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CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN THE PRIESTLY STRATUM OF THE TETRATEUCH:  
A SYMBOLIC ATTEMPT TO RECREATE DIVINE ORDER

by

Kenneth R. Franz

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Faculty of Graduate Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

Department of Religion

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	p. iv
ABSTRACT . . . . .	p. v
ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	p. vii
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY . . . . .	p. 1
A. The Objective . . . . .	p. 1
B. Past Research . . . . .	p. 3
C. Present Limitations . . . . .	p. 5
D. Organization . . . . .	p. 5
CHAPTER TWO	
CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN PAST SCHOLARSHIP . . . . .	p. 8
A. The Meat Laws: An Introduction . . . . .	p. 9
B. The Meat Laws: A Review of Past Scholarship . . . . .	p. 11
C. The Meat Laws: A Critique of Past Scholarship. . . . .	p. 21
D. "Leprosy" and "Discharge" . . . . .	p. 25
E. Conclusion . . . . .	p. 29
CHAPTER THREE	
THREE CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES OUTLINED . . . . .	p. 31
A. Mary Douglas . . . . .	p. 32
1. Rituals and Symbols . . . . .	p. 32
2. Pollution Rules . . . . .	p. 36
3. Clean and Unclean in Leviticus . . . . .	p. 38

B. Jacob Neusner . . . . .	p. 45
C. Emanuel Feldman . . . . .	p. 52
D. Transcending Past Scholarship . . . . .	p. 59

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRIESTLY WRITER(S) . . . . .	p. 64
A. Literary-Critical Questions Considered . . . . .	p. 65
1. Characteristics of P . . . . .	p. 65
2. Authorship and Date . . . . .	p. 65
a) The Mosaic Period . . . . .	p. 65
b) The Pre-Exilic Period . . . . .	p. 67
c) The Exilic/Post-Exilic Period . . . . .	p. 73
d) A Tentative Conclusion Regarding Authorship and Date of P . . . . .	p. 78
3. P's Relationship to the Other Sources . . . . .	p. 81
4. P's Place in the Canon . . . . .	p. 88
5. Conclusion . . . . .	p. 96
B. Priestly Theology . . . . .	p. 97
1. P's View of History . . . . .	p. 97
a) Creation of the World . . . . .	p. 99
b) The Covenant with Noah . . . . .	p. 107
c) The Covenant with Abraham . . . . .	p. 110
d) The Covenant at Sinai . . . . .	p. 112
2. P's View of God: The Sovereign and Holy One . . . . .	p. 115
3. The Cult . . . . .	p. 118
4. The Priest . . . . .	p. 123
5. Symbolism in P . . . . .	p. 126

CHAPTER FIVE

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN PRIESTLY THOUGHT . . . . . p. 131

    A. Five Purity Laws Examined: Introduction . . . . . p. 132

        1. The Meat Laws . . . . . p. 134

            a) The Larger Land-Based Animals . . . . . p. 135

            b) The Creatures Living in the Waters . . . . . p. 138

            c) The Birds of the Air . . . . . p. 140

            d) The Smaller Land-Based Animals . . . . . p. 141

            e) Divine Order and the Meat Laws . . . . . p. 144

        2. Death . . . . . p. 146

        3. Childbirth . . . . . p. 150

        4. "Leprosy" . . . . . p. 159

        5. "Discharge" . . . . . p. 163

        7. Conclusion . . . . . p. 172

    B. Clean and Unclean Thinking and  
        Other Regulations in P . . . . . p. 174

    C. Clean and Unclean in Deuteronomy . . . . . p. 189

CHAPTER SIX

DOUGLAS, NEUSNER AND FELDMAN RECONSIDERED . . . . . p. 207

    A. Mary Douglas: A Critique and Commentary . . . . . p. 208

    B. Jacob Neusner: A Critique and Commentary . . . . . p. 226

    C. Emanuel Feldman: A Critique and Commentary . . . . . p. 234

    D. Conclusion . . . . . p. 238

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . . p. 239

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . p. 247

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Words can not express my indebtedness to my wife, Heidi. She has frequently assumed many of my domestic responsibilities, and her unwaning support has been a constant source of encouragement. The thesis is as much hers as it is mine.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, and to my mother, who first taught me to seek out "divine order" ... until "the new morning."

## ABSTRACT

The clean and unclean legislation in the Old Testament has been variously interpreted in the past. Two major deficiencies which mark most of the traditional interpretations are: (1) Their approach to the clean and unclean regulations proceeds largely in piecemeal fashion, with little concern for treating the whole range of laws and inquiring into the possible existence of an inherent common denominator. (2) They do little to gain an understanding of the combined general function of the clean and unclean regulations within the larger religious tradition.

The work of Mary Douglas, Jacob Neusner and Emanuel Feldman transcends that of past scholarship. Each suggests a dominant theme which she/he considers significant to the biblical writer and through which she/he seeks to account for all the regulations. For Mary Douglas the clean and unclean laws function as an expression of God's holiness, which she relates closely to wholeness, completeness and perfection. For Jacob Neusner the regulations serve the priests' concern for the temple and cultic acceptability. For Emanuel Feldman the concept of death, that which represents the opposite to God, figures largely in the clean and unclean laws.

Certain inadequacies of these approaches have emerged in the course of our investigation. Even though each makes a significant contribution they do not provide a scheme broad enough to account adequately for all the regulations. Further, in their conclusions these scholars occasionally fail to appreciate fully the Priestly Source's theological



intentions for the laws which, in turn, distort the perspective on "clean and unclean" thinking.

The conclusion arrived at in this study places the clean and unclean regulations fully into the context of the Priestly Source's Kābôd-theology and recognizes the effort to express divine order as the central concern of the clean and unclean regulations. God's potential presence in the midst of Israel, which constitutes both blessing and threat, is to encourage the Israelite to live as if in the presence of God. As God is holy so the Israelite is to be holy. God's holiness is most fully characterized by His divine ordering of the world. To the extent that the clean and unclean regulations express symbolically God's order they convey at the same time His holiness. All that is regarded unclean by the Priestly Source is in each case considered unsuitable for the symbolic recreation of holiness, the nature and essence of God.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AES . . . . Archives européennes de sociologie
- BA . . . . Biblical Archeologist
- BDB . . . . F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C. A. Briggs. Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.  
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
- BZAW . . . . Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
- CBQ . . . . Catholic Biblical Quarterly
- EJ . . . . Encyclopedia Judaica
- ET . . . . Evangelische Theologie
- IDB . . . . The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
- IDBS . . . . IDB, Supplementary Volume
- Int . . . . Interpretation
- JAAR . . . . Journal of the American Academy of Religion
- JAOS . . . . Journal of the American Oriental Society
- JBL . . . . Journal of Biblical Literature
- JNES . . . . Journal of Near Eastern Studies
- JSSR . . . . Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
- JQR . . . . The Jewish Quarterly Review
- KB . . . . L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner. Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958.
- RB . . . . Revue biblique
- SJT . . . . Scottish Journal of Theology
- TDNT . . . . Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
- TDOT . . . . Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
- VT . . . . Vetus Testamentum
- ZAW . . . . Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
- ZLThK . . . . Zeitschrift für die gesamte Lutherische Theologie und Kirche

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The idea of clean and unclean (cl/uncl) is found in some form or another in all societies. Ethnographic work focusing on these ubiquitous concepts has increasingly attempted to understand them within their larger social/cultural context. Old Testament scholarship, examining cl/uncl in the biblical text, has frequently turned to social/cultural anthropology in its quest to understand these concepts and their role in the religion of Israel.

The Old Testament student examining the concepts of cl/uncl can not, however, use the approach of an ethnographer who observes the practices of a particular society first hand. Although social-science theory can provide assistance, any study of cl/uncl in the Bible must begin with the text itself. Having examined the text, only then may one cautiously use those theories advanced by the social sciences, which might best elucidate the text. The conclusions of this study will be based on this principle.

#### A. THE OBJECTIVE

The cl/uncl regulations found in the Old Testament are a diverse group of laws which are not easily understood. Many of the rules undoubtedly have separate origins and were absorbed by Israel at different stages of her existence. There were probably also a variety of reasons why they were ultimately assimilated into the religion of Israel. The par-

ticular use and reshaping of these regulations by the different biblical writers also creates certain difficulties in the study of these concepts. Although the complex history behind these enigmatic concepts can complicate matters, it need not create difficulties that can not be resolved. A study of cl/uncl restricted to a distinctive tradition in the Old Testament can provide insights regarding the concepts and their function within that particular tradition.

The objective of this study is to investigate the Priestly Stratum of the Tetrateuch and to examine its particular theological use of cl/uncl. Although these two concepts were not a creation of the Priestly Writers(P)[1] they were incorporated into P's larger theological perspective.

No other biblical writer uses the concepts of cl/uncl as frequently as does P. In no other stratum are the regulations outlined in greater detail. It may not be possible to gain much information about the pre-P understanding of cl/uncl, but a study restricted to this particular stratum should be able to uncover its distinctive use of the concepts.

P's cl/uncl laws are frequently regarded as antiquated and meaningless. Some are repulsive to the modern mind. They play a significant role in the Old Testament, however, and an adequate understanding of their theological use can assist the reader in gaining a better understanding of their function in the biblical text.

---

1. 'P' may refer to either the writer(s) or the document.

## B. PAST RESEARCH

This inquiry is indebted to the tremendous amount of scholarly endeavor which precedes it. As noted above, the study of cl/uncl in the Bible has not been restricted to a dialogue between biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholars but has included active discussion and debate on an interdisciplinary level. The work of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists has frequently been used to explain the presence and function of cl/uncl thinking in the Old Testament. The contributions of Robertson W. Smith (The Religion of the Semites, 1889), Emile Durkheim (The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, 1912), James Frazer (The Golden Bough, 1941) and Sigmund Freud (Totem and Taboo, 1913), to name just a few, have had no small influence in the study of cl/uncl in this century.

Many of the older theories are no longer in vogue today, while some live on. The work of Durkheim, for example, although modified and revised by his successors, continues to exercise a great deal of influence. This is true especially through the work of Mary T. Douglas. Douglas, a social anthropologist, has made a significant impact on the study of cl/uncl in the Old Testament. Her inclusive approach and wholistic perspective prompt her to look for a principle which will account meaningfully for the different uses of the cl/uncl concepts, while at the same time regarding them as one part of a much larger system of thought.

Jacob Neusner, a historian, and Emanuel Feldman, a theologian, have also published important works on the cl/uncl

laws wherein they acknowledge the contributions of Douglas. Although both arrive at different conclusions, her influence on these scholars is readily apparent. Considered together, these three scholars represent a new trend in the study of cl/uncl in the Old Testament; one which seeks to place the diverse laws within a larger anthropological-theological thought structure. Their views will be examined below.

The "thought structure" or "larger system of thought" this study seeks to investigate is that of P. Julius Wellhausen, a significant proponent of the so-called documentary hypothesis, convincingly argued that the Pentateuch consisted of a collection of various sources, each possessing certain distinctives. He believed that P was the latest source and resulted from the reforms of the post-exilic priesthood. Since the time of Wellhausen the documentary hypothesis, along with many of Wellhausen's views, has been vigorously challenged, prompting many changes. His basic contention, however, namely that distinct sources exist within the Pentateuch, and that P is the latest of these, remains intact.

The Priestly stratum has received much attention, and there is considerable agreement regarding the basic concerns and the broader theological perspective of P. Yet questions specifically concerned with P's theological use of the cl/uncl laws have not traditionally been addressed at any length. This study will ask these theological questions as it examines P's broader theological "thought structure." Germane social-science theory, especially that of Douglas, will also be considered in the quest to understand cl/uncl in P.

### C. PRESENT LIMITATIONS

The complex history of the cl/uncl regulations has already been alluded to. A related problem is that there still exists no consensus regarding the general date of P's composition and its particular historical context. The diverse and often ancient material which it has absorbed creates many of the present difficulties. Although one need not arrive at a date for the initial composition of the different cl/uncl regulations, it is helpful to determine at what time they were used by P in order to arrive at their proper historical context in relation to P. This will be attempted in chapter four.

P's very treatment of the sacrifices, the different ritual procedures and the various cl/uncl regulations, also creates certain limitations. Much appears to be taken for granted and at no point does P give the impression that it is dealing with the different cultic practices in a comprehensive fashion. There no doubt existed a tremendous amount of background knowledge which is no longer available to the modern Old Testament student, yet enough can be gained from the text to allow one to arrive at some tentative conclusions.

### D. THE ORGANIZATION

The steps this thesis takes are the following. In chapter two the necessary background information for the study is provided. Here the traditional views of past scholarship concerning cl/uncl in the Old Testament, especially as they relate to the so-called "dietary laws," are examined

briefly. The more recent work of Douglas, Neusner and Feldman will be outlined in chapter three, followed by an assessment of their work in relation to the earlier approaches.

The cl/uncl concepts are frequently found in P. Therefore, chapter four is devoted to a general study of this stratum. Questions regarding the date of P, its relationship to the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E) and the Deuteronomist (D) all need to be addressed in the quest to place P in its proper context. Here texts relevant to the cl/uncl theme, found in the various sources, will be examined. The periodization of divine revelation in P, which has long been recognized, is discussed in an effort to understand P's broad theological concerns. The important constituents of the cult, along with the significant cultic themes and their function in the cult, are also examined.

Chapter five narrows the discussion to the cl/uncl regulations as they are found in P. Although cl/uncl will have been discussed briefly in chapter four (because of their general connection to the cult), the concern within this section is threefold: One, to examine the explanatory glosses found in the regulations. Two, to discover how these cl/uncl laws relate to the other Priestly legal concerns. Three, to inquire into the relationship between cl/uncl in P and in D - where some of the laws also surface. The first two parts of the inquiry will serve to place the cl/uncl rules within the context of the larger P theology, while the third part can serve as a testing device, to determine whether P's particular concerns can be detected in its shaping of the cl/uncl



regulations found in its writings, over against the use of cl/uncl in D.

In chapter six the work of the three scholars examined earlier will be evaluated in light of the results of the inquiry into P's use of cl/uncl. The shortcomings of their work will be discussed and the strengths of their studies highlighted. Building upon the work of these scholars and others, this study will seek to show how the cl/uncl laws have been integrated into the larger legal/cultic concerns of P.

Chapter seven will summarize the findings and assess the relationship between P's shaping and use of the cl/uncl regulations, and their particular role in promoting the symbolic recreation of divine order.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN PAST SCHOLARSHIP

The concepts of *cl/uncl* in the Old Testament have been variously interpreted. They have been considered as arbitrary divine decrees (Maimonides), which can be allegorized or treated as metaphors and interpreted ethically (Philo, Jacob Milgrom); as irrational survivals of ancient practices (Robertson Smith), which demonstrate a "primitive mentality" (J.G. Frazer, Nathaniel Micklem); as laws concerned with hygiene and sanitation (G.E. Wright, R.E. Clements); as potentially dangerous, spiritual (demonic?) forces (E.A. Hobel, B.A. Levine); and as regulations which arose out of a reaction to foreign religious practices and serve as a polemic against them (F. Hauck, W. Eichrodt).[1] This chapter will outline briefly these various kinds of interpretations and examine their particular shortcomings.

Although the *cl/uncl* regulations cover a variety of concerns, the primary focus of this chapter is the "meat laws." [2] They have received much scholarly attention, and a study restricted to them can both serve to highlight the different interpretations and approaches of past scholarship and show their inadequacies. A brief look at the laws con-

-----  
1. Although seven different categories are noted, overlapping does occur. Further, the different writers mentioned are named merely as representative figures. Others could be added.

2. Traditionally they have been called "dietary laws," or "food laws." Meat laws, I believe, is more accurate since no attempt is made to comment on other food groups.

cerning leprosy and body issues will further expose deficiencies in the past approaches.

#### A. THE MEAT LAWS: AN INTRODUCTION

The three passages most frequently cited by older scholars are Leviticus 11:1-23, 41-47 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21. It is interesting to note that the lists found here appear in almost menu-like fashion. The "menu guide" includes meat selections featuring fowl, fish and grazing animals. Perhaps because they were perceived as delicacies, two different varieties of locusts, along with a certain type of cricket and grasshopper, were also considered "clean" and therefore edible.

The criterion used by the discriminating Israelite in choosing a meat dish (when choosing a land based animal) was simple. That which "parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud" was considered edible. However, if one of these two characteristics was missing, the animal was considered "unclean." The camel, rock badger, hare and swine were given as examples of unacceptable meat while the ox, sheep, goat, ibex, and antelope were some of the acceptable animals.

The Israelite "menu" also provided guidelines concerning acceptable seafood dishes. Only that which had fins and scales was considered proper for consumption. Most fish could, therefore, be included in this list. Lobsters, shrimp, oysters, squid and eel were, however, unacceptable.

Perhaps the most difficult meat group to classify precisely are the birds of the air. One finds here no real

descriptive criteria. Only a long list of birds, not considered as proper for the Israelite, was advanced. They include the eagle, vulture, falcon, sea gull, owl, etc. One is left with the impression that the writer(s) of this list believed their audience was aware of what was acceptable and perhaps needed only to be reminded which birds were not.

Winged insects that moved upon all fours (with the exception of those mentioned above), and all "swarming things" like the weasel, mouse, lizard and crocodile, along with all those which move about on their belly (e.g., snake), were categorically pronounced as unfit for consumption.

Although these meat laws were directed only to Israelites, there was one related law which was addressed to all peoples. The old prohibition against consuming blood (Gen. 9:4-5) continued to play an important part in these laws. Deuteronomy 12:16 and 15:23 restate the prohibition: "only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water." Leviticus 17:10 goes a step further and asserts: "if any man of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against his people" (cf. also Lev. 7:26-27). Leviticus 17:11-13 provided the rationale for this prohibition: because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" and it was given to be used at the altar for making atonement.

Other rules relate to the meat laws[4] but those men-  
-----  
4. Rules concerned with animals which have died by themselves or have been torn by beasts (Lev. 7:24; Deut. 14:21); rules concerned with the slaughter of animals (Lev. 17:1-9; Deut. 12:15; 15:23); the handling of carcasses (Lev. 11:24-40); and rules concerned with animal fat (Lev. 3:17).

tioned above are most frequently referred to by past scholarship. These regulations, and the different explanations for them, will now be outlined. Two much older yet very influential views will first be advanced, followed by the more contemporary perspectives.

#### B. THE MEAT LAWS: A REVIEW OF PAST SCHOLARSHIP

This study begins with a consideration of Maimonides, who perhaps makes the most disparaging assessment of the regulations, and moves to examine the ever loftier, complex views which have evolved through time. Having devoted well over 500 pages to a comprehensive study of the Talmudic laws of cleanness, Maimonides concluded that they constitute arbitrary divine decrees which the human mind simply can not rationalize.

It is plain and manifest that the laws about uncleanness and cleanness are decrees laid down by scripture and not matters about which human understanding is capable of forming a judgment; for behold, they are included among the divine statutes.[5]

Although the human mind may not fully understand the laws, Maimonides believed that they could assist one in attaining a higher level of morality. He writes:

we may find some indication (for the moral basis) of this: just as one who sets his heart on becoming clean becomes clean ... so, too, one who sets his heart on cleansing himself from uncleanness ... becomes clean as soon as he consents in his heart ... and brings his soul into the waters of pure reason.[6]

Understanding God's rationale for the regulations may not be

---

5. Moses Maimonides, The Code of Maimonides, Book Ten, The Book of Cleanness, Trans. Herbert Danby (New Haven: Yale University, 1954), p.535.

6. Ibid.

possible, but relying on His wisdom and being obedient to His holy laws would inspire one to a life of greater holiness. In his treatment of the food laws this perceived intent of the laws becomes clear.

It is the way of piety that a man keep himself separate and go apart from the rest of the people and neither touch them nor eat and drink with them. For separation leads to the cleansing of the body from evil deeds, and the cleansing of the body leads to the hallowing of the soul from evil thoughts, and the hallowing of the soul leads to striving for likeness ... (Lev. 11:44).[7]

A similar ethical, disciplinary appeal is found in Philo. He possesses a somewhat more positive view of the laws than does Maimonides, however, in that Philo never describes the laws as arbitrary divine decrees but rather allegorizes the laws and interprets them ethically. Commenting on the fish menu he asserts:

Fish with fins and scales ... symbolise endurance and self-control, whilst the forbidden ones are swept away by the current, unable to resist the force of the stream.[8]

Combining an allegorical/ethical interpretation with a medical one Philo further argues that:

The lawgiver sternly forbade all animals of land, sea or air whose flesh is the finest and fattest, like that of pigs and scaleless fish, knowing that they set a trap for the most slavish of senses, the taste, and that they produce gluttony, an evil dangerous to both soul and body, for gluttony begets indigestion, which is the source of all illnesses and infirmities.[9]

In this century there are those who have continued this

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7. Ibid., p. 393-394.

8. S. Stein, "The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature," Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 64(1957), p. 147.

9. Ibid., p. 147.

general approach and interpret the laws ethically while others emphasize the medical dimension.

A contemporary scholar who follows closely these older views, especially those of Philo, is Jacob Milgrom.<sup>10</sup> In his thought-provoking article "The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System"[10], he also argues from an ethical point of view (but is not interested in allegorizing the laws). The starting point, he believes, is humankind's insatiable appetite for meat and power. He writes:

Man will have meat for his food, and will kill to get it. The Old Testament records factually the restrictions enjoined on early Israel to allow man to satiate his lust for animal flesh - and yet not be dehumanized in the process. The obvious goal of this Kashrut system of dietary laws - to tame the killer instinct of man can be fully understood only in the light of other important emphases.[11]

He notes that humankind was originally vegetarian (Gen. 1:28-29), but then rebellion brought with it mortality, labor and carnivorous inclinations.[12] Noah's sons are permitted flesh (Gen. 9:3) but not without restrictions: "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen. 9:4).

In his article Milgrom focuses on the close connection between "blood" and "life." Life is divinely given and:

The abstention from blood is a constant reminder to man that though he may satisfy his appetite for food he must curb his hunger for power. For life is inviolable; it may not be tampered with indiscriminately.[13]

While the eating of blood is proscribed for all, additional

---

10. Int. 17(1963), 288-301.

11. Ibid., p. 288.

12. Ibid.

restrictions are placed on the Israelite.

He is to discipline his appetites further by narrowing down the permitted animals to a few. In this way he may aspire to a higher level of life which the Bible calls Kadosh, or holy." [14]

This ascetic rationale for the meat laws is then developed. The people were to make themselves holy because their God was holy (Lev. 11:14). The injunction to be holy translated itself into the conscious determination to separate oneself from other gods. Further, he notes, holiness ultimately is assigned to God alone. Yet, "if certain things are termed holy - such as the land (Canaan), person (priest), place (sanctuary), or time (holy day) - they are so by virtue of divine dispensation." [15]

Having made these observations, Milgrom suggests that, "from the biblical viewpoint, the priesthood, Israel and man, respectively, form three concentric rings of decreasing holiness about the center, God." [16] Humankind was only bound by the blood prohibition but Israel, in a higher sphere of holiness, was bound to a more rigid code of behavior. It is from this vantage point that Milgrom sees the meat laws. [17]

In his discussion of the meat laws, Milgrom appears to move towards the position which regards the laws as reflecting some type of "primitive mentality." At no point does he

-----  
13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 300.

15. Ibid., p. 302.

16. Ibid., p. 305.

17. Although Milgrom places the accent for understanding the regulations on the ascetic and ethical dimension, he does not deny that esthetics and hygienic considerations, along with a rejection of foreign religious practices, may have also played a part in some of the laws (Ibid., p. 296.).



explicitly make this observation but his view of humankind, as possessing some type of "killer instinct," does come close to that position.

The position which regards the regulations as the product of "primitive" thinking is largely indebted to the evolutionary frame of reference, popular at the turn of the century. W. Robertson Smith and James Frazer are two scholars who are frequently associated with this position. Both regard all the cl/uncl regulations as a product of superstition among "primitive" people who had not yet fully progressed socially or morally.[18]

In the work of Nathaniel Micklem we can see that the older views of Smith and Frazer live on. According to Micklem the meat laws are considered as the product of instinct and "prereflective" thought:

why do we find eating foxes disgusting ... our repulsion is in the first instance not rational but instinctive .... The idea of 'uncleanness' is similarly pretheological, or prereflective, though it may in time become a matter of reflection.[19]

Arguing against those who regard the laws as concerned with hygiene or typifying certain sins he writes:

It may be taken as certain that neither hygiene, nor any kind of typology, is the basis of uncleanness. These regulations are not by any means to be rationalized. Their origins may be diverse, and go back beyond history....[20]

Although he might stand in agreement with Maimonides, that

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18. The Religion of the Semites (New York: Meridian, 1957, first pub. in 1889), p.154. and Totemism and Exogamy, Vol. 4 (London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1968), pp. 40-71.

19. "Leviticus," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 54.

20. Ibid., p. 53.

the laws are arbitrary decrees which can not be rationalized, he does not believe them to have a divine origin, nor does he interpret them as Philo did, in an ethical/symbolic fashion. They simply represent the "prelogical" product of an ancient society which "may," "in time," have "become a matter of reflection."

Whereas there are those who regard the laws as reflecting lower levels of thought, the position which regards them as laws concerned with hygiene and sanitation, has a very high view of the Old Testament lawgivers. Within this position the medical interpretations, which Philo began, are more fully developed. Those within this camp believe that the writer(s) of the cl/uncl laws recognized many inherent health dangers. R.E. Clements describes the laws as "a simple and comprehensive guidebook to food and personal hygiene." [21] Having considered the various interpretations advanced for the meat laws he argues that although the regulations arose before the era of modern medical science they do, nonetheless, represent a form of hygiene, albeit a primitive one. [22]

G.E. Wright, taking a similar position, does not cast the hygiene explanation in as emphatic a fashion. Commenting on the the laws in Deuteronomy 14 he states:

How some animals came to be considered clean and others unclean is something we do not know. In certain cases with the swine (vs.8), and predatory birds (vss.12-18) the reason must clearly have been the danger to health, particularly in a hot country

21. "Leviticus," Broadman Bible Comentary, Vol. 2 (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scot, 1971), p.34.

22. Ibid., p. 33.

where there was no such thing as refrigeration. [23]

S.H. Kellogg also emphasizes the hygienic explanation in his treatment of the laws. With regard to the meat laws he concludes:

At least one chief consideration which, in the divine wisdom, determined the allowance or prohibition ... of the animals named in this chapter, has been their fitness or unfitness as diet from a hygienic point of view....[24]

His views do, however, also show certain similarities with those of Maimonides and those who regard the laws as "prereflective." He too, subscribes to the view which attributes "instinctive repugnance"[25] to the growth of the cl/uncl laws.

Another position which focuses upon the food itself concerns its spiritual makeup, over against its physical composition, and the ramifications of that makeup. All food which is considered taboo is somehow charged with supernatural power and is, therefore, dangerous. Baruch A. Levine, more than any other biblical scholar, has used this old social-science perspective to elucidate the cl/uncl regulations. In his study of the different cultic practices, especially the purification rituals, he attempts to show how they are based on a demonic conception of sin, offence and transgression.

In his study he closely relates the Hebrew kippur, to the Akkadian kappuru. He rejects the traditional interpretation

23. "Deuteronomy," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), pp. 423-424.

24. The Book of Leviticus, The Expositor's Bible (Toronto: Willard Tract Depository and Bible Depot, 1891), p. 294.

25. Ibid., p. 282.

given to the atonement rite, where the sin is covered up/over, and argues that it best be understood in its Akkadian sense as, "to wipe off," hence "to purify." [26] Further, he suggests that the Hebrew practice paralleled the Akkadian to the point that it, too, involved the magical utilization of blood. [27] In its use of the blood the notion of "covering up" was not implied in the purifying rite. Rather, he suggests:

Purification is more properly understood as an attempt to alienate impurity, for persons to divest themselves of it. Impurity is viewed as an external force which adheres to a person or object. [28]

Blood, which can substitute for life (Lev. 17:11), can redeem a person since "deities, like demons, accept blood in lieu of life, and do the bidding of those who present it to them." [29]

For Levine, many of the ancient Israelite cultic practices reflect those of her neighbors. This also is true for all that is considered unclean. Uncleanness, viewed as an external force, could enter the person and attach itself to him/her. [30] The unclean animals were somehow connected to the powers working against God and were, therefore, taboo. [31]

The last position to be outlined shares with the previous one an important characteristic. It too regards the unclean animals as potentially dangerous. Dangerous, not because of their inherent demonic qualities but because of

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26. In the Presence of the Lord: Aspects of Ritual in Ancient Israel (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), pp. 56-57.

27. Ibid., p. 60.

28. Ibid., p. 63.

29. Ibid., p. 68.

30. Ibid., p. 77.

31. Cf. M. Noth, Leviticus: A Commentary, trans. J.E. Anderson, revised edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), p. 92.

their connection to foreign religions. This position generally understands the unclean animals as representing some pagan practice or symbolically personifying some other nation or cult. In an effort to separate the people of Israel from the other nations, the lawgivers advanced the regulations which serve as a polemic against foreign religious practices. This approach is quite popular, and sentiments like the following are common: "the laws of cleanness reflect the conflict of the religion of Yahweh against earlier or surrounding paganism." [32]

Noth, in his commentary on Leviticus, argues that the unclean animals were not to be eaten because of the large role they played in the foreign cults. [33] He recognized that:

not all animals which were sacrificed elsewhere are however, declared unclean in the Old Testament; neither the ox nor the sheep nor the goat. These beasts were everywhere used in the sacrificial cult.... [34]

Yet, he believed that the lists were shaped as a reaction to a wide variety of foreign sacrificial practices which extended over a long period of time. These laws did not focus on one particular foreign cult but were rather, ultimately designed to prohibit taking part in any idolatrous cultic practice which might cause the Israelite to follow after other

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32. Friedrich Hauck, "Clean and Unclean in Old Testament Religion," IDNI, Vol. 3, Ed. G. Kittel, Trans. G.W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 416.

33. Leviticus, p. 92.

34. M. Noth, The Laws of the Pentateuch and other Essays, Trans. D.R.A.P. Thomas (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), p. 58.

gods.[35]

Not all Old Testament scholars state their position as carefully as Noth. There are those who point to the pig bones unearthed at several of the Canaanite shrines and automatically make the direct connection to the unfavorable status of the pig in the meat laws.[36] W. Eichrodt, following this logic, writes:

The use of many animals for food is forbidden for the reason that they figure in alien cults or magic rites; such are the pig, which was an ancient Canaanite domestic and sacrificial animal, and mice, serpents, and hares, which were regarded in magical belief as especially effective media of demonic power.[37]

This last position has in the past century perhaps had the largest following. Although variations exist, all tend to relate the particular animals to foreign religious practices.

This study has briefly outlined seven different interpretive approaches taken to the meat laws. It has attempted to show the points of continuity and overlap between them and yet to highlight their distinctive contribution to the on going discussion of cl/uncl. An evaluation of them follows.

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35. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59. Cf. also G. von Rad, *Genesis*, Revised edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), p. 120. Von Rad here claims that: "the sacral depreciation of certain animals resulted from the defensive struggle of the Yahweh faith against stranger, older cults or other magical practices in which one made use of these animals. Many animals considered unclean in Israel were highly valued for sacred use elsewhere or in older Palestinian cults."

36. L.E. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean," *IDB*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 643.

37. *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), pp. 134-135. Note here the close connection to Levine's views concerning demonic powers. Cf. also Wilfried Paschen, *Rein und Unrein. Untersuchung zur biblischen Wortgeschichte*, (Studien zum alten und neuen Testament, 24, Munich, 1970), p. 58.

### C. THE MEAT LAWS: A CRITIQUE OF PAST SCHOLARSHIP

In the evaluation which follows no attempt is made to provide a comprehensive critique of the various views. Some of the positions may well contain elements of truth. For example, the fact that the pig was used in the Canaanite cult may well have served to endorse the opinion that it was unclean. The question is, however, whether it was this foreign practice which made it unclean or whether there was some other principle at work. Further, do the different interpretations deal adequately with all the animals mentioned or do they simply focus on a few?

This study will seek to understand P's theological perspective and intent in using the different cl/uncl regulations. Its basic presupposition is, therefore, that the laws are not arbitrary, contrary to Maimonides' view. This will be more fully developed in chapter five. For the present it suffices to say that one is quite safe in assuming that there exists some literary intent in the work of most writers. The problem more often arising is the reader's inability, for one reason or another, to recognize that intent. This appears true also for Maimonides, who was unable to recognize the writer's intent and, therefore, regarded the laws as arbitrary.

The approach which attempts to allegorize the regulations or regard the different animals in some symbolic way may well serve in some ethical appeal but it can also be both subjective and presumptuous. For example, to suggest that the finest meats were not allowed, reflects only personal

taste. Further, personal symbolic interpretations can be plagued with subjective stereotypical perceptions. Philo believed that fish with scales symbolize endurance and self control.[38] Others may disagree suggesting rather that fish with scales represent aggression. Another example is lambs: do they symbolize ignorance and weakness or gentleness and trust?

Any approach which attempts to use symbolism in some way must provide some method which prevents one from arriving at a variety of unrestrained subjective conclusions. Only a symbolic system which accounts for all the different animals with a consistent scheme can be considered a reliable approach by which to understand the regulations.

The classical perception of "primitive" human beings as somehow not completely developed cerebrally and unable to think complex thoughts or reason logically is no longer accepted today. It was shown above, however, that a vestige of the older view can still be seen in some contemporary interpretations. Micklem is correct in arguing that the cl/uncl concepts "go back beyond history," but to suggest that they existed at any time as irrational, instinctive or prereflective ideas is unverifiable. Further, he makes little attempt to describe their function and rationale in the biblical text. This, of course, is not surprising in light of his disparaging evaluation of the cl/uncl concepts. The Israelites were not continually motivated by irrational fears, and their instinctive reactions were shaped no differ-

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38. Cf. Philo, p. 12 (of this chapter).



ently than our own: by means of a complex interaction between the biological/psychological being and the social/physical environment.[39] Those basing the unclean laws on some "primitive thinking" premise find little support today.

The hygienic explanation is also no longer tenable because of several weaknesses. First, the biblical text nowhere explicitly states that the unclean animals are harmful to one's health. No appeal is made for the Israelite to maintain a healthy diet. Second, if one assumes that Israel had discovered the risks involved in eating certain foods, could they not also have recognized that by thoroughly cooking these foods the health risks would be overcome? Third, this explanation does not help one understand all the rules. Although it may seem to fit some, it does not account satisfactorily for all. This kind of "medical materialism," as many critics call it, is unacceptable today.

The position advanced by Levine is an interesting one but also has gained little support. Perhaps too much is built upon his perceived similarity between Israelite and Akkadian cultic practice. The parallelism which he attempts to show is not altogether persuasive. His polytheistic conception of impurity, with its many independent demonic powers, also stands in contrast to the work of many significant scholars who argue for the fervent monotheistic component which developed in the exilic/post-exilic period, of which P and its

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39. See Philip K. Bock, Continuities in Psychological Anthropology (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Comp., 1980), pp. 247-250. Cf. also J.W. Rogerson, Old Testament Anthropology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 46-65.

cl/uncl laws are a part (this point will be argued below).

Finally, the approach which seeks to explain the unclean animals in terms of a polemic against the nations and foreign cults also has serious weaknesses. For one, it explains only a few regulations and does not account for the clean animals. Further, the methodological approach is also weak. It is easy to find examples of the unclean animals being used in one cultic form or another in the surrounding nations. Some point to the pig and argue that it was not only considered sacred in Canaan but also in Babylon, Cyprus and Syria.[40] Also, hundreds of mummified cats, dogs (cf. animals with paws, Lev. 11:6; Deut. 14:7), falcons (cf. Lev. 11:14), crocodiles (cf. Lev. 11:30) and other animals, with their strange link to Egyptian divinity, have been found in Egyptian cemeteries.[41] Were one to look long enough one could, undoubtedly, account for all the unclean animals mentioned. This approach of showing connections, however, ultimately proves very little. Above all it can advance no adequate explanation why many of the animals were considered clean when they, too, were widely used in all the cults surrounding Israel.

This brief critique of the above positions has focused only on the various views regarding the meat laws. When testing these views against other cl/uncl regulations more problems arise. In the following discussion these problems will be outlined briefly.

40. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean," p. 643. Also p. 20 above.

41. Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion (London: Harper and Row, 1948), p. 9.

#### D. "LEPROSY" AND "DISCHARGE"

In this section the deficiencies in many of the traditional approaches and interpretations to the laws concerning "leprosy" and "discharge" will be discussed. Next to the meat laws these two concerns are most frequently raised by scholars investigating cl/uncl in the biblical text. Past conclusions arrived at will be used to further show the inadequacy of many of the traditional approaches. The various interpretations attempting to explain the meat laws have been found to be lacking. How do many of the older views fare in their attempt to explain regulations dealing with "leprosy" and "discharge"?

Leviticus 13:1-14:57 contains the "law for leprosy" (14:57). L.I. Rabinowitz has noted that these laws have often been regarded as "the most abstruse and complicated of the laws." [42] Although it was common in the past to interpret these laws as simple medical regulations, this view has today generally been dismissed.

The term "leprosy," when used in the Old Testament, is not the disease we today technically call bacillus myobacterium leprae. John Wilkinson, trying to describe and identify it, points to twelve different conditions which it could include; he deliberately omits leprosy (as we now know it) from the list. [43] He offers four different reasons why it could not be the disease we call leprosy today: one, it affects organic and inorganic material alike; two, it in-

42. "Leprosy," EJ, Vol. 11, (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), p. 33.

43. "Leprosy and Leviticus: The Problem of Description and Identification," SJI 31(1977), p. 165-166.

cludes a wide spectrum of clinical features which are not typical of leprosy (e.g., white spots, white hair, and its origin in a boil or a burn); three, it appears to describe identifiable diseases which are not leprosy (e.g., fungus type diseases), and; four, the biblical disease shows evidence of spread in the skin within seven to fourteen days, while leprosy spreads much more slowly.[44]

Traditionally, leprosy has frequently been discussed in phenomenological terms. Leviticus 13 describes the physiological characteristics of the disease while chapter 14 is concerned with specific ritual acts which serve to cleanse the leper. In the past, however, very little meaningful inquiry has been done which focuses on the theological intent of these two chapters. Typically the root of "leprosy" is discussed, its presence in the ancient Near East shown, a description is given, and then some rationale advanced at the conclusion attempting to explain the cleansing ritual. An example follows:

Since there are reasons for believing that emotional stresses frequently underlie the incidence of most cutaneous disorders, the injunction to wash in the Jordan (II Kings 5) may have constituted an important suggestive element in a regime of psychotherapy.[45]

Those who regard the cl/uncl laws as concerned with hygiene, sanitation or some other related medical issue argue that the removal of the infected person constitutes an attempt to stop

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44. "Leprosy and Leviticus: A Problem of Semantics and Translation," SJI 31(1978), p. 162.

45. R.K.Harrison, "Leprosy" IDB, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 113.

the spread of the disease.[46] Clements suggests that the "leprous house" regulations sought to eliminate the damp conditions which give rise to mould, etc, and in turn, "may often be unhealthy and make a house unsuitable for human habitation." [47] Can one actually relate these leprosy rules to public health and welfare concerns? If so, what role do the purifying rites play? In what real way is the leper assisted? This approach and view is not very convincing.

Is the disease a product of demonic forces? Do the leprosy laws evolve out of a reaction to (foreign?) prohibited practices? Using symbolism, can one simply liken leprosy to death (Num. 12:12) or should one consider the sign of leprosy as "a portent and wonder among the Israelites to warn them against slanderous speaking"? [48] (cf. Num. 12 & Deut. 24: 8-9). Many other examples can be advanced showing the different interpretations given these regulations. No consistent approach is used, however, and many of the views are based on subjective personal perspectives.

With regards to uncleanness related to bodily discharge Leviticus 15:1-31 and Deuteronomy 23:9-14 are the passages most often referred to. Although frequently referred to, there has been little serious discussion regarding the function of the "discharge" regulations concerned with uncleanness. Martin Noth, in his commentary on Leviticus, numbering 208 pages, spends less than a page and one half on the topic.

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46. Clements, "Leviticus," p. 37. Cf. Kellogg, Leviticus, p. 334.

47. Clements, "Leviticus," p. 41.

48. Maimonides, The Code of Cleanness, p. 203.

Half of the discussion centers around matters concerning the date and literary questions, the other half attempts to describe the different unclean situations and the particular purity rites which would again render the person clean. In his treatment of the laws nothing is said regarding the meaning of these regulations or how they fit into the larger context of cl/uncl thinking.

The editors of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, under "Issue," give only its Hebrew and Greek translation and state that it refers "to a discharge as from a suppurating sore or wound; a bodily secretion, whether venereal or not." [49] Under "Discharge," the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, states that it is the normal Pentateuchal designation for gonorrhoea and claims that:

The Levitical regulations for controlling this ancient scourge of humanity are among the earliest on record. Caused by the Neisserian gonorrhoeae (gonococcus), the disease is a highly infectious, acute inflammation of the mucous membrane of the genital tract. The discharge of Lev. 15:19ff includes menstruation. [50]

A cursory reading of Leviticus 15 leaves the reader with the impression that a number of conditions are here described [51] and that the concern is not first and foremost curing some physical ailment or controlling/preventing some infectious epidemic. Yet the concern with "discharge" has

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49. Vol.2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 771.

50. R.K. Harrison, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 845.

51. Some of the traditional unclean bodily discharges referred to are: urine, pus, feces, spittle, semen, regular and irregular menstruation.

often been interpreted in this "medical" fashion.[52] Others, of course, who regard the cl/uncl laws as "instinctive" or in some way reflective of "primitive" thinking remain consistent in their interpretation of the regulations and also regard the great concern over bodily discharge as inspired by an "irrational revulsion of ancient man." [53]

Many of the problems inherent in these interpretations have already been raised in the discussion of the leprosy laws. Those who advance some medically oriented interpretation of the regulations frequently give the impression that the priests functioned as physicians. This is unlikely, however, since nowhere does the text appear to be concerned with physical cleanness but ritual uncleanness (theologically motivated). The laws also can not be considered the products of irrational thought processes if the psycho/social interplay involved, in the case of the lawgiver, is fully recognized and appreciated.

#### E. CONCLUSION

Two major deficiencies which mark most of the traditional interpretations are: (1) Their approach to the cl/uncl regulations proceeds largely in piecemeal fashion, with little concern for treating the whole range of laws and inquiring into the possible existence of an inherent common denominator. (2) Little has been done to gain an understanding of their combined general function within the much larger reli-

52. For Micklem, hygiene and religion in this case are closely connected ("Leviticus," p. 74). Cf. also Clements, "Leviticus," pp. 34 & 43.

53. Cf. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean," p. 644; Kellogg, Leviticus, p. 306; Milgrom, "Biblical Dietary Laws," p. 296.

gious tradition.

It has been shown above that there exist a number of different ways in which past scholars have sought to understand the cl/uncl regulations in the biblical text. The laws most often in question are the ones just discussed. Even in relation to these three areas, however, no consistent scheme can account for them. The "polemic against the nations" argument may appear to account for the meat laws but not those concerned with "leprosy" or "discharge". Those focusing on some medical rationale may come closest to providing a scheme which appears to deal most adequately with the three different concerns in question. Their arguments, however, have been shown to have serious shortcomings as well. The symbolic or ethical interpretations fail in that no principle is advanced that can fairly consistently provide similar results with regards to the various laws.

It is precisely here, where the work of Douglas, Neusner and Feldman transcends the contributions of past scholarship. In their work they have sought to take seriously the theological intent of the lawgivers who use the various regulations in an effort to make a particular point which might effect certain results. What was that specific purpose for the cl/uncl regulations according to these scholars? Their work will be examined next.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THREE CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES OUTLINED

The recent work of Mary Douglas,[1] Jacob Neusner[2] and Emanuel Feldman[3] moves significantly beyond the traditional approaches and interpretations discussed in chapter two. Their inclusive approaches and wholistic perspectives prompt these scholars to look for a principle which will account meaningfully for all the cl/uncl regulations and embed them into a larger theological-anthropological thought structure. Their works, which both supplement and challenge each other, will be outlined below. How they transcend previous scholarship will also be shown.

The views of Mary Douglas will be examined first. Her work represents the earliest attempt to deal with all the cl/uncl regulations[4] in a comprehensive way. The works of Neusner and Feldman, who are influenced by her work, are then examined. Douglas' social-anthropological approach is some-

1. Douglas' book, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), focuses most directly on the cl/uncl regulations in the Bible. Other relevant material published by Douglas will be drawn into the study as her views are examined.
2. The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973).
3. Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning: Law and Ideology (New York: Yeshiva University, KTAV Publ. House, Inc., 1977).
4. All the cl/uncl laws concerned with the different animals (Lev. 11), childbirth (Lev. 12), "leprosy" (Lev. 13-14), bodily "issues" (Lev.15), sexual misdeeds (Lev. 18), miscellaneous instructions to the community (Lev. 19-20), the priests (Lev. 21-22), and the various prohibitions scattered throughout concerning contact with a corpse are tied together in her theory.

what more complex, however, and her fuller treatment of the laws will require that more attention be given to her work.

#### A. MARY DOUGLAS

Mary Douglas (MD) is interested in discovering the role that rituals and symbols play in a particular social context; especially how they relate to the beliefs, ideas and values of that society. In her book, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, she attempts to show how pollution beliefs are used as "analogies for expressing a general view of the social order."<sup>[5]</sup> As a social anthropologist she approaches the Old Testament texts from a different angle than most Old Testament scholars and thus provides some suggestive insights into the cl/uncl regulations. Before proceeding to a discussion of her treatment of the regulations, it is helpful to outline briefly her understanding of the function of rituals and symbols in society.

##### 1. Rituals and Symbols

For MD rituals are perceived as filled with meaning. They are considered as symbolic actions which play an important part in their different social settings. She reacts strongly to anti-ritualists who disparage ritual and understand it as empty, meaningless activity. She concedes that, "it is fair enough that 'ritualized' ritual should fall into contempt. But it is illogical to despise all ritual, all symbolic action as such."<sup>[6]</sup> According to MD, all people

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5. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 3.

6. Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York: Pantheon, 1970), p.3.

engage in ritual activity. The "enlightened" belief that one can separate oneself from the religious, ritualistic tendencies of past ages is illusory because it has misunderstood both ritual and ancient practices. Although perceptions of the world may have changed, humankind continues to share with those of past ages a desire to order and structure the world. This, MD believes, is accomplished by erecting a socially determined symbolic system.[7]

Whereas ancient civilizations always used religious ritual to structure symbolically their world this no longer is true for all today. Although some may no longer consider themselves "religious," MD insists that they, too, are the possessors of ritual which organizes their world.[8]

According to MD, it is impossible to separate human interaction from ritual action.

As a social animal, man is a ritual animal. If ritual is suppressed in one form it crops up in others, more strongly the more intense the social interaction. Without the letters of condolence, telegrams of congratulations ... the friendship of a separated friend is not a social reality. It has no existence without the rites of friendship. Social rituals create a reality which would be nothing without them. It is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought.[9]

By enlivening the memory and linking the present with the relevant past, rituals assist one in creating social order and reality.[10]

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7. Ibid., p.9.

8. Purity and Danger, p. 65.

9. Ibid., p. 62.

10. Ibid., p. 64.

Having shown that rituals can be considered as an integral part of every society, MD continues by suggesting that the very power of rituals lies in society itself.[11] In placing the accent on society, her study of ritual symbolism and its importance in regulating social experiences comes close to the positions promulgated by Durkheim and others. She accepts Durkheim's contentions that rituals in fact create society[12] and that in ancient societies,

... all spiritual powers are part of the social system. They express it and provide institutions for manipulating it. This means that the power in the universe is ultimately hitched to society....[13]

For MD, God, power and society are also closely equated.

Not only is the idea of society a powerful image but it also has structure consisting of both external boundaries and internal lines.[14] If a social group is very exclusive its outside boundaries and internal lines are very well defined. These boundaries and lines contain power to reward conformity and repulse attack.[15]

According to MD, the human body is best able to reflect social forms and can be seen in a society as providing symbolism which helps to maintain the social structures. Much of her work is based on the premise that an important part of the common stock of symbols which are used by society to create order and reality arise from "body symbolism." [16] She

10. Ibid., p. 64.

11. Ibid., p. 65 & 114.

12. Ibid., p. 65. Durkheim, E. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Trans. J. Swain (New York: Collier, 1961).

13. Ibid., p. 113.

14. Ibid., p. 114.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 121.

writes:

Any culture is a series of related structures which comprise social forms, values, cosmology, the whole of knowledge and through which all experience is mediated. Certain cultural themes are expressed by rites of bodily manipulation.... The rituals enact the form of social relations and in giving these relations visible expression they enable people to know their own society. The rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body.[17]

All cultures use the human body in some way to express their social experiences.[18] MD believes this is so because bodily symbols best express the notion of an organic social system.[19]

Any physical experience of the body, however, is always interpreted through social categories which represent a particular view of society. In agreement with Marcel Mauss, she believes that the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived since every kind of action carries the imprint of learning.[20] Maintaining Mauss' position that the human body is always treated as an image of society she advances the hypothesis that "bodily control is an expression of social control - abandonment of bodily controls in ritual responds to the requirements of a social experience which is being expressed." [21] She suggests that where role structure in a society is strongly defined, there formal behavior will be valued.[22] Where roles are less highly structured, the

16. Ibid., p. 121.

17. Ibid., p. 128.

18. Natural Symbols, p. vii.

19. Ibid., p. xii.

20. Ibid., p. 65. Marcel Mauss, "Les techniques du corps," Journal de la Psychologie 32(1936), NA.

21. Ibid., p. 70.

22. Ibid., p. 73

more value is placed on informal behavior.[23]

MD works on the assumption that if one can learn how a person understands the workings of that complex system called the body, its organization, its spatial arrangement, and its priorities of needs, then one can work backward and discover the total pattern of a society's self understanding, such as its perception of its own workings, its organization, its power structure, and its cosmology.

To understand MD it is therefore important to remember her view of rituals and symbols, and the complex relationship between the human body and the social body. The human body is the natural symbol system through which the social body mediates a particular perception of reality and at the same time attempts to bring harmony to personal existence. This, she argues, is particularly true of pollution rules.

## 2. Pollution Rules

That which is regarded as pollution or is placed in the category of "dirt" plays an important role in every society. MD begins by arguing that dirt is a relative thing existing "in the eyes of the beholder." She observes that our present day idea of dirt is often connected to hygiene

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23. In her study of various cultures, two key elements of social and cultural organization are used. She calls them "group" and "grid." Group refers to social pressure and indicates the degree to which an individual may be controlled by others. Grid refers to those rules which relate one person to others on an ego-centered basis. Here individualism comes to the fore. Both group and grid are further understood as having both strong and weak tendencies. Depending where a society is placed (in this quite complex) scheme, she believes much can be determined regarding its views concerning personal and social identity, cosmology, etc. Natural Symbols, pp. 65-124.

24. Furicity and Danger, p. 5

and is dominated by our growing knowledge of pathogenic organisms. We are, however, still influenced very much by conventions of order even today.[25] In the aboriginal groups she has studied there is much less knowledge of bacterial transmission of disease and yet there frequently remains a heightened awareness of dirt. This suggests to her that the various perceptions of dirt are by-products of particular societies which systematically order and classify matter.

She writes:

Dirt ... is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system.... This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity.[26]

Having argued that ideas of dirt are part of a symbolic system constructed by a society, she suggests that dirt is something shunned, not because of "fear" or "holy terror," as has often been assumed in studies focusing on ancient taboo, but it is shunned because it stands in opposition to order. Further, the regulations advanced by a society in its attempts to eliminate pollution, dirt or uncleanness, should not be considered as a negative movement, but as a positive effort to organize the environment.[27]

All pollution regulations, including the Old Testament cl/uncl regulations, organize the environment and create

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25. Ibid., p. 35. Douglas gives the example that shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining room table; food is not dirty in itself, but should not be left on clothing or sheets.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., p.2.

unity of experience. They do not operate in a vacuum but within a socially determined symbolic system. Only where there is structure of thought which has certain boundaries, margins, external and internal lines can there be pollution.[28] To understand the system of purity rules which determines pollution, is to understand much about the particular society which gives rise to that system.

Pollution rules, according to MD, are also closely connected to "body symbolism" since they are very frequently concerned with the body. She develops this in her study of the Levitical regulations which will be examined next.

### 3. Clean and Unclean in Leviticus

For MD, all past interpretations which have understood the rules as meaningless, polemical, hygienic, instinctive, moral, etc., are rejected because they have, by and large, approached the regulations in piecemeal fashion and have failed to take seriously the total structure of thought which envelops all the regulations. The starting point for her are the Levitical injunctions which repeatedly begin the cl/uncl regulations with the command to be holy. She writes:

Since each of the injunctions is prefaced by the command to be holy, so they must be explained by that command. There must be contrariness between holiness and abomination which will make over-all sense of all the particular restrictions.[29]

Holiness is something which is perceived as having boundaries, margins and internal lines by which it places a certain order on the global, social and individual level.

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28. Ibid., p. 41.

29. Ibid., p. 49.



Placing the accent on order, she argues, also has the support of source criticism which attributes Leviticus to the Priestly source whose authors' most dominant concern was with order.[30]

The idea of order in the regulations is related to holiness which in turn is directly connected to God. The significance of God's blessing is first discussed. MD notes that, "in the Old Testament we find blessing as the source of all good things, and the withdrawal of blessing as the source of all dangers." [31] By remaining in covenant with God and keeping His precepts Israel would receive God's blessing which creates order and brings prosperity to the nation.[32] The focus of all the precepts is on the idea of the holiness of God which His people are asked to recreate in their own lives. Whereas the holiness of God may be understood as the broad structure of thought, the symbolic systems subsumed by that structure are the ideas concerning separateness, wholeness, completeness, and perfection.[33] These ideas lie at the heart of Israel's understanding concerning the boundaries, margins and lines which distinguish between cl/uncl.

According to MD these lines are evident, for example, in the case of the leper who is unclean and must remain separated from all that is clean because s/he does not represent wholeness or perfection. All sacrificial animals, too, were

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30. Ibid., p. 46.

31. Ibid., p. 50.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 51. MD adds these three ideas to the traditional idea of "being set apart," as the meaning behind holiness.

to be without blemish. The priest, especially, was to be "perfect." The idea of physical perfection is also worked out with regard to body wastes which transgress the body's boundaries.

We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolize its specially vulnerable points. Matter issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, feces, or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body.[34]

For MD the idea of holiness is ultimately "given expression in the wholeness of the body seen as a perfect container." [35] Here we simply see the body reflecting the larger structure of thought.

The above observations concerning pollution relate particularly to the individual. Yet the regulations also relate to the social sphere. For example, with relation to adultery MD writes: "it is my belief that people really do think of their own social environment as consisting of other people joined or separated by lines which must be respected." [36] Crossing these internal lines which function as social barriers is treated as pollution because it severs the completeness and wholeness of the particular lines and in so doing brings disorder.

MD's perspective also accounts for the many miscellaneous pollution-related regulations found in Leviticus 19. She perceptively observes that contradiction and double-dealing (e.g., theft, lying, false witness, speaking ill of

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34. Ibid., p. 121.

35. Ibid., p. 52.

36. Ibid., p. 138.

the deaf (while smiling to their face), hating someone in your heart (while presumably speaking kindly to him)} is against holiness because they are "clearly contradictions between what seems and what is." [37] These social actions, too, do not reflect wholeness and are, therefore, proscribed.

Just as bodily completeness, wholeness and perfection reflect holiness, their opposites, hybrids and other confusions, reflect unholiness and abomination. With this theory MD explains the rationale behind some of the sexual misdeeds mentioned in Leviticus 18 and the prohibitions in Leviticus 19:19. She argues that sexual relations with beasts are proscribed because they are a perversion. MD notes that "the word 'perversion' is a significant mistranslation of the rare Hebrew word tebhel, which has as its meaning, mixing or confusion." [38] She believes this same theme is at work in the prohibitions against mixing of kinds (Lev. 19:19 and Deut. 22:9). Holiness requires that all should conform to its class and should not create confusion.

The meat laws develop this idea of holiness along the same lines. According to MD the land and livestock are drawn into the divine order by also receiving the blessing of God. Man's duty is to safeguard this blessing by preserving the created order. Those animals which failed to meet the necessary criteria defining livestock (Lev. 11:3) are classified as unclean. No other reason is given. They simply are not inside the prescribed boundaries. The borderline cases, too,

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37. Ibid., p. 54.

38. Ibid., p. 53. MD refers here to Lev. 18:23.

meeting some of the criteria but not all, are considered "incomplete," and thus are unclean.[39]

MD suggests that the mode of locomotion is important in distinguishing between cl/uncl. The rationale is based on a particular understanding of God's created order.

To grasp this scheme we need to go back to Genesis and the creation. Here a three-fold classification unfolds, divided between the earth, the waters and the firmament. Leviticus takes up this scheme and allots to each element its proper kind of animal life. In the water scaly fish swim with fins. On the earth four-legged animals hop, jump or walk. Any class of creatures which is not equipped for the right kind of locomotion in its element is contrary to holiness.[40]

That which creeps, crawls or swarms upon the earth is categorically pronounced as unclean because this form of movement is explicitly contrary to holiness (Lev. 11:41-44). Why, one might ask? The explanation MD gives is that,

... it is an indeterminate form of movement. Since the main animal categories are defined by their typical movement, "swarming" which is not a propulsion proper to any element, cuts across the basic classification.[41]

The created order, which functions as a significant determining factor when evaluating wholeness, completeness and perfection, is here also shown to operate as a symbolic system under the broader structure of thought: holiness.

Every society uses a variety of rituals and symbols to create order for itself. According to MD the cosmos itself can become turned in on humankind in that all that happens, be it storms, droughts, personal or social calamity, is

39. The camel, rock badger, hare and swine are mere examples of unclean animals which meet only part of the requirements.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

interpreted in an anthropocentric way.[42] If someone is accidentally killed one may ask, why that person? why in that way? why at that particular time? why...? These occasions prompt individuals to find some type of response which brings order. Yet most people do not have the time to construct a comprehensive metaphysics, and therefore a world view is developed in piecemeal fashion in response to such urgent concerns.[43] Together with other piecemeal explanations in a particular social setting a larger community metaphysics evolves which attempts to bring order and sense to a situation where these might be lacking.[44]

Holiness, for Israel, is the basic structure of thought. It is made up of symbolic systems which filter through all the cl/uncl regulations. The many different laws are in this way understood as symbolically meaningful regulations which ultimately point to God, His holiness, and His created order. Holiness, and all its ramifications are that which determine cl/uncl on all levels, individual, social and cosmic. But to what end did Israel use this conception of holiness?

As previously stated, according to MD, "all spiritual powers are part of the social system ... the power of the universe is ultimately hitched to society." [45] It is at this point where her indebtedness to her discipline becomes very apparent. In her first treatment of the Israelite cl/uncl laws she regarded them as socially determined regula-

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42. Ibid., p. 85.

43. Ibid., p. 90.

44. Ibid., p. 91.

45. This presupposition of MD was advanced on p. 34.

tions which play a part in the total symbolic structure of thought and function to organize the universe, creating unity of experience.[46] With the pollution laws affecting all levels of life, "the whole universe is harnessed to men's attempts to force one another into good citizenship." [47] In a later book MD concedes that she had overlooked the importance of the regulations in setting Israel apart from other people.[48] Yet this did not change her earlier conclusions. At an even later occasion she writes:

It suits my thesis well that small groups of learned exiles in Babylonia, conscious of their unique historical mission, and conscious of the need to separate theirs from the culture of their conquerors, should have elaborated detailed rules of purity. Nowhere else in the world has such logic-chopping consistency been excelled.[49]

For MD the regulations functioned first and foremost to create order for this exclusive society. From her perspective, pollution rules do not generally correspond closely to moral rules.[50] Although she mentions four different ways in which the rules may uphold the moral code[51], she does not regard the biblical writers as primarily concerned with ethics or morals. For example, with regard to the rules focusing on sexual misdeeds she writes:

Incest and adultery (Lev. 18:6-20) are against holiness, in the simple sense of right order. Morality does not conflict with holiness, but holiness is more a matter of separating that which

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46. Ibid., p. 2.

47. Ibid., p. 3.

48. Natural Symbols, p. 38.

49. Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 307.

50. Purity and Danger, p. 129.

51. Ibid., p. 133.

should be separated than of protecting the rights of husband and brothers.[52]

Thus, for MD, Israel's conception of holiness functions first to create some semblance of individual, social and cosmic order for an exclusive group whose cultural boundaries are being threatened by the more dominant societies of that time.

Whereas MD has sought to understand the cl/uncl regulations through the scheme of holiness which was to create social order, Jacob Neusner uses the idea of the temple in interpreting the laws. His views will be examined next.

#### B. JACOB NEUSNER

Jacob Neusner (JN) has worked through the different biblical and talmudic literature concerned with cl/uncl legislation more thoroughly than perhaps any other contemporary scholar. In The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism, JN's objective is to show how the cl/uncl regulations have evolved through successive forms of interpretation in ancient Judaism.[53] After he has laid out this range of ideas historically associated with purity, and has shown both continuities and development, he hopes to have shown that there was no single system used to interpret the rules. He does, however, advance a system arising out of P, but for him it merely represents one approach.

For JN the purity laws in ancient Judaism are a given, and his concern is not to inquire about their origin but

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52. Ibid., p. 53.

53. Ibid., p. 1f.

rather the rationale behind their particular use by the different biblical writers. With regards to their origin he simply suggests that "first comes the practice of not stepping on the cracks in the cement. Then comes the story about bad luck." [54] So also he interprets the cl/uncl rules. According to JN it is no longer possible to determine the psychic history which gave rise to this impurity-phobia. The more significant question is why they were used by the various writers.

Although the focus of this study is on JN's particular view of P's use of the regulations, it should be noted that his book also deals with the many other biblical writers who use the cl/uncl concepts. After advancing the various biblical uses of cl/uncl thinking, as outlined by JN, attention will be restricted to his treatment of the laws in P.

According to JN, four different meanings are assigned to cl/uncl in the non-priestly writings: one, impurity is seen as a sign of rejection of or by God (Isa. 35:8; Jer. 33:8; Ezek. 20:2); two, idolatry is considered a source of uncleanness (Gen. 35:2; Ezek. 20:30; 36:25); three, impurity is a sign of moral evil (Gen. 34:5-13; Ezek. 24:11); and four, the land may become unclean because of evil doings (frequently having to do with idolatry - Ezek. 36:18). [55] This metaphorical use of uncleanness as sin, JN argues, is not, however, characteristic of P. "While the priestly code approaches the notion of uncleanness as a metaphor for sin, it holds back

54. The Idea of Purity, p. 7.

55. Ibid., pp. 13-15.



from finally coming to that conclusion." [56]

In his treatment of *cl/uncl*, JN shows statistically that the two terms, *tāhōr* and *tāmē*, (1) most frequently surface in P and (2) occur chiefly in reference to the cult: restricting entry into the temple. [57] The conclusion he reaches is that:

Purity in Israelite times is presented by the priestly code as primarily a cultic concern.... All sources of impurity according to that code produced a single practical result: one must not enter the Temple. All rites or purification aimed at one goal: to permit participation in the cult. [58]

Uncleanness restricted one from entering the temple while being clean, or cleansed, permitted entry. The focal point for P, therefore, is the temple.

According to JN, the fact that these laws appear to be concerned primarily with ritual and temple purity, and that it is the priests who are the laws's most ardent promulgators, means that "we are justified in calling it an ideology - a system of ideas;" [59] "priestly propaganda." [60] How does this "system of ideas" work and how do the different laws fit into this scheme? It is at this point where JN attempts to use the approach of MD.

For MD, the pollution rules played an important part in

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 26. The Hebrew term for "unclean" occurs 64.3% in Leviticus and Numbers; 15.5% in Ezekiel; and 20% elsewhere. The occurrence for clean is 43.7% in Leviticus and Numbers; 14.2% in Ezekiel and Chronicles; 15.6% in Exodus; and 25.9% elsewhere. JN does not provide the precise citations, however, only the books wherein they are found.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

the lines of structure which classified and ordered Israel's corporate experiences. P's conception of holiness - perfection, wholeness and completeness - could be considered as the basic structure of thought which was at the core of this large symbolic system. This system is in part adopted by JN. He makes a significant change, however, and places the temple at the center. Having shown P's close connection and concern with the cult, JN contends that the cl/uncl laws focus on the temple itself and its larger meaning. He writes:

Extant ideas, centered on the Temple, about purity and impurity in microcosm reveal a conception far greater than themselves. They show how the day-to-day issues of community and common life were understood in terms of the cult.[61]

For P, JN argues, the temple became "the one point in Israel's life upon which the the lines of structure - both cosmic and social - converge." [62]

Moving away from what MD considered as the key to uncovering P's larger system of thought, JN boldly asserts that "the viewpoint of the priestly code has been imposed upon all the laws; the concern of all the laws is, primarily, cultic acceptability, secondarily, holiness." [63] It is from this perspective that he interprets the cl/uncl laws. With the primary concern being cultic acceptability it comes as little surprise that he makes no attempt to work out a detailed rationale for the cl/uncl laws in Leviticus 11-19.

In his brief treatment of the cl/uncl animals, JN simply states that "we are not told why these particular animals are

61. Ibid., p. 28.

62. Ibid., p. 29.

63. Ibid., p. 20.

unclean.... All living creatures are simply divided into clean and unclean, without explanation." [64] Regarding the uncleanness of a woman after childbirth, he writes that "we are not told the nature of her 'sin'," [65] but merely, that she must purify herself and that the priest must make atonement for her. JN suggests that there is also no rationale given for 'leprosy' in organic or inorganic material. Although no sin is specified, the priest was simply to make atonement for the diseased person or house. In discussing the uncleanness of bodily discharge, JN points to Leviticus 15:31, which is a part of the biblical text outlining this particular law: "You shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by **defiling my tabernacle** that is in their midst." He then asserts, "here in a single sentence is the complete priestly ideology of purity. All matters of purity attain importance because of the cult." [66]

Uncleanness of sexual misdeeds is treated somewhat differently. Here we find the striking omission of the temple or cult. Leviticus 18:24-28 and 20:22 make a clear connection between uncleanness through sexual misdeeds and uncleanness of the land. Yet this creates few problems for JN. He simply connects the cult with the land: "so the land, like the cult, must be kept clean.... The cult and the land are now joined to the people: all three must be kept free of

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64. Ibid., p. 18

65. Ibid., p. 19

66. Ibid., p. 20

impurity." [67] In this particular law, JN suggests, one can begin to see a slight development away from a sole concern with the temple.

The laws concerned with the uncleanness of the corpse are interpreted much like the earlier ones. They are "not explained, but are taken for granted." [68] Although most interpreters in the past have regarded these laws as directed to all Israelites, JN believes that they are more specifically concerned with the priesthood and all the holy things of the cult. This conclusion well highlights to what degree JN's notion of the temple and the cult determine his understanding of cl/uncl regulations.

According to JN "the priestly laws and narratives ... remain strikingly reticent about what lies behind the specific rules of uncleanness." [69] Almost no clues are provided regarding what lies behind the various purity regulations. He offers a few of the traditional explanations advanced in chapter two of this study, but concedes that all fail to account adequately for all the laws. Ultimately, he concludes, one can argue only that "behind all of them the primary ideological motif is cultic purity." [70]

For JN the temple and the cult play a very significant role. The priests especially viewed all the day-to-day issues of the community through "temple-cult spectacles." Although others were to use the cl/uncl symbols in different

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67. Ibid., p. 21.

68. Ibid., p. 22.

69. Ibid., p. 24.

70. Ibid.

ways and for various reasons, JN believes that P uses them almost exclusively in connection with temple purity.

In a later book this view is slightly altered. In it JN moves closer to the position of MD by placing less emphasis on the temple as the primary center in P's structure of thought. The temple now becomes more integrated with other important themes:

When we enter the system of purity, we come to the pivot of the world: Temple, the holiest place of the holy Land of the holy people, Israel.... Life outside is lived in accord with the rules observed at the center. Dangers and threats to the center bode ill also for the life at the periphery.[71]

The temple, altar and holy utensils are, in JN's later work more closely aligned with the home, table and kitchen utensils. Here he incorporates into his perspective one of the critical comments made by MD in her "Critique and Commentary," placed at the end of his earlier book.[72] In this later study he concedes that all the cl/uncl rules are tied together in a single system and converge at no single point in the various laws: "so the Temple is not the only locus of cleanness or sanctification." [73]

This later shift in position significantly undermines his previous contribution and the conclusions at which he had arrived. His attempt to construct a particular scheme through which all the various laws are examined is commendable, however. Emanuel Feldman is another scholar who has

71. Method and Meaning in Ancient Judaism (Missoula: Scholars, 1979), p. 126.

72. "Critique and Commentary," in The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), pp. 137-142. Esp. p. 140.

73. Method and Meaning, p. 127.

attempted to use this type of approach. His perspective will be examined next.

### C. EMANUEL FELDMAN

Emanuel Feldman (EF) is well aware of the work of MD. Whereas he summarizes her work by stating that, "she explains everything on the basis of 'holiness'," [74] one can summarize his work by stating that he explains everything on the basis of 'death.' For EF, the concept of death is central in his investigation of defilement in the Old Testament and the Halakah. Death is considered the complete opposite to God and anything within its sphere is considered estranged from the divine and is, therefore, unclean in the Israelite economy. This thesis, presented in condensed form here, will be developed below.

In his study of the cl/uncl regulations, he, like MD, also attempts to use a particular scheme which will make sense of the various laws and tie them together in some orderly fashion. In his book he argues that "her own proposals, while unique, are somewhat inadequate and occasionally even erroneous.... Prof. Douglas's scheme does not account for the ritual difference inherent in living and dead things." [75] He believes that the concept of death, understood correctly, can assist one in understanding the various cl/uncl laws.

In his first chapter he studies the concept of death in ancient societies. He attacks Frazer and older anthropolo-

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74. Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement, p. 49.

75. Ibid., p. 50.

gists who have promulgated the view that there exists some type of uniform reaction to death: one of fear and horror.[76] He points to several prominent Old Testament scholars who continue to see many of the rules as inspired by fear. He rejects this view and regards it as totally unfounded.

Turning to the work of Radcliff-Brown, Sylvia Anthony and others,[77] he attempts to show that fear of death is not an instinctive behavior but one that is learned. In an effort to show the role which culture plays in shaping one's view of death he briefly outlines the different ancient Near Eastern perspectives on death. After examining how death was viewed in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan, he concludes that,

... the response of the ancient world to death manifests itself in several forms: in an attempt to ignore it, in a physical effort to overcome it, and in a matter-of-fact acceptance of its finality.[78]

Depending upon the society in which one lives, one's indigenous view of death will surely shape one's Weltanschauung. With this introduction EF then moves on to examine Israel's understanding of death and to explain its theological significance, especially as it relates to Israel's view of

cl/uncl.

In his study of the biblical text, he suggests that one can find in the various passages dealing with the topic of

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76. Ibid., p. 3.

77. Ibid., p. 7. Radcliff-Brown, who has studied the burial customs of the Andaman tribal people, has concluded that fear did not come naturally to the people but that it was learned. Anthony, having studied children's reaction to death, also concludes that fear of death is not instinctive but learned.

78. Ibid., p. 11.

death no element of fear or horror in Israel's reaction to death. This is true also of the corpse defilement regulations which he regards as pre-occupied with matters of death.[79] Even though contact with that which was dead brought about the longest period of defilement, there is no evidence of fear which accompanies this period.

According to EF, Israel's attitude about death differed remarkably in a positive sense from that of its neighbors.[80] Death is a given and the life God gives is known to be limited. Although the ideal is to die "old and full of years," the Israelite knew that death could not be overcome. Contrary to Israel's neighbors it also granted no "mythological power to death ... since there is only one God. Therefore, there are no mythopoeic fantasies, rituals, or efforts to maintain a link with the dead." [81]

Basic to Israel's world view is the fact that God is the sovereign and only Lord of the universe. EF rejects the views of those scholars who argue that God's power did not extend into Sheol.[82] Psalm 139:8, 33:7, 55:15, 95:4; Job 11:7-8, 12:22, 26:6; Proverbs 15:11; Hosea 13:14; Isaiah 7:11; and Deuteronomy 32:22 are all used to make the point that God was considered to be ruler over all, including the underworld. In an effort to explain those passages which pro-

79. Ibid., p. 13.

80. Ibid., p. 15 .

81. Ibid., p. 16.

82. Passages which are frequently used to argue this position are Ps. 6:6; Ps. 88:11-13; and Isa. 38.9ff. Even a scholar like Yehezkel Kaufmann, with his strong monotheistic position states that, "the realm of the dead in Israelite religion is godless," in The Religion of Israel, Trans. Moshe Greenberg (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 314.



claim that the dead can not praise God he advances the distinction between God's presence and His power. God has power over death and Sheol but He is "unable to be present in death ... because those without life can have no relationship with Him." [83]

For Israel, God is considered the deity of life whose primary characteristic is his creating, life-giving nature. In a word study focusing on the different names of God EF repeatedly highlights the connection made by the biblical writers between God and life. He concludes that:

the livingness of God is His fundamental and primary characteristic. Death, as the opposite of life, is the ultimate opposite of God. God is the Lord of life, and while He rules death and life, He consciously withdraws from death and separates Himself from it. [84]

With this understanding of death as that which is separated from God who, "wishes to work within the context of life," [85] EF asserts: "it is likely, therefore, that the biblical/rabbinic laws of tum'ah represent not taboos, but a manifestation of the absence of life." [86]

Having discussed the biblical view of death and God, EF turns to the cl/uncl regulations and attempts to show how this view can explain the various laws. He begins with the corpse laws which are easily explained from this perspective. But what about those regulations concerned with issues from the body, leprosy, etc.? EF explains:

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83. Ibid., p. 18.  
84. Ibid., p. 29.  
85. Ibid., p. 18.  
86. Ibid., p. 29.

It is significant that in these instances, too, adumbrations of death - absence of life - are present. Whenever any constituent element of human life is lost, whether it be the loss of an actual limb or the loss of vital physical fluids....[87]

Seminal emissions or menstruation, both considered as "vital fluids," thus defile when leaving the body.

Even a certain measure of spilled human blood can defile, because "blood is nefesh," that is, life; and absence of life defiles. In addition ... seminal emissions may represent the seed of life which, now that they have flowed from the body, are no longer life producing.[88]

With regards to the uncleanness of a woman after childbirth he suggests that,

... here, too, we find an element of absence of life: once she gives birth, the mother is no longer producing, creating and nurturing life.... The new infant now begins a life of its own - and is not tamé - but the mother's role of life-producing, life-nurturing, and life-sustaining now literally comes to an end, and perhaps this is why she now becomes tamé. [89]

Not only does the regular and irregular menstruation bring about uncleanness because of the loss of blood (life), but also the birth of a child is considered as "loss" on behalf of the womb.

The leper, too, is suffering a kind of death. "The proof passage showing the leper's similarity to death is Numbers 12:12, which indicates that leprosy eats live flesh." [90] The scripture passage reads, "let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed...." The fact that the purification rite for a leper extended over seven

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87. Ibid., p. 35.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., p. 37.

90. Ibid.

days (identical requirement for one who has touched a dead body), he believes, also supports his thesis.

In his treatment of the meat laws his thesis, that uncleanness is essentially an absence of life and God, is used metaphorically for estrangement and desacralization. He writes:

The term of tamé here is not the defiling tamé of the dead who defile upon contact. He who eats forbidden food does not become defiled; no post-defilement purification is necessary if such food is eaten.... The term tamé used in connection with forbidden foods, then, applies to these foods the pristine, metaphorical meaning of tamé as "something desacralized." The term tamé is an intensely pejorative one in connection with foods, underscoring their undesirability. Tamé used in this sense means that one shall not eat of these foods because they are desacralized, undivine, sacrally unfit.[91]

Consciously trying to avoid being misunderstood here as being influenced by the older school of thought, he emphasizes that:

There is nothing intrinsically abominable or defiling about the pig or any other creature. But, says God in effect, I have forbidden it to you, ... they are for you, desacralized and strange - echoing the desacralization and estrangement of the highest tum'ah of the dead.[92]

As far as developing a rationale for the meat laws, he follows Micklem[93] who believes that the regulations can not be rationalized since their origins go back beyond history. EF is content to suggest that they are "best understood when we apply to it [the meat laws] the pristine meaning of tamé as estrangement and unsacred." [94]

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91. Ibid., p. 51.

92. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

93. Micklem's view is discussed on pp. 15-16.

94. Ibid.

Whereas other scholars have in the past emphasized the kōdeš (holiness) of God, EF's accent lies on the tum'ah; that which highlights all that is opposite to God and estranged from Him. The emphasis on the holiness of God is present in the book but it plays a secondary role, standing in contrast to tum'ah. For EF, life is the key characteristic of God, while death, as the ultimate in lifelessness, represents separation from the God of life. All in the sphere of death is desacralized and estranged from God.[95] Since tum'ah symbolized estrangement from the divine it was well suited to be used in connection with the meat laws in making a theological point.

This perspective which EF offers in his book is a fairly unique one.[96] Within his scheme, the concept of death (and all which it suggests to the Israelite) functions as the "spectacles" through which the cl/uncl regulations are understood.

Having outlined the approaches and perspectives of Douglas, Neusner and Feldman, it is important to highlight briefly how their work moves beyond that of traditional scholarship.

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95. Ibid., p. 141.

96. One finds a hint of this view in A. Dillmann, Exodus und Leviticus (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1897), p. 521. Also, E. König in, "Defilement and Purification; Ceremonial" [The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 3, Ed. Samuel M. Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnells, 1909). p. 388] writes: "The principal idea in the Old Testament conception of uncleanness was the relation to death apparent in the given phenomena." But he never does work through the laws as does Feldman.

#### D. TRANSCENDING PAST SCHOLARSHIP

In the final section of this chapter the work of the three scholars just reviewed will be summarized. How they transcend past work will become apparent. However, no comprehensive evaluation of their work will follow at this point. A study of P's theological perspective and its specific use of cl/uncl thinking will first need to be undertaken before a meaningful critique of their approaches and conclusions can be made. In following this procedure this study reflects an indebtedness to the work of these three scholars. Each scholar has shown that the biblical writer's broader intent regarding the cl/uncl laws must be taken seriously even though one may not be able to answer questions concerned with the origin of the regulations which P takes up and uses.

At the outset it is important to be reminded of the two major deficiencies mentioned in chapter two which can be found in most traditional works.[97] Although the work of all three scholars discussed in this chapter does attempt to overcome these shortcomings, MD's approach and conclusions most adequately fulfils the requirements which were found wanting in traditional scholarship.

The work of MD represents the most thorough-going study of the Old Testament cl/uncl regulations by a social anthropologist today. Whereas the social-science theory of J.G. Frazer and Robertson Smith perhaps most influenced the Old Testament scholars examining cl/uncl up to the mid-twentieth century, MD presently ranks as the most significant. Of the  
96. See pp. 29-30.

very recent critical commentaries on Leviticus which deal at any length with the cl/uncl legislation (there are few in number), most make reference to her work and frequently use it. Her influence on these scholars will be shown in chapter five and six.

Her socio-anthropological perspective, although not unique in her field, has provided some creative new possibilities for the Old Testament student attempting to understand the cl/uncl material scattered throughout the different priestly writings. She approaches the regulations from a somewhat different vantage point. Her concern is to find their particular place in the larger social structure. How do they assist society in its important task of creating and maintaining order, on the individual, social and universal level?

For MD the cl/uncl laws represent merely a part, albeit a significant part, of a much larger symbolic system constructed by a particular society. This society's lawgivers are seen as formulating the laws in an effort to inculcate those concerns valued by the society. From this perspective she looks for a prominent concern in P which will account for the many different cl/uncl regulations. She refuses to deal with the laws in a piecemeal fashion but regards them as laws which can be integrated using a larger structure of thought.

Although she may have constructed a very complex approach which even relates the laws to body symbolism she, more than any one else, provides a scheme whereby all the regulations can be accounted for in a fairly convincing

manner. Some of her socio-anthropological presuppositions may not be compatible with those of the theologian but she does, nevertheless, provide a fresh approach which can be adapted to the concerns of the theologian.[98] Above all, her attempt to advance an overarching theme which was used by P and runs throughout all the cl/uncl laws moves her well beyond the traditional approaches.

This attempt to focus on the lawgivers' perspective and to account for the various laws within that perspective is also something which JN has sought to do in his study of the regulations. The logic which he follows is easily comprehended. Since the cl/uncl concepts most frequently surface in P and are most fully developed there, questions concerned with their meaning must be related directly to P and its concerns, namely the temple. Although he, like MD, considers the laws as a "system of ideas," JN never attempts to show how the various laws actually function within that system. His use of "system" should not be confused with that of MD's. He refers simply to P's primary concern (the temple); she refers to all the various symbols which are generated by a society and find themselves as part of a system of thought which serves to promulgate a particular Weltanschauung.

In his treatment of the cl/uncl regulations JN is concerned with P's intentions, not with providing a rationale for the different laws. Thus it is quite natural that he would describe them as "priestly propaganda" concerned solely

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98. Further treatment of this question follows in chapter six.

with ritual and cultic purity. After all, the regulations arose from an exclusive group which was primarily concerned with the temple and all that it encompassed. He could not consider the laws a product of a society which used them for its own ends.

Although JN was unsuccessful in constructing a scheme which made sense of the various laws, he did, nonetheless, draw them together under the rubric of P's temple concerns. Although they may well have had diverse origins, for P they all functioned in one way: to prohibit all who were unclean from entering the temple and in this way to maintain its purity. This was, after all, the explicit task of the priesthood.

As noted above, there is a major shift in JN's position at a later date, but P and its concerns with purity remain the focal point. Although he concedes that the temple is not the only concern, the laws are still approached through the perspective of P and its concern for purity.

In EF's treatment of the laws the biblical writer's point of view is also taken seriously. Much of EF's work revolves around questions which focus on the relationship between God's fundamental nature and essence, and the cl/uncl regulations. Having shown that the biblical writers regarded God as the ultimate expression of life, with death representing the opposite - total estrangement from God, he moves to explain how the cl/uncl laws relate to this scheme. With the exception of the miscellaneous regulations in Leviticus 19 and 20, he attempts to explain most of the laws.



Among the three scholars discussed in this chapter, EF's study represents the most theological approach taken. He has focused on the theological implications of the laws and relates them directly to Israel's view of God. From this perspective the cl/uncl laws play an important role in Israel's religion: raising the people's consciousness about their God.

Douglas, Neusner and Feldman have each highlighted different overarching themes found in the pertinent biblical texts, and use them in their interpretation of the cl/uncl laws. Although the different themes do not present an equally satisfying interpretation for the various regulations each position, nevertheless, makes an important contribution to the cl/uncl discussion. This study will return to discuss these contributions and evaluate them in chapter six.

The most significant gain achieved by all three scholars discussed is that any study of cl/uncl in the Old Testament must now begin with an adequate understanding of the biblical writer's comprehensive perspective. This study will, therefore, first examine the general theological concerns of P and then move on to investigate how P has used the cl/uncl regulations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PRIESTLY WRITER(S)

P is a very distinct stratum in the Tetrateuch. There is general agreement among Old Testament scholars regarding those characteristics which set it apart from the other strands. These will first be mentioned. No consensus presently exists, however, regarding P's authorship, its date of composition, and its relationship to the other literary sources. Although it is not the task of this thesis to examine these issues at great length it is, nevertheless, important to arrive at some conclusions regarding them before one can legitimately proceed to discuss P's theological perspective.

Having placed P within some historical framework this study will examine P's view of history. The significance of its periodization of divine revelation, which reaches its highpoint in the Sinai experience, will be discussed here. A very definite picture of God arises out of P's view of God's working in history. This view is important for this study and will be outlined briefly.

The role of the cult and the priesthood will then be examined in this chapter. P's understanding of God and history directly affects its perception of the function of the cult and the priest. Here one deals with the realm of the sacred, but it has a direct relation to the profane. The nature of this relationship will be introduced in the present chapter and developed in chapter five.

## A. LITERARY-CRITICAL QUESTIONS CONSIDERED

### 1. Characteristics of P

There is a general consensus regarding the distinctive characteristics which set P apart from the other sources.

Georg Fohrer has stated the matter succinctly:

It [P] exhibits a formal style ... a characteristic use of language, a love for genealogies and numbers, an interest in cultic and priestly matters, an emphasis upon cultic purity and holiness, an avoidance of anthropomorphisms.[1]

Along with its formulaic and programmatic character[2] P can be easily distinguished from the other literary sources. There is considerable agreement regarding its presence in the Tetrateuch.

### 2. Authorship and Date

Three basic positions exist regarding the authorship and date of P. Scholars have pointed to the Mosaic period, the pre-exilic period and the exilic/post-exilic period for its composition. The last two positions will be discussed in greater detail since they represent the views of most critical scholars. Each will be examined in turn and its basic arguments advanced. Having discussed these positions, this study aligns itself with those scholars who hold to a late date for P's final redaction.

#### a) The Mosaic Period

The traditional view has always regarded all the laws

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1. Introduction to the Old Testament, Trans. David Green (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), p. 179.
  2. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," CBQ 38(1976), p. 278. Cf. also Walter Breuggemann and Hans W. Wolf, The Vitality of the Old Testament Traditions, second ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), pp. 101-103.

given to Moses at Sinai as direct revelation from God to Moses. It was generally accepted that the whole Pentateuch was compiled by Moses who may have been assisted by priestly scribes. Thomas Hobbes (in 1651), Baruch Spinoza (in 1670), Richard Simon (in 1678), and Jean Astruc (in 1753), are usually considered among the first to question the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.[3] Up to that time this authorship appears not to have been in doubt.

Those who continue to hold to Mosaic authorship do so for several reasons. First, the Pentateuchal texts repeatedly state that God spoke to Moses.[4] Moses, the principal figure in the Pentateuch, is given the status of premier lawgiver. This, too, is affirmed in the post-Exilic literature. Second, there is nothing which might suggest that one person could not have written down a large number of laws.[5] The presence of third person references to Moses in the texts may simply indicate that some sections were altered during transmission. Further, R.K. Harrison suggests it is quite possible that,

... many of the small or isolated sections in the Hebrew text were committed initially to the priests for safekeeping, and only at a later period were the manuscript pieces assembled into some sort of mosaic and joined together into a roll.[6]

The somewhat disjointed nature of the text need not discount

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3. S.J. De Vries, "Biblical Criticism," *IDB*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 414.

4. W.S. LaSor, et al. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 50.

5. W.H. Gispen, *Leviticus* (Kampen: Kok, 1950), p. 11.

6. *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 538.

the possibility of Mosaic authorship. Third, many of the laws do not reflect the later periods when the tabernacle and the ark were no longer a cultic reality. A. Noordtzij writes:

They wrote for their own time and wished to see their laws obeyed by their contemporaries, so how could they have presented regulations that during their day would have been altogether impossible to execute?[7]

According to the traditional position the whole Pentateuch can be considered a homogeneous composition which, some concede, may have been slightly altered in the post-Mosaic period to suit the changing circumstances of Israel.[8]

We turn now to consider those scholars who employ historical-critical methodology. They have generally considered this earlier position untenable.

#### b) The Pre-Exilic Period

The ranks of those who argue for a pre-exilic date for P have been steadily growing. This position owes much to the initial work of Y. Kaufmann who has vigorously challenged the conclusions of J. Wellhausen. Although this position continues to work with the documentary theory, Wellhausen's chronological conclusions regarding the Pentateuchal sources are rejected. For many P is considered to be prior to D, while others regard them as concurrent works. Arguments advanced for a pre-exilic date seek support from linguistic, cultic, social and historical studies.

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7. Leviticus, Trans. Raymond Togtman, Bible Student's Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), p. 11.

8. Harrison, Introduction, pp. 539-541. Noordtzij, Leviticus, pp. 9-12.

Jacob Milgrom has examined a variety of terms found in P which, he suggests, all point to a pre-exilic date. Having analyzed three terms found in the first chapter of the book of Numbers, which describe organizational units in Israel, he concludes that they,

... support the view that the Priestly account of the wilderness sojourn has accurately preserved a host of institutions that accurately reflect the social and political realities of Israel's pre-monarchic age.[9]

In a study of the term  $\text{הַתְּבָרָה}$  in Chronicles and in P, he arrives at a similar conclusion:

The  $\text{הַתְּבָרָה}$  passages in P are old, pre-exilic materials which were allowed to experience reinterpretation but no inner editorial change. Thus the case of the Levitic  $\text{הַתְּבָרָה}$  and its reflexes in the Bible can be added to the fast-growing portfolio on behalf of the antiquity of the materials comprising the Priestly source.[10]

A. Hurvitz has also selected technical idioms and terms in P and compared them with their use in exilic and post-exilic material. His results are the same as those of Milgrom. In one of his studies seven of nine terms show no post-exilic influence[11]. In another study thirty seven linguistic contrasts between Ezekiel and P are accounted for which, he suggests, prove P to be the older source.[12] The

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9. "Priestly Terminology and the Political and Social Structure of Pre-Monarchic Israel," JQR 69(1978), p. 81.

10. "The Term 'Aboda," Studies in Levitical Terminology (Berkeley: University of California, 1970), p. 87.

11. A. Hurvitz, "The Evidence of Language in the Dating of the Priestly Code. A Linguistic Study in Technical Idioms and Terminology," RB 81(1974), 24-56.

12. A. Hurvitz, A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel (Paris: Gabalda, 1981).

linguistic studies of both Robert Polzin[13] and Allan Guenther[14] have also been used to support a pre-exilic date for P.[15] Both suggest that P stands closer to earlier Biblical Hebrew than to late.[16]

The prominent presence of the tabernacle in P has also increasingly been used to argue for a pre-exilic date.[17] Richard E. Friedman has recently used this argument.[18] For Friedman, P's portrayal of the tabernacle is of prime importance. He writes:

According to the Priestly accounts, from the day of the Tabernacle dedication all revelation occurs there, all sacrifice, all burning of incense, all priestly consumption of offering (in its court); it houses the covenant tablets, the ark, the cherubim; it is constructed of precious wood, metals and fabrics according to divine instructions; only the priests may enter it; only the high priests may enter its Holy of Holies.[19]

He argues that very little of this understanding of the

13. Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose (Missoula: Scholars, 1976).

14. "A Diachronic Study of Biblical Hebrew Prose Syntax" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1977).

15. See J. Milgrom, Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology (Lieden: E.J. Brill, 1983), p. x; and Richard E. Friedman, The Exilic and Biblical Narratives: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works (Chico: Scholars, 1981), p. 76.

16. It should be noted that the goal of Guenther's dissertation is not to date P. Those using his work to argue for a post-exilic date for P (footnote 15 above) quote Guenther's conclusion that, "the corpora P<sub>g</sub> and P<sub>s</sub> appear to stand between early and late BH but much nearer to the earlier or 'classical'" (A Diachronic Study, p. 219). Yet little is said of the implications of his further conclusion that, "the P writings ... are somewhat anomalous..." (p. 225).

17. G. Henton Davies, "Tabernacle," IDB, Vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 506.

18. The Exilic, pp. 44ff. Friedman regards the majority of P as a pre-exilic work composed in response to D in the pre-exilic period. A second stage in P sees some additions made in the exilic period.

19. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

tabernacle has any reflex in the Second Temple, or for that matter in Ezekiel's plan for the Second Temple. It does, however, fit the dimensions of the First Temple's inner sanctuary.[20]

Further, since the tabernacle and ark represent Yahweh's presence in P theology,[21] it is unlikely that P wrote after the fall of Jerusalem. To suggest this, argues Friedman, would be:

to claim that the priestly writers developed the theme of the Tabernacle as Israel's eternal channel to God shortly after the destruction of that channel. It is to picture an exiled Judean priest, in the years following the destruction of the centuries-old central national shrine, institutionalizing a programmatic doctrine that sacrifice must take place nowhere but at that shrine.[22]

Friedman believes this to be an unacceptable alternative. The tabernacle and ark were no longer present after the fall of Judah, and it is impossible to regard the P material as programmatic for, or reflective of, a Second Temple.[23]

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20. Ibid., pp. 48-53. Pointing to 1 Kings 8:4 and 2 Chronicles 5:5 he argues that both biblical histories explicitly state that the Tent of Assembly was brought up to the Temple of Solomon on the day it was dedicated along with the ark (p.48). This tent was set beneath the wings of the cherubim in the holy of holies, along with the ark and temple vessels (p. 53.) Thus, P's frequent use of the tabernacle well reflects a pre-exilic date.

21. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

22. Ibid., p. 61. Of the Ezekiel prophecy that "my Tabernacle will be over you" (Ezek. 37:27) he interprets it as simply referring to the spreading of a heavenly tabernacle over the entire people of Israel and has nothing to do with rebuilding the temple or cultic centralization.

23. Ibid. Recently Victor Hurowitz, in "The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle," [JAOBS 105(1985), 21-30.] has also challenged those who regard the tabernacle as a projection of the temple into the Mosaic period on historical grounds. He has examined the tabernacle building account in light of other ancient Near Eastern building stories. In its present state it has been shown to conform to similar stories



Those holding to a pre-exilic date have also argued against the standard critical view which sees a distinction between priests and Levites in P but not D (suggesting a later date for P).[24] Raymond Abba, although recognizing that a distinction between the two groups was not as clear-cut in D as in P, argues that this difference can be accounted for on cultic grounds rather than separating D and P historically.[25] Further, sociocultic arguments concerned with P's levitical cities[26] and the tithe provisions for

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found in the inscriptions of Lugalannemundu, Ur-Nammu, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar (p.26). Cf. also M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (Oxford: Oxford University, 1972), pp. 244-254. Since Wellhausen's time the building account of the tabernacle has frequently been considered as the product of a long literary process consisting of various literary additions. This theory is seriously questioned and Hurowitz believes that this new information can also serve to push back the date of P.

24. Cf. J.A. Emerton, "Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy," VI 12(1962), 129-138. Here it is argued that in D priests and Levites are synonymous (Deut. 33:8-10), while at a later date (in Ezek. and P) Levites are not given the full rights of a priest.

25. In "Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy," [VI 27(1977), 257-267.] Abba uses Deut. 9:7-10;11 to show that D: "preserves a tradition of both the founding of a hereditary Aaronic priesthood and the setting apart of the tribe of Levi for sanctuary duties. In this D agrees with P (cf. Num. 20:25-28; 8:14) but shows no dependence whatever on P" (p. 259). Abba also advances two arguments against those who use Deut. 10:8 to suggest that in D Levites could carry the ark while not in P. Following von Rad [Studies in Deuteronomy (London: S C M, 1953), p. 40.] he states that in D the ark is no longer considered the throne of the invisible God but serves merely to house the tables of the law. Further, on all occasions of high ceremony (bringing the ark into Solomon's Temple) the priests carried the ark, while at unceremonial occasions (David's sudden flight from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's revolt), the Levites were permitted to carry the ark. Another explanation (which supports Abba's basic argument) may be found in Num. 4:1-15. Here priests are given the task to cover the ark which the Levites may then carry.

26. Ziony Zevit, "Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," ZAW 94(1982), pp. 485-487.

the Levites[27], have also been advanced to support a pre-exilic date for P.

One scholar, who has also placed P's composition in the pre-exilic period, has attempted a type of mediating position. Menahem Haran stands in agreement with those who have argued for P's special connection with Ezra's reform and suggests that a distinction be made between P's original composition and its proclamation. He writes:

These are two discrete events separated by considerable lapse of time. All Ezra did was the promulgation and canonization of the priestly source, as part of the complete and consolidated Pentateuch, and at that moment in time the scrolls making up this source were already quite ancient.[28]

With regard to P's relationship to D Haran suggests that P "displays conspicuous sectarian features, and there is no doubt that its torot, 'instructions,' were the exclusive possession of the priestly semi-esoteric circle." [29] D, an outsider, could not have had access to it and was, therefore, not influenced by it.

Having explained the lack of interaction between D and P, even though they existed concurrently, he addresses the

27. Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and Ancient Near East," JAO 90(1970), pp. 201-202.

28. Menahem Haran, "Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source," JBL 100(1981), p. 327.

29. Ibid., p. 328. The Holiness Code (H), which was incorporated into P, however, influenced both P and D. For example, scholars have long debated the line of influence between the meat laws in Leviticus 11: 4-28 and Deuteronomy 14: 4-20. [Cf. Noth, Leviticus, p. 91; K. Elliger, Leviticus (Tubingen: Mohr, 1966), 143-5; and W.L. Moran, "The Literary Connection between Lev. 11:13-19 and Deut. 14:12-18," CBO 28(1966), 271-277.] Haran suggests that both P and D are dependent on H; the older source. D, having access to only H, and not the whole of P, remained out of touch with this so-called sectarian esoteric source.

standard critical view which depicts P as utopian, idealistic, and inclined to reflect on the past. Although he accepts this view, he rejects the idea that P constitutes a projection into the past, fabricated without historical basis.[30] According to Haran P was solidly based on history [31] but its ideas were not promulgated until the time of Ezra at which time they do appear somewhat out of place.

All of the above evidence suggests a pre-exilic date for P. Many of those holding to this position, of course, do not deny the presence of exilic and post-exilic accretions. But they suggest that the burden of proof should be properly borne by those advocating a late date for the additions. The accretions in P are definitely considered in the minority.

#### c) The Exilic/Post-Exilic Period

Scholars within this camp generally recognize the existence of earlier material in P but are more concerned with finding the date of its final compilation and the particular historical context which has influenced the present shape of the material. Often P is considered the product of one author-editor[32] or a narrow school or single tradent using the different written and oral material.[33]

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30. In "Shilo and Jerusalem: The Origin of the Priestly Tradition in the Pentateuch" [JBL 81(1962), 14-24.], Haran has shown that the temple of Shilo became the creative focus of P, which gave rise to a utopian system.

31. Haran argues that P's work can be historically based in the cultic reforms during Hezekiah's reign ("Behind the Scenes of History," pp. 331-332).

32. Sean E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1971), p. 19.

33. Frank M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), p. 324.

Along with the group just studied those scholars holding an exilic view of P argue that there are few indications which suggest that P's cultic concerns were carefully followed in the post-exilic period and are thus best placed in the exilic period.[34] This group also argues that there are cultic ideas present in P which are not present in the pre-exilic period. Klaus Koch has suggested that in P, "atone-ment" meant removal of sin and that this idea plays no role in the pre-exilic Israel.[35] Otto Eissfeldt also points to a development in P's cultic ordinances.[36] Vink looks at the specialization of the cult, especially the Code of Purity, and suggests Persian influence on the exiles.[37] These various factors all suggest an exilic date for P.

Among an exiled people without land or king, the priests became increasingly important.[38] This explains the accent on the priesthood and the lack of emphasis on nationhood and kingship. Aaron, an ambiguous figure in pre-exilic writings, gains prominence as the focus shifts to the priesthood.[39] P's primary concerns are perceived as cultic and not civil.

Although the tabernacle is no longer a possibility in

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34. Vink, in Date and Origin of P, goes so far as to say that: "the biblical and extra-biblical historical data outside the PC [Priestly Code] proper contain no trace at all of an early post-exilic presence of the PC in Palestine (p. 63).

35. "Sühne und Sündenvergebung um die Wende von der exilischen zur nachexilischen Zeit," EJ 26(1966), 217-238.

36. The Old Testament: An Introduction, Trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 207. The three agricultural festivals are used to show the development in P.

37. Date and Origin of P, pp. 110-112. Cf. also H. Ginsberg, "Aramaic Studies Today," JAOS 62(1942), pp. 229-30.

38. J.R. Porter, Leviticus, Cambridge Bible Commentary (London: Cambridge University, 1976), p. 1.

39. Vink, Date and Origin in P, p. 132.

exile, Frank M. Cross has argued that it continues to be used because it takes on new meaning. The new priestly doctrine regarding the "tabernacling" of Yahweh emphasized God's ability to be present with Israel even when in exile. According to Cross this new meaning can also be seen in the sudden burst of names, given to boys born in the mid-sixth century, with the element gkn, (God's presence or glory).[40] Although the tabernacle was not present physically for Israel, it did function theologically.

P, well aware of the older traditions concerning the patriarchs, exodus and settlement, presents the material to those in exile in the form of promise. "It leaves its readers and hearers on the verge of the land, knowing that the land can be theirs...."[41] P, working in the exilic period, attempts to write a program for the restoration of Israel, based on the covenant at Sinai.[42]

The post-exilic period of Israel has frequently been described as a theocracy. The priests ruled supremely and the cult was the vehicle which brought order to a fragmented society. This period is closely associated with the exilic period. The post-exilic views are frequently considered an extension of priestly thought in the exilic period. In fact, many holding to a post-exilic date for P are open to the possibility that the initial P edition may well have begun

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40. Canaanite Myth, p. 323. Check 1 Chron. 3:21,22; Ezra 8:3,5; Neh. 6:18.

41. Peter R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), p. 102.

42. Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 325.

in exile, brought back to Jerusalem, completed and used there under the reforms of Ezra.[43] This group, too, recognizes in the P material older traditions but is more concerned with the final form of P.

Other significant points raised by the representatives of this position are: (1) Centralization concerning the place of worship is no longer an issue in P.[44] (2) P contemplates only theocratic order, with political interests falling into the background.[45] (3) The social conditions assume an agricultural community whose social and political organization is undeveloped reflecting the early post-exilic era.[46] (4) The distinction between priests and Levites is for the first time clearly acknowledged in the post-exilic period.[47] (5) P appears further to develop ideas already stated in Ezekiel.[48] (6) The cultic picture is P's projection of some ideal picture of Sinai back onto the post-exilic Judian community.[49]

Wellhausen, whose position as to the date of P is widely

43. S.R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 140; W.O.E. Oesterley, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 62; Artur Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, Trans. Dorothea Barton (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), p. 138. N.H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers, The Century Bible (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), p. 7.

44. Weiser, Introduction, p. 138.

45. Driver, An Introduction, p. 137. Oesterley, An Introduction, p. 55 & 62.

46. Oesterley, An Introduction, p. 54

47. Roland De Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, Trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 364-366.

48. Aelred Cody, A History of Old Testament Priesthood (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), pp. 159-172.

49. Roland De Vaux, The Early History of Israel, Trans. David Smith (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), pp. 396-398.

accepted, gave little credence to the authenticity of much of the so-called older material. The tabernacle was considered a fiction based on the the Solomonic Temple and not some ancient tent tradition.[50] More commonly held today, however, is that P's tabernacle was simply a description of a temple under the guise of a portable tent sanctuary.[51] Programmatically it functioned as a building blueprint for the rebuilding of the temple.

Terence Fretheim offers an alternative position which sees P's use of the tabernacle in terms of a polemic against those seeking to reconstruct the temple in post-exilic times. In contrast to Wellhausen he assumes the historical authenticity of the tabernacle and argues that:

The tabernacle of P must then be seen not as a projection of the temple back into the Mosaic period, but as an impermanent sanctuary which was programmatically set forth by the Priestly writers as the dwelling place of Yawheh for the post-exilic community.[52]

According to Fretheim, the permanent structure of the temple brought with it the idea of the localization of God. Thus the term "tabernacle" fits well into the later period at which time P opposed any move to confine God to one place and

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50. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel (Cleveland: Meridian, 1957) p. 39ff.

51. R.E. Clements, God and Temple (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), p. 111. Cf. also Frank Cross, "The Priestly Tabernacle" in Old Testament Issues (Samuel Sandmel, editor, London: Harper and Row, 1968, especially pp. 63-65). Cross writes: "The Priestly tabernacle appears in this perspective to be the culminating tradition - schematic and ideal to be sure - OT themes which had seminal beginnings in the Mosaic tent .... [No] doubt the tabernacle account was to be an explanation for the past and a plan for the future" (p. 65).

52. "The Priestly Document; Anti-Temple?" VI 18(1968), p. 329.

regard him in static terms. As in the past, P called "for a return to the theocratic age, prior to kingship and temple, in their own day, with a people around a moveable sanctuary." [53]

Although one can find older material in P, those who argue for a post-exilic date for its composition believe that the material can all be accounted for in light of P's historical context, its theological intentions and its particular use of the older material. The laws, last reworked in an effort to bring religious meaning and assist in the reformulation of the Judian community, are best interpreted from this perspective. [54]

d) A Tentative Conclusion Regarding Authorship and Date of P

All those familiar with the debate concerning the authorship and date of P are aware of the variety of arguments advanced by scholars attempting to establish P's particular historical context. From the above investigation it is clear that due to the complex historical and literary nature of P, it is probably impossible to confine P into any one period.

The presence of very ancient material does not prohibit the late date for the final redaction of P, nor does the late final redaction rule out the authenticity of the older traditions upon which it draws. It has been shown adequately that many of the cultic and social practices found in P extend into Israel's pre-history. It is doubtful, however, that P existed in written form before the period of the -----

53. Ibid., p. 316.

54. Norman K. Gottwald, A Light To The Nations (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 453.



monarchy. Yet by the fourth century B.C.E. the Pentateuch was complete since it is the same in both the Jewish and Samaritan texts of that time.[55]

E.A. Speiser, attempting to account for the diverse nature of the P material as well as the sense of unity it exudes, suggests that P is the work of a school with roots extending to the very earliest history of Israel. He argues that P is "not an individual, or even a group of like-minded contemporaries, but a school with an unbroken history reaching back to early Israelite times, and continuing until the exile and beyond." [56] This hypothesis, he suggests, can account for the discrepancies in the texts and for the general homogeneity of the underlying traditions. Although this position is plausible the major criticism of his conclusion is that there is no proof of the type of school he envisions.

By using a canonical type of approach [57] Speiser's concerns can be taken seriously without having to argue for the priestly school he suggests existed. There appears to be little doubt that P has incorporated a variety of older material. The presence of this later material does suggest a later redaction. This final editing of the text is today generally placed into the later part of the Babylonian exile

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55. J. Alberto Soggin, Introduction to the Old Testament: From its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandrian Canon, Trans. R.J. Coggin (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), p. 138.

56. Genesis, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. xxvi.

57. See Brevard S. Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); and James A. Sanders, Canon and Community (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

or early post-exilic times.[58] This position, however, does not preclude the possibility of finding Mosaic material in P. At the same time, it recognizes the importance of understanding "Mosaic authorship" from a theological vantage-point; one which seeks to take seriously the contribution of the community of faith (in this case P's) to the canon.[59] Thus, one can understand P as incorporating older cultic material within its writings and reshaping it according to its own particular theological orientation (which, of course, has evolved from the older traditions).

From this perspective the various positions outlined above are not as polarized as they may appear. Although each argues that the majority of P belongs in one particular period, none suggest that no accretions were later added to P. Having acknowledged the presence of a final editor(s), the primary task of this study then becomes one of discovering P's final theological intent, not dating the various traditions in P.

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58. Joseph Blenkinsopp, Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism (Oxford: University, 1983), p. 103.

59. Childs, Introduction, pp. 132-135. Childs writes: "The implications to be drawn from this understanding of the Mosaic authorship is that a theological judgment was at stake respecting the authority of Israel's law. The claim of Mosaic authorship functioned as a norm by which to test the tradition's authority. This was obviously not a historical judgement in the modern sense, but a measuring of the truth of a growing corpus of law by the tradition long experienced as authoritative. The appeal to Mosaic authorship derived its meaning only with the context of a community of faith for whom a body of written tradition had already been recognized as authoritative. The claim of Mosaic authorship therefore functioned theologically within the community to establish the continuity of the faith of successive generations with that which had once been delivered to Moses at Sinai."

### 3. P's Relationship to the Other Sources.

Any study attempting to understand P's theology must first come to some conclusions regarding its relationship to the other sources. Various views exist here as well, and one's position is directly related to questions regarding date and authorship. It was argued previously that P's final redaction probably occurred in the exilic/post-exilic period. We will now examine P's relationship to the other sources. Before proceeding to this discussion it is necessary to address briefly the controversial issue concerning the literary status of P.

The question frequently debated is this: Does P represent an independent literary source or can one consider it essentially a redaction of earlier Pentateuchal sources? These opposing positions are frequently associated with Noth and Cross, respectively. Noth has argued that P be considered a narrative source produced by a single author,[60] while Cross has sought to demonstrate that P presupposes certain JE traditions and, therefore, does not restate them. P, rather than an independent source, is the final redactor.[61] In an effort to show the incomplete nature of P, Cross makes several observations. For example, he points to the absence of any story in P of the birth of corruption in the otherwise "exceedingly good" creation.[62] P also contains no tradition of the birth and youth account of Moses

60. M. Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, Trans. B. Anderson (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 9-11. Cf. also Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, p. 205.

61. Cross, Canaanite Myth, pp. 301-321.

62. Ibid., p. 306.

and "(without the supplement of Epic tradition) gives nothing of the circumstances of his death or place of burial." [63] Most surprising of all is P's silence concerning the covenant-making event at Sinai. Cross writes:

The most stunning omission from the Priestly document is a narrative of the covenant ceremony proper. The covenant at Sinai was the climax to which the entire Priestly labor had been directed. Israel's final gift of the presence of Yahweh's Glory "tabernacling" in their midst. Israel's final law, adumbrated in earlier covenants, was now revealed in full.... To suppose that the Priestly tradent simply had no tradition of the covenant rites at Sinai is incredible. To posit a theory that P had no covenant at all at Sinai is a fortiori beyond credence. Either the Priestly tradent had the tradition and a redactor has removed it in combining P with JE, or he relied on the Epic tradition, especially the E tradition of Exodus 24:1-8 for the narrative of the covenant rites. In our view, the latter alternative fits far more easily with the evidence. [64]

Cross has here made a strong case!

Although these two contrasting views represent the classical positions taken by critical scholarship, they need not constitute the only options available to the Old Testament student. Childs has attempted to provide a mediating type position:

It could well be that P, or a portion of it was an independent source and also served a redactional role. The problem seems to be how to explain, on the one hand, P's obvious dependence on JE in places, and on the other hand, the apparently independent integrity of his narrative in the other

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63. *Ibid.*, p. 317-318. Cross observes that since "Moses is the central figure in the Priestly source and the reconstruction of the history and institutions of the Mosaic age is both his primary interest and the climax of his work, these omissions appear inexplicable if he knew such traditions and did not report them. It is even more difficult to imagine that he knew no such traditions" (p. 318).

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

places.[65]

Only after one has gained a wholistic perspective of P's theological intent and historical context, can one begin to deal with the questions Childs raises. Having placed P's final composition in the exilic period or later, and having briefly alluded to the importance of the tabernacle, etc. (all closely connected to the Sinai event), Noth's suggestion, that P was unaware of the earlier significant traditions, is not convincing. However, P's distinct cultic tradition (source?) may have functioned as a guiding principle in its redaction of the older material.

This study of P follows Cross who assumes that P is familiar with JE. P's relationship to JE will be demonstrated when discussing its theology. Some brief comments need to be made at this point, however, with regard to P's relationship to D. The nature of this relationship has been a controversial subject among scholars. Some of the reasons for this became apparent in the above discussion concerning the date and authorship of P.

Those who place P's composition in the pre-exilic period, or regard P's and D's composition as occurring somewhat simultaneously, have taken several approaches and arrive at various conclusions. Assuming major differences between P and D (i.e., their attitude towards kingship, nationhood, priests, Levites, cult, etc.), one may follow the position set out by Haran and regard P as deriving from some priestly

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65. Brevard S. Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 123.

semi-esoteric circle, whose writings were unavailable to D.[66] Weinfeld offers an alternative position according to which the differences in D and P represent the ideologies of two different schools: D is assigned to the scribes who are associated with the court; P is the work of priests who are concerned with the temple rites and cult.[67] Weinfeld describes the religion of P as theocentrically oriented and that of D as anthropocentric.[68] The priestly literature was clearly interested in the sacral realm of life while the scribes "wrote literature dealing predominantly with man and the mundane world." [69]

Other scholars placing P in the pre-exilic period have argued that the differences between P and D have been exaggerated. For example, the distinction between priests and Levites in P and D has been overstated.[70] Friedman questions the common assumption made by many Old Testament scholars (following Wellhausen) who argue that P is later than D because of "the fact that the centralization concerning the place of worship is no longer at all under discussion, but is simply assumed." [71] According to Friedman, P's continual focus on the tabernacle, which he associates with the First Temple, [72] suggests that P protests too much to assume that

66. See p. 72.

67. Deuteronomy, pp. 183-184.

68. Ibid., p. 185.

69. Ibid., p. 184.

70. Abba makes this point; see p. 71. Here he follows G.E. Wright's lead in "The Levites in Deuteronomy" VI 4 (1954), pp. 325-330.

71. Weiser, Introduction, p. 138. See also Desterley, An Introduction, p. 54. Fohrer, Introduction, p. 185.

72. See p. 70.

centralization has been accomplished.[73] With regard to centralized worship, he relates the satyrs [sic] of Leviticus 17:7 to Josiah's centralization in 2 Kings 23:8 where Josiah "broke the bamoth of the satyrs".[74] According to Friedman both D and P were written by priests who represented different circles but did, nevertheless, share various concerns and even used similar terms.[75]

The major difference which Friedman perceives between the two priestly circles is related to their sacred literature. He writes:

While all of the primary sources of the Torah speak of the holiness of the entire people of Israel the concept of am gadol is particularly emphasized in D. Its most significant consequence is the absence of the levels of holiness which characterize P.[76]

Whereas P delinates between territory and cultic responsibility, D does not. Pointing to Numbers 16:3 he suggests that "the Korah account is apparently a Priestly response to the Deuteronomistic stance." [77] Korah here argues against Moses and Aaron: "You take too much, for all the congregation, all of them, are holy, and God is in their midst; and why do you raise yourselves over the congregation of God?" Moses' reply and God's actions then serve to endorse the different distinctions which P seeks to teach (i.e., "different ideas of the prerogatives of the priests and Levites at the central

73. The Exile, p. 64.

74. Ibid., p. 65. With this reading of the text he follows the emendation of Noth (and others); see Noth, Leviticus, p. 131.

75. Ibid., p. 68.

76. Ibid., p. 69. Exod. 19:6 (J); Lev. 19:2 (P); Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19; 28:9 are referred to as the "primary sources of the Torah."

77. Ibid.

place"[78]).

Friedman also builds upon the position which identifies the two different priestly houses as Mushite and Aaronid.[79] According to him, the Mushite Torah was offensive to the Aaronids because of its infrequent reference to the Aaronids and its derogatory treatment of them in the golden calf account.[80] Therefore, he hypothesizes the composition of a second Torah by the Aaronids which would serve to legitimize their cultic position and present them in better light. He suggests that both Jeremiah (8:8) and Ezekiel (22:26) witness the presence of an alternative Torah.

According to Friedman Jeremiah is well aware of P since he uses its blessing phrase, "be fruitful and multiply." At the same time he attacks the ark (and its connection to blessing) and replaces it with an emphasis on the place and name theology found in D.[81] Of Jeremiah's derogatory comments regarding the sacrificial system he writes:

Jeremiah's classical attack upon the efficacy of sacrifice without obedience seems to reflect the alternative Torah compositions of the Deuteronomists and the Aaronid priestly house as well. The critical interest of the Priestly literature in sacrifice is patent. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, contains no comparative detailed legislation on the particulars of sacrifice.[82]

Jeremiah here challenges the claim made by P that offerings were divinely ordained in the wilderness according to P's Torah. With this perspective Friedman offers an interesting

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78. Ibid., p. 70.

79. Cross, Canaanite Myth, pp. 195-215.

80. Friedman, The Exile, pp. 70-71.

81. Ibid., p. 73. See Jer. 3:16ff.

82. Ibid., p. 74.



interpretation of the relationship between D and P. At the same time it places both squarely in the pre-exilic period.

Those who place P in the exilic period often see little meaningful interaction between P and D. Having placed D somewhere around the seventh century B.C.E., it is interpreted as having little in common with P. Gottwald writes: "Deuteronomy knows nothing of P either by direct reference, quotation, or allusion." [83] The specific differences were referred to in the discussion concerning the question of authorship and date. [84]

The Deuteronomistic historians, whom E.W. Nicholson has shown to be the direct descendants of the original D circle and tradition, [85] although standing closer chronologically to P, have also frequently been considered out of touch with P. Claus Westermann's comments represent a widespread position:

P developed in the same approximate period as did the Deuteronomic history, yet the two have little in common. They must have emerged from completely different circles and completely different tradi-

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79. Cross, Canaanite Myth, pp. 195-215.

80. Friedman, The Exile, pp. 70-71.

81. Ibid., p. 73. See Jer. 3:16ff.

82. Ibid., p. 74.

83. Gottwald, A Light, p. 445. Cf. Driver, An Introduction, p. 137.

84. See p. 76.

85. Deuteronomy and Tradition (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), pp. 107-118. He demonstrates how D and Dtr. H. are closely related in both language and theological standpoint. According to Nicholson, considerable portions of the present book of Deuteronomy, particularly the first introductory chapters 1-4, the plural passages within chapters 5-30, and the concluding chapters 31-34, come from the pen of the Dtr. H. (see pp. 26 and 108). Further, Nicholson places D around the seventh century and the Dtr. H. in the late pre-exilic or exilic period (pp. 113-114).

tions. P stands closer to the work of the Yahwist....[86]

#### 4. P's Place in the Canon

It was argued above that P is a late-exilic or early post-exilic work which utilizes JE and highlights certain concerns which arise out of its particular historical context and its priestly tradition. Further, it is highly unlikely that P, composed after D, was unaware of a source as important as D. Friedman has advanced an interesting argument which regards the writing of P as a response to D. The conflict between the Mushite and Aaronid priestly circles, as proposed by Friedman and others is not, however, totally convincing. There seems to be little explicit proof in the text that supports this contention.

That differences between P and D exist would be difficult to dispute. The differences, however, arise out of their different historical contexts. Along with Friedman, this study takes the position that both P and D are the product of priestly writers. Contrary to Friedman, however, the differences in D and P are not best explained solely by pointing to the ideological differences between Priestly houses but by considering also the differences which relate to the point of origin. D and P are products of different times. D, written in the seventh century, is more directly concerned with questions related to nationhood, civil law, and kingship, than is P. There is general agreement that P is more concerned with matters related to the cult. Yet,

86. Elements of Old Testament Theology, Trans. W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), p. 213.

taking into consideration P's theological perspective, which will be examined next, it will become apparent that it, too, possessed concerns regarding issues related to "nationhood".

Writing around the end of the exilic period, P seeks to create a sense of order for a disparate people. It uses the old tabernacle and ark traditions in an attempt to create "Godly order." Fretheim has argued that P is anti-temple because of the limitations the temple places on God to move about with Israel.[87] This attempt to account for P's theological intent in calling for a return of the tabernacle and ark is laudable. In this sense his conclusion fits well with the standard critical view which regards P as reflecting upon the past, idealizing it and attempting to set out some program which might recreate that idyllic state at the later date after Israel's return to Palestine.

If one places Fretheim's conclusions together with those of Friedman a more satisfying alternate view arises. Friedman has argued that the tabernacle and ark were placed in the holy of holies in the First Temple times.[88] Is it not possible that P, writing at the later date, uses the tabernacle and ark in a symbolic[89] way in an effort to get to the very heart of Israel's faith? Both the tabernacle and the ark were symbolic of that which lies at the core of Israel's cult: namely God's presence and subsequent blessing. It may be going too far to suggest, as does Fretheim, that P wrote against those who sought to rebuild the temple, but P's

87. See pp. 77-78.

88. See p. 70.

89. Fuller discussion of "symbolism" in P, on pp. 126-130.

writings could be considered as anti-temple to the extent that P reacts to the excesses of the First Temple.[90] P desires to separate itself from the detestable history of the First Temple and therefore uses the term "tabernacle". Although both the ark and the tabernacle were no longer a reality in the exilic and post-exilic period they continued to be symbolically effective in expressing the essence of Israel's faith.

P ultimately, of course, not only stresses the tabernacle and ark but the whole Mosaic era prior to Israel's becoming a nation in Palestine. James Sanders provides the broader scenario within which the above P perspective can be placed. For P, Sanders writes:

Israel's pervading identity lay not with the later phases of nationalization of her pre-exilic existence in the grand climaxes of the conquest of Canaan and Jerusalem, but exclusively with what had been at the heart of the early mosaic or amphictyonic cult recitals in the first place .... Climactic now was not a national triumph, but rather a worship service projected for that time when the tribes would enter the land and take it .... No longer at the heart of the canon was there any nationalistic fulfillment of identity or hope, but rather a service of thanksgiving projected for the time that restoration would take place.[91]

According to Sanders P was not the possessor of an independent source but largely agreed "with colleagues of D" regarding the JE epic (although they did "put their imprint on

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90. In response of Fretheim's views J. Alberto Soggin writes, "this theory appears to be untenable in such a neat form, but if it were toned down more and re-expressed in less extreme terms it could explain the insistence on the tent at a time when there were animated discussions about the rebuilding of the Temple (Introduction, p. 143).

91. Torah and Canon (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), p. 48.

it").[92] Yet P was not interested in the JED history in Judges to Kings. Sanders advances two reasons: "P's mandate in the exile to go beyond D in finding the true identity of Judaism; and the necessity in the post-exilic Persian period to review the whole history of Yahwism in light of that identity." [93] In P almost everything is directly related to the cult, including the laws, since it was P's desire "to provide dispersed Judaism with a visible rallying point of identity on the one hand, and a viable rallying point of hope on the other; the law and the Jerusalem cult." [94]

Using the Mosaic theology which had been rediscovered in the pre-exilic Deuteronomic revival, P sought to provide for Israel a new sense of identity and hope. Sanders concludes his discussion of P with the observation: "For the P thinkers to be willing to rest their case on a purely Mosaic base is very understandable. They believed that Israel's new and true identity was to be found in a priestly theocracy." [95]

P, in an effort to prevent the excesses of the past, places numerous restrictions on the cult. Weinfeld, following other scholars, has stated that "sacrifice, according to Deuteronomy, is not an institutional practice but a personal one...." [96] It is precisely this point against which P reacts. It was stated above that the distinction between the Levites and priests in D and P has been exaggerated by some

92. Ibid., p. 45.

93. Ibid., p. 47.

94. Ibid., p. 46.

95. Ibid., p. 48.

96. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy, p. 212.

scholars in the past.[97] This is not to say that differences do not exist. In P it is the responsibility of the Aaronids alone to offer sacrifices to God. This apparent restriction or narrowing serves to place better controls on the cultic excesses of past generations when fewer guidelines were in place (enforced?) to regulate the cult.

When Jeremiah attacks the sacrificial system,[98] this is best interpreted as a polemic against false worship.[99] According to Friedman, Jeremiah here challenges P's strong emphasis on sacrifice and its contention that offerings were divinely ordained in the wilderness.[100] Weinfeld has observed that this statement is "a slap in the face for the Priestly Code...."[101] The position taken by this study is that Jeremiah, rather than differing from P, actually stands in harmony with P in its protest against false worship.[102]

97. See pp. 71 and 84.

98. Jeremiah 7:21-26.

99. Cf. Isaiah 1:10-20; Hosea 2:11; Amos 5:21-24.

100. Friedman, The Exile, p. 74.

101. M. Weinfeld, "Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel," ZAW 88(1976), p. 54.

102. There remain many unresolved literary-critical questions concerning the book of Jeremiah. James L. Crenshaw, in "A Living Tradition: The Book of Jeremiah in Current Research" [Int 37(1983), 117-129], has observed that the fundamental issue has to do with how one can recognize authentic materials of Jeremiah when there exist four distinct literary styles: (1) poetic oracles; (2) biographical narratives; (3) prose sermons, and; (4) a book of consolation (p. 118). He notes that the issue is further complicated by the similarities which existed in vocabulary and phraseology between Deuteronomy and the prose sermons. J.P. Hyatt, for example, has argued that the prose passages are deuteronomistic and in fact stand in contrast to Jeremiah [see JNES 1(1942), 156-173]. This thesis finds the general positions of John Bright, Artur Weiser and Helga Weippert, who all regard the prose tradition already present during Jeremiah's time, most satisfying. Bright has argued against those who see the prose material as deuteronomistic and suggest that passages such as Jer. 34:2-5 are incomprehensible after the fall of Jerusalem

In the early part of chapter 7 Jeremiah continually uses D's name theology in a polemical way. The accusation comes against "all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord," who have trusted "the deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord....'" (7:2-4). The people are admonished to amend their evil ways (vvs.5-7) and to cease worshipping foreign gods.

Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Ba'al, and go after other gods that you have not known, **and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name....** (vvs. 9-10).

Jeremiah, having similar concerns as P over the purity of God's dwelling place states: "has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (vs.11)

The judgment then follows:

And now, because you have done all these things, says the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to **the house which is called by my name**, and in which you trust, and to the place I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight... (vvs.13-15).

Jeremiah here confirms Jerusalem as "the place I gave to you," but rejects the crimes of the people, the false hopes in the temple, and the excesses of the cult. God, aware of the people's prohibited religious practices, states, "is it I

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(cf. 39:6-7). According to Bright the prose tradition can be fairly closely connected to Jeremiah's message and ministry ["The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," *JBL* 70(1951), 15-35]. Weippert, in *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches* [BZAW, no. 132 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973)], has convincingly demonstrated that a formal prose was widespread in the ancient Near East during Jeremiah's day. Weiser also considers Jeremiah's words and thoughts to be preserved in the prose material (*The Old Testament*, p. 217).

whom they provoke? ... Is it not themselves, to their own confusion?" (vs. 19). In their confusion the people sacrifice illegitimately (vs. 21).

Jeremiah, perhaps at the early stage of the same movement which becomes crystallized in P, stands in agreement with P in rejecting the position that God spoke to Israel's fathers and commanded them to sacrifice (vss. 21-22). According to P, and likely Jeremiah, this task was at the later date reserved for the priesthood which sought to control the cultic (vss.21-22) and social (vss.23-24) abuses. Jeremiah gives the reason why, "for the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the Lord; they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it" (vs. 30). Thus destruction is sure to follow.

Jeremiah, writing just prior to the fall of Jerusalem, writes against those who have falsely interpreted D's use of the name theology and is concerned with the people's illegitimate cultic social practices.[103] His solution to the problem is stated in both explicit and implicit terms. Directing his address to the people he explicitly calls for social justice. He is not unaware of the sacred, cultic dimension, however, and states that, "Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest" (2:3a). If Jerusalem is still the place God has chosen (7:14), and further restrictions are placed on the people's cultic participa-

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103. J. Muilenburg, "Jeremiah the Prophet," IDB, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 826.



tion,[104] the implicit assumption appears to be that the priests were now solely responsible for offering sacrifices. It is this implicit position which P develops.

P, concerned with the role of the priests, writes in an effort to solve the cultic problems of the past by restricting the participation of the commoner. It regards its task as an important one since the corruption of Israel's cult in the past meant destruction. In an effort to avoid the further demise of Israel, it seeks to safeguard the cult from further abuses and assist the people in living holy lives so that God might be present among His people and might bless them.

Writing to a dejected community, P seeks to inculcate a sense of God's presence upon all the people. Although the tabernacle and the ark, Israel's most revered cultic constituents, were no longer with the community, that which they represented - God's presence with Israel - continued to play an important symbolic role. Even with the rebuilding of the Second Temple, it was P's intent that the focus be on God's presence in the holy of holies, where the tabernacle and ark were placed in the First Temple.

Whereas in the past the "tent of presence" was found "far off from the camp,"[105] in P it is found in the center.[106] Further, it should be noted that God's holiness and presence were not only expressed symbolically through the ark and the

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104. Israel's "fathers" are prohibited from sacrificing and committing abominations in God's house (Jer. 7:22 & 30).

105. Exod. 33:7-11

106. Num. 2:2

tabernacle, but the priests also sought to ingrain in the people a sense of God's presence by extending the realm of the sacred into the everyday practices of the people.

### 5. Conclusion

It has been argued above that P is aware of JE and D. Although there exist clear distinctions between the various sources these can be accounted for by examining the various particular historical contexts and concerns of the writers. P, writing after the fall of the nation of Israel, uses the older traditions associated with the Mosaic era to provide identity and create in the people a sense of hope.

Upon examining literary-critical questions related to P, some of P's theology has already become obvious. According to P, God's presence with His holy people and their obedience to Him are of utmost importance to Israel's livelihood. The realm of the sacred is a significant one to P and it uses the concepts of the ark and tabernacle to express symbolically God's holiness and presence. In P's telling of history one can discover much of P's understanding of "the sacred". Studying this "history", many of P's theological concerns become apparent. P's "history" and theology will be examined next.

## B) PRIESTLY THEOLOGY

This study will attempt to arrive at P's theology through its understanding of history. It was noted above that a group's past experiences and perception of history play an important part in its construction of a comprehensive metaphysics.[107] By examining P's perception of history its broad theological perspective can be uncovered.

In P's history God is the most prominent agent. Therefore, having examined P's view of history, its view of God will be examined next. The focus here is restricted to a study of God's holiness and its implications. A discussion of the cult and its promulgators the priests follows. Having examined P's view of the cult and priesthood, their function and responsibilities, much of P's broader theological perspective will have become apparent. Finally, the role of symbolism in P's theology will also be discussed.

### 1. P's View of History

Standard critical scholarship has for quite some time regarded P as presenting its audience with a series of divine revelations through time. Following Wellhausen most scholars have argued that in P one finds four successive 'stages,' 'covenants,' 'eras' or 'dispensations'. [108] Although there are those who hold to slight variations of this view [109] it

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107. See above, chapter three, esp. p. 43, on M. Douglas.  
108. See Fohrer, Introduction, p. 182; Cross, Canaanite Myth, pp. 295-296. B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, Second edition (London: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 383.  
109. Gerhard von Rad in his Old Testament Theology [Vol. 2, Trans. David Stalker (London: S C M, 1975), p. 240], mentions three series of divine revelation (to Noah, Abraham and

is widely held that P's creation account and its version of the Noachic, Abrahamic and Sinai covenants, all represent definite stages. At each stage of history new manifestations, institutions and regulations are revealed by God.[110] For P, the will of God is progressively revealed through history.[111]

P's presentation of history has been described as cold and stiff.[112] Yet in part this can be understood in light of P's "concern to display concrete historical epochs unfolding in an orderly manner according to a pre-established plan." [113] Whereas JE's concerns focused on the history of the Patriarchs, P is concerned with the growth of particular cultic institutions through history.[114] JE depicts God's promises to and guidance of the Patriarchs, as a key element in Israel's salvation. For P "the salvation of Israel depends upon a properly ordered cultus." [115] Thus from the creation of the world onward P's primary concern is the cult and its function.

From this perspective the study seeks to examine the four phases set out by P. P begins with the creation of the

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Moses). Joseph Blenkinsopp, in Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1977), p. 59., also points to three periods (creation of the world; construction of the wilderness sanctuary; and distribution of the land after entry).

110. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 233.

111. Blenkinsopp, Wisdom, p. 109.

112. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 233.

113. Blenkinsopp, Structure, p. 275.

114. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 233.

115. Peter R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), p. 96.

world and concludes with the creation of the cult at Sinai. These eras, along with the intermediate Noachian and Abrahamic periods, will be examined briefly with particular attention given to God, his created order and the progressive narrowing of divine election in P.

#### a) Creation of the World

P's creation account (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) has in the past occasionally been separated from other major P narratives (e.g., Noah, Egypt, Exodus, etc.) because of doctrinal issues within it. Anderson has argued that this is incorrect for it violates the intent of the story which can not stand alone but is rather inextricably interwoven with other history.[116] L. Kohler has correctly observed that P's creation account functions to open history and that all meaning comes through creation.[117]

P's creation account contains doctrine throughout. Von Rad notes that "it is the result of intensive, theologically ordering thought." [118] He elaborates further: "here everything is written after reflection; nothing is without theological relevance, for in this work we have the essence of the theological labor of many generations of priests." [119] Von Rad does not overstate the matter when he asserts that, "indeed, it contains the essence of Priestly knowledge in a

116. Bernard Anderson, Creation versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible (New York: Association, 1962), p. 47.

117. Old Testament Theology, Trans. A.S. Todd (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), p. 87.

118. Genesis: A Commentary, Revised ed., Trans. John H. Marks, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), p. 27.

119. Ibid., p. 28.

most concentrated form." [120]

In the following section P's creation account will be examined and its understanding of God and his created order highlighted. In the past P's statement, "So God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:27), has received much of the attention, with the focus primarily on humankind. This phrase, however, does not first and foremost seek to highlight humanity, or suggest some type of personal relationship between God and people as is described in JE. JE's patriarchs are portrayed as the possessors of a very close relationship with God. In J's creation story Adam and Eve personally relate to God in the garden. This could never be attributed to P who avoids anthropomorphisms. Whereas JE's interests evolve around the life of the patriarchs, P has no particular interest in human achievements. [121] Rather, in P the transcendence and "otherness" of God is stressed. [122]

In P's creation account God, by his word alone, creates orderliness in the universe and establishes the earth out of chaos. [123] For P God is both the creator of order and its present maintainer. P is absorbed in God's sovereign majesty, and the focus remains intensely on Him. It is the supreme creator and His divinely created order which P seeks to high-

120. Ibid., p. 47. He also states: "these sentences cannot be easily overinterpreted theologically! Indeed, to us the danger appears greater that the expositor will fall short of discovering the concentrated doctrinal content" (p. 48).

121. C. Westerman, Genesis 1-11: A Commentary, Trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), p. 56.

122. Köhler, Old Testament Theology, p. 111.

123. W.J. Harrelson, "The Significance of Cosmology in the Ancient Near East," Translating and Understanding the Old Testament, ed. H.T. Frank and W.L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), p.247.

light.

In P the order - chaos polarity is laid squarely upon the plane of history. In contrast to the neighboring nations, no king is described as creating a single law; in P God alone orders the universe through His word. Having examined the various cosmologies of the ancient Near East, over against P's creation account, Walter Harrelson concludes:

Israelite man lived in an ordered universe. Yahweh, the only God (or the only God who significantly acted in the world), maintained this order both through his own presence and activity and through the agency of his creatures.[124]

In a very profound way God's creation in P is characterized by order.

Writing about this created order Anderson states: "The Creator commands, and thereby not only brings a creature into being but also designates its peculiar nature and assigns to it a specific task." [125] All that is created is given a particular function within God's ordered universe. The heavenly bodies are not independent forces (as in the surrounding nations) but function to serve the earth in ordering the seasons, days and years. The earth, too, serves to produce vegetation and sustain God's creatures. Not only does all of creation have a particular design but all that God creates functions together in harmony. In P's creation account harmony and goodness are important themes.

Another important aspect, often overlooked, is that God's created order is made up of many distinctive elements. The

124. Ibid., p. 252.

125. "Creation," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 729.

separation of light from the darkness creates day and night (1:4-5). Vegetation and animal life are created and intended to reproduce each "according to its kind." All of God's creatures have a particular function within his created order and are charged to fill the earth. The vegetation is charged to "bear fruit in which is their seed"(1:12), and the creatures of the earth are also charged to "be fruitful and multiply"(1:22). The charge to propagate is qualified with the admonition to reproduce only "according to its kind."

At every stage of God's creation one finds the pronouncement that, "God saw that it was very good"(1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). This perfect created order is not to be disturbed. According to P all that is created by God is to be maintained according to its original design and kind. A large part of the responsibility to maintain God's orderly creation is given to humankind. Although in the past the phrase "God created Man in his own image" has frequently been used to show humankind's lofty position over against the rest of God's creatures (humans were considered somewhat more fit to reflect God's very nature than the animal world), this position has been much refined in our century. Many scholars today interpret it as highlighting the task given to humanity rather than ascribing to humankind certain stature.[126]

Humankind shares with the rest of God's creatures the responsibility to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. Two other verbs are added: "subdue it (קַבֵּץ); and have

126. Westermann, in Genesis 1-11 (pp. 148-155), provides a helpful summary of the various positions taken by scholarship in interpreting Gen. 1:26-27.



dominion over ( |T7 ) ... every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). To be created in God's image is here directly related to the ability to rule. Wolff explains, "it is precisely in his function as ruler that he [Man] is God's image." [127] This interpretation of the text is often related to the ancient Near Eastern practice of setting up a king's statue which was considered an equivalent proclamation of his domination over that particular sphere. [128] In this way humankind is to function on behalf of God.

Likeness to God is not based on physical qualities, for P, no doubt, was familiar with J's account of man being created out of the substance of the earth as the other creatures were and sharing with them in the fragile, transient nature of life. Rather, in God's created order humankind is given a distinct task. W. Janzen writes the following about this tension between humanity's oneness with the rest of the created order and its divinely given task:

Humankind is created by God as "earthling," a part of the earth. Adam is one of the works of God's six days of creation, a brother to the stones, plants, and animals. What lifts humans above these is not higher quality and lordship, but higher calling and responsibility. [129]

Thus for P's view of humanity, the accent must be placed on its function, rather than on its superiority over God's created world.

Humanity, living faithfully according to its higher

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127. Anthropology of the Old Testament, Trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p. 1974.

128. Ibid., pp. 151-154, 158-159.

129. Still in the Image: Essays in Biblical Theology and Anthropology (Newton: Faith and Life, 1982), p. 63-64.

calling and responsibility can, in so doing, represent the image of God. Werner H. Schmidt, also having emphasized the function of humankind, examines the ancient belief of the king reflecting or representing a god and suggests that in P, this thought is developed and all humankind is perceived to function in this manner.[130] In P's creation account all humanity is to represent symbolically God's rule on earth. As the royal statues of old represented the rule of absent kings, so also is humankind to represent God's rule and interests on earth. By ruling vicariously through His creatures God seeks to maintain His created order.

The attempt to maintain created order is, however, not only dependent on God's agents, humankind, but also on his very presence. Although God created an orderly world out of chaos and gave to humankind the task of ruling it, His presence continues to be a factor in the ongoing story of history. Contrary to other ancient Near Eastern creation stories, where humanity is created to take over the earthly responsibilities of the gods who wanted nothing to do with the earth,[131] P's God maintains a vital interest in His creation.

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130. Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973). He writes: "Ist der König 'Ebenbild Gottes,' so ist schon in Israels Umwelt weniger an seine Gestalt oder körperliche Ähnlichkeit mit der Gottheit als an seine Stellung oder sein Amt gedacht. Aber nun ist nach der Priesterschrift nicht mehr nur der König, sondern ein jeder 'Bild Gottes.' Das sagt Gen 1:26f. nicht nur auf Israel beschränkt, sondern vom Menschen als Geschöpf. Als Gottes Schöpfung ist der Mensch Gottes Bild, und als Bild Gottes ist er Gottes Schöpfung.... Wie der altorientalische König eben als König 'Bild Gottes' ist, so ist der Mensch als Mensch 'Bild Gottes'" (pp. 143-144).

131. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, p. 159.

As humanity's rule on earth represents God's rule most fully among his creatures, so the sabbath is to represent God's true presence and sovereignty on earth. In P's scheme the sabbath was the precursor of the cult to come. De Vaux has shown the different religious significance of D's sabbath and that of P. In D the sabbath functions as a reminder of God's guidance of Israel out of Egypt (Deut. 5:14b-15), while in P it becomes the first sign of God's eternal presence.[132] In P only the sabbath is "hallowed" at this stage in P's history. Having sanctified this day (Gen. 2:3) P, on another occasion, describes the sabbath as an "everlasting sign" (Ex. 31:17). Thus in P's history it functions both as a sign between God and the people of Israel and as God's final stamp on his good creation.

P's unique propensity to present its material with precision and order is clearly visible in its creation account. In six days God created order out of chaos and placed upon humanity the responsibility to maintain that created order. The seventh day God hallowed. A frequent observation made by scholars is that the creation of humanity in the image of God represents the climax of God's creative activity. This may be a misreading of P. The crescendo in P's creation account reaches its ultimate intensity in the hallowing of the se-

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132. De Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 481. De Vaux has connected both D's and P's sabbath with the covenant. Having done so he distinguishes between the two perspectives stating that the difference, "is that whereas Deuteronomy has in view of the people of the Covenant, the Priestly texts place the emphasis on the God of the Covenant." Here, too, one sees P's intense focus on God, over against D's emphasis on God's people.

venth day. Thus the highlight of this creation account is God Himself and not man.

In P's creation account God and His divine ordering of the world is the primary focal point. According to P God embodies pure order and conversely, order in its fullest sense represents God. Chaos represents all that is opposite to God. From P's creation account it has been shown that from God's divine ordering of things springs life, harmony, perfection and meaning. His order replaces chaos and by His word He creates living creatures where before no life existed. From formlessness and confusion God gives to His creation a particular design. Its various parts are to function in harmony and not discord. Finally, His created order is perfect ("exceedingly good").

With this understanding of God and creation order P seeks to encourage the exilic/post-exilic Israelite community. The God who created the universe also created Israel. As God established order out of chaos in the very beginning of time, so also can He again create order and inject new life for the distraught people of Israel.

As mentioned above, the sabbath represents the climax of all which God created and functions as a constant reminder of Gods presence in, and ownership of, His creation. As God rested on the seventh day so also was humankind to join God in this rest. Ralph Klein, along with others, has noted that the sabbath, understood in this way, also represented a highly confessional day for the exilic community which lived

in Babylon where this practice was foreign.[133]

#### b) The Covenant with Noah

In P's creation account the sabbath functions symbolically as a sign of God's final imprint on and approval of creation and a symbol of His presence to His creatures. So also have scholars pointed to the function of the rainbow in the Noah story as a sign of God's presence and commitment. Other elements exist in this story which help elucidate P's historical perspective. Friedman, along with other scholars, has argued that although P follows J's account closely it does, nevertheless, provide some significant differences.[134] One significant difference can be seen in its telling of the number of animals entering the ark. The account stating that "seven pairs of all clean animals ... and a pair of animals that are not clean" (Gen: 7:2) be taken into the ark by Moses, is assigned to J.[135] Westermann explains that this is true because of the higher value placed on them by the Israelites.[136]

Friedman agrees that Genesis 7:2-3 belongs to J but disagrees with the assessment that the cl/uncl animal dis-

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133. Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p. 126. But see also J. Morgenstern's article, "Sabbath" [IDB, Vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 135], who notes that there was also a Babylonian day (sabattu) designated specifically as a "day of quieting of the heart." However, he does not regard this day as similar to or inspiring the inception of the Hebrew sabbath.

134. The Exile, p. 82. Here he follows S. Mowinckel, Erwägungen zur Pentateuch Quellenfrage (Trondheim: Universitetsforlaget, 1964), p. 28f.

135. Cf. von Rad, Genesis, p. 119; Westermann, Genesis, p. 428.

136. Genesis, pp. 427-428.

inction is based on their utility for humans. J places a higher value on clean animals because of its sacrificial practice. For P, however, legitimate sacrifice is only possible after the introduction of the cult at Sinai and thus one finds no mention of cl/uncl animals in his version (Gen.7:11,13-16a,24; 8:1,2a,3b,4,5,7-13a,14-19; 19:1-17). He writes:

In J, Noah takes seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals into the ark. In P he takes only one pair of each, with no reference to the cl/uncl distinction. This is part and parcel of P's consistent presentation in which there can be no sanctioned sacrifice prior to the consecration of Aaron and the Tabernacle.[137]

According to Friedman J's Noah promptly offers a sacrifice to God upon leaving the ark and thus requires more "clean" animals. But in P, "the righteous Noah cannot possibly perform a sacrifice and therefore requires no extra sacrificeable animals." [138]

The difference between the J and P account need not suggest two independent sources but may be accounted for, again, by examining the intent of each writer. As has been stated above, P's focus remains intensely on God while JE and D do tend to place the accent on the people of God. In the JE account of the flood, the salvation of Noah and the creatures of the earth is highlighted. Although this theme does not go unappreciated in P the accent in P's flood account is on the rainbow and its implications. As the sabbath functions as a sign between God and his creatures so also does

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137. Ibid., p. 82.

138. Ibid.

the rainbow which is here described as "a sign of the covenant" (Gen. 9:13). JE, having other concerns, makes no mention of this important theme in P.

For P, the Noah flood account provides a good opportunity to continue his particular story which began with the creation account. Here, too, we find the familiar blessing, "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1,7). P makes a slight addition in the Noah account, however. Whereas in its creation account all living creatures are given only vegetation for food (Gen. 1:29), after the flood God says to Noah: "every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything" (Gen. 9:3). No mention is made of distinguishing between cl/uncl animals. All animals are edible at this stage in P's "history".

Although there can be little doubt that P was familiar with the concept of cl/uncl foods (if not from JE then certainly from the surrounding peoples of the ANE who all possessed a consciousness of tabooed foods), this notion of cl/uncl foods is proleptic outside P's particular history at this point. The old prohibition against the consumption of blood, however, is not overlooked. As was noted above, blood and life are considered synonymous, and all life belongs to God.[139] According to P not only of man but of even the beasts of the earth, God "will surely require a reckoning" if flesh with blood is consumed (Gen. 9:5).[140] Following this

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139. See p. 10. Cf. also Westermann, Genesis, p. 464.

140. See above, pp. 145 and 149-150.

prohibition, the original charge to be fruitful and multiply and abundantly fill the earth is restated (Gen. 9:6-7). The statement "God made man in his own image," reaffirms (as discussed above) humanity's responsibility to represent God and maintain the order set out by Him.

In both the creation and flood accounts P highlights God. One finds this to be true also in P's story of the covenant with Abraham. It will be examined next.

### c) The Covenant with Abraham

It has long been recognized that the Abrahamic covenant has been preserved in two forms: one coming from J (Gen. 15) and the other from P (Gen. 17). In the J account God's covenant is specifically stated to be a response to Abraham's request.[141] In P's telling of the Abraham story Friedman notes that "the account opens with God's self-introduction to Abraham." [142] He points to three further differences between the P and J account. Whereas in J Abraham performs a covenantal sacrifice by dividing an animal in two parts [143] one finds no hint of such a practice in P. Friedman writes: "the absence of the covenant sacrifice in P ... is consistent with the total absence of sacrifice by any character in P prior to the consecration of the Tabernacle." [144] Two other differences between P and D are: (1) In the P account it is Abraham who laughs at God's promise while in J it is Sarah and; (2)

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141. G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 717.

142. The Exile, p. 85. Cf. also von Rad, Genesis, pp. 197-198.

143. See also Mendenhall, "Covenant," p. 718.

144. The Exile, p. 85.



In P God addresses Abraham directly regarding the naming of Isaac, while in J one finds a visit from angels to Abraham and Sarah.[145]

These differences between J and P have been used by Friedman to support his contention for a pre-exilic date for P. The differences can also be accounted for, however, by again focusing on the intent of P, over against J. In P the focus is on the supreme God who introduces Himself to Abraham while in J, the focus is on Abraham's cry of despair and God's response to that cry.[146] Further, in J Abraham is protected from slander and Sarah is portrayed as the one who laughs at God's promises. In P God's sovereignty is highlighted with much less value placed on the Patriarch's behavior. P's general avoidance of anthropomorphisms explains the last difference between J and P.

Whereas JE tends to highlight the experiences of individuals, P appears more concerned with focusing on God. P is keenly aware of the many problems which the nation of Israel has encountered. Thus P places its hope not in humankind but in God. For this reason in both the Noachic and Abrahamic covenants P introduces the unilateral promise in an attempt to solve the problem of the broken covenant.[147] According to P all hope for order and life rests in God who

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145. Ibid.

146. Von Rad, in Genesis, writes: "The Yahwist set God's call in the midst of Abraham's human situation.... The Priestly document, on the other hand, reduces Abraham's call to the purely theological, i.e., it speaks in vs. 1-14 of God only. Not a single word is said about Abraham, only the gesture of reverence in v. 3" (p. 197).

147. Klein, Israel in Exile, p. 143.

receives all of its attention.

Before moving to P's Sinai stage several other P features in the Abrahamic covenant need to be mentioned. It has frequently been observed that in P's Abrahamic covenant one again sees the progressively narrowing focus of God upon a particular people. Whereas in its flood account God's covenant is extended to all peoples, in the Abrahamic covenant it is extended only to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:7). Further, the sign of God's covenant in this account is circumcision (Gen. 17:11). The sign of circumcision is now added to P's other signs, the sabbath and the rainbow. In this last sign one finds the most personal and direct symbol of ownership and election. The focus of God's particular concern is now narrowing.[148] This becomes clear in his covenant with the people at Sinai.

#### d) The Covenant at Sinai

In examining the various source-critical questions above, it was noted that P is silent regarding any covenant-making event at Sinai.[149] Following Cross it was argued, however, that P quite likely "relied on the Epic tradition, especially the E tradition of Exodus 24:1-8 for the narrative of the covenant rites." [150] Exodus 24:15-18 is frequently considered as "P's parallel to the account by JE in chapter 19 of Moses' ascent on the mountain." [151] Cross has also

148. Blenkinsopp, Wisdom, p. 109.

149. See p. 62.

150. Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 320.

151. J.P. Hyatt, Exodus, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 258. Cf. also Martin Noth, Exodus: A Commentary, Old Testament Library, Trans. J.S. Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 200.

pointed to Leviticus 26 and shown how the "traditional covenant form is intact in these verses." [152] As P made no mention of a covenant ritual in its Noachic and Abrahamic covenant account, so must one also assume that although few verses in P relate directly to a covenant making event at Sinai, P, nevertheless, took such a tradition for granted. [153] Accepting the Sinai covenant tradition as a given, P proceeded to pour "his traditions into the Sinai section until it dwarfed all his other sections and indeed his other periods." [154]

This study of the various periods in P's history began with an examination of P's creation account. It is well known, however, that it is P's concern with the cult which gives rise to its particular telling of history, including its creation account. Von Rad states: "P is utterly serious in wanting to show that the cult which entered history in the people of Israel is the goal of the origin and evolution of the world. Creation itself was designed to lead to this Israel." [155] According to P, "at Sinai Jahweh founded Israel's cult" [156] and before that occasion Israel "was yet entirely without cult." [157]

Friedman's observations regarding P's concern to show no sacrifices in its telling of Israel's history gains support

152. Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 319.

153. Ibid. Cross, concerning P's Abrahamic account: "The Priestly covenant with Abraham has no tradition of a covenant ritual in Genesis 17. We must assume that the J rites in Genesis 15 serve the purpose."

154. Ibid., p. 318.

155. Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 233.

156. Ibid., p. 234.

157. Ibid., p. 240.

from these conclusions. Von Rad had earlier noted that because P considered Israel to be without cult before Sinai, it "excised from the traditions which it inherited all records of sacrifices in the period from Abraham down to the revelation at Sinai, and in many other ways as well it distorted the traditional material." [158] Friedman has shown this to be true. In P's telling of history, the cl/uncl animal distinction also only becomes a significant theme after the Sinai event.

As has been repeatedly argued P's concerns evolve first and foremost around its perception of God. Although undoubtedly aware of the other traditions, it is not P's intent to "distort" the older material but rather to highlight God, His created order and His intentions for the created cosmos. God had chosen Israel and set it apart (consecrated it) for Himself. At Sinai Israel enters into a covenant relationship with God and thus becomes a sacred community. This event represents the highpoint in P's salvation history. What is new in this period and afterwards for P is "Jahweh's revelation of himself in the Kābôd, in which he now puts himself at Israel's disposal," [159] and enters into a covenant relationship with it. Through this event the promises to the patriarchs are fulfilled (Gen. 17:7). [160]

Although P believed Israel to be a sacred community there remained a clear distinction between God and His people. The notion of God's presence demanded that all within

158. Ibid., p. 240-241.

159. Ibid. The Hebrew here means, "the Glory of Yahweh."

160. Soggin, Introduction, p. 143.

His chosen sphere of direct involvement be carefully regulated. In P's portrayal of the wilderness camp the priests and Levites were to camp around the tabernacle, the place where God's Kābôd would descend, and thus provide a separation or protecting wall between God's holy meeting place and His people (Num. 2). P, here, differs from E, where the tent is found outside the camp (Ex. 33:7). This difference can be accounted for by examining P's view of God. P's perspective of God, the cult and the priesthood, which flows directly from the Sinai event, will be examined next.

## 2. P's View of God: The Sovereign and Holy One

Eichrodt has noted that P's conception of God is similar to that found in the JE Mosaic experience of God as awe-inspiring and unapproachable.[161] However, in P the past connection of God with a dazzling fire-like phenomenon is left behind.[162] For P "and the Glory of Yahweh"

becomes the important terminus technicus used to describe God's presence.[163] The translation "glory" of Yahweh derives from the Hebrew Kābôd which carries with it the sense of "heavy/weighty," "standing," "splendor," and "honor." [164] These terms provided a most fitting description of a God who is set aside as "totally other" with whom none can be compared, and who has created order, harmony and perfection out of chaos. It is his vast and good creation

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161. Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 406.

162. Ibid., p. 277; von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 240.

163. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 240.

164. Ibid., p. 239; Eichrodt, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 30. Cf. J. Muilenburg, "Holiness," IDB, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 618.

which reflects God's exceeding greatness.

The idea of God's Kābôd was not a new creation of P but, as Von Rad has argued, it was merely a reintroduction of an older sacred tradition in the interest of promoting greater spirituality.[165] In the older traditions the tent was regarded the place of revelation [166] and the ark symbolized God's presence.[167] Although these two traditions have frequently been considered as originally independent, in P they are combined.[168] Whereas in the older traditions God may have been perceived as dwelling in the tent of meeting this changes in P.

P's struggle to integrate older material with its present theological convictions creates real tensions. Soggin writes:

The P Sinai pericope is dominated by a particular kind of theological dialect; on the one hand God 'lives,' 'dwells' in the midst of his own people; on the other hand, he 'meets' with the people at the Tent of Meeting. ... Now in this dialect the theme of meeting plainly prevails over that of dwelling....[169]

Von Rad states matters more emphatically, "the tabernacle is -----

165. Von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, Trans. David Stalker, Studies in Biblical Theology (London: S C M, 1953), p. 40. Von Rad connects the tabernacle with the אֶלֶּהֶם לֵּאמֹר, or "the tent of meeting" (p. 39). Cross has noted that the archaic term אֶלֶּהֶם לֵּאמֹר, referring the Israel's earlier shrine, is reinterpreted by P and understood as "the tent of revelation" or "tent of divine-human meeting" (Canaanite Myth, p. 300).

166. Blenkinsopp, Prophecy, p. 76.

167. Eichrodt, Old Testament, Vol. 2, p. 109.

168. G.H. Davies in "Ark of the Covenant" [IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 225], observes that P's name for the ark, "ark of the testimony" is used thirteen times exclusively by P. The "tent of meeting" or "the tent of the testimony" tradition was likely drawn together with that of the ark by P with its term for the ark. Cf. von Rad, Old Testament, p. 237.

169. Introduction, pp. 143.

neither the dwelling place of Jahweh himself nor of his name, but the place on earth where, for the time being, the appearance of Jahweh's glory meets with His people." [170] For P, God is absolutely transcendent and He appears from time to time at the tabernacle in His Kābôd.

The implications of God's holiness and transcendence affect every aspect of Israel's life. His sovereignty and holiness arouses fear and reverence in all. The holy creator God is totally other and must, therefore, even be separated from His sacred community. Contact between the sacred and profane could evoke calamity. Thus, although His holy presence among Israel is perceived as a favor from God, W. Janzen notes that it,

... is at the same time a very threatening phenomenon, because it brings two very distinct spheres, the divine and the human, dangerously close to each other. Anything unclean is related to the presence of the tabernacle (Lev. 16:10; Num. 19:20; cf. Ezek. 43:9) and may spark off disaster (Lev. 10:1-2). The main concern of P, therefore, becomes the question: How can Israel become a clean people, so that the appearance of the Lord in its midst can be tolerated and not lead to its destruction? [171]

Cross, pointing to the solution advanced by P to this new predicament, writes:

The entire cultic paraphernalia and cultus was designed to express and overcome the problem of the holy, transcendent God visiting his pervasively sinful people. Zones of holiness in the Tabernacle and court, and in the battle camp vividly express the paradox of the immanence of the Holy One. [172]

According to Janzen, Leviticus 10:10-11 can well be consid-

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170. Studies, p. 39.

171. "The Theological Meaning of the Sin Offering," p. 3. An unpublished paper written in 1961.

172. Canaanite Myth, p. 299.

ered the Leitmotiv of P:[173]

You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.

Israel, that sacred community which entered into a covenant relationship with God, was to live by the statutes given by God, mediated to the people through Moses, and now promulgated by the priests. In an effort to secure God's presence and guard against His wrath (Lev. 15:31), the community sought to obey His commandments and recreate the order, harmony and perfection which embody and reflect the creator God. For P it is the cult and the priests which play an important role in teaching God's chosen people to be His holy ones, thus obtaining His blessing.

### 3. The Cult

Von Rad has noted that in P, "the cult brings Israel to the remembrance of Jahweh." [174] Further, from the very earliest times Israel knew that the correct performance of the cult was essential for it to be the recipient of God's blessing, [175] which insured public order and well-being, shalom. [176] P, well aware of the cultic excesses of the past, seeks to enforce many of the older cultic regulations, and at the same time, to introduce new requirements and restrictions. For example, in P one finds that blood is no longer the only way of atoning for sin (Lev. 5:11-13) but that

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173. Janzen, "Theological," p. 4.  
174. Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 242.  
175. Blenkinsopp, Wisdom, p. 106.  
176. Blenkinsopp, Prophecy, p. 108



obedience and confession (Lev. 5:5) now appear to become more significant (vss. 5-6).[177] Also, Fohrer notes what has been mentioned above, that in P "it is no longer possible to approach God directly; one must instead go through the clergy, who act as mediators." [178] In P the laity could no longer offer up sacrifices and pronounce blessings because this task was reserved for the priests alone.[179] Whereas JE's Moses could say: "you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6), P places the emphasis squarely on the latter and insists that only Aaron's descendants may function as priests. All this in an effort to prevent the cultic problems of the past.

It has frequently been noted that in P one finds a catalogue of cultic requirements which seek to regulate the sacrificial observances of Israel. This material has been shown to be a diverse collection, which was probably transmitted first orally and then in written form by the priests.[180] With this in mind von Rad concludes that "the document in no sense develops anything like an even reasonably complete theology of the cult. In this respect it has in

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177. Janzen, "Theological," p. 5-7. With regard to confession cf., von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 261. See also Jacob Milgrom, Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 108-110. Milgrom makes a distinction between voluntary and involuntary sin. In the case of the former confession is necessary. For involuntary sin "remorse alone suffices; it renders confession superfluous."

178. Introduction, p. 185.

179. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 244.

180. Rolf Rendtorff, Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 20-22. Cf. also von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, pp. 250-253.

general been much overestimated." [181] In his treatment of the sacrifices von

Rad states:

We must abandon from the outset with P any idea that it is possible to presuppose, behind each kind of sacrifice, a precise theory of the sacral event in question exactly distinguishing it from all the other kinds. Not only is none given by P: but there are even indications that so precise a theory as we should perhaps expect no longer in fact existed. [182]

It may not be possible to gain the precision sought after by von Rad but this should not deter the Old Testament student in his/her quest to find the underlying theology of P which served to guide it in its final selection and interpretation of the older material. [183] Von Rad is undoubtedly correct with his observation that "if the writer of P had not had to work with old traditions, if he could have made up his own theological construction independently of them, everything would certainly have been much more uniform." [184] To state, however, that "it was obviously entirely outside P's intention to suggest to the worshipper any specific understanding of the sacrifices" [185] raises the question, why incorporate these particular sacrifices to begin with?

It has been stated above that in placing the sacrificial system and the older laws within the Sinai event P sought to legitimate them. In its reworking of the older material, however, it also sought to create social and cultic order for

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181. Old Testament, Vol. 1, pp. 251-252.

182. Ibid.

183. Janzen, "Theological," p. 2.

184. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 259.

185. Ibid., p. 260.

God's people and to safeguard their purity and thus avert the dangerous implications of God's holy presence in their midst.[186] P recognized Israel's daily contact with that which was unclean and from which it must sanctify itself in order to participate in any cultic activity (Ex. 19:10,14). Even the holy of holies, the altar and tabernacle required cleansing from all the people's uncleanness (Lev. 16:20-21). According to P God's holiness, purity and perfection demands that every aspect of Israel's life be drawn into the divine order which is expressed in God's creation and His will for His chosen people.

P, intensely concerned with God, His holiness and created order, does not differentiate carefully between sin and uncleanness.[187] In fact, notes L.E. Toombs, sin and uncleanness are frequently used as synonyms in P.[188] Further, no clear distinction is made between ritual and moral cleanness or overt sin and ritual impurity.[189] Both could be equally destructive since God's holiness could "break out" and destroy the person who profaned the sanctuary (Lev. 10) or sinned flagrantly (Num. 16). Both uncleanness and sin require a sin-offering because they threaten the holiness of the community by standing in opposition to God. From this perspective P's view of sin must be seen as much wider than

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186. Philip J. Budd, Numbers, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 5 (Waco: Word Books, 1984), p. 77.

187. See P's treatment of a suspected adulterous in Num. 5. Here moral delinquency is named and treated as uncleanness (vs. 20).

188. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean," p. 647. See Lev. 5:3-5.

189. J.K. Zink, "Uncleanness and Sins: A Study of Job 14:4 and Ps. 51:7." VI 17(1967), p. 360.

it is presently regarded and it belongs together with all that which disrupts proper order in Israel.[190] Douglas Davies, thinking along this line, has argued that the idea of sacrifices is connected to restoring the social order which has been disrupted.[191] Porter has also argued that "the sacrificial system is the objective way ordained by God which restores to full fellowship the offender,"[192] and thus creates social order.

Because of the nature of God and His relationship with His people all transgressions against His law were considered a grave offense that both affected the transgressor and the community as a whole. It imperilled the whole cult since it was believed that through transgression evil had been set in motion and would inevitably turn against the transgressor and the community to which s/he belonged.[193] Therefore, the community had much at stake and the priests, in the context of the cult, were given the task of making atonement for the individual transgressor and the community as a whole. Where they failed in assisting the people in distinguishing between the holy and profane, in keeping God's laws, disorder and destruction become inevitable (Ezek. 22: 26).

Whereas scholars have often pointed to the biblical tendency to demythologize older traditions Blenkinsopp makes the observation that at certain points P "remythologizes"

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190. Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 8.

191. "Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus." *ZAW* 89(1977), p. 393.

192. *Leviticus*, p. 8.

193. Von Rad, *Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 265.

matters related to the cult.[194] As in the older traditions preparation for worship required physical rites (washing and cleansing - Ex. 19:10f) P now seeks to order and regulate worship using many of these older laws.[195] With the sacrificial laws, as well as the cl/uncl regulations, P sought symbolically to recreate holiness among the people along with a sense of divine order and presence. The priests play an important role in all this and will be discussed next.

#### 4. The Priests

It was noted above that for P the cult brings Israel to a remembrance of God. This is no less true of the priests. In P the priest is the mediator between God and His people.[196] It is the task of the priest to assure God's blessing on the people. In the new hierarchical pattern advocated by P all temple-personal could serve in the cult but the sons of Aaron alone are given the responsibility of pronouncing the blessing and offering sacrifices to God.[197] In P it is the Aaronic priests who now function as the custodians of the old revelation [198] and as the primary mediators for Israel.

Following the older sources in the first stages of its history, P also portrays God as extending his blessing to the recipients directly. God extends a word of blessing to the animals (Gen. 1:28), to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28), to Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1), to Abraham and his family (Gen. 17).

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194. Blenkinsopp, Prophecy, p. 108.

195. Westermann, Elements, pp. 201 and 214.

196. Ibid., p. 198.

197. Budd, Numbers, p. 76.

198. E.C. Blackman, "Mediator in the Old Testament," IDB, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 322.

But at Sinai, after the people have done the work which God had commanded, it is Moses who blesses the people (Ex. 39:43). After the consecration of Aaron and his sons it is Moses and Aaron who bless the people (Lev. 9:22-23). Still later it becomes the responsibility of Aaron and his sons as announced by Moses:

The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron and his sons, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them" (Num. 7:22-27).

Thus in P von Rad notes that it became "the business of the priests" to pronounce the blessing and put the name of Yahweh on the cultic community.[199] Although it was still God who ultimately gave the blessing it was the priests through whom it was now mediated. Further, whereas in the past the "name-theology" was directly related to the central sanctuary,[200] in P the "name" (and thereby His blessing) is placed upon the people.[201]

In P expiation also could only be effected by the Aaronide priesthood. Von Rad notes that "in P, as distinct from D, the one who effects expiation is never Jahweh himself: instead, it is everywhere the priest who does this." [202] In this case as well it is, of course, ultimately God who effects expiation. The priests, however, now stand out as

199. Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 246.

200. Von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, p. 38.

201. Budd, Numbers, p. 77.

202. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 270.

Yahweh's fully authorized agents.[203] All this is quite consistent with regard to P's understanding of Israel's history, its past problems and P's solution to those problems. With this in mind it is hardly possible to overstate the very important position and role given to the priesthood.

P, writing to a people who have lost their sense of rootedness and purpose in the world scheme of things, seeks to create order and inject new life into a movement that is being threatened from all sides. It is the assumption of this study that P, in its attempt to create new hope and life for this people, takes up significant past traditions, adds to it new material, and in every way attempts to establish a new community based upon the one formed at Sinai. Israel's experience with kingship ultimately constituted a disastrous failure. Therefore, P envisions a theocracy, where God Himself would rule through His very presence in the midst of the people. His primary mediators, the priests, are to guide His holy people in their efforts to separate themselves from all that is unholy. To this end P seeks to encourage the people to practice a type of imitatio sacerdotium.

W. Janzen has noted that one can find four ethical paradigms in the Old Testament: the patriarch/wisdom, royal, priestly and prophetic paradigm.[204] In P the people are presented with the priestly paradigm.[205] As in the case of

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203. Ibid.

204. Lecture at University of Manitoba, October 2, 1984, in the course "Seminar in Biblical Religions: Ethical Themes from the Old Testament" (Religious Studies, 20. 704).

205. This is true also in certain psalms and prophetic passages (e.g., Ps. 15:24; Isa. 33:14-16; Ezek. 18.

the priest, all of life is seen in relation to the cult. As certain restrictions are placed on the priests that served at the tabernacle, so also are many of the regulations extended to the people who live in the setting of the camp or holy community. Whereas the laws regarding the priests were related to the tabernacle, the laws for the people are extended to the community itself. Although P could never describe Israel as "a kingdom of priests" with regard to cultic duties, P does, nevertheless, appear to ask the people to live life with that same God-consciousness that accompanied the life of the priest. Thus one finds the continual reference to the tabernacle and to ritual practices which symbolize God's presence and accessibility.

#### 5) Symbolism in P

P's intense focus on God and its particular understanding of Israel's history appear to be major factors in prompting it to use certain symbols in expressing its message. In P's creation story and in its "historical excerpts" P presents a picture which is to inspire a downcast people. The sabbath, the rainbow, circumcision and the cult are all signs which are used to remind Israel of God's presence and relationship with her.

The tabernacle and ark, too, are used in a symbolic way to re-emphasize that which lay at the heart of the cult - God's presence with His people. Earlier it was noted that the old tent tradition,  $\text{אֶוֶן מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם}$ , was interpreted by P as "the tent of revelation" or "the tent of meeting," the place



where Yahweh meets with His people.[206] Cross has observed that the covenant formulary, "I will become your God", is "expanded and brings us to the very heart of the Priestly covenant theology." [207] He points to both Leviticus 26:11-13 and Exodus 29:45ff and then asserts:

The prime benefit of the Sinaitic covenant in the view of the Priestly tradent was the "tabernacling" presence of Yahweh in Israel's midst. Yahweh not only would become their god, he would become the god in their midst, who "walks about" among them.[208]

In his comparative study of D's and P's understanding of the tent/tabernacle and ark von Rad convincingly demonstrates how for P both the tent and ark were considered the place where Yahweh's glory meets with His people from time to time.[209] Thus, in no uncertain terms, both tabernacle and ark functioned as symbols of God's presence.

Mount Sinai can also be considered a symbol of Israel's birth and God's presence. Robert Cohen has noted that the later biblical writers, in fact, "did not even know its location, for only vague indication are given (Exod. 3:18; 19:1; Deut. 1:2). [210] Although merely a memory, Mount Sinai was, nonetheless, a sacred symbol linking the birth of Israel to primal time. Cohen writes:

Mount Sinai represents the beginning of time because there creation occurs, the creation of Israel. Indeed, the giving of law at Sinai is analogous to the act of bringing order out of chaos in creation myths.[211]

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206. See pp. 116-117.  
207. Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 298.  
208. Ibid., p. 299.  
209. Studies in Deuteronomy, pp. 39-41.  
210. The Shape of Sacred Space (Chico: Scholars, 1981), p. 43.  
211. Ibid., p. 56.

As God created and ordered the world "in the beginning" and as He created and ordered Israel at Sinai, so again He seeks to recreate Israel and again bring order to the exilic/post-exilic community which P addresses.

At Sinai Israel is chosen to be a holy people, and its priests are charged to teach the people to distinguish between cl/uncl. Von Rad has noted that "uncleanness was the most basic form in which Israel encountered that which was displeasing to God," and that for Israel, the question of cl/uncl "constantly arose in the life of the individual [as a] ... status confessionis".[212] Choices in life between God (and all which He demands and embodies) or other gods, continually needed to be made a pertinent issue in the exilic/post-exilic community. The cl/uncl legislation, impacting every area of life, sought to extend the realm of the sacred to incorporate all of life. In this way all Israel was symbolically associated closely to the cult. As a sacred community, therefore, all laws related directly to the cult.

To suggest that Israel was a "holy people" or to state that all of life was placed in the sphere of the holy was, of course, also to speak symbolically. Uncleanness and sin were an inevitable part of Israel's existence (Lev. 16:15-16; Num. 8:19). However, through the various laws and rites, God had provided a means by which purity might be **declared** by the priests, God's representatives. Through this priestly declaration the Israelite could be **symbolically** restored to holiness.

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212. Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 273.

With regard to the symbolic way in which P's laws function, Hartmut Gese offers a very satisfying interpretation. He suggests that P views God's laws as "the transcendental basing of life in symbolic actions."<sup>[213]</sup> Further, he argues, this new reality which P envisions, the holiness of God's people and His transcendence and accessibility to them, can not be confined to doctrine but can be symbolically achieved through the cult.<sup>[214]</sup> Gese offers a good insight here, namely that the cult functioned to **pronounce** symbolically Israel holy (as was the task of the priests, mentioned above). According to Gese holiness for Israel was made possible by the revealed cult, and it enables the people to live a holy life and to be obedient to the revelation, "you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:45).<sup>[215]</sup> Yet Gese cautions, "such a law can only be kept, it can not be fulfilled."<sup>[216]</sup> Only God alone, of course, is ultimately holy. His people, however, by living obediently according to His laws and intentions, can symbolically recreate holiness and thus be **declared** holy.

It was stated above that in P's telling of history God is its primary focal point. It is, therefore, no surprise that the theme of holiness dominates its laws. God is described as holy, and so are His people. But how can holiness best be described? In P's creation story the actions of God reflect His very essence. Thus holiness and

213. Hartmut Gese, Essays on Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), p. 73.

214. Ibid., p. 74.

215. Ibid., p. 72.

216. Ibid.

the creation of order, life, design and perfection are all closely associated to holiness. God's people, although never intrinsically holy, can live, however, in such a way that they symbolize holiness. We turn now to the cl/uncl legislation to examine how these laws were to assist Israel in symbolically being a "holy people".[217]

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217. To state that the cl/uncl laws function in a symbolic fashion is not to suggest that they functioned only as a symbol, detached from reality. A symbol frequently participates in some measure with that which is real. V.H. Kooy writes: "The religious symbol points beyond itself to reality, participates in its power, and makes intelligible its meaning. As such it goes beyond a sign or an image." He states further: "The value of a symbol is its ability to elucidate; to compress into a simple, meaningful whole, readily grasped and retained; to provide a center for shaping of conduct and belief" ["Symbol, Symbolism," IDB, Vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 472]. It is in this sense that I use the term symbol.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN PRIESTLY THOUGHT

In chapter four, P's theology was examined. It was shown that P seeks to portray all of life as flowing from God, who in an orderly fashion has created the world and has had an active hand in the historical development of Israel. It was suggested that, according to P, order in its fullest sense represents God. In P's creation account one finds that from God's divine working of things spring order, life, design, harmony, perfection and meaning. Chaos, death, confusion, discord, imperfection and absurdity represent the opposite.

In this chapter, particularly the contrasting categories of order/disorder and life/death will be shown to be present in the various cl/uncl laws. It was noted in chapter three that Douglas, in Purity and Danger, attempted to relate the meat laws, in particular, directly to P's creation account. W. Janzen had five years earlier made a similar point:

The common denominator for such diverse phenomena of uncleanness as leprosy, a rock badger or a pig, and the touching of a dead body seems to lie in the idea that a mixing of orders (Schoepfungsordnungen) makes unclean.[1]

It is the intent of this chapter to demonstrate that the cl/uncl regulations relate directly to God's divine ordering of things. That which maintains and reflects His divine order, design, life and perfection is considered clean. That which

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1. "The Theological Meaning," p. 4.

creates or symbolizes chaos, confusion, death and imperfection is unclean. These opposite spheres of order and disorder, life and death, etc., are to be kept separate. It was Israel's duty to distinguish between them and thus continue to be reminded of God and His intent for Israel and creation in general.

Within the limits of this chapter the five primary sources of uncleanness, which are most often discussed by scholars, will be examined first. Other P laws will then be drawn into the discussion and their relationship to cl/uncl thinking shown. Finally, P's use of the cl/uncl laws will be compared with that of D's use of these regulations.

#### A. FIVE PURITY LAWS EXAMINED

##### Introduction

P explicitly mentions five different sources which give rise to uncleanness. Although the various regulations are scattered throughout P they will be listed here in the order advanced by P in Leviticus 11-15 (where the majority appear). The five major sources of uncleanness are: (1) Eating certain animals (Lev. 11:1-23, 29-30, 41-47; 17:15-16; 22:8), (2) contact with a corpse (Lev. 11: 24-28, 31-40; 21:1-24; 22:4-5; Num. 5:2; 6:6-12; 19:11-16; 31:19-20), (3) childbirth (Lev. 12:1-8), (4) 'leprosy' (Lev. 13:1-14:57; Num. 5:2; 22:4) and, (5) 'discharge' (Lev. 15:1-33; Num. 5:2, 22:4).

P, concerned that an unclean person or object be cleansed, advances three different ways in which purification can be attained. Time is an important element in the cleans-

ing process involving certain unclean states.[2] One day, seven, forty or eighty days are the time units required to deal with the various unclean states. Washing, too, is a means of cleansing oneself.[3] Frequently both the passing of time and washing are required for cleansing. Bringing a sin offering, burnt offering, guilt offering and/or a cereal offering is required for all those whose uncleanness extends seven days or more.[4] Further, in the different regulations one occasionally finds what appear to be slight variations in what is prescribed.[5]

In chapter four it was mentioned that P in no way presents a comprehensive, tightly knit theology of the various sacrifices. This is true also of P's use of the old cl/uncl laws. This is not to say that there existed no underlying principle which guided P. It was stated above that P's understanding of God and His created order is significant in the shaping of its writings. P's view of God and His created order serves as the spectacles which guide P in its selection and use of the laws.

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2. Lev. 11:25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 39, 40; 12:2, 4, 5; 13:6; 15:6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28; 17:15; Num. 6:5; 19:11, 14, 16, 19, 21, 22; 31:19.

3. Lev. 11:25, 28, 32, 40; 13:6, 34, 54, 58; 14:8, 9, 47; 15:5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 27; 16:26, 28; 17:15; Num. 8:7, 21; 19:7, 8, 10, 12, 19, 21, 24; 31:24.

4. Lev. 5:2-6; 12:6-8; 14:13, 19-20; 15:15, 30; 16:11-16; Num. 8:8; 19:17.

5. For example, in Num. 5:2 the person with a discharge must be put outside the camp while in Lev. 15 certain cautions are extended to those in contact with a person having a discharge, and restrictions regarding participation in the cult are imposed on the unclean person, but nothing is said with regards to putting the person outside the community. Compare also the cleansing ritual of the leper in Lev. 13:13,34; and 14:9. Different requirements are advanced in these verses.

## 1. The Meat Laws

In the two most recent critical commentaries on Leviticus available to this writer both scholars frequently turn to the work of Douglas. Both Wenham and Porter see the animal world in Leviticus divided into the three spheres mentioned in P's creation account: those that walk on the land, fly in the air and swim in the waters.[6] Each animal within its particular sphere is given specific characteristics and "any creature which seems to diverge from its proper nature or proper sphere is therefore lacking in perfection and so unclean." [7]

Michael Carroll rejects this threefold classification scheme advanced by Douglas and argues that there exist in fact five different categories of animals which can be found in both Leviticus 11 and Genesis 1: 'cattle,' 'beasts,' 'creeping things,' 'fish' and 'birds.' [8] He recognizes that it is possible to collapse the first three of his five categories into a single 'land category' "but this would reflect the analytic preferences of the modern reader, and not the logic of Genesis, which is at pains to list these three [land] categories." [9]

According to Snaith there are four different categories of creatures mentioned in Leviticus 11: animals (2-8),

6. Wenham, Leviticus, p. 169; and Porter, Leviticus, p. 84.

7. Porter, Leviticus, p. 84. Cf. Wenham, Leviticus, p. 169.

8. "One More Time: Leviticus Revisited," AES 19(1978), p. 118.

9. Ibid. He points to Gen. 1:25 where all three land-based animals are mentioned: "And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind."



fish (9-12), birds (13-19) and swarming things (20-23). [10] He most closely follows the actual progression of the text, and it is his categories which will be used by this study. In this study two slight changes will be made: (1) Snaith's 'animal' category will be referred to as 'larger land-based animals'; and (2) his 'swarming things' category will be referred to as 'smaller land-based animals' (which include insects and insectivores).

#### a) The Larger Land-Based Animals

In chapter two it was mentioned that two characteristics are advanced by P which describe those larger land-based animals which are considered edible.

These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals you may eat (Lev. 11:2-3).

In this passage both "beasts" and "animals" are better consistently translated "cattle" [11] The characteristics mentioned here are found in many of the domesticated animals ("cattle") which Israel raised and used. Yet the category of domesticated animal ( בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה ) is not the only key. [12]

The key to understanding the meat laws seems to lie in Leviticus 11:44-45:

10. Leviticus and Numbers, p. 81.

11. The RSV is somewhat misleading since בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה is first translated "beasts" and then "animals". Yet in both Lev. 11:26 and 27 the RSV uses the term "animal". Here, however, the better translation would be "cattle" (vs.26) and "beasts" ( בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה used in vs.27). Although בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה is widely translated, "cattle" (for Lev. 11:2-3), appears preferable since it most frequently refers to animals owned and used by humans and only "rarely of wild beasts, esp. carnivora" (BDB, p. 97).

12. In Lev. 11:26 בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה also refer to unclean animals. Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. . . . For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

This passage makes it clear that the cl/uncl laws are based on the understanding that God's people are to be holy as God is holy. They are to live obediently according to His divine will and thus imitate God's holiness.

With regard to the particular characteristics mentioned concerning the clean animals which are acceptable for consumption, it is interesting that they represent the chief characteristics of the larger animals which Israel sacrificed to God. Wenham has observed that Israel's "diet was limited to certain meats in imitation of their God...."[13] This would receive further support were P's writings regarded as presenting a priestly paradigm which the people were to model. As the priests consumed primarily that meat which was offered in sacrifice, so also were the people to eat only that 'type' of animal which was set apart for sacrifice.

This of course, does not explain why these particular animals were chosen. To gain a better understanding, it is necessary to be reminded of God's original intent and design for His world and the changes which occur after the flood. In P's creation account all living creatures are given "every green plant for food" (Gen. 1:30.) This vegetarian state of existence changes after the flood when "every moving thing that lives" is given to humanity (alone) for food (Gen. 9:3). The concession appears here to be extended to humanity

13. Leviticus, p. 170.

alone.[14] Along with this new possibility, however, comes the injunction against the consumption of blood in Genesis 9:4. Since the concession is so closely related to the question of blood consumption perhaps only human beings may eat since they alone can properly drain the blood from the body. According to P any living creature which failed to obey this command would surely be severely judged by God: "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man" (Gen. 9:5). Leviticus 17:15 appears to support this position since here, all that has "died of itself or is torn by beast" (i.e., the blood has not been properly drained from the body) makes one unclean when eaten.

Of those animals which best symbolized the vegetarian life-style the two characteristics mentioned function best to represent that group **symbolically**. At no point does P seek to outline a comprehensive list concerning which animals are considered clean or unclean. The characteristics mentioned merely represent the dominant features of those animals which P knew not to be carnivorous and which were also used in the sacrificial system.

The camel, rock badger, hare and swine are advanced by P as unclean because they do not possess the required characteristics. Technically, of course, P is incorrect in its assumption that the camel, rock badger and hare "chew the cud".[15] Both the rock badger and hare are not cloven-footed

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14. Carroll, "One More Time," pp. 343-344.

15. Wenham, Leviticus, p. 172.

but move on "paws" (  $\text{פָּדָד}$  ), and are thus considered unclean (Lev. 11:27). Further, although the camel and hare may not be considered carnivores the swine and rock badger can both be considered omnivorous. Of the unacceptable animals mentioned by P the swine comes closest to fulfilling all the requirements. One may ask, if the hare or rock badger are considered as animals which "chew the cud", why not the swine? Perhaps the characteristics advanced by P are to serve largely in a symbolic fashion to describe all typical animals which restrict their diet to vegetation. The swine, being omnivorous, is thus **perceived** as not "chewing the cud" and thus conveniently rejected.

#### b) The Creatures Living in the Waters

Little is said regarding this category. Again, both Wenham and Porter follow Douglas and suggest that the demand for "fins and scales" represents P's understanding of "the proper characteristics for living and moving in aquatic conditions." [16] Carroll suggests that the ancient Israelite was familiar with carnivorous sharks, which had fins but lacked scales, and therefore regarded all animal life in the waters as unclean if it did not have fins and scales. [17] These interpretations are suggestive, but no strong textual support can be advanced in direct support for them. Yet there appears to be little which the biblical text will support, and thus some commentators merely mention the passage and say nothing about the meaning of the characteristics

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16. Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 86; Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 174.  
17. "One More Time," p. 123.

tics advanced here.[18]

As stated above, only certain domesticated animals familiar to Israel are considered clean and are acceptable for consumption. Perhaps this is a good starting point also for understanding P's view of edible sea food. Israel was familiar with fish and had eaten it in Egypt (Num. 11:5). There even appears to have been the practice among some to raise fish in pools.[19] Although it is uncertain to what extent fish were raised by the Israelites one can assume that "commercial" fishing was practiced. In fact a gate at Jerusalem was called the "fish gate", likely because of its connection to the sale of fish.[20] The Mediterranean, the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan were probably the primary sources.

Although Israel was undoubtedly aware of the fact that there existed a variety of water animals the fishing industry appears never to have been a primary one for Israel. The Phoenicians in the earlier days and the Tyrians in the later days of Israel monopolized the fishing industry.[21] P, in using the characteristic "fins and scales" may have used them because they were the most familiar and represented those animals commonly eaten in P's past. Knowledge of "man-eating" "whales" (Jonah) or carnivorous sharks may also lie behind the prohibition against eating fish without fins or scales.

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18. See Snaith, Leviticus, p. 82; and Noth, Leviticus, p. 93.

19. Cant. 7:3 - "fishpools of Heshbon." See also Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody, 1977), p. 479.

20. M. Burrows, "Jerusalem," IDB, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 856.

21. C.U. Wolf, "Fishing," IDB, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 273-274.

One other possible explanation concerns P's comment that "anything in the seas or the rivers that has not fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters ... is an abomination to you" (11:10). That which has fins and scales is never here described as "swarming creatures." Is it possible that due to the limited exposure Israel had to the fishing industry it associated all fish with fins and scales with moving about in an orderly fashion (we speak of a school of fish), and that which did not possess fins or scales as somehow darting about in some unruly fashion? This position is somewhat different from that of Douglas and others who focus on the means of propulsion (i.e., fins). The accent here is placed on the symbolism behind the movement itself. Reflecting a sense of disorder (violence?) rather than order, it is considered unclean. This question of the meaning of "swarming" will be further examined below.

#### c) The Birds of the Air

Scholars generally agree that the birds mentioned here were likely all considered birds of prey. Because many of the birds in this passage are found only here in the biblical text they are difficult to identify. Further, it should be noted that the bat, although not technically considered a bird today, was so for the Israelites as well as for the Arabs.[22]

No positive statement is advanced as to which birds are considered clean. Only a list of unclean birds is given.

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22. C.F. Keil, Manual of Biblical Archaeology II (Edinburgh: Clark, 1888), p. 365.

Although there remains uncertainty regarding some of the birds mentioned by P, it is generally believed that the greater majority are carnivorous birds. Thus by consuming prohibited meat, which was a concession extended only to humanity, it comes as no surprise that these birds are considered unclean.

#### d) The Smaller Land-Based Animals

Winged insects that go upon all fours are first mentioned and regarded as unclean. Locusts, however, which are also described as moving upon all fours are considered clean. Wenham, again following Douglas who focuses on the legs and the way in which the animal moves, suggests that the winged insects or "swarming things" (  $\chi \eta \psi$  ) are considered detestable because "they have no clear-cut motion peculiar to their sphere of life... going on all fours is the opposite of walking uprightly." [22] Locusts, however,

... have a distinctive hopping motion as opposed to swarming. It makes them more like a bird with its wings and two feet. Because they have a motion appropriate to their sphere, they are clean. [24]

Porter, who works with the concept of appropriate locomotion in each sphere, arrives at a similar conclusion. [25] This position appears weak, however, since it does not account for the fact that the locusts, like other insects, have six legs and do not easily fit together with either land-based animals or the bird "sphere." Insects do not move about on all fours as land-based animals, nor do they move about on two legs and

23. Leviticus, p. 175.

24. Ibid.

25. Leviticus, p. 87.

wings as birds do. Wenham, moving away slightly from Douglas' emphasis on the "mode of locomotion" in a particular sphere writes:

These creatures are unclean because they swarm, that is, they dart hither and thither in unpredictable fashion.... Order not chaos is the goal of creation, and this principle applies as much to motion as to species.... Only animals that are true examples of each type are clean. Others which transgress the norms of locomotion are unclean in themselves.[26]

Here the emphasis is not on the means of locomotion, but on the symbolism inherent in the motion.

Carroll suggests that with the exception of the locust and grass-hopper, most insects mentioned in the biblical text are considered as "'meat eaters' in some sense of the word: gnats bite, bees and hornets sting, and most authorities suggest that the Old Testament 'flies' were mainly (like gnats) biting insects." [27] With this interpretation this section appropriately follows the carnivorous bird section. Grasshoppers and locusts, which are most frequently regarded as plant eaters, although very destructive at times, do not fit with the other insects because they are not considered "meat eaters".

Carroll does not, however, deal adequately with the "swarming things" mentioned in verses 29-30. Following Levi-Strauss he assumes that "people everywhere make a distinction between nature and culture, and that the world of animals is associated with nature and the world of men with cul-

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26. Leviticus, p. 178.

27. "One More Time," p. 122.



ture." [28] The animals mentioned in verses 29-30 are connected to those in the succeeding verses (Lev. 11:32-35). Since the "swarmers" mentioned there come in contact with food and kitchen utensils and are likely creatures which one might find on the walls and floors of the Israelite home, Carroll argues that they are considered unclean because they have blurred the distinction between nature and culture by not remaining in the animal sphere. The problem with this nature/culture distinction, however, is in its very assumption that "people everywhere" make this distinction. It was noted in chapter four that according to P, humankind was considered an earthling, "a brother to the stones, plants and animals." [29]

Had Carroll remained consistent with his earlier contention a more persuasive argument could have been made. These animals (Lev. 11:29-30), too, can be considered as "meat eaters" and therefore regarded as unclean. The weasel, for example, is a carnivorous animal. The mouse, often associated with plagues and death (see 1 Sam. 6:1-5), could also easily have been considered a "meat-eater" (as easily as the rock badger a "cud chewer"! ). Although there is some uncertainty about the various reptiles mentioned in these verses, the chameleon for one, as well as likely the others, could all be considered as insectivorous lizards. Consuming other living creatures would also make them unclean.

The final part of the chapter again prohibits the con-

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28. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

29. See p. 103.

sumption of any "swarming things." It is interesting that it is with this theme that P concludes its discussion of the meat laws. The great importance to which P lifts this theme becomes particularly clear when this passage is compared to its Deuteronomic counterpart. Whereas the term for "swarming things" is used only once in D, it is used twelve times in P. Since this is a dominant theme and is often repeated, one might suggest that the order/disorder theme may be an emphasis unique to P's cl/uncl theology.

#### e) Divine Order and the Meat Laws

It is interesting that cl/uncl thinking in P is associated only with meat and not with other foods. Although other foods are prohibited for a time being (first harvests), or reserved for God,[30] they are never pronounced "unclean." Why is this so? Is it possible that the meat laws have to do with cl/uncl thinking because among the food groups they are best suited, as living beings, to symbolize the realm of order and disorder, life and death? Those domesticated animals which are most directly under humanity's "dominion" are regarded as clean. "Cattle" which have a cloven hoof and chew the cud, most completely reflect God's intended order. Here, man and animal live together in harmony. Certain fish and birds, too, can be considered as "domesticated" animals to the degree that they also are a "livestock industry." The four different locusts, although similar to many other unclean animals, are perhaps considered clean because they are

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30. See Lev. 19:23-25; 23:17; Num. 15:20; 28:26.

not regarded as "swarmers,"[31] or considered "meat-eaters".

All animals, however, that are carnivorous or associated with death (or buzzing about dead bodies), the plague, uninhabited or deserted buildings, ruins or the wilderness,[32] and which are not domesticated or controllable but swarmed about, all of their "kind" stand in contrast to God and are considered unclean. Those under Israel's "dominion", so to speak (Gen. 1:28), and which do not eat living or dead creatures (Gen. 9:3-4), are considered clean.

By way of summary one can advance two main points of rationale for the cl/uncl animal designation: First, all those animals which reflect order in their movement are considered clean. Second, only those animals which are not considered "meat-eaters" are clean. Both points relate directly to the contrasting categories of order/disorder. Those animals which reflect disorderly movement and also those which consume meat (thus acting contrary to God's intended order), are considered unclean. Particularly in the second point one finds death closely associated with the chaos-sphere.

All those animals used in the sacrificial system meet the requirements of these two points. That which is an acceptable offering for sacrifice to God can also be eaten by the Israelite. Thus in all eating of clean meat, order and life are being affirmed and an imitatio dei practiced. What

31. Proverbs 30:27 states, "the locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank".

32. Kornfeld in "Reine und unreine Tiere im Altes Testament" [Karion NA(1965), 134-147], makes a similar argument but connects the wilderness animals with the ancients' concerns about demons. I see the wilderness animals as symbolic of disorder and death.

is acceptable to God, that which symbolically reflects order and life, can be eaten by His people.

## 2. Death

In Leviticus 11:24-28, 31-41, P sets out those regulations concerned with uncleanness which comes through contact with dead animals. Although much of the chapter deals with those animals which are unclean to eat, in the above passages P categorically states that contact with any dead animal, be it clean (edible) or unclean (non-edible), brings about uncleanness. It is important to note here the distinction between uncleanness related to that which should not be eaten, and uncleanness related to contact with a dead corpse. Thus, according to P, all living animals are considered "clean" to touch but not all are considered "clean" to eat. However, all dead animals are considered as sources of uncleanness when touched. The uncleanness which comes from touching a dead animal, however, is not as great as contact with a human corpse.

A more severe uncleanness comes from contact with the dead human body. A person who might touch the dead body of a person would be unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11-13), over against the one day ("till evening") for contact with a dead animal. Even being in the same tent with a dead person would make one unclean for seven days (Num. 19:14). To understand this idea of the uncleanness of the dead, some brief observations about Israel's view of death will first need to be made.

It has been noted in the past that one finds in the

Old Testament various perspectives on death. E. Jacob writes that, "in certain texts which apparently reflect the oldest concepts of death, existence in the dwelling place of the dead is represented as entirely independent of Yahweh." [33] Yet in other passages (cf. Ps. 139: 7ff.; Amos 9:2) God's power is clearly shown to extend even into Sheol. Questions concerning the different perspectives of various biblical writers on death need not be addressed here. Rather, questions concerned with the meaning of death, over against life and God, will be examined below.

Two generalizations can be made regarding the idea of death and the Israelite. Death was considered the normal end of life and, in fact, the opposite to life. [34] Loss of life not only meant the loss of  $\text{נְפֻשׁ}$  - that which gives personal vitality - but also loss of relationship with the community and God (and the responsibilities and privileges which these entailed). [35]

According to Israelite views, the life force of human beings belongs intrinsically to God. This life force is often referred to as residing in the blood and/or in the breath. [36] Breathing is universally regarded as a vital sign affirming life while the loss of blood can lead to the eventual loss of life. In the past "breath", has been regarded as coming from God, and some passages suggest that at death it

33. "Death," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 803.

34. Ibid., p. 802.

35. W. Brueggemann, "Death, Theology of," IDBS, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 219.

36. Lloyd R. Bailey, Biblical Perspectives on Death (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p. 42.

returns to God.[37] This has led some to distinguish between the soul and the body. De Vaux, however, argues against this position and insists that this view is foreign to Israelite thinking.[38] According to the Israelite the human being is a whole entity, not one made up of several parts, and the life force is directly dependent upon God.

Death, for the Israelite, was a given (Josh. 23:14; I Kings 2:2). Yet it was the wish for all to die "full of years" (Gen. 15:15; 35:29; Judges 8:32; Job 42:17). There were frequently deaths which were considered "bad." L. Bailey points to three different conditions which heightened the Israelite's fear of death. Premature and violent death, as well as death when there is no surviving heir heightened Israel's fear of death.[39] Life was meant to be lived fully, harmoniously and in an orderly manner. Death brought an end to life and undoubtedly brought psychological and social disorder to both the family and the larger community.

It also created cultic disorder since all those in close contact with the dead became unclean and could thus not participate in the cultic activities of the community. Wolff notes that the "fact that the dead are 'unclean' and make other things 'unclean' disqualifies them cultically to the

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37. See I Kings 19:4; Ps. 104:29; Eccl. 12:7.

38. Ancient Israel, p. 56. De Vaux notes that in scripture one finds mention of both a "living soul" and a "dead soul" (cf. Lev. 21:11 and Num. 6:6 with Num. 19:13). After a person has died the "soul exists, like a shade," and this understanding explains why a body left unburied, accessible to preying birds and wild beasts, was considered the worst of curses 1 Kings 14:11, Jer. 16:4; 22:19; Ezek. 29:5).

39. Biblical Perspectives, pp. 48-49.

strongest possible degree." [40] Yet according to P the dead did not possess powers, as appears to have been assumed by Israel's neighbors. P demythologizes death by forbidding the Israelites from practicing the mourning rites of their neighbors (which were also likely the standard earlier practices of many an Israelite). Mourners are not to respect death by clipping their hair or beard, or inflicting themselves with cuts (Lev. 19:27f.; 21.5). Wolff notes that "such respect for death is impossible in Yahweh's presence." [41] Israel is to be a holy nation and is, therefore, to identify with God and not reflect or symbolize death by practicing the mourning rites of its neighbors.

Contrary to the dying and rising godheads of the other nations, Wolff writes:

Yahweh is in contrast testified to exclusively as 'the living God,' especially in polemics against foreign gods: Josh. 3:10; II Kings 19:4; Hos. 2:1. More frequently still, he is the one who gives and preserves life: Deut. 30:15,19; Pss. 64:1; 103:4; 133:3; and frequently elsewhere. [42]

He continues: "The zeal with which the Old Testament laws term everything that has any connection at all with death as 'unclean' (tame) in Yahweh's eyes corresponds to this." [43]

In P life is closely identified with God. That which is dead, especially the human corpse, stands in sharp contrast to the life-giving God. Further, the corpse may well have been considered unclean because it symbolizes the overlapping of the spheres of life and death. A corpse may give the

40. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 105.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

appearance of life and yet is dead. Here, too, the theme of "disorder" or the mixing of spheres can serve to explain the extreme uncleanness attributed to that which is dead.[44]

It was noted above that "breath" and "blood" are the two terms the Old Testament uses to describe the "life-force" in humans. Wolff observes that of the two, the latter term is used "incomparably more often." [45] Both "breath" and "blood" belong to God. For this reason "sacral law includes in its thinking all crimes against the blood, not only in the cultic and ritual sphere but also in the social one. Both are assigned to the sphere of Yahweh, as the guardian of life." [46]

God is the creator of life. For this reason the ending of life is not to be taken lightly. "Breath" and "blood" both belong to God, and although the concession to eat meat is given to humanity, the symbol of life (and death), the blood, is not to be consumed by humankind. Death, although a given reality, represents that which is opposite to God. Blood, which represents both life and death belongs to God and is not to be eaten or used by humankind for its mundane purposes.

The loss of blood is closely associated with death, and death ultimately creates disorder both on the social and religious level. The ideas of lost blood, death and disorder also appear to be key factors in the law concerning childbirth which will be examined next.

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44. Cf. W. Janzen, "Theological Meaning," p. 4.

45. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 59.

46. Ibid., p. 61.



### 3. Childbirth

Scholars examining Leviticus 12 generally focus on two major concerns: (1) What creates the state of uncleanness which accompanies childbirth? and: (2) How does this relate to the fact that the birth of a girl warrants a period of uncleanness that is twice as long as that for the birth of a boy? Frequently these two concerns have been dealt with separately, but since they are found together it would appear that a satisfying solution should be able to account for both.

A variety of opinions have been advanced which will first be outlined briefly. Noth's position represents the traditional views of many scholars who regard this law as a relic of ancient Near Eastern practices. He writes:

The sexual processes, especially birth, were also reckoned 'unclean' far beyond the circle of Israel, because mysterious powers were seen to be at work in them, having little or no connection with the official cults.[47]

With regard to the birth of a female effecting double 'uncleanness' he points to the "cultic inferiority of the female sex." [48] Although childbirth was widely considered something which created uncleanness this does not at all explain why P chose to incorporate the laws into its writings. Further, to suggest that female cultic inferiority explains the difference between the periods of uncleanness only moves the question back one step: Why was the female cultically inferior?  
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47. Leviticus, p. 97. Cf. also P. Heinisch, Das Buch Leviticus (Bonn: Hanstein, 1935), p. 59; and C.J. Vos, Women in Old Testament Worship (Delft: Judels and Brinkman, 1968), pp. 62ff.

48. Ibid.

Another explanation has been advanced by John Otwell who has also pointed to the "mystery" behind childbirth. Yet he interprets this mystery in a very positive manner. According to Otwell,

... the woman who had just given birth to an infant may have been "unclean" because she had been too closely involved with the work of deity. She would need a period to be de-energized, so to speak; and that period would need to be twice as long for the birth of a child which might become capable in its turn of bearing children as for a male child.[49]

He suggests that uncleanness "here may have been the result of too close a contact with God." [50] This interpretation has its problems, however, in that it does not adequately explain why the mother "shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed" (11:4). If Otwell's interpretation were correct this should have elevated the woman's standing in the cult but it does not appear to do so. This appears to weaken his argument even though his interpretation consistently accounts for the two related concerns mentioned above.

Otwell, of course, has moved in the opposite direction of those older scholars who have argued that the birthing mother was more vulnerable to the demonic world during this period.[51] These views, however, have little direct support from the biblical text. Nowhere is the new mother portrayed as more vulnerable to either the divine or the demonic world.

The text itself is not ambiguous in its statement re-

49. And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Women in the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), pp. 176-7.

50. Ibid., p. 178.

51. See A. Bertholet, Leviticus (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901), p. 41; Elliger, Leviticus, p. 157; and Snaith, Leviticus, p. 91.

garding that which has created the uncleanness and for which purifying now needs to occur. After childbirth the mother is unclean "as in the time of her menstruation" and continues to be "in the blood of her purifying" until the appropriate time period has elapsed. Most scholars (if not all) have recognized that the discharge of blood in this passage is a key concern of the lawgiver.[52] Since blood signified life the loss of blood at childbirth signified the loss of life (a movement towards death), and would thus ultimately defile. Some past suggestions advanced for the difference in the period of uncleanness range from the future menstruant state of the female baby[53] to beliefs that the birth of a girl brought with it a longer period of postnatal discharge.[54]

Harrison, pointing to the discharge as the source of uncleanness, writes:

The discharges involve tissue debris, mucus and blood, and are known as the lochia. Two stages are normally experienced after parturition, the first (lochia cruenta) being stained with blood, while the second (lochia alba) has a paler appearance and is free from blood.[55]

Wenham makes almost the identical point and since the postnatal discharge lasts longer than a week, as in the case of menstruation, he suggests this requires the additional days.[56] Both reject the past interpretations regarding the

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52. Some, like Kellogg, have in their commentaries simply combined this chapter with chapter fifteen, which also deals with "discharge" (Leviticus, pp. 305-326).

53. Harrison, Leviticus, p. 135; Porter, Leviticus, p.95.

54. A. Dillmann, Exodus und Leviticus (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1880), p. 506; D.I. Macht, "A Scientific Appreciation of Leviticus 12:1-5," JBL 52(1933), pp. 253-260.

55. Leviticus, p. 135. Cf. also Noordtzij, Leviticus, p.131.

56. Leviticus, p. 188.

different time periods of purification, depending on the sex of the baby, and suggest that they may simply be accounted for in light of the comparative status of the sexes in ancient Israel.[57]

That the issue of discharge is the key to uncovering the meaning of this passage would be difficult to dispute. But some of the above reasoning is not convincing. First it appears difficult to assume that the discharge mentioned here refers to the lochia alba. This has no support from the text since it explicitly mentions only blood. If the various later discharges are included one would need to be reminded that an expectant mother may experience an increase in various discharges weeks before actual childbirth. Yet no mention is made of this discharge. It would appear that those scholars who interpret this passage as referring to a variety of discharges have been falsely influenced by their understanding of 'discharge' in Leviticus 15. Here, in Leviticus 12, only blood is mentioned by P.

A more plausible interpretation, which also focuses on the discharge and its meaning, has been suggested by W. Janzen.[58] The discharge at childbirth is placed into the larger context of the regular menstrual discharge of the mother. According to Janzen the childbirth event may represent a type of "period", or marker of significance in life. "Could it be that the larger time of uncleanness at

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57. Cf. Wenham, Leviticus, p. 188; and Harrison, Leviticus, p. 135. Both point to Leviticus 27:2-7.

58. This suggestion was advanced in a personal meeting with Professor Janzen on April 21, 1986.

birth be seen as a 'period of periods', such as the Sabbath year, Jubilee year, or the 'seventy weeks of years' in Daniel?"[59] With regard to the shorter period of uncleanness for the mother with boy he suggests that it may be associated with the boy's circumcision.[60] Perhaps the removal of this "uncleanness" (the circumcision of the foreskin), shortens the period for the mother with boy but not with girl, since for the girl the comparable flow of blood (the breaking of the hymen) is delayed.

Another possible explanation, which remains consistent with the theme focusing on the contrasting categories/spheres of order/disorder, life/death advanced earlier, associates childbirth, and the loss of blood at that occasion, with the potential loss of life and order. Childbirth, although a symbol of life, may also have been a strong symbol or reminder of death. Otwell has well argued that in the mind of the Israelite, God was actively involved in the conception and birth of a child, in the opening and closing of the mother's womb.[61] The promise of progeny was a significant theological theme, but may it not have become so precisely because of the precarious nature of life for the Israelite? Survival and a long life were not taken for granted as they perhaps are today.

In an interesting study Carol Meyers shows, using social science data, that in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age, the life expectancy of a male was about forty and that of a

59. Ibid.

60. Cf., p. 157, footnote, 69.

61. And Sarah Laughed, pp. 56-60. See Gen. 29:3; 30:22.

female about thirty.[62] Although today women generally outlive men this appears not to have been the case in ancient times. She points to ancient biologists like Aristotle who also claim that males of all species lived longer than females.[63] Disease, famine and conflict are most frequently cited as the primary agents of death. However, death of mother or infant were also, undoubtedly, a frequent occurrence. Archeological data support the contention that there existed a very high infant mortality rate,[64] as does Scripture.

O.J. Baab has noted that Exodus 1:19 gives the impression that Israelite women delivered their babies quickly "but usually birth was agonizing and so unforgettably painful that various writers use this experience figuratively." [65] In Psalms 48:6 one finds the panic of kings described: "trembling took hold of them there, anguish as of a woman in travail." Jeremiah, too, frequently uses the imagery of a woman in hard labor crying out in pain, groaning and gasping through this very difficult experience.[66] Isaiah, in fact, believed the anguish of a woman in labour to be so severe that it was fitting imagery to describe the day of the Lord. He proclaims:

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near....  
Pangs and agony will seize them;  
they will be in anguish like a woman in travail.

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62. "The Roots of Restriction: Women in Early Israel," BA 41(1978), p. 95.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. "Birth," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 440.

66. See Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 49:24; 50:43.

They will look aghast at one another;  
their faces will be aflame.  
Behold, the day of the Lord comes,  
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger... (Isa. 13:6-9).

Childbirth was a very difficult experience for ancient humanity and one which we, with our technological advancements, often fail to understand and appreciate fully.

Otwell, examining motherhood in the Old Testament, notes that even on the basis of our own medical records of the not too distant past, we must "assume an extremely high rate of infant and maternal mortality." [67] He points to the many wives of Rehoboam and Abijah and shows how even these well-to-do citizens bore relatively few children (II Chron. 11:21 and 13:21). The story of the birth of Rachel's son tragically describes the difficulties accompanying childbirth.

Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And when she was in her hard labor, the midwife said to her, "Fear not; for now you will have another son." And as her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Ben-o'ni (son of my sorrow) (Gen. 35:16-18).

The wife of Phinehas also is described as giving birth in pain and then dying (1 Sam. 4:19-21). [68] One could, of course, juxtapose to these passages describing the difficulty of birth, others which express the joy of new life. There is no doubt that new life would bring much joy, but the experience of severe difficulty in childbirth was likely the norm, and the birth of a dead or sick child will not have been uncommon for Israel. Perhaps this explains Leviticus 27:6 which places no tithe-value on a child before it reached one month.

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67. And Sarah Laughed, p. 49.

68. See also 2 Sam. 12:15; 1 Kings 14:17.

Von Rad has noted that "leprosy" and contact with the dead was probably that which prompted the most serious kind of uncleanness[69] The seven days of uncleanness connected to leprosy and contact with the dead is frequently cited as the most severe. Yet in childbirth one finds a total of forty or eighty days of uncleanness assigned to the mother.[70] Is it not possible that in childbirth, the frequency of death (in the very beginning of life!), and the obvious disorder which it will have created, may be considered as key factors explaining the great length of the period of uncleanness? Is there any other event which may have more profoundly symbolized the clashing of the two opposing spheres of life and death, order and disorder? The birth of a female, which in the future will again bring so closely together in birth the spheres of life and death, may also account for the doubling of the period of uncleanness.

Birth and death are concepts closely connected. In many ways birth can be a reminder of death. Although birth represents life, it probably also often meant death in Israel's day. Meyers writes, "to put it bluntly, in normal times, families would have had to produce twice the number of chil-

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69. Old Testament Theology, vol. 1, p. 274-275.

70. Walter C. Kaiser, Toward Old Testament Ethics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), p. 206. Kaiser suggests that both the mother and the child are impure. Scholarship generally disagrees with this conclusion. He further suggests that because the male is circumcised the time of the mother's impurity is cut in half. See also Rendtorff (Die Gesetze, p. 55) regarding the shorter period of cleansing because of the boy's circumcision and Janzen above (p. 154). Both Kaiser and Rendtorff offer no rationale which fits into a broader context. Simply, the girl is not circumcised and thus requires more time.



dren desired in order to achieve optimal family size." [71] The birth of a new child in Scripture is cause for celebration! Yet fetal, infant or maternal death, undoubtedly frequently brought sadness to an event which today, by and large, brings only joy.

As death and disorder appear to figure largely in P's laws concerning childbirth, so also do these concepts play an important role in the leprosy laws. According to P the leper is described as "one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb" (Num. 12:12). In the leper, as in the stillborn child, one finds adumbrations of death and disorder.

#### 4. 'Leprosy'

Leviticus 13 and 14 deals with so called 'leprosy' in people, clothes and houses. The Hebrew term  $\text{לֵפְתָרִים}$ , is very loosely used to describe a variety of conditions. In chapter two it was shown that the 'leprosy' of Leviticus is not what today is called leprosy. Although few scholars today continue to believe that Leviticus is actually describing leprosy as we know it, there continues to be considerable speculation regarding what precisely is meant in these chapters. With regard to the skin diseases, Snaith advances approximately ten different conditions, ranging from ringworm, to shingles, to eczema. [72] Wenham suggests that, "twenty-one different cases of skin diseases are distinguished in the first section, and three different cases of diseased garments in the

71. "The Roots of Restriction," p. 95.

72. Leviticus, pp. 92-97.

second." [73]

Porter begins his investigation of the 'leprosy' laws with the observation that these chapters, "consist of a number of originally separate collections of priestly case law, which have been brought together and given a common theme by the compilers of Leviticus." [74] From this perspective he resists the temptation to speculate as to what the various diseases may have been and suggests that the concern here is simply with "malignant skin-disease." [75] His conclusion appears correct but he fails fully to appreciate the way in which P uses this theme.

According to Porter this 'leprosy' "made a man imperfect and so unable to come into contact with the holy place and the holy community which would in turn be rendered unclean by him." [76] Although Porter here uses the work of Douglas, it is Wenham who most closely follows her conclusions. He writes:

Holiness in Leviticus is symbolized by wholeness. ... Men must behave in a way that expresses wholeness and integrity in their actions. When a man shows visible signs of lack of wholeness in a persistent patchy skin condition, he has to be excluded from the covenant community. [77]

If wholeness is an aspect of holiness it would appear that this understanding provides a very adequate explanation as to

73. Leviticus, p. 193. Harrison, in Leviticus, continues to follow the views of some scholars mentioned in chapter two who see here "priest-physicians" who "appear to be the first in the ancient world to isolate persons suspected of infectious or contagious diseases..." (p. 140).

74. Leviticus, pp. 96-97. Cf. also Rendtorff, Die Gesetze, pp. 51-51.

75. Leviticus, p. 97.

76. Ibid.

77. Leviticus, p. 203.

why 'leprosy' was considered unclean. The question remains, however: how does the theme of wholeness relate to the infected garment or house? Would the presence of mildew or some fungus growth in a garment or on a house wall constitute lack of wholeness? Would the Israelite, seeing a growth on the wall of his/her house reflect on the "wholeness" of the house?

A theme which more adequately accounts for the 'leprosy' laws is that of disorder. P, collecting various older laws, places them under the wider theme of "disorder." It has been convincingly argued that the 'leprosy' laws are not based on hygienic considerations or that they seek to outline medical knowledge. One need only be reminded that the term 'leprosy' is used to describe a condition that affects organic and inorganic material alike. It would appear that P uses the term 'leprosy' as a type of catch word to describe a variety of different conditions which symbolize disorder.

A quick reading of the "law of leprosy" leaves one with the impression that certain spots, eruptions, swellings, boils or an itch, were all considered as conditions which make one unclean. Yet upon careful reading one realizes that these conditions do not automatically make one unclean. One could have a "diseased spot" and an "eruption" and still be clean (Lev. 13:6). One could have a "boil" (13:23) or an "itch" (13:37) and be clean. The dominant concern throughout seems to be that "the disease has no spread" and that it "is checked." This is true of 'leprosy' on people, garments and

houses.[78] But if the disease "is spreading" or in the process of "breaking out" the victim or object is considered unclean.[79]

Leviticus 13:12-13 is an interesting passage which well demonstrates the point:

And if the leprosy breaks out in the skin, so that the leprosy covers all the skin of the diseased person from head to foot, so far as the priest can see, then the priest shall make an examination, and if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean of the disease; it has all turned white, and he is clean.

Although the accent in these verses appears to be on the color, this would be to misunderstand the text. At various occasions in this chapter the color white is associated with uncleanness.[80] In several other Old Testament passages being "white as snow" is considered to be a definite sign of having 'leprosy'. [81] How does one then interpret Leviticus 13:12-13? This verse can be variously interpreted. Is the person who has this leprosy now clean because the whole body has turned white? Is it possible that one could actually be a leper and still be considered clean? Or is this person now clean, who formerly was a leper, because all has turned white - meaning the disease has run its course, is no longer spreading (in remission?), and is therefore checked? In light of Numbers 12:10, where Miriam is described as "white as snow ... and behold she was leprous," it would appear that color alone is not the issue. As with the spot, eruption,

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78. Lev. 13:5,6,28,32,34,37,53; 14:48.

79. Lev. 13:7,12,20,27,35,42,50,57; 14:39,43,44.

80. Lev. 13:3,10-11; cf. 13:13,17, 38-39.

81. See Exod. 4:6; Num. 12:10; and 1 Kings 5:27.

boil and itch, these occurrences are not the key; the issue is whether the disease has been checked and is no longer uncontrollably spreading - be it on the body, on a garment, or on house walls. If inflamed, having the appearance of "raw flesh", or giving the impression of continued growth, it is considered "unchecked" and thus unclean.[82]

It is no longer possible to determine what different conditions P was speaking of and it may well be that P itself was unaware of the various conditions the older laws, which it incorporated, were outlining. The common denominator throughout, however, appears to be uncontrolled spreading which graphically symbolized unleashed disorder. Just as 'leprosy' symbolized disorder, and perhaps occasionally brought premature death, so also do the laws concerning 'discharge' relate to the themes of disorder and death.

#### 5. 'Discharge'

There is a general consensus among Old Testament scholars that the law of 'discharge' in Leviticus 15 is concerned with emissions from the sexual organs. Of the five basic sources of uncleanness, the interpretation of this section has changed least. Traditionally the hygiene argument has been one of the more popular.[83] These laws have also been associated with demonic powers which brought about uncleanness.[84]

Porter, following the conclusions of scholars from the

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82. Cf. W. Janzen, "Theological Meaning," p. 4.

83. See chapter two, pp. 28-29.

84. Elliger, Leviticus, p. 197; W. Kornfeld, Das Buch Leviticus (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1972), pp. 99f.

history of religions school, simply states that "the processes of human reproduction are mysterious to early peoples and therefore surrounded by various taboos." [85] Wenham uses the conclusions of Douglas who sees bodily issues as threatening the boundaries of the body politic of this exiled minority. [86] In his commentary Wenham also suggests that:

Where the rules about discharges were respected, they ... would encourage restraint in sexual behavior.... Because sexual intercourse made both partners unclean, and therefore unable to participate in worship for a whole day, this regulation excluded the fertility rites and cult prostitution that were such a feature of much Near Eastern religion. [87]

Although Wenham uses some of the conclusions of Douglas he here returns to the old "polemic against the foreign nations" theme. In contrast to Douglas he also believes this chapter to make various moral statements:

It also served to make ordinary prostitutes social outcasts.... This rule deprived the prostitute of social respectability and therefore helped to undergird the stability of the family life. Similarly the prohibition on intercourse in war should have protected conquered women from abuse (cf. Num. 25). [88]

With regard to the laws concerning menstruation he assumes that they will have rarely affected the married mother who was continually either nursing the child or pregnant.

According to Wenham:

The only women likely to be much affected by the law of Lev. 15:19-24 would be unmarried teenage girls.... In this way these regulations may have promoted restraint in relations between the sexes

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85. Leviticus, p. 119.

86. Leviticus, p. 223.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

and have acted as a brake on the passions of the young.[89]

Wenham presents some interesting points but the variety of conclusions he arrives at weakens his argument. Can the loss of bodily fluid from the sexual organs be a representation of incompleteness or lack of wholeness (an inadequate symbol of holiness) and at the same time promote political and cultural unity (through the idea of body politic) as well as promote sexual restraint and guard against cultic prostitution?

As was noted above, few new insights have been advanced by scholarship regarding the particular meaning of the 'discharge' laws. A slightly different perspective may be possible, however. Remaining consistent with the theme of order/disorder, life/death, etc., a new vantage-point may be gained.

To begin with, it is necessary to question the older but solidly entrenched view that these laws deal primarily with sexual emissions and thus highlight the theme of "sex". To accomplish this it is necessary to examine briefly the relationship between this chapter and the 'leprosy' chapters preceeding it. Both 'leprosy' and 'discharge' are considered quite polluting since in both cases the seven days of cleansing and sacrifices are required to make one clean again. 'Leprosy' appears to be somewhat more serious if one considers that a male lamb is offered as a "guilt offering" over and above the usual sin and burnt offering. A rationale for that may well have been that 'leprosy', an external disease,

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89. Ibid., p. 224.

is a stronger symbol of disorder than 'discharge', which is less easily visible.

Just as the term 'leprosy' today is understood as meaning a variety of external, readily visible conditions, so 'discharge' should be understood as a term referring to a variety of internal or less visible conditions, especially as they relate to the sexual organs. Further, just as it was argued that it is impossible to determine which diseases P actually refers to (doubt was expressed whether P even knew) in its 'leprosy' laws, this could be true also of some of the 'discharge' laws. It would seem safe to assume that it was not P's intent to describe specifically the less obvious disorders mentioned in Leviticus 15 (esp. in vss. 2-3). Perhaps P used the term 'discharge', in the broad sense to refer to a variety of sexually related physical disorders known to the Israelite. If so, one can again see P's use of the contrasting themes of order/disorder, life/death, in these particular cl/uncl laws. In gathering and using the older material P is so concerned to highlight this theme that contradictions appear in its writings regarding both 'discharge' and menstruation.[90]

Leviticus 15 deals with the זָבַח (zab) of the male and the זָבַח (zabah) of the female. As mentioned above, it was noted that the term 'discharge' traditionally has been interpreted as meaning both gonorrhoea and menstruation.[91] Scholars have arrived at this conclusion even though most

90. Cf. Lev. 15:1-15 & Num. 5:2-4; Lev. 15:24 & 18:17, 20:18.  
91. See chapter two, p. 28.



recognize the fact that the term occurs only in a few places.

Wenham writes:

The noun is used only in this chapter; the related verb "to flow" is rare, apart from the standard description of Canaan as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8; Num. 13:27, etc.)[92]

It would seem that conclusions regarding any term which is used so infrequently, especially within a passage as foreign to the modern reader as Leviticus 15, might remain somewhat more tentative than has been the case with regard to these laws. This is particularly true in light of perceptive observations like: "with the exception of the first paragraph it is clear that the discharges come from the sexual organs," and "apart from the fact that an abnormal discharge from the male organ is being described, few specific details are given here." [93] The first paragraph comprises a large and significant portion of the chapter and if "few specific details are given" it is interesting that since the time of the Septuagint, male 'discharge' has been largely associated with gonorrhoea.

The line of argument has usually proceeded as follows. In Leviticus 15:2 P states that the 'discharge' comes "from his body" (  $\text{בְּגוֹמְוֹ}$  ). Most commentators regard the term "body" here as a euphemism for the sexual organ. [94] Snaith, following this understanding, writes that "this is why there

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92. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 218. He mentions that the verb "to flow" occurs only in Ps. 78:20; 105:41 of flowing water, and Jer. 49:4. The term  $\text{זָרַם}$ , however, is used also in Lev. 22:4. See *KB*, p. 252; and *BDB*, p. 264.

93. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 217 and 218 respectively.

94. See Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 119; Harrison, *Leviticus*, p. 160.

is the particular emphasis on what the sufferer sits on or lies on." [95] The term, however, is a very common one in Hebrew and has a variety of meanings. Its most basic meaning is "flesh" but it usually refers to the whole body (Lev. 14:9). Perhaps this more common meaning should be more seriously considered for the particular context here.

In P's very important introductory comments (vs. 3) it is clearly stated that "this is the law of his uncleanness for a discharge: whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped from discharge, it is uncleanness in him." The term "runs" (  $\text{רָץ}$  ), literally means "to flow easily", [96] while the term "stopped" (  $\text{סָתַם}$  ), literally means "to seal up" or "block". [97] Whereas in verse 2 the discharge is "from his body", in verse 3 the 'discharge' has "stopped" his body; in fact, it has not been released and thus "it is uncleanness in him." With this reading of the text the emphasis is no longer placed on the discharge which the body releases, but the disorderly effects that one with a 'discharge' experiences. Could P here not be describing any man who has some internal physical disorder, especially as it relates to the sexual organ. It may never be possible to define precisely the particular disorder but that need not deter this study. The important point P appears to be highlighting concerns "disorder".

Whereas Leviticus 15:3-15 uses the term  $\text{צָרַח}$  in dealing

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95. Leviticus and Numbers, p. 106.

96. BDB, p. 938; KB, p. 890. To flow like "slimy juice."

97. BDB, p. 367; KB, p. 344.

with disorders related to the sexual organs, the 'discharge' frequently described in 15:16-18 deals solely with the emission of semen. Commentators generally continue to regard this section as dealing with 'discharge'. Wenham, although recognizing that the previous section deals with "long-term" male discharge" notes that verses 16-18 deal with "transient male discharges." [98] This approach can serve to misrepresent the passage. It should be noted that nowhere in this section is the term  $\text{צָרַף}$  used. The "emission" of verse 16 is literally interpreted, that which "goes out from him" ( $\text{לְיָדָיו מֵעַל הָאָדָם}$ ). The term  $\text{צָרַף}$  is used for the discharge mentioned in verse 19.

The verses dealing with the "emission of semen" are closely related to the succeeding verses dealing with menstruation (15:19-24). It has been argued above that blood was considered a life-force and therefore, any loss would bring about a state of uncleanness. [99] Further, it must be remembered that the ancient Israelite was well aware of the fact that both menstruation and semen were required to procreate. [100] Therefore, both semen and menstruation must be considered equally as life-force and loss of this fluid would symbolically mean potential loss of life.

With this in mind one could argue that according to P, blood in the uterus or semen in the vagina is not unclean. Out of their life-giving environment, however, they become unclean. Having made this observation it is necessary to

98. Leviticus, p. 219.

99. See above, pp. 147-150

100. See Gen. 18:11; 38:9.

note, however, that the "loss" of blood and semen are inevitable occurrences, and maybe for this reason, both forms of uncleanness are not considered grave. Perhaps because they do not graphically symbolize disorder and death, there is no need to bring an offering to make atonement. In this case only washing and the elapse of a certain time period is necessary for cleansing.

The symmetry of chapter 15 is remarkable. P begins with the more serious male 'discharge', then moves to discuss first the loss of life-force in the male and then also the loss of life-force in the case of the female. P concludes where it began; with a discussion of the more serious 'discharge' of the sexual organ, in this case with regard to the female. In verses 25-30 P appears to be concerned particularly with menstrual disorder. P clearly distinguishes between normal and abnormal menstruation. This menstrual disorder results in P's restating many of the regulations advanced in the first section of the chapter dealing with the more serious male disorders.

In Leviticus 15 one sees that both male and female having a 'discharge', defile their bed and that which they touch. P goes on at greater length describing the various items made unclean through contact with the man who has a 'discharge', but this is probably not an attempt by P to be comprehensive, or present some alternative set of guidelines for the male, over against the female with a 'discharge'. According to P all those in contact with the unclean male or female suffer the same fate (i.e., uncleanness) and are

required to wash their clothes, bathe themselves and wait until evening to be cleansed. Further, both male and female suffering from a 'discharge' follow the same purifying process. Having been cleansed of their 'discharge', both must wait seven days, then wash their clothes and bodies, and on the eighth day offer to the priest two turtledoves or two young pigeons so that a sin offering and a burnt offering may be presented on their behalf by the priest, and atonement be made (cf. 15:13-15 with 28-30).

In the last verses of the chapter, P provides a summary of the laws which affirms the perspective just advanced. Verse 32 states, "this is the law for him who has a 'discharge' and for him who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean thereby...." The term 'discharge' here is  $\text{זָרָה}$ , while the term for emission is  $\text{שֵׁשׁ־עֵשְׂרֵן}$ . Clearly one has here a distinction not only in term and nature of law but also in the effects of uncleanness and the requirements for cleansing.

The first and last part of verse 33 describe the uncleanness which comes from normal menstruation or lying with a menstruant. Placed between this concern is a general statement of uncleanness which comes from the serious 'discharge', be it in a woman or a man: "for any one, male or female, who has a discharge ( $\text{זָרָה}$ )... is unclean." [101]

In summary it would appear that P is concerned with a minimum of four different physical conditions. The first and last concerns have to do with more serious physical dis-

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101. Cf. a similar P phrase in Gen. 1:27. "In the image of God He created him: male and female He created them."

orders, especially as they relate to the sexual organs, in both male and female. The second and third have to do with the inevitable discharge of semen from the man and the period of menstruation for the woman.

Although various physical conditions are referred to, it would appear that P's ultimate concern is not clinical or therapeutic. P, thinking theologically and not medically, refers to the sexual organs in an attempt to highlight the themes of order and life. Any disorder is contrary to God's original intention for His "exceedingly good" creation. Disorder in the sexual organ, that part of the body most closely associated with procreation, may have been considered particularly defiling because of its affiliation here with death. Using the sexual realm, one as basic to humankind as the food realm, P seeks to affirm order and life. All which stands in contrast to order and life makes unclean.

#### 6. Conclusion

In this first section of chapter five the theme of order/disorder (of which the ideas concerning life/death, perfection/imperfection, etc. all play a part) has been shown to relate directly to the main cl/uncl regulations of P. P, working within a "Kābôd theology", seeks to safeguard the people from the wrath of a holy God and does so by encouraging them to reproduce holiness symbolically in their own lives.

The main purity laws follow the death of Nadab and Abihu who failed to distinguish between holy and profane fire and thus died when in God's presence (Lev. 10:2). P advances

the cl/uncl laws after entering this episode which is to encourage Israel to be faithful to God and to remind her to "be holy, for I [your God] am holy." Of course P recognizes that the holiness of God's people is ultimately a reality only in the dispensational (declared) sense and thus provisions are made to atone for the "holy place, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel" (Lev.16:16). P possessed no illusions regarding the ultimate "holiness" of the people, yet it is P's desire that through the purity laws the people might be reminded in all of life, of God's nature, his presence and His will for their lives.

As the life of the priest revolved around the cult, so also is it P's desire that each Israelite live life in relation to the cult. As it was imperative that the priest live ever conscious of the presence of God, so also were the people to model their lives after this priestly paradigm. This perspective gains support from the unusual use of the Hebrew verb  $\text{קָדַשׁ}$ , which suggests "sacred separation", found in Leviticus 15:31.[102] Snaith notes that various biblical translators found this use of the word difficult and thus tended to use  $\text{נִחַדַּרְתִּי}$  (warn).[103] Yet the term "sacred separation" is here used in the context of Israel whereas in Numbers 6:2,3,5 and 6 it is used in the case of the Nazirite vow. Israel, as the Nazirite, is to live in "holiness".

It is P's desire that all Israel be a holy nation. By

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102. Snaith, Leviticus, p. 109. Snaith does not here attempt to argue for a priestly paradigm but his interpretation of verse 31 does lend support to this view.

103. Ibid. He gives no explanation for this word change.

keeping the sabbath it imitates God. By limiting itself to certain meats, it also imitates God who accepts the sacrifices of only certain animals. P seeks to show that in all of life the principle of Godly order is to guide His holy people. To this end all of life is seen as living in the presence of God. As the priests lived within the context of the cult, so also it is P's desire to promote this approach to life in each Israelite. As God is the creator of order, life and perfection, Israel was to live within His order, affirming life and striving to reflect and reproduce His perfection. God's holy community is not to mix the holy and the profane sphere. For Israel the mixing of these spheres not only makes unclean, but can also threaten her very existence.

#### B. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN THINKING AND OTHER REGULATIONS IN P

In examining the basic cl/uncl laws found in Leviticus 11-15 reference was made to other laws in this book and in Numbers that relate to these laws. For example, in Leviticus 17 one finds regulations concerned with the slaughter of animals, that sacrifices not be made to "satyrs" and that the blood be disposed of in the proper way. Here one also finds restrictions regarding the consumption of meat "with its blood." In Leviticus 21-22 and Numbers 6 one finds a host of cl/uncl laws (discussed above) specifically related to the priests and the Nazirite. As Israel is to restrict its contact with all that makes one unclean, so also are the priests and the Nazirite to separate themselves strictly from all uncleanness. In these two passages, as well as in Numbers



19 and 31, the theme of contact with the dead is significant. The dead corpse of an animal and especially a human, is considered a strong source of uncleanness. All in Israel are to restrict their contact with the dead.

Of course, these laws relate directly to the cl/uncl laws discussed above. In Leviticus 18-20, however, there exist a host of laws which deal with a variety of concerns. These laws, although not directly related to the cl/uncl regulations, do, nevertheless, frequently emphasize the same theme as that found to be prevalent in the cl/uncl laws. In the following discussion these laws will be related to the broad theme of order. Before examining them it is necessary briefly to comment on the distinct body of law within which they are found.

It was noted above that P, working in the exilic or post-exilic period, incorporated a variety of older material. A very significant legal corpus embedded in P is the so-called Holiness Code (H) of Leviticus 17-26. It was A. Klostermann who first recognized this as an independent literary unit and gave it the name Heiligkeitsgesetz.<sup>[104]</sup> This name was given to it because of the text's frequent call for Israel to be holy.

Today, the majority of scholars continue to regard H as originally independent. Yet there remain some important scholars who, because of many similarities H shares with P, consider Leviticus 17-26 as never having existed alone.

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104. "Beitrage zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs," ZLThK 38(1877), 401-445.

Rather they regard H as being an original part of P.[105] Scholars who assign P to a pre-exilic date also tend to see more similarities than differences. Milgrom, for example, writes: "Ch. 17, the alleged beginning of the code, is connected thematically and verbally with the preceding chapters." [106] Of the final two chapters in Leviticus he writes:

Chs. 25-26, the alleged conclusion, form an independent scroll, to judge by the unique vocabulary, ... theme, ... and redaction.... Nonetheless, much of the language and some ideas in chs. 17-26 differ with the first part of Leviticus. Most likely P incorporated into these chapters an earlier document which might be called the Holiness Source.[107]

In Milgrom's treatment of H, much doubt is expressed about it being an originally independent entity. Milgrom appears to regard Leviticus 17-26 as largely a product of P which, he concedes, likely used the H source in its writings.

It is not the task of this study to review and evaluate the criteria used to set H apart from P, or to consider the original form of H. With regard to the latter point, Boecker writes: "There are almost as many theses as there are authors." [108] Assuming the standard critical view, that H is an older, originally independent entity, it is nevertheless important to remember that there are sections which are

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105. See Elliger, Leviticus, pp. 14-20; and V. Wagner, "Zur Existenz des sogenannten 'Heiligkeitgesetzes,'" ZAW 86 (1974), 307-316. According to Wagner the prominent and pervasive theme of Israel being brought out of Egypt and following after God's holiness (see Lev. 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 42, 55; 26:13, 45), fits well into the larger P framework. This has prompted Wagner to see Exodus 25 to Leviticus 26 as a unified, cohesive piece.

106. "Leviticus," IDBS (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 543.

107. Ibid.

108. Law and the Administration, p. 187.

clearly late and reflect the exilic period.[109] H was not incorporated wholesale by P and this is made obvious by the "series of additions which betray the mentality of P." [110] H. Graf Reventlow has noted that frequently H is overwrought so thoroughly by P that it appears impossible to disentangle the two.[111] For our purposes it is enough to mention that H, although originally independent, has been reworked to the degree that it now clearly stands in line with P's broader theology.

According to Reventlow, H is best considered a public worship document ("ein gottesdienstliches Dokument") which stems from the the early Israelite covenant festivals.[112] He suggests further that the presentation of Leviticus 17-26 shows that the laws evolved in Israel's cult over a long period of time.[113] He uses the analogy of a kernel to which much has been added over the years.

In examining the message of H (now in P), it is important to note that everything is directly related to God's holiness. This was particularly clear also of P's treatment of the meat laws, where it was argued that God's holiness, and the accompanying themes of order and life, are key concepts needed to uncover their rationale. Boecker accurately summarizes H when he suggests: "Jahweh's holiness is

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109. See Lev. 26:34-46.

110. Boecker, Law and the Administration, p. 187.

111. Das Heiligkeitgesetz (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), p. 74. Reventlow believes that "H im Sinne von P uberarbeitet ist, denn hier sind H und P so eng verschlungen, dass eine Entwirrung garnicht mehr moglich erscheint."

112. Ibid., p. 30.

113. Ibid.

constantly being named as the background for the demand for holiness from the people, a holiness to be realized through both social justice and cultic effort." [114]

Whereas "ethical" and "moral" concerns are frequently related to God's commandments as found in the various decalogues, H.G. Reventlow, in his study of the H, has argued that with regard to Leviticus 19 one finds here both "ethical" and "ritual" concerns with no distinction between the two. [115] Although P is concerned with the proper functioning of the cult, its ritual concerns also have ethical ends. All cultic and ritual symbolism is directly related to ethical living and, as was noted above, concepts like uncleanness and sin are frequently indistinguishable.

Before focusing on the various laws mentioned in Leviticus 18-20 it is necessary to make some general comments regarding the content of these chapters. Throughout this diverse legal material P's characteristic phrase, "I am the Lord your God," or "I am the Lord," is mentioned twenty-four times. [116] This constant reminder that "I am the Lord your God" can be considered the motive clause for keeping the various laws. [117] God had chosen Israel and now expects her to imitate him, "Say to the congregation of the people of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy"

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114. Law and the Administration, p. 189.

115. Die Heiligkeitsgesetze, p. 74

116. Lev. 18:2,4,5,6,21,30; 19:2,3,4,10,11,14,16,18,25,28,30,31,32,34,37; 20:7,24,26.

117. Boecker, in Law and the Administration (p. 189), has also noted that by frequently pointing to God and the holiness theme, H "gives an impression of unity and completion."

(Lev. 19:2). In discussing the standard cl/uncl laws it was noted how each related directly to an understanding of God. This is true also for these laws.

Another theme emphasized frequently in Leviticus 18-20 prohibits Israel from following the practices of the other nations but, "you shall do my ordinances and keep my statutes and walk in them." At six occasions is this theme stressed in these three chapters.[118]

Through the years Israel had compiled many different laws which it regarded as authoritative. The laws advanced here should, however, not be considered as a comprehensive list. Just as the explicit cl/uncl regulations can not be considered an attempt to deal with the subject in an all-inclusive fashion, so also must one regard these laws. Together the laws well function to represent symbolically the broad theme of order, in its treatment of "relationships".

In chapter 18 forbidden sexual relations are outlined. The text clearly associates these forbidden practices with foreign nations (18:3, 30). Although there exists here a definite polemic against the other nations the rationale behind the prohibition of these practices is to be found in Israel's God and not its neighbors. Israel is not to imitate its neighbors but its God. In P's understanding of God one can find its rationale for the prohibition of these sexual practices.

The opening five verses form the introduction to this chapter. Israel is to imitate God and not its neighbors, and  
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118. Lev. 18:4,5,6,21,30; 19:19; 20:8,22.

in so doing "shall live" (19:5). As the other nations had defiled themselves by these practices and had thus been cast out of the land, so Israel would be cast out ("vomited out!") if it did not obey God's commands (19:24-28). Obedience to God's will would bring ordered and good life. Disobedience would bring disorder and death. The land itself would become unclean (19:27) and "vomit out its inhabitants" (19:25). Land symbolized life and well-being for the Israelite, [119] and it was life which God sought to give his people. Disobedience would bring death, and being cast out of the land, being landless, meant loss of identity and security [120] In fact, landlessness ultimately is closely associated with hopelessness and death. [121]

The rest of Leviticus 18 deals explicitly with forbidden sexual relations. Sexual relations with the members of one's extended family, sexual relations with one's own sex, bestiality and cultic prostitution are all denounced. They are contrary to God, symbolizing disorder, and are, therefore, prohibited. Severe punishment and sometimes fatal judgement is handed down upon those who transgress these laws (Lev. 20).

As was mentioned above, the laws are not comprehensive, they do not deal exhaustively with all possible sexual deviations. They are best understood as representative of sexual offences. For example, in the extended family laws there is

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119. Walter Brueggemann, The Land (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 2.

120. Ibid., pp. 6-9.

121. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

no prohibition against sexual intercourse with one's daughter, the wife of a nephew, a father's nephew's wife, one's grandmother or niece. Other close relations could be mentioned. Of further interest also is that one can find in the patriarchal stories infringements against these laws.[122] Yet it would appear that P's major concern here is not to outline all the different illicit sexual relations possible but to create order within the extended family and larger community. It is well recognized that illicit sexual relationships, especially in smaller communities, generally break social conventions and prevent domestic harmony.[123]

Although the overriding concern of P is to outline illicit sexual relations, verse 18 clearly places a strong emphasis on both "uncovering her nakedness while her sister is yet alive" and on not taking "a woman as a rival wife to her sister." That this type of rivalry would also create social disorder is well attested in the Bible[124]

Leviticus 18:19-23 outlines five further sexual offences which are considered as disorders. Sexual intercourse with a menstruant has been discussed above. Verse 22 prohibits sexual intercourse with the neighbor's wife. As sexual relations with a relative can create dissension within the extended family so also can other extra-marital relationships disrupt the larger community. P appears well aware of

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122. Cf. Lev. 18:18 with Gen. 29; Lev. 18:8 with Gen. 35:22.

123. Stephen F. Bigger, "The Family Laws of Leviticus 18 in Their Setting," *JBL* 98(1979), p. 192.

124. See Gen. 16: 1-6; 30:1; 1 Sam. 1:6-7.

the wrath with which a jealous husband can act.[125] Israelite proverbs, too, saw the potential for disorder and violence in unlawful sexual relations:

He who commits adultery has no sense;  
he who does it destroys himself.  
Wounds and dishonour will he get,  
and his disgrace will not be wiped away.  
For jealousy makes a man furious,  
and he will not spare when he takes revenge.  
Proverbs. 7:32-34.

Violence and social disorder were probably a frequent result of adultery.

In P's treatment of extra-marital relations it appears to also emphasize that people in various relationships are tied together. Those individuals mentioned in verses 6-18 are, in fact, described as extensions of others (e.g., "your brother's wife ... is your brother's nakedness"). According to P illicit sexual relations are a direct infringement upon the rights of other individuals or social groups.

In Leviticus 18:21 the devotion of one's children to Molech is proscribed. Porter writes that, "strictly speaking, this verse has nothing to do with sexual offences...".[126] Snaith observes, however, that, "it is significant that this reference to the children and the Molech cult occurs in the middle of a series of prohibitions of illegal sexual intercourse." [127] He suggests rather that parents gave their children to priests who symbolically devoted the children to Molech by walking with them between two fires. Further he

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125. P thus provides a non-violent approach to appease the husband (Numbers 5:11-28).

126. Leviticus, p. 148.

127. Leviticus, p. 125.



writes that the children were probably "given to the authorities at the shrine to be trained as temple prostitutes, male and female." [128] This interpretation would be more in keeping with what has been said thus far. Cultic prostitution would have been shameful idolatry and it would also have represented disorderly sexual relations. Man and wife were to "become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Humanity was to live in harmony together according to God's design, and cultic prostitution, if in fact practiced, [129] would have represented a revolt against God's intentions.

Homosexuality and bestiality, too, represented an attack against God's created order (Lev. 18:22-23). God had created each according to its kind and each was to have sexual relations with the opposite sex of its own kind. This is true for humanity (Gen. 2:24), and in P's flood account this is equally true of the animal world (Gen. 6:19; 7:16). All prohibited sexual relations are defiling but homosexuality and especially bestiality is considered an "abomination" (  $\text{קִדְּוֹנָה}$  ) and a "perversion" (  $\text{לְבָבָה}$  ). The first word literally means "disgusting" and the second, "confusion or mixture". These practices are described by P as a disgusting confusion of the divine order which God has created.

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128. *Ibid.* See Isa. 57:9 and Jer. 32:35.

129.  $\text{זָמִימָה}$  and  $\text{קִדְּוֹנָה}$  have traditionally been interpreted as male and female temple-prostitute, respectively (see BDB, p. 878; and O.J. Baab, "Prostitution," IDB, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), pp. 931-934). Yet in a conversation with Professor Saul Olyan he made the observation that the two Hebrew terms refer only to male and female cultic personnel, set apart for temple service. Thus he cautions against interpreting the Hebrew terms as references to cultic prostitutes. Nowhere is prostitution explicitly stated.

The term, "confusion" or "mixture", occurs only in one other passage. In Leviticus 20:12 it is again used to describe the sexual intercourse between a man and his daughter-in-law. For P, any putting together or "making one" of that which God has intended as separate is an abominable confusion of God's divine order.[130] In Leviticus 20 the death penalty is prescribed for many of the sexual offences mentioned in chapter 18.

Leviticus 18:24-30 represent the concluding exhortations advanced by P with regard to the sexual practices of the foreign nations. Here one finds a final curse upon all those who would transgress against God's statutes and a last reminder in the chapter that "I am the Lord your God." Again the focus is on God. Even though many of these laws can be considered as a polemic against foreign practices, it appears that P's concern for divine order, harmony and a peaceful life will have, however, played a larger role in shaping the present laws. All which perverts and confuses God's intended order is regarded as abominable. It represents symbolically all that is contrary to God.

This is true also of the various laws which make up Leviticus 19. P has attempted to tie the various laws together with its distinctive phrase "I am the Lord." The chapter begins with "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to all the congregation'" and concludes with, "And you shall observe

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130. Bigger, in "The Family Laws," follows Douglas' emphasis on body issues. He suggests that all the sexual laws are concerned with the "misuse of semen" and "the mixing of different types of semen in the receptive animal or woman" (p. 203).

all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them: I am the Lord." As in the previous chapter the ultimate motivator encouraging the people to obey God's laws is God Himself.

This chapter, which has been regarded as the 'priestly decalogue', [131] takes on an "apodictic and predominantly negative form" in its outlining of thirty or so laws. [132]

Porter notes:

Like most ancient collections of laws, there is no clear or logical order in the way the commands are set out - or none, at least, that we can discover - but the compiler simply strings together loosely what was available to him. His objective was to preserve what he could of the old legal traditions from the wreck of the national life, that they might once more provide the structure for the revived Israel he hoped to see. [133]

In this chapter one finds both cultic requirements and ethical obligations tied closely together. Although we might make this distinction, P does not, since it regards all law as based in the divine ordering of life.

P begins with an invitation to imitate God's holiness (vs. 2) and to remain faithful to him (vs. 4). Ethical obligations (reverence of parents), and cultic requirements (keeping of the sabbath), are both considered as indicators of holiness. Again these laws are best interpreted as **representative** of all of God's laws which were to create divinely ordered life.

Verses 5-8 deal with regulations regarding the eating of the peace offering. Verses 9-10 are also concerned with food, but here it is the food for the poor, the gleanings

131. Elliger, Leviticus, p. 255.

132. Porter, Leviticus, p. 151

133. Ibid.

after the harvest, which concerns P "You shall not steal" begins the next set of laws. Just as reaping "your field to its very border" and stripping "your vineyard bare," would be to steal from the poor, so the theme continues in verses 11-12. To steal, deal falsely, lie (which is "to swear by my name falsely") all promote disorder and confusion since they represent the opposite to dealing honestly, openly and forthrightly. This theme continues in the next three sections (19:13-18). Here there are a host of negative commands with two positive ones: "in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor" and; "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." At the end of each short section the motivating clause is advanced, "I am the Lord." It is God who has set the standard and Israel, his sacred community, is to imitate his holiness. Israel is not to promote disorder or stand against life (vs. 16). But to promote righteousness (פִּדְיוֹן), justice (צְדָקָה) and love (אַהֲבָה). These qualities lie at the center of ordered life.

Verse 19, at first glance, appears out of place; so much so that some commentators have suggested that the levitical lawgivers simply gathered the older traditions even though "they no longer understood their allusions...".[134] Returning to the theme of "confusions" or "mixtures" Wenham suggests that "the ban on all mixtures, especially mixed breeding, shows man following in God's steps. He must keep separate what God created separate." [135] Porter states that

134. Calum M. Carmichael, "Forbidden Mixtures," *VI* 32(1982), p. 411.

135. *Leviticus*, p. 269.

"the idea underlying this little group of three prohibitions is the same as that underlying the laws of 'uncleanness': creatures or things of one nature are not to be mixed up with those having another." [136]

It was noted above that many of these laws in H are older than P. P, however, did not incorporate H indiscriminately but fit H into its own work, where H serves P's agenda. Occasionally H appears to stand in opposition to older practices and requirements which P was aware of. [137] P incorporated the laws, however, because it sought to use them symbolically, in an effort to prohibit the "mixing" of God's created order. That which is of a different kind (אֲשֶׁר שָׁדוּד) is to remain separated. God's divinely created order is not to be disturbed. Hybrid combinations would only lead to disorder. According to God's ordering of things Israel, too, was created to be holy, separated from the practices of the other nations. The law prohibiting the mixing of kinds brought this understanding to the mind of the Israelite.

The three verses following verse 9 deal with the disorderly relationship of a man who "lies carnally with a woman who is a slave, betrothed to another man." Just as verse 19 relates to the passage in chapter 18 regarding the "confusion" inherent in homosexuality and bestiality, so also these verses relate back to the sexual offences mentioned in the previous chapter. Anything creating social disorder is pro-

136. Leviticus, p. 157.

137. See the presence of mules in ancient Israel (2 Sam. 13:29), and the weaving together of scarlet stuff, fine twined linen and goats hair for the holy garments, etc. (Ex. 35:23-35).

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Verses 23-25 deal with a "firstfruit" of sorts regarding Israel's agricultural products. In all of life, including the economic dimension, Israel is continually to live in the presence of God, aware of its relationship with God and its responsibilities within the covenant arrangement. A variety of cultic and ethical concerns are mentioned in verses 26-34. These verses encourage the Israelite to remain faithful to God, and in interacting with others, to show no partiality. Strangers are to be treated as fellow Israelites, in fact, "you shall love him as yourself." All these laws are based on God's election and care for Israel. (vs.34). As God has dealt with Israel in love and forthrightness, so also is the Israelite now encouraged to imitate God (19:35-37). In so doing s/he recreates, and lives within God's intended (created) order.

As mentioned above, Leviticus 20 largely sets out the penalties for violating God's laws. Israel is to be a holy people, and failure to strive after holiness would mean sure death. God separated Israel from the nations (20:24), and His people are now to distinguish between cl/uncl, holy and profane (20:26), Godly and ungodly. Israel is to live within the sphere of holiness (in the presence of God), affirming God's intended order, design, life, perfection, etc. It is not to engage in any activity that might mix the spheres of holy and profane. In distinguishing between these opposing spheres, "you should be mine [God's]," and divinely ordered life would be Israel's to enjoy.

For P all its laws centered on God and in some way related to His created order and His intent for it. This is true for both the explicit cl/uncl laws and those not explicitly related to the theme behind the cl/uncl regulations. Is the same motive evident behind D's use of cl/uncl? D's use of the laws will briefly be examined next.

### C. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN IN DEUTERONOMY

Whereas cl/uncl thinking can be found throughout P this is not true for D. In D these concepts appear to play a much lesser role. Certainly they are not referred to as frequently as in P. Of the five basic cl/uncl regulations examined above, only the meat laws receive any real attention in D. Little is said regarding uncleanness through contact with a dead body. No comments are advanced about the uncleanness which is brought on by childbirth. "Leprosy" is mentioned once in D and even here one finds no explicit connection to uncleanness:

Take heed, in an attack of leprosy, to be careful to do according to all that the Levitical priests shall direct you; as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do (Deut. 24:8).

It appears that D assumes that its listeners are aware of the leprosy regulations and need only to be encouraged to be obedient. Neither the 'discharge' uncleanness nor the uncleanness which comes from menstruation is mentioned. Only once is uncleanness mentioned with regard to that which "chances to him by night" (23:19-20).

This infrequent use of the cl/uncl laws need not suggest that D was unaware of the many regulations. Yet they appear

less important to D. In chapter four the difference in historical context between D and P was discussed. It is important to return briefly to this discussion to understand the different theological presuppositions and intentions of D and P, especially as they relate to cl/uncl thinking.

In chapter four it was argued that D and P are not far apart theologically but that the differences between them can be understood in light of their historical contexts. There exists a general consensus today among Old Testament scholars that centralization, and the rationale behind it, a desire to prohibit certain Canaanite practices, are the most outstanding features in D.[138] N. Lohfink has written that, "the greatest innovation that Deuteronomy produced was the demand to centralize the cult at the place which Yahweh chose." [139] In Deuteronomy 12, the well known "centralization of worship" chapter, many insights can be gained regarding the perspective and intent of D. In this chapter the command is given:

You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods.... But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go, and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices ...; and there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households... (12:2-7).

Other passages in Deuteronomy concerned with the centralization of the sacrificial system are scattered throughout.[140] From the passage quoted above it is clear that the primary

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138. Boecker, Law and the Administration, p. 184.

139. "Deuteronomy," IBES (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), p. 231.

140. See Deuteronomy 14:22-9; 15:19-23; 16:1-22; 17:8-13; 18:1-8; 19:1-13.



reason behind centralizing the cult was to guard against the nation following the practices of other cults. D sought to distinguish clearly between Yahwism and the prohibited beliefs and practices of Israel's neighbors.

Another problem is advanced in Deuteronomy 12:8: "you shall not do according to all that we are doing here this day, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes." In an effort to guard against prohibited religious practices and to unify the cult, D sought to centralize the cult which would then be able to set out some standard for the nation as a whole to follow.

Whereas earlier no restriction was placed on the locale for bringing a sacrifice, in D it was restricted to "the place which the Lord will choose" (Deut. 12:14). Yet, as in the ancient days, it appears as though the person offering the sacrifice continues to play a significant role (see 12:13-14). This is especially true of the eating of the sacrifice, "you shall eat before the Lord your God ... you and your households" (12:7). In P, however, the remaining portions of the sacrifices are assigned to the priest's household (Lev. 6,7, 21,22), and as was noted in chapter four, the Aaronic priesthood alone could offer the sacrifices to the Lord.

Thus one can see an ever narrowing formal cultic responsibility given to the Israelite and an increasingly significant role given to the priest. All this in an effort to prevent the cultic excesses of the past and deter Israel from becoming like her neighbors. D's Israel, politically, social-

ly and religiously, is in many ways far removed from the Israel which was once at Mount Sinai. Yet this Israel "comes once more under the sovereignty of Yahweh, in order to be claimed by him as his people - as a 'holy people' (7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19; 28:9)."[141] Although this holiness theme, as related to the people, is used by D, it is P which highlights this theme and perceives all of life through it.

Whereas in D it is easier to distinguish between "ethical" or "moral" concerns, and "sacral" ones, in P all of Israelite life is related to holiness. In P no real distinction is possible since both social injustice and cultic misdeed are considered as that which stands contrary to God. Whereas D stresses Israel's election,[142] and not its righteousness,[143] P continually reminds Israel that it is a "holy nation," and ought therefore to live accordingly. Both D and P seek to motivate Israel to righteousness and justice, but D does so by advancing much of the older legal material which appears more secularly oriented, while P attempts to promote holiness in the Israelite by interpreting all of life, as directly related to the cult and to God.

Having briefly again discussed P's and D's historical

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141. Von Rad, "Deuteronomy," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 837.

142. "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers" (Deut. 7:7-8).

143. "Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out.... Know therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you are a stubborn people" (Deut. 9:5-6).

context and general use of the cl/uncl laws, this study will attempt to distinguish between P's and D's use of the cl/uncl regulations. Only tentative conclusions can be arrived at, for two reasons. One, a comprehensive study of D's theology should be undertaken before one can adequately begin to distinguish the fine differences between D's use of cl/uncl and P's use of the concepts. This can not be done here. Two, the fact that D seldom refers to the cl/uncl concepts, and yet undoubtedly is aware of them, creates obvious limitations. Were one to examine D's theology thoroughly and were the concepts more frequently used, there would be a more realistic chance of distinguishing accurately between cl/uncl in D and P. Due to the limits of this study and the D material, no really comprehensive conclusions can be arrived at here.

As was said above, nothing is said in D regarding the uncleanness which comes from childbirth and little is said regarding 'leprosy'. Neither does one find in D a law of 'discharge' as in Leviticus 15. Deuteronomy 23:9-14 deals with bodily emissions in a military camp which is engaged in holy war. These verses supplement chapter 20 where D has outlined rules for holy war.

Before examining D's "bodily emissions" passage, it is helpful to comment briefly on the wider context within which the Deuteronomy 23 passage is found. A variety of "miscellaneous laws are advanced in chapters 21-25. Although it is well known that these laws have a long and diverse history of growth, much like the P material, it is D who assembles them

and presents them as a new unity.[144] As was true for P, in many of the laws one finds the juxtaposition of order and disorder, life and death. These themes appear also to have preoccupied D.

In Deuteronomy 21, five supposedly disparate laws are advanced. The first deals with the expiation of a murder when the killer is unknown. The second supplements the holy war rules outlined in chapter 20 and deals with the treatment of female slaves. The third law deals with the inheritance rights of a first-born son. The fourth law concerns the rebellion of a disobedient son. The fifth law concerns the burial of the body of a hanged criminal. Calum Carmichael has persuasively argued that although these laws may appear to be linked together by some haphazard editorial process they do, nevertheless, fit together neatly in that all have to do with the coming together of life and death.[145]

In the first law the ceremony of killing a heifer "which has never worked" (21:3) on new land "which is neither plowed nor sown," (21:4) "is intended to remind the participants of the coming together of life and death in their midst." [146] Much of the symbolism in the ceremony represents the premature death of the slain man. In the second law the mourning rites of the captive woman represent the present or eventual death of her parents which will go unnoticed by her.[147] In the third law the father distributing his goods,

144. Boecker, Law and the Administration, p. 179.

145. "A Common Element in Five Supposedly Disparate Laws," VI 29(1979), p. 141.

146. Ibid., p. 132.

147. Ibid., p. 135.

near his time of death, is prohibited from denying his first-born son (first-fruits of his life) his rightful share.[148] In the fourth law the rebellious son is handed over by his parents for a sentence of death. Carmichael observes that this, in fact, seldom happened but suggests that the sages' "counsel is that to discipline a son, by physical means, will not lead to his death but will save his life from Sheol" (Prov. 23:13,14).[149] In the final law one again finds a clear example of death coming in the midst of life.[150] So it is in each case where there is a coming together of two opposites, life and death. It is this overlapping or mixing of spheres which the writer appears to focus upon.

Having made this observation Carmichael writes, "the aim of the lawgiver is to set things right by ensuring a separation of the two." [151] He goes on to point out that in each law a wrong-doing has been dealt with and a strong affirmation of life is advanced. According to D the opposite spheres of life and death are to remain separated. Were one to take this interpretive approach used by Carmichael and broaden the spheres of life and death to include order and disorder, many of the laws in the following chapter also appear to fit together well.

In Deuteronomy 22, five laws in particular appear to be directly related to this thinking which prohibits the mixing of opposites. In verse 5 a woman and man are both commanded

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148. Ibid., p. 136.

149. Ibid., p. 137.

150. Ibid., p. 138.

151. Ibid., p. 141.

to wear the appropriate garments of their sex. This prohibition against transvestism has frequently been associated with foreign cultic practices.[152] Although this may in part be true, the context within which it now is found, however, would not suggest this rationale as primary. Perhaps a more fitting interpretation would be to understand this law in light of God's created order. A confusion of sexes would violate God's intent and would represent a mixing of kinds.

This is true also of the prohibition against taking for food both the mother bird and her young or eggs (22:6-7).[153] Here, too, one finds the affirmation of life and the desire to promote order. Von Rad and Craigie offer two alternative positions. Von Rad suggests that the law "can probably be attributed only to humane motives and hardly to considerations of utility." [154] Craigie disagrees, however, and argues that the taking of both the mother bird and her young,

... would be bad; in commercial language, it would be exchanging a long-term profit for an immediate gain. To take and kill the mother would be to terminate a potential future supply of food. To take the mother and leave the others would not be possible, for they would not be able to survive without the mother.[155]

Both von Rad's humanitarian and Craigie's economic explanations are not very satisfying. A theological interpretation

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152. See Gerhard von Rad, Deuteronomy: A Commentary, The Old Testament Library, Trans. Dorothea Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 141; and Peter C. Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), p. 288.

153. Cf. also Deut. 14:21b.

154. Deuteronomy, p. 141.

155. Deuteronomy, p. 289.

which focuses on the mixing of spheres, namely here life and death, fits much better the general thrust of this chapter and the one preceding it. The admonition, "you shall let the mother go" (vs. 7) is an affirmation of the sphere of life, over against the alternative, the sphere of death. Could this be true also of the first laws in this chapter? Could the unwillingness to help one's neighbor in securing a stray animal (22:1-4), which may in some measure have represented the livelihood of that neighbor, be in some (small?) way promoting death (or a lesser quality of life?) and disorder rather than affirming life and order. This appears more clearly to be true of the law concerning "a parapet for your roof" which, too, was to prevent injury or possible death (22:8).

In Deuteronomy 22:9-11 one also finds three laws, each prohibiting the mixing of kinds. Traditionally these laws have also frequently been associated with prohibited religious practices or with magical rites.[156] Carmichael has offered an interesting interpretation where these laws are regarded as having a sexual meaning. With reference to certain biblical passages he shows how "ploughing" and "sowing" readily lend themselves to the notion of sexual intercourse.[157] Using other texts he suggest that the vine and other seed, as well as the ox and ass, refer to Israel and Canaan respectively.[158] "Linen" is frequently associated with a prostitute's make-up, and wool "contrasts with linen

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156. See von Rad, Deuteronomy, p. 141; and Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 290.

157. Forbidden Mixture, p. 403.

158. Ibid., pp. 398-401.

precisely in its lack of sensual associations. If linen can suggest wantonness, wool can suggest its opposite." [159] With this symbolic interpretation of the passage he suggests that the writer seeks to discourage Israel from mixing with Canaan. Thus this interpretation, too, is one which regards the laws as a polemic against foreign nations, in this case Canaan.

There can be little doubt that D sought to retain Israel's "separateness" as a nation but this interpretation is not the only one. Those who interpret these laws theologically by suggesting that they seek to maintain the distinctions of God's created order, appear to provide an equally convincing conclusion.

Were one to highlight in these three laws the life/death contrast, one might consider the following interpretation. Could not the practice of planting two seeds in the same field threaten the growth of the less hardy, slower growing plant, which may not receive the nutrients and light required? With regards to the plowing with an ass and ox, could not the ass suffer from the difficult work of ploughing with an ox? Here we have two animals of very unequal strength with one perhaps, consequently suffering because of it. Finally, could D have believed that the mingling of wool and linen would suffer the same fate as the sewing together of old and new skins. [160] The washing and drying (shrinking) of the

159. Ibid., p. 409.

160. In Leviticus there is a reference to garments made of skin. Were one to tear the leprous spot out of the skin (13:56) another piece of skin would be used to repair the damaged part. Would not the Israelite have been aware of the



different material would ultimately weaken and distort the whole. With the above interpretations it would appear that there may also be slight adumbrations of death in these laws.

A more likely interpretation, however, hinges on the order/disorder contrast. Could these laws not be interpreted at face value (in representative fashion) as prohibiting the mixing of kinds?[161] Could not D have been aware of the tradition used by P in its creation account? According to P's creation account vegetation was to yield seed "according to their kind" (Gen. 1:11). God also created living creatures "according to their kinds" (Gen. 1:24). God's created order was to be upheld. A mixing of kinds would be symbolic of a move towards disorder. This emphasis on the contrasting order/disorder theme, and the mixing of kinds, would have also served to remind the Israelite not to mix with the foreign nations. Israel was to be a holy nation, separated from the other nations.

The remainder of Deuteronomy 22 deals with various sexual offences which may also be considered as improper ways of "becoming one." Many of the laws mentioned in Deuteronomy 23 appear directly related to the cult.[162] The man "whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut" (23:1) and the "bastard" (23:2) are restricted from entering "the assembly of the Lord." The meaning of the term "bastard" (בְּרִיָּה) is uncertain [163] and it is mentioned only at one

problems involved in sowing together fresh and old skins.

161. Cf. with the discussion on p. 186 focusing on similar (P) laws.

162. Deuteronomy 23:1,2,8,18,21.

163. Noth, Deuteronomy, p. 146.

other occasion in the Old Testament.[164] Craigie suggests that it may refer to children born out of wedlock or children born to cultic prostitutes.[165] This interpretation would be in keeping with the larger context since improper union would again represent disorder and therefore disqualify from cultic participation.

Returning to Deuteronomy 23:9-14 it would appear that the military camp engaged in holy war represents the "assembly of the Lord." As God "resides" in His holy temple so He here "walks in the midst of your camp." In D the emission at night is described as "not clean" and excrement (in vs. 13) is often considered the "indecent thing" (of vs. 14). According to D it appears that both could make God "turn away from you" (23:14). This, of course, would surely spell defeat and possible death in the battle. God's presence was desired in the military camp and as uncleanness figured largely in the context of the cult, so also in the context of the military camp in a holy war.

In this passage the key issue clearly concerns the presence of God along with that which is unclean and indecent. The sphere of the holy is to remain separated from the sphere of the profane. Nothing is said of the nature of the emission at night except that it creates a state of uncleanness. The excrement is not connected with "uncleanness (  $\chi\eta\mu\alpha$  ) but rather is described as an "indecent thing"

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164. See Zechariah 9:6

165. Deuteronomy, p. 297. He notes that even those children born as a result of the rape of a single woman would have a father since the law required the man to marry the victim.

( 7179 ). This Hebrew term can also be translated "offensive", "disgraceful", or "nakedness".[166] Emphasizing the "nakedness" theme one could argue that it is not first and foremost the excrement that is offensive (and must therefore be covered up), but the act of defecating in the camp which would expose one's "nakedness". Thus the repeated concern that there be a place outside the camp where one might go (away from God's "presence", vss. 12,13).[167] God, in the midst of the camp, was not to see "anything indecent among you, and turn away from you" (23:14).

D's longest and most explicit use of the cl/uncl concepts is found in Deuteronomy's own version of the meat laws (14:3-21). This passage has a remarkable resemblance to the meat laws found in Leviticus 11. The Leviticus passage is a fuller treatment, however, with the exception of the clean animal list. In P only some unclean animals are listed but no clean ones. D lists as clean the ox, the sheep, the goat, the hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain-sheep. Whereas ten clean larger animals are listed which have the proper characteristics, no clean birds are listed or characteristics given. Only the names of twenty unclean birds are given and these, too, are difficult to distinguish, as in the case of P.[168] D's statement regarding clean fish is essentially

166. A similar term ( 7179 ) referring to being naked can be found elsewhere in the Old Testament. See Gen. 9:22-23; Isa. 47:3; Ezek. 16:36-37.

167. Note also that the bathing of oneself was to be done outside the camp (Deut.23:11).

168. Although both P and D mention 20 birds the buzzard and great owl are omitted in P, the falcon and the ibis are not

identical to P except that D is more concise. Further, D's treatment of the birds is more positive compared to P where it is only negative.

The most obvious difference between P's and D's meat laws is that in D "all winged insects are unclean" (14:19), while in P four different locusts or grasshoppers are considered clean. In an effort to align D's with P's locust laws some scholars have connected verse 19 and 20.[169] Verse 20 is translated, "all clean winged **things** you may eat." This interpretation would allow for those insects mentioned in Leviticus. The actual Hebrew terms used, however, do not support this conclusion. In both cases there is little doubt that a bird and not an insect is referred to. In verse 11 the term for bird is while in verse 20 it is (literally meaning "fowl" collectively). The same term for "fowl" is used in Leviticus 11:13. It is difficult to provide a satisfying rationale for this difference with regards to the locusts in D and P.

The most obvious omission in D, as over against P, is its total failure to treat the "swarming things" category. In P this category receives much attention. With this in mind, it would seem safe to assume that P is probably at this point building upon the original older law which likely both D and P used.[170] With P's stronger emphasis on the "disorder" theme this further elaboration by P is understandable.

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omitted in D (according to the RSV translation).  
169. See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p. 232, (follows S.R. Driver).  
170. See p. 72 (footnote 29), for more literary-critical information regarding the meat laws in D and P.

A few other differences between P and D, one of which is not mentioned in D's meat laws but appears elsewhere in D, concern the eating of animal fat. In P fat is treated much like blood and is reserved for God, for use only on the altar (Lev. 3:16-17). In D, however, it appears that the consumption of fat is not prohibited (Deut. 32:14). Another difference related to the meat laws is that in D that which dies of itself could be sold to an "alien" (Deut. 14:21). In P all that dies by itself makes both native and stranger unclean (Lev. 17:10,15-20). According to P God's laws are the same, "both for the native or the stranger who sojourns among you" (Lev. 18:26). Thus D, in this case perceives a clear distinction between Israelite and non-Israelite.

Those scholars who treat D's meat laws at any length in their commentary on Deuteronomy usually advance the traditional interpretations for the laws mentioned in chapter two. This study has attempted to advance a more satisfying interpretation of P's meat laws using the work of Douglas, Neusner, Feldman and others. It is difficult, however, to elaborate at any length with regards to the cl/uncl regulations found in D because so little attention is given to the concepts. Yet it appears safe to assume that much of what lies at the heart of the laws in P, is true also for D even though little is explicitly said.

It was noted earlier that D appears more concerned with preventing foreign religious practices in Israel. Similar concerns are evident in P. Yet P's intense focus on God and its desire that "all Israel" be a holy nation, one which

models itself after the priestly paradigm, does not allow for a continual polemical reflection upon the other religions. In P all within the community are to be "holy", both the people and their possession. This is clear also in P's elaboration of the holy war laws where P demands that all booty gained must be purified before being absorbed by the community (Num. 31:19-20). No mention is made of this practice in D where the cleansing of booty gained, appears not to have been practiced (cf. Deut. 2:35; 20:10-14). P, more than D, perceives that all Israel is a "holy" nation and seeks to maintain that "holiness" by encouraging each Israelite to model his/her life after that of the priest, who lives all of life as in the presence of God.

In P the cl/uncl laws appear as a significant part of P's agenda to extend the realm of the sacred into every level of life. The Israelite is to live life ever conscious of God's presence and thus symbolically express His holiness. To live within God's divine order, symbolically reflecting Him by affirming order and life, God's special design upon His creation and His perfection, is to be the goal of each Israelite, according to P.

To be sure, D also sought to inspire Israel to holiness but its approach differed in that it did not use the priestly paradigm or the cl/uncl regulations to promote a sense of God's order and desire to be continually present with His people. D, having gathered the older traditions, does not directly relate them to the cult as does P. Yet the contrast-

ing themes of order/disorder[171] and life/death[172] are clearly present throughout D. Here, too, order and life are highlighted and affirmed by D. These dominant themes undoubtedly go back to the beginnings of Yahwism.

Although D possessed many of P's concerns, D appears more directly engaged in a polemic against foreign cultic practices. D's dominant centralization theme is concerned that Israel not follow the religious practices of Canaan. Focused intensely on the threat of "pagan" influence, D frequently juxtaposes "Israel" and the "foreign nations". This explains the distinction between the law for the Israelite and the alien.[173] In P, however, God's presence and His holiness is frequently juxtaposed with that which stands in contrast to Him and His created order (and is thus considered profane). P, focusing more on God and the cult, with not as great a need to be as polemical as D, hopes that all living within Israel, both native and stranger, will live obediently according to God's laws.

Concerned more with the threat from the outside, D makes little or no mention of the cl/uncl regulations concerned with the dead, childbirth, 'leprosy' and 'discharge'. In D's treatment of the meat laws, which receive more attention than all the other cl/uncl laws, D places them squarely in a polemical context. In P, God through Moses gives the laws to the holy community in covenant with God at

171. The curses at the end of Deuteronomy also affirm order over against chaos (27:15-26).

172. Other passages where the spheres of life and death are not to be mixed are found in Deut. 14:21b; 20:5-7; 24:4-6.

173. See p. 203.

Sinai. The meat laws in D, however, are preceded with a prohibition against practicing pagan mourning customs (Deut. 14:1-2), and are followed by further instruction directly related to prohibited cultic practices. The commandment "you shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Deut. 14:21b), [174] has been connected to forbidden "pagan" rites. [175]

The following passage (Deut. 14:22ff.) relating to Israel's "first-fruits" tithing practice, also appears polemical. D is clearly concerned with the question: To whom do I offer my tithe and where? According to D it is important that it be offered "before the Lord your God, in the place which he will choose, to make his name dwell there" (Deut. 14:24). The theme is mentioned several times in Deuteronomy 14:22-27. In P's treatment of the tithe (Lev. 19:23-25), however, one finds no glaring polemic. In this more worshipful setting, P does not address the question raised by D but simply considers the tithe to be holy and "an offering of praise to the Lord" (Lev. 19:24).

D, although undoubtedly cognizant of the cl/uncl regulations, is absorbed with a more pressing concern; namely that of preserving Israel as a holy nation, separated from the cultic practices of its neighbors. D, more pre-occupied with polemics, focuses less on the cult than does P. Not perceiving foreign cultic practices as threatening as D, P seeks to interpret all of life in relation to the cult and God's presence (the greater threat).

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174. Also in Exod. 23:19.

175. Von Rad, Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 209.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DOUGLAS, NEUSNER AND FELDMAN RECONSIDERED

The cl/uncl-related work of Douglas, Neusner and Feldman was outlined in chapter three. No critique of their work was offered at that time since it was first necessary to examine P. P's larger theology and its particular use of the cl/uncl regulations was developed in chapters four and five. A critique of the work of these three scholars now follows.

As we relate the findings of chapters four and five to the work of Douglas, Neusner and Feldman, both positive contributions and shortcomings will become apparent. In evaluating these scholars it will be shown that each advances a scheme too narrow to account adequately for cl/uncl. Yet by incorporating the strengths of each into a larger symbolic system which highlights the larger contrasting scheme of order/ disorder, it will be possible to advance the discussion of P's cl/uncl laws.

The approach taken here in reconsidering the work of the three scholars proceeds as follows. First, a brief review of their work is undertaken. Second, the particular strengths of their work are highlighted. Third, their weaknesses are discussed and alternative views offered where possible. Finally, some remarks will be made regarding their general approaches as they relate to this study.

Douglas' work is by far the more comprehensive and will, therefore, receive considerably more attention than

that of the others. We will begin with her work.

#### A. MARY DOUGLAS: A CRITIQUE AND COMMENTARY

MD has shown that all people are engaged in ritual activity which functions symbolically in structuring one's world. Through various rituals, frequently associated with the elimination of "dirt" or "pollution," a society organizes its environment.[1] Further, according to MD, the body, too, can function as a symbol of a society's particular social experiences. She develops these views in her study of cl/uncl in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

For MD the concept of holiness is central. She recognizes that holiness is often interpreted as "separateness", but for her the ideas of wholeness and completeness are basic to an understanding of the cl/uncl regulations. Her view, stated succinctly, follows:

In short the idea of holiness was given an external physical expression in the wholeness of the body seen as a perfect container.... Wholeness is also extended to signify completeness in a social context.... Holiness means keeping distinct the categories of creation.[2]

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1. Recently Douglas has written concerning "pollution" ideas in technologically advanced countries. She notes that "dangers are selected for public concern according to strength and direction of social criticism" (p. 7), both in "primitive" cultures and in our own. She questions, "is it ever possible to see nature through neutral scientific lenses?" (p.47). In her third chapter MD advances examples showing how scientists disagree on many issues. Differences in opinion by the scientific community regarding water contamination and chemical spills in Winnipeg (not to mention the diverse international perspective concerning the disaster at Chernobyl) could be added to the examples she lists. MD observes that we have much information concerning the risks of sun-bathing (skin cancer), smoking (lung cancer), etc., yet our choice of risks is largely determined by the biases of our society. Risk and Culture (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 67-82.

2. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, pp. 51-53.

With this understanding of holiness she examines all the cl/uncl regulations along with other laws traditionally not directly related to them.

The most significant contribution made by MD is her attempt to understand the larger symbolic system which incorporates all of Israelite life and relates meaningfully to all of the various concerns of that society. No other scholar has advanced a symbolic system which is as comprehensive. Using the theme of holiness and its meaning of wholeness, MD discusses the various rules of behavior, actions and expectations, found in Israel's use of cl/uncl.

MD's insistence on the significant role of P's creation account is also laudable. She writes, "to seek to understand their ancient purity rules is to seek to accept the challenge of seeing **how** their whole world was constituted, starting from Genesis I...".[3] Any attempt to understand the cl/uncl regulations must take seriously the cosmological considerations of Israel.

A final feature which certainly distinguishes MD from all other scholars examining the cl/uncl theme in the Old Testament is her use of "body symbolism." According to MD each society projects a particular view of the body which in turn reflects its view of itself. Here, too, the idea of wholeness, especially as it relates to the physical body, plays an important role. As wholeness, oneness and completeness symbolize holiness, so hybrids and confusions are symbolic of that which is abominable. With this premise she makes  
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3. "Critique and Commentary," p. 139.

some interesting observations regarding Israel's religious, social and political regulations and perceptions.

In the following discussion focusing on the weaknesses in MD's work, it is these three major points which this study will test. Although it will not be denied that holiness, the creation account and body symbolism are important factors in understanding the cl/uncl regulations, refinements will need to be made to some of MD's conclusions. Some points are tenuous while others need to be dismissed.

It will be argued below that MD's view of holiness needs some refinement. As it stands, its main theme, that of "wholeness", appears to be more a product of her dominant concerns regarding body symbolism and body discharges, than a result of P's understanding of God. Further, her concept of "wholeness" does not account adequately for all the various regulations.

In examining P's broader theology in chapter four, it was argued that divine order, over against chaos, is the most significant theme in P's treatment of God. God embodies order and from His ordering of things springs life, design, harmony, and perfection. Although the themes of wholeness and completeness could be added to these they can only be secondary to those others just mentioned. Granted, the themes of wholeness and completeness are part of P's creation account. God had created an exceedingly good creation having everything necessary for ordered and harmonious life. Yet in P the accent is clearly on the divine ordering of life. According to P God's orderly world stands in sharp contrast to the

chaos which preceded this divine order (Gen. 1:2).

As wholeness and completeness figure prominently in MD's understanding of holiness, this is true also of her study of the meat laws. She writes: "The dietary laws would have been like signs which at every turn inspire meditation on the oneness, purity and **completeness** of God." [4] Although the laws no doubt were to function to remind the Israelites of their God, it is not the animal's "complete" taxonomic status but divine order which should again receive the emphasis. It was argued above that the themes of order and life best explain the meat laws. [5] Those animals which most completely reflect God's intended order are considered clean.

MD'S strict classification of the animal world into three categories is also unconvincing. Her suggestion that, "any class of creature which is not equipped for the right kind of locomotion in its element is contrary to holiness," [6] appears to miss the point. According to MD any animal which does not **wholly or completely** fit within her three categories is considered unclean. She writes:

Other precepts extend holiness to species and categories. Hybrids and other confusions are abominated.... We can conclude that holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused. [7]

Yet in the treatment of hybrids P does not appear to be using some classification scheme based on the means of locomotion

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4. Purity and Danger, p. 57. Emphasis mine.
  5. See pp. 144-146 and 186-187.
  6. Purity and Danger, p. 55.
  7. Ibid., p. 53.

but on the principle of maintaining the divine order placed initially on God's creation.

Because some morphological criteria are advanced by P regarding certain land- and water-based animals, MD believes that it is P's intent to highlight these characteristics. She concedes that no description is given for birds, and they are, therefore, not treated by MD.[8] The fact that P does not advance standard descriptions for all animals, however, suggests that no rigid classification scheme, based on the means of locomotion, is intended. In chapter five Carroll's critique of MD's creation classification scheme was discussed and it need not be considered again here.[9] Both P and D appear cognizant of the fact that God had created distinct creatures[10] who were to live harmoniously in God's created

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8. Ibid. Douglas writes, "Birds I can say nothing about, because, as I have said, they are named and not described...." Focusing on the particular mode of locomotion in each sphere she speculates, "it may well turn out that they [unclean birds] are anomalous because they swim and dive as well as they fly, or in some other way are not fully bird-like" (Ibid., p. 56).

9. See p. 134. Further, were it true that all clean animals needed to conform to one of MD's three categories, having the appropriate characteristics, it would be unlikely that the cherubim, those mythological creatures with wings [see T.H. Gaster, "Angels," IDB, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), pp. 186-187], would have received the hallowed position given to them. One would think that the great sea monster, also, would have been described as unclean (Gen. 1:21). Thus the main point appears not to be the means of locomotion but the concern that all creatures live according to God's intended order. P sought to prohibit the "mixing" of God's created order (see pp. 186-187).

10. In both P and D one finds a concern for identifying an animal "according to its kind." The term for "kind" in both cases is not דָּבָר, as used in Lev. 19:19 or Deut. 22:9, but it is rather the Hebrew term מִינֵהוּ (cf. Lev. 11:14,15,16,19, 22,29, with Deut. 14:13,14,15,18). In P's creation account and its telling of the flood account, where P describes a

order. As creatures transgressed God's designs for them, by eating meat or in some way becoming symbolically associated with death or disorder, they became unclean for the Israelite to eat. They were not unclean in themselves, but Israel was forbidden to internalize or identify in any way with that which did not reflect God's order.

Two fellow anthropologists[10] have also criticized MD for limiting her explanation of the Israelite meat laws to some animal taxonomy. In response to their criticisms MD concedes that she originally focused too narrowly on her classification scheme.[11] With regard to her earlier rationale for the uncleanness of a pig she writes in response to Bulmer's criticism:

On more mature reflection, and with the help of his own [Bulmer's] research, I can now see that the pig to the Israelites could have had a special taxonomic status equivalent to that of the otter in Thailand. It carries the odium of multiple pollution. First, it pollutes because it defies the classification of ungulates. Second, it pollutes because it eats carrion. Third, it pollutes because it is reared as food ... by non-Israelites. An Israelite who betrothed a foreigner might have been liable to be offered a feast of pork.[12]

With this "multiple pollution" argument she advances an interpretation which accounts for the uncleanness of the pig

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divinely ordered world made up of distinct parts, the term <sup>770</sup> is used fifteen times (Gen. 1:11,12,21,24,25; 6:20; 7:14). The term may well have been used more frequently by P because of its desire to highlight God's creation order. See also pp. 186-187 and 196-198.

10. Ralph Bulmer, "Why is the Cassowary Not a Bird? A Problem of Zoological Taxonomy Among the Karam of the New Guinea Highlands," *Man* 2(1967), 5-25; and S.J. Tambiah, "Animals are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit," *Ethnology* 7(1969), 423-459.

11. *Implicit Meanings*, p. 270.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

from various angles but, at the same time, no longer strictly adheres to her holiness-wholeness scheme.

MD, using her group/grid interpretive scheme[13] and focusing on the physical body, also appears to fail in her attempt to correlate clearly Israel's social organization with its particular cosmology. Although she seeks to advance a scheme which will account for a society's concerns regarding purity, ritual, magic, personal identity, body control, trance, "sin", suffering, etc.,[14] she expects too much of her group/grid model. Those who may attempt to follow her argumentation will not find the task an easy one. Given her high level of abstraction, which allows her a variety of conclusions, and her strong emphasis on society's view of "the body", which she suggests accurately reflects the larger social organism, MD can be accused of reducing individual and social self-perception to a single interpretive system. Although her approach to uncovering the symbolic structures inherent in a society can assist one in understanding certain aspects of society, MD's broad scope, complex theory and tendency to reduce things to fit her grid/group scheme, has prompted some to regard her work as "a terribly complicated way of oversimplifying everything." [15]

Much of MD's theory rests on her view of body symbolism, and it is particularly here where she misreads the cl/uncl regulations of P. There can be no denying that for P the body

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13. See pp. 35-36. Especially footnote 23.

14. Natural Symbols, pp. 57-99.

15. Peter Steinfels, "Review of Natural Symbols and Purity and Danger." Commonweal 93(1970), p. 50.



functioned in a symbolic way, but MD's treatment, especially of body discharge and its meaning, finds little support in P. To suggest that all which transgresses the body's boundaries[16] is considered unclean because it has separated itself from that perfect, **whole container**, may be true of the Lele people, who were the objects of MD's careful study in her fieldwork, but this is not true for P. To suggest further that one interpret transgression of body margins as a threat to the boundaries of the "body politic"[17] also remains doubtful. With MD's intense focus on society as a self-contained organism which orders all within its boundaries, she fails to understand P's theologically oriented writings. According to MD, "when rituals express anxiety about the body's orifices the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group." [18] It will be shown below that this minority group, which MD envisages, was neither as exclusive nor as preoccupied with body discharge as she suggests.

With regard to MD's contention that body discharge is considered unclean, the discussion in chapter five on 'discharge' (Lev. 15) does not support her view. Those arguments mentioned there, which suggest that P is solely highlighting discharge from the sexual organs, will not be raised again[19] but they stand in contrast to MD's much

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16. See p. 40.

17. Purity and Danger, pp. 114-128.

18. Ibid., p. 124.

19. See pp. 163-172.

broader view.[20] Other P texts further put in question any interpretation which generally considers bodily emissions as unclean. For example, in the Nazirite vow the hair of a Nazirite is cut and is used in a **sacrificial rite** (Num. 6:18). This practice would be unlikely were hair, separated from the "whole container", considered unclean. With regards to the loss of hair in the "leprosy laws" there is also no connection between lost hair and uncleanness (Lev. 13-14). Hair removed from the body is nowhere described as unclean.

In examining D's laws concerning fecal material it was argued that the focus is not first and foremost on the uncleanness of excrement but rather on nakedness. In neither D nor P is excrement explicitly described as unclean. Further, were it actually considered unclean would it not have been avoided in P's instructions concerning burnt offerings?[21]

Spittle, too, is nowhere explicitly stated to be unclean. In Leviticus 15:8 it is not the spittle which makes unclean but the contact with the man who has a 'discharge'. To be spit on did not bring uncleanness but was equated with shame.[22]

Throughout the Old Testament there is little support for the view that body emissions, excluding those from the sexual organs, were considered unclean. Tears were not considered unclean but were frequently regarded very positively.[23] On one occasion they are even described as on

20. See p. 40.

21. See Lev. 4:11; 8:17; 16:27; Num. 19:5ff.

22. See Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; 1 Sam. 21:13; Job 30:10; Isa. 50:6.

23. See Ps. 56:8; Isa. 38:5.

the altar (Mal. 2:13). According to MD's theory, milk, having transgressed the body of the mother, should also be considered unclean. Yet one finds no text in Scripture which might support this contention. Further, nowhere in the Old Testament is sweat clearly considered unclean. In Ezekiel 44:18 one finds the prohibition against putting on any linen turbans around the priest's head, or around his loins, which might cause him to sweat. The sweat here is not described as unclean. The concern that the priest not sweat may well be that it does not reflect the high task of his calling. The altar and temple duties are not to be seen as laborious. A similar Hebrew word for sweat (  $\text{זָבַח}$  ) is used here as in Genesis 3:19 (  $\text{זָבַח}$  ). In no way is the responsibility of the priest to be considered equal to the burden of hard work imposed on Adam and humankind.

It was noted above that according to MD body discharge relates directly to various practices in a society. Her sociological perspective with regard to body discharge is particularly evident in her essay "Couvade and Menstruation". Here she mentions four different ways in which this uncleanness upholds the male/female balance in tribal societies.[24] The wide range of social ramifications attached to this loss of body fluids reflects MD's approach, where discharge and sociological functions are directly related to one another.

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24. Essay found in Implicit Meanings, pp. 61-64. (1) To assert male superiority. (2) To assert separate male and female social spheres. (3) To attack a rival wife. (4) To lay claim to a special relationship.

This very sociological interpretive approach also has problems with regard to its understanding of P's vision of Israel. In Purity and Danger MD notes that Israel was very concerned with its boundaries:

The Israelites were always in their history a hard-pressed minority. In their beliefs all the bodily issues were polluting, blood, pus, excreta, semen, etc. The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity and purity of the physical body.[25]

At another occasion she writes: "the Israelites cherish their boundaries and want nothing better than to keep them strong and high." [26] Although this may be true from a theological point of view, it does not appear to be so from a cultural, social point of view. MD, with her sociological perspective, appears to overstate the cultural or ethnic element. Were this to be the case P would have undoubtedly advanced a comprehensive set of "food laws" which would have highlighted and clearly identified Israel's cultural and ethnic heritage. P, however, is not concerned with that which brings "ethnic identity" or promotes a particular cultural way of life. Rather, P advances the meat laws in an effort to make a clear statement affirming divine order and life itself. Through them P seeks to encourage Israel to identify with God and uphold His precepts.

According to MD, all of P's apparent concerns over body

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25. Purity and Danger, p. 124.

26. "Self-Evident," in Implicit Meanings, p. 304. When making a different point MD concedes that defections and infiltrations are familiar to Israel and that "its boundaries are never strong enough" (p. 305). In this way she at times shifts her position, inconsistently arguing her point.

issues and sexual restraints are directly related to P's desire that Israel be separated from the other nations. She insists that: "To expect of them [Israel] to stop preaching a stern sexual morality, vigilant control of bodily boundaries, and a corresponding religious cult would be asking them to give up the political struggle." [27] Here again, one sees an interpretation which is primarily focused on sociological concerns. [28]

This dominant sociological perspective fails to appreciate the fact that P's views are first theological, and that they need not have reflected the position of the larger Israelite community. Further, P is not interested in promoting any exclusive ethnic group. One might argue, on the contrary, that P frequently advances instructions which will facilitate the practice of incorporating the so-called "sojourner". [29] According to P all God's precepts are directed

27. Natural Symbols, p. 82.

28. Douglas has also attempted to make some sociological observations of Indian culture based on her views about body issues. In response to this particular aspect of her work William McCormack writes: "It seems really unfortunate for the ultimate sensibility of this book, that though Dr. Douglas has herself worked in a 'highly pollution-conscious culture in the Congo,' she must depend on others' observations of the world's most systematically pollution-conscious culture, that of caste India, about which she makes some quite jarringly naive statements" (a review of Purity and Danger in JSSR 6 (1967), p. 314).

29. The Hebrew term גֵר is consistently used to describe the "sojourner". It is frequently rendered "stranger" or "resident foreigner". De Vaux has noted that "the גֵר is essentially a foreigner who lives more or less permanently in the midst of another community where he is accepted and enjoys certain rights" (Ancient Israel, Vol. 1, p. 74). It was usually personal misfortune (famine, war, etc.) which created the גֵר who, as a result, sought out refuge with a foreign people [see M.H. Pope, "Proselyte," IDB, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 921]. Thus in the Old Testament the sojourner is often mentioned together with the poor or the

to both the native and the sojourner.[30] The sojourner is also given the opportunity to participate in the cult by giving an offering[31] and is, along with the native, extended forgiveness.[32] The sojourner and the poor are to be given food to eat[33] and the refuge cities are also to be a haven for both the native and sojourner.[34]

In no way does P attempt to alienate itself from the sojourner (גֵּר) or, for that matter, from the outsider or "alien" (גֵּרֹף). Even the priest's daughter is not prohibited from marrying the גֵּרֹף (Lev. 22:12). According to P foreigners could even function as servants of the priest (Num. 31:25:31, 42-47).[35]

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widow and orphan. Israelites were to help the , remembering that they too, had once been "sojourners" or "strangers" in Egypt (Exod. 22: 21-22). With a similar background the Israelite was to empathize with the "stranger" and "love him as yourself" (Lev. 19:34).

In many ways the sojourner (גֵּר) can be considered a part of Israel. Yet P clearly speaks of both "the native" (הַאֲזִיחִי) and the גֵּר (see Lev. 18:26; 19:34). P does not, however, distinguish between them to the same degree as does D, who advances different laws for the native over against the גֵּר (see p. 202). Yet in P the גֵּר, although not הַאֲזִיחִי, shares in many of the same privileges and responsibilities of an Israelite. With regard to P's treatment of the non-Israelite Wolff observes that the command to love one's neighbor (Lev. 19:17f) "had no parallel among Israel's neighbors" (Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 188). Although "neighbor" is usually interpreted as "fellow Israelite" [see H.F. Beck, "Neighbor," IDB, Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 534], Wolff suggests that "even here it already includes, in a postscript, the non-Israelite, who lives as a protected citizen of Israel" (Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 188).

30. Lev. 17:15; 18:26; 20:2; Num. 9:14; 15:29.

31. Lev. 17:8-13; 22:18-19; Num. 15:14-16.

32. Num. 16:26.

33. Lev. 19:10; 23:22.

34. Num. 35:15.

35. Perhaps Isaiah 66:18-21 (cf. also 56:1-8), where there appears to be a willingness to accept even foreigners to serve as priests, is a similar development as that found in

Ultimately, it was P's desire that the Israelite might love the person in your midst "as yourself" and that this person might, in fact, become "to you as the native among you" (Lev. 19:34). In P's Noahic covenant account God makes an everlasting covenant with "all flesh upon the earth" (Gen. 9:16). In the Abrahamic covenant P announces that Abraham "shall be a father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:4). P here is likely aware of J's contention that "Abraham shall become a great nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him" (Gen. 18:18). Deutero-Isaiah appears to carry this thought forward when he describes Israel as a "witness" for the nations.[36] Israel was to be a "light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6). "All the ... earth" was to turn to God and be saved (Isa. 45:22). Examining these passages John Bright writes:

God intends to rule over the whole earth, and foreigners are invited to accept that rule (45:22-23; 49:6). And although Jews do not lose their place of pre-eminence, the worship of foreigners will be equally acceptable.[37]

With reference to the term גֵּר M.H. Pope has argued that in time there was a gradual change in its meaning from resident foreigner or immigrant to convert.[38] He suggests that this shift may well have begun around the exilic period

P. Granted, Ezekiel (44:7-9) bitterly protests against this admission of foreigners into the priesthood. Here, however, among other reasons, Ezekiel will have been echoing the concern of P that only those of Aaronic descent could function as priests.

36. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. 2, p. 249. See Isa. 43:10; 44:8; 55:4.

37. The Kingdom of God (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 145.

38. "Proselyte," p. 921.

when there was an increasing focus on the cult rather than the "nation". The triumph of a monotheistic belief during the exilic period tended to transform Yahwism from a nationalistic to a universalistic religion.[39] Thus one finds Deutero-Isaiah proclaiming, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). Following this theme Trito-Isaiah states, "and they [all nations] shall come and see my glory" (Isa. 66:18). This same vision, although less "evangelistic", is found also in P. P, too, looks forward to that day when "all the earth will be filled with the glory of the the Lord" (Num. 14:21). This picture of P's view of Israel and the world stands in sharp contrast to MD's view of Israel as a very exclusive, politically threatened minority. Sociologically this may be true but it does not appear to be the case from P's theologically oriented vantage-point.

MD has stated that "the power in the universe is ultimately hitched to society"[40] and that it is through society's beliefs in the omniscience and omnipotence of some great power that people are organized, turbulent youth controlled, etc.,[41] From this perspective she quite understandably concludes that "pollution rules do not correspond closely to moral rules." [42] Although this may be true of the Lele in the Congo she has, with this interpretation of P, gravely misunderstood its great moral emphasis. In chapter

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39. Ibid., p. 923.

40. Furty and Danger, p. 113.

41. Ibid., p. 91.

42. Ibid., p. 129.



four. It was argued that for P there is no clear distinction between uncleanness and sin.[43] It is P's desire that all of life, even the most mundane activity, be a reminder of God and the sphere of the holy. The covenant God made with Israel at Sinai declares Israel to be a holy nation, one which is separated for God's purpose, holiness. Israel is not to separate itself from the nations in the spacial or in the ethnic sense. Rather, it is to live in harmony with the stranger in it's midst. In all of life Israel is to imitate God and seek to reflect His holiness. Israel is to separate itself only from that which does not reflect God's order and in this way be His holy people. To that end P portrays all of life as deeply moral.

It is at this stage where the clash between theology and MD's sociology becomes most intense. Whereas the discipline which MD represents seeks to focus upon those social elements and forces which give rise to particular religious perspectives and theological formulations, the theological enterprise seeks to discover that insight and that revelation which gives rise to a particularly oriented society. Here one has two approaches which move in opposite directions. MD appears to assume that the cl/uncl laws arise out of dominant social concerns and fails to appreciate fully their theological, priestly context. This belief that the theological concerns of P represent the dominant concerns of the larger society can not be assumed. P's views may not have represented the dominant concerns of the larger community but the

43. See pp. 121-122.

quest of the Aaronic priests to speak theologically about God, His created order and His ultimate intent for the whole world. MD, indebted to her discipline, appears to focus too much on the possible sociology of Israel, rather than the theology of P.

There can be little doubt that social needs give rise to certain means through which the needs are met. But in the case of P's use of cl/uncl it is ultimately P's understanding of God, first, and the predicament of the exilic community, second, which shaped the laws in the manner they are now found in the canon. With the cl/uncl regulations P makes certain demands on the people, the larger majority of whom no doubt will not always have appreciated fully the profound theology behind the laws.

In her treatment of the cl/uncl laws MD appears to have overstated matters with regard to Israel's views concerning body discharge. With her sociological perspective she has also underemphasized the theological intentions of P and the moral dimension of the laws. Further, it is doubtful that her concepts of wholeness and completeness play as significant a role in determining that which is holy as she suggests.

The strengths of MD's work, however, far exceed its weaknesses. Modifying her basic sociological presupposition, that pollution rules grow out of the need to organize and order one's world, one can argue that for P, the pollution rules arise out of its particular understanding of divine order in the universe. MD is to be commended for insisting that all the laws be understood in light of Israel's cosmolo-

gical considerations. With her broad symbolic system highlighting God's holiness MD attempts to take into account everything from P's creation story to its understanding of Israel's predicament in the exilic period. She has attempted to show how the various cl/uncl laws function together to give meaning to this broad context.

In her work the social forces behind the cl/uncl regulations receive much attention, often at the expense of the cultic and theological dimension behind the laws. Here the work of Neusner and Feldman provides a helpful counterbalance. It will be evaluated next.

#### B. JACOB NEUSNER: A CRITIQUE AND COMMENTARY

As a historian JN seeks to discover the different ways in which the cl/uncl concepts have been interpreted in the various biblical texts. Along with P's particular use of the concepts JN suggests four different meanings assigned to cl/uncl in the non-priestly writings.[44] According to JN the concepts have evolved through time, and he attempts to uncover their various meanings at the different stages in time.

The most significant contribution JN has made to the cl/uncl discussion is his insistence that these concepts in P relate directly to the cult. No other biblical source uses them as much as P or connects them as closely to the cult as does P. JN, in Method and Meaning, later modifies his original position and follows the views of MD who argues that the temple is not the only locus of cleanness.[45]

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44. See p. 46.

45. Method and Meaning, p. 127.

JN's focus on P's intention for using the cl/uncl laws is commendable. This, together with his original insistence that the temple functioned as a focal point, has more potential than JN is aware of. Ultimately JN concedes too much to MD, and it will be argued below that, only as the work of both authors stands together, can one adequately appreciate P's intent for and use of cl/uncl thinking. JN's position gains strength when approaching the concepts in light of P's larger theology.

As in the case of MD, it is precisely at the point of JN's strengths that one can find weaknesses. JN accurately observes that cl/uncl are significant concepts to P. The temple, too, is singled out for special attention. Yet JN falters when he presents an unjustifiably disparaging picture of P's intentions for the cl/uncl regulations and their relation to the temple. To a degree it is true that the cl/uncl concepts are part of P's "propaganda" or "ideology". This perspective must be accompanied, however, by an understanding and appreciation of P's attempt to present a priestly paradigm which Israel is to model.

Simply to consider the cl/uncl laws as "priestly propaganda" which is primarily concerned with bringing about cultic acceptability for the Israelite is, however, to misunderstand P's ultimate intent. To observe that P remains "strikingly reticent about what lies behind the specific rules of uncleanness," and simply to suggest that "behind all of them the primary ideological motif is cultic purity,"[46]

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46. See p. 50.

does little justice to P. Although no explicit reasons may have been advanced by P this does not mean that no profound rationale, beyond "cultic acceptability", exists. JN, at one occasion, notes that even though the purity laws are not mentioned in certain sources this does not mean that the laws did not exist. Sometimes they are taken for granted, and he recognizes that "we cannot suppose people always discuss matters of most importance to them." [47] So also should JN have carried out more seriously an examination of the concepts in P rather than dismissing them as "priestly propaganda".

JN, in protest against P and in light of what he regards as more positive uses of cl/uncl in other biblical sources, writes:

So we must not be taken in by the viewpoint of the priestly writers in the Hebrew Scriptures. Their claim that purity was primarily a cultic concern is utterly false. Uncleanness served as a metaphor for sexual misdeed, idolatry, or unethical behavior. [48]

According to JN purity was never solely a cultic matter in the other biblical sources, even though he believes it was so in P (according to his earlier position). This negative picture painted by JN, of P, can be replaced with one which more adequately understands P's intentions and appreciates P's approach. This can be done using JN's findings.

In his study of cl/uncl JN sees the concepts evolving from narrow ritualistic concepts to more elevated, ethical ones:

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47. "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism," JAAR 43(1975), pp. 17-18.

48. Ibid., p. 24.

The two really important changes in the interpretation of purity occur in Alexandrian Judaism on the one side, and in rabbinic[sic] Judaism on the other. In both instances purity and impurity are interpreted entirely outside of the cultic setting. They serve as metaphors and allegories in which both the impurity and the thing to which impurity is compared have nothing whatever to do with the Temple.[49]

He continues and notes that:

It is a curious irony that in changing the focus of purity from the cult to the home and street, Pharisaic and Rabbinic Judaism returned to the view of purity probably characteristic of Israelite religion before the promulgation of the Priestly Code.[50]

Rather than perceive here a failure of P this development would seem more appropriate as a vindication of P's ultimate intent, namely, that P sought to extend the realm of purity and holiness into every area of life. P is totally misunderstood when one, as JN does, regards P's concerns as solely focused on the temple.

JN has argued that this much broader view of purity which evolved, "seems to me decisive testimony against the priestly view that purity ever was primarily a cultic concern." [51] Quite on the contrary, one might argue. One should consider this as decisive testimony in favor of P who likely took the concepts of cl/uncl, which were perhaps earlier relegated largely to the priests and the cultic circles (is this why one finds so little of cl/uncl in D?), and placed these laws in the mouth of God, directed to all Israel. All Israel was to be a holy nation. Holiness was not to be

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49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 25.

51. Ibid., p. 26.

limited to the priesthood.

JN's understanding of the temple also needs refinement. First of all it should be noted that P never makes mention of the "temple". P only speaks of the tabernacle. Earlier it was argued that the tabernacle was used since it represented that which lies at the heart of Israel's faith, a belief in the presence of God among His chosen holy people. Swayed by the criticisms of MD, however, JN revises his earlier position, that the temple was at the center of the cl/uncl laws, and concedes that it "is not the only locus of cleanness or sanctification." [52] According to JN, especially at a later date, "it is now the sect ... or the people as a whole .... The Temple, now secondary, is made itself to signify the godly community, which is analogically generative, therefore primary." [53]

MD seeks to diminish the role of the temple when in her critique of JN she writes: "The temple is a building of stone and wood, sometimes destroyed and sometimes rebuilt." [54] She prefers to see the temple, altar, and utensils equated with the home, table and kitchen utensils. [55] It is true that the temple is a building (but no mere building). Further, this extension of the sacred into the mundane is correct, as has been discussed above. [56] Nevertheless, there continues to be a distinction between the two. When P refers to the taberna-

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52. Method and Meaning, p. 127.

53. Ibid.

54. "Critique and Commentary," p. 140.

55. Ibid.

56. See pp. 126-130.

cle, it identifies that which most fully represents the very presence of God. Therefore, the "tabernacle" can not be considered as secondary in P's scheme of things since everything is interpreted in light of God's presence there. In P the tabernacle becomes a type of standard through which all of life is viewed: life being lived in the presence of God.

MD writes that "the holiness of the Temple is a focal point of the purity rules of the biblical legacy."<sup>[57]</sup> Following JN's original claims it would appear correct to argue that it is the focal point since it represents the presence of God and His covenant with His people. When she states that "the symbolism of the Temple does not come to rest upon a building,"<sup>[58]</sup> MD is correct. She is only partially correct when she continues, however, and states that "the temple itself signifies their godly community."<sup>[59]</sup> For P the tabernacle first and foremost represented God's presence with His people. As His covenant people, Israel was to respond to its God by being a holy community, living obediently according to His statutes and thus, in a measure, reflecting His holiness.

In P the tabernacle most fully symbolically represented holiness since it was here where God, through His Kābôd, would make Himself known. P's Kābôd-theology, as discussed in chapter four, is important to remember when making an appraisal of the role of the temple, or better, the tabernacle, in P's larger theology. It was in the holy of holies, that most holy spatial sphere of existence on earth, where God was

57. "Critique and Commentary," p. 141. Emphasis mine.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.



believed to be potentially present. The temple grounds and the temple city appear to be further spheres of decreasing degrees of holiness. This is also true of the regulations in the recently published Temple Scroll from the caves of Qumran at the Dead Sea.[60] Milgrom notes that laws of impurities,

are arranged according to the following sequence: Temple, Temple city, other cities, and the land. The basic principle is that the wilderness camp is equivalent to the Temple city and hence, the laws of the former apply to the latter. Other cities must also be pure, but not holy, that is, their purity is not of the same degree as the Temple city.[61]

In Yigael Yadin's study of the Temple Scroll he notes that, "the Essenes also championed the imposition of the priestly rules for the Temple and the priesthood upon the city of Jerusalem and all of Israel." [62] It was argued above that P presents its readers with a priestly paradigm which it desires all of Israel to model. As the priest lived all of life ever conscious of God's presence and in the context of the cult, so also were the people now to live.

In opposition to MD it is argued here that this evidence from the Temple Scroll also appears to suggest that the holiness of the tabernacle should be considered a primary focal point. This emphasis of the Temple Scroll is a probable development of a trend already there earlier in P and its purity laws. Although it is true (to a degree) that "the temple itself signifies their godly community", [63] the standard of holiness, through which P sees all of life, is

60. Jacob Milgrom, "The Temple Scroll," *BA* 41(1978), p.111.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 120. Emphasis mine.

63. See p. 229.

the place where the holy God most fully reveals Himself.

As there are spheres of holiness, with the holy of holies symbolizing the most holy center, so also are there temporal spheres of holiness. The sabbath, the day of atonement (Lev. 16) and other religious periods or festivals, for example, are days set aside for the worship of God and are thus considered holy. In examining P's theology it was noted that the period of creation, and that of the Sinai experience are also significant periods when God created the world and His people respectively. As God's holiness is exemplified through His creation of the universe and Israel's holiness declared at Sinai, these important events are to impact the Israelite continually. Ultimately, it is P's desire that the theme of holiness would extend into every temporal and spatial sphere of the Israelite so that in all of life, the Israelite might be reminded of God's holiness. Thus although P's focus is on Israel, God's holy people, it is not primary as MD suggests. P's primary and most intense focus is on God, the ramifications of His holiness and His election of Israel. The tabernacle and cult most fully symbolize God's holy presence and His will for His people.

Contrary to MD, P's views need not have been the "dominant position of Israelite society" (although P undoubtedly sought to address dominant concerns).<sup>[64]</sup> P's purity laws did not arise out of a desire to maintain the social order envisaged by the larger group (as MD suggests), but its writings and concerns are first theologically (not sociologically  
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64. See p. 218-222.

based, seeking to re-establish God's will for His people and the world. The fact that P's concerns were not restricted to the cult is evident in the success of later Judaism in using these concepts outside of the cult. Yet for P the tabernacle, symbolically representing the place where God's Kābôd descends from time to time, is a significant symbol through which all of life is viewed. As Israel sought after holiness, so God would bless His people. Thus it was both holiness and blessing, both of which are dependent upon God's presence (i.e., the "tabernacle"), which were primary concerns of P as it used the cl/uncl regulations.

MD has argued that the body plays a large part in the symbolic system which highlights "holiness". There can be little doubt that the body did function symbolically. She overstates the matter, however. Of greater symbolic value is the tabernacle, that which represents the presence of God, since all the cl/uncl laws relate directly to it. Yet, although the tabernacle was the symbol of holiness, par excellence, so also was the larger society and the individual to reflect God's holiness. From this perspective both the views of MD and the earlier views of JN (although modified above) are important.

#### C. EMANUEL FELDMAN: A CRITIQUE AND COMMENTARY

Of the three scholars critically examined in this chapter EF's work is most recent. He is aware of the work of both MD and JN. In chapter three it was noted that although EF is appreciative of MD's symbol system which connects all the cl/uncl regulations to holiness (wholeness, completeness

and perfection), he considers death to be a more appropriate overriding theme in P's use of the concepts. In EF one finds a thoroughly theological approach to cl/uncl. According to him, the Israelite understanding of a living God, in whom life itself is most fully embodied, relates directly to the cl/uncl regulations.

Although EF's emphasis on God as the "Living One" constitutes a real strength, especially in light of the fact that this theme had not significantly entered the cl/uncl discussion, the concept of death by itself is too narrow to explain adequately all the cl/uncl laws. Further, "death" is not always applied in the most convincing manner. So, although he may be correct in suggesting that death was an important issue in a particular law, his approach and argument is not always persuasive. This will be shown below.

Before proceeding to evaluate the way in which EF has worked through the various cl/uncl laws a brief critique is necessary regarding his view of death in Israel, over against its neighbors. He has argued that Israel granted no "mythological power to death ... since there is only one God", and that there existed "no mythopoeic fantasies, rituals or efforts to maintain a link with the dead." [65] It is plain that earlier in Israel's history this is not the case. [66]

65. See p. 54. Cf., however, M. Pope, "The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit," in Ugarit and Retrospect: 50 Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic, Ed. Gordon D. Young (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981).

66. See 1 Sam. 28:8-19; 2 Kings 21:6, and Isa. 8:19. Necromancy was practiced in Israel and was first forbidden by written law in Deut. 18:10-11 and Lev. 19:31; 20:6,27. Earlier in Israel's history there no doubt was also the belief that there existed many gods. See verses like Judg.

Were EF to have stated that P, writing in the exilic period or later, argues that there is only one living God [67] and that P seeks to demythologize the powers of death, he would have differentiated more critically between P and popular Yahwistic religion, thus avoiding the pitfall of idealizing "Israel's" beliefs. This, however, does not significantly detract from his thesis which will be examined next.

EF begins with a study of corpse defilement. His whole premise is that the primary element in all tum'ah is death.[68] He repeatedly asserts that corpse defilement is the most intense form of uncleanness.[69] In an effort to make his point regarding the primary role of death in uncleanness, he does, however, make some glaring overstatements. His assertion that touching any human corpse brings about "the longest possible period of defilement"[70] is incorrect since both 'leprosy' and severe 'discharge' disorders have an indefinite period of uncleanness. In these cases uncleanness lasts until one is healed plus seven days. After childbirth the mother is unclean for forty to eighty days. Further, intercourse with a menstruant also makes unclean for seven days. All these periods of uncleanness, some of which are longer than the period of uncleanness from

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11:24 which clearly presuppose that Chemosh was the god of the Moabites, just as Yahweh was Israel's god. See also Exod. 15:11: "Who is like you Yahweh, among the gods?"

67. The fact that monotheism could be more explicit in P is evidenced in the explicitly monotheistic statements made by Deutero-Isaiah (40:18-20; 44:9-20; 46:6-7) who is approximately contemporaneous to P.

68. Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement, pp. 34-37.

69. Ibid., p. 13. See also pp. 31-35, 64.

70. Ibid., p. 13.

corpse defilement, do not support his view of the primacy of death.

According to EF "whenever any constituent element of human life is lost,"[71] be it a limb, body fluids, etc., there one finds uncleanness. This rationale, however, accounts adequately for only some of the cl/uncl regulations. He convincingly argues that the loss of seminal emission ("the seed of life") and menstruation ("life force"), is related to death. Yet his contention that childbirth brings uncleanness because it represents the end ("loss") of the mother's role of life-producing, life-nurturing, and life-sustaining is totally unconvincing.[72] Quite on the contrary, the sense of life-nurturing, etc., is probably only heightened after the child is born. Further, it is only with the "loss" on behalf of the womb, that life can really begin (or continue). It is highly unlikely that one could show that these views of EF were actually held by the Israelites.

The concept of death is also too narrow to deal with 'leprosy'. EF follows earlier scholars here, who point to Numbers 12:12 where death is closely related to 'leprosy'.[73] Nowhere in the primary texts dealing with the 'leprosy' laws is death mentioned, however. A further problem in EF's handling of 'leprosy' is that no attempt is made to treat 'leprosy' in inorganic materials. His concept of death is clearly inadequate here.

Particularly unsatisfying is EF's treatment of the meat

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71. Ibid., p. 35.

72. Ibid., p. 37.

73. See p. 27.

laws. His treatment of these laws seem quite remote from his handling of the other cl/uncl regulations. His meat laws section represents a considerable departure from his earlier work. Here, suddenly, certain meats are considered unclean in the "pristine, metaphorical meaning of 'something desacrallized,' ... they are desacrallized, undivine, sacrally unfit." [74] No other rationale is given except that, refraining from these foods "Israel becomes gadosh just as God is gadosh." [75] This conclusion is no conclusion at all! EF could have pointed to the carnivorous practices of many of the animals mentioned and connected them to his concept of death. He appears to have missed this point altogether.

Although EF ultimately fails to use the concept of death to its fullest potential in his treatment of the cl/uncl laws, he does, nevertheless, succeed in demonstrating that there exists a significant connection between the notion of death and uncleanness. The concept of death, that which is opposite to God, is a key factor in the cl/uncl regulations. In the final chapter we will return to the important theme of death (also a form of disorder), and its relationship to P's cl/uncl laws.

A first reading of EF's book may give the reader the distinct impression that he has failed to make his point. Yet his point is a good one and upon further reflection one soon begins to appreciate the added dimension which EF, with his theological perspective, brings to the cl/uncl discussion.

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74. Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement, p. 51.

75. Ibid., p. 52.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Douglas, Neusner and Feldman all make a significant contribution to the cl/uncl discussion. Douglas correctly leads the way by suggesting that an appropriate theme be advanced that accounts for all the cl/uncl regulations. Her idea of holiness represents the key to her symbolic system.[76] Where MD significantly underrates the importance of the cult, choosing rather to focus primarily on the sociological needs which may have given rise to the particular regulations, Neusner's initial insistence on the primacy of "the temple" in F can be used in part as a corrective. Finally, EF correctly draws attention to the important connection between death and uncleanness, which went virtually unnoticed in the work of MD and JN.

With this critique it becomes apparent that each of the themes advanced by MD, JN and EF is important. No rationale for F's cl/uncl regulations is adequate without relating to its views concerning holiness, "the temple" and death. It is the contention of this study that "divine order", which incorporates the strengths of all three scholars, can best function as the theme which most adequately accounts for F's cl/uncl regulations. This will be argued in the concluding chapter.

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76. Doubt was expressed above, however, concerning Douglas' contention that the concepts of wholeness or completeness play as large a role as she suggests. The theme of divine order appears to be a more significant one.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The cl/uncl regulations found in the Old Testament have been variously interpreted in the past. In chapter two, seven different types of approaches and interpretations were outlined briefly. Major shortcomings inherent in most of these traditional interpretations are that the regulations are frequently treated in piecemeal fashion, without seeking out a principle which might serve to link together the whole range of laws, and little attention is given to show how they might fit into the larger religious tradition within which they are found. Even the two most prominent approaches in the recent past, namely, the tendency to regard the cl/uncl laws in polemical or medical terms, can no longer be considered as viable positions today.

This is not to suggest that some of the cl/uncl laws may not occasionally have functioned as a "polemic against the nations" or have provided some medical advantages. The unclean status of the pig, for example, may well have served in a polemical fashion. The prohibition against eating its meat may also have averted some possible health risks. The rationale behind these explanations, however, is suggestive at best and ultimately does not consistently account for all that is unclean. Further, these approaches fail to appreciate fully the theological dimension behind the cl/uncl regulations. MD, responding to those wishing to present a scienti-

fic, rational, medical explanation for the laws correctly observes: "Even if some of Moses' dietary rules were hygienically beneficial, it is a pity to treat him as an enlightened public health administrator, rather than as a spiritual leader." [1]

In this thesis the writer has sought to take seriously the theological dimension of the cl/uncl concepts. Since they are most frequently used by P, it is P's theology which has received major attention. MD, JN and EF have all advanced certain themes through which they interpret the various regulations. The themes of holiness, the temple and death, however, are too limited by themselves. Yet by placing them in the context of P's Kābôd-theology, and highlighting the theme of divine order, a more satisfying scheme for P's cl/uncl regulations can be presented.

Mircea Eliade, in The Sacred and Profane, has argued that in antiquity, humankind did not regard space and time as homogenous. The various interruptions in life which a person experienced suggested that there existed qualitative differences in space and in time. [2] Eliade points to the experience of something "wholly other", as described by Rudolf Otto (The Holy), which gives rise to a higher plane of reality.

With the creation of this new plane of reality by the "wholly other", all else outside its sphere is considered profane. Cognizant of this qualitatively different level of reality, Eliade suggests that:

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1. Purity and Danger, p. 29.
  2. Ibid., p. 20.

The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany[3] reveals an absolute fixed point, a center.[4]

In P the significant center or point of orientation for all its theology, including its use of the cl/uncl regulations, is the presence of God's Kābôd in the tabernacle. For P the potential threat and blessing of God's presence is of utmost importance.

A further observation made by Eliade is that "religious man seeks to inhabit a 'divine world', ... [where one may] live in a pure and holy cosmos, as it was in the beginning, when it came fresh from the creator's hands." [5] In the conclusion of his book he writes: "The gods created man and the world.... By reactualizing sacred history, by imitating the divine behavior, man puts and keeps himself close to the gods - that is, in the real and significant." [6]

P, too, sought to remind the exilic and post-exilic Israelite community of that which was real and significant. Reality, for this disenfranchised community, was to rest in the assurance that their God, who had created the world and Israel itself, continued to be in control of global events. Cognizant of their election and His presence, Israel was to be holy as He is holy (Lev. 11:45).

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3. Eliade uses this term to designate that act or occasion when the sacred is manifested. The Sacred and the Profane, Trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959), p. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 21.

5. Ibid., p. 65.

6. Ibid., p. 202

In chapter four it was argued that P's Kābôd-theology seeks both to safeguard Israel from the wrath of the holy God and at the same time to obtain God's blessing. Israel, at Sinai, had entered into a covenant relationship with God (Exod. 19:3-6), received the gift of His presence, and was now to be a holy and consecrated people. Commenting on Israel's call to holiness in Leviticus 22:31-33, W. Zimmerli notes that the emphasis is on being "declared as holy" and then "being what you are!"[7] Chosen and declared holy, Israel is responsible to emulate holiness. Israel is summoned to an imitatio dei. [8] As one attempts to imitate God, however, one is never considered as having arrived at a state of holiness, but one is to practice holiness. [9] Yet "holiness" is an abstract term. How can one practice God's holiness?

Eliade, MD and others have argued that any attempt to understand God and His attributes leads to cosmological contemplation. In looking carefully at P's creation account, and its understanding of the Noahic, Abrahamic and Sinai covenants, much can be gained concerning P's view of God and His

7. "'Heiligkeit' nach dem sogenannten Heiligkeitsgesetz," VI 30(1980), p. 503. "Ich, Jahwe, heilige euch" (erkläre euch für heilig) .... Sei, was du bist!"

8. Ibid., p. 511. Zimmerli writes: "Der in Lev. 19:2 formulierte Grund-Satz des H: 'Ihr sollt heilig sein, denn ich, Jahwe, euer Gott, bin heilig' könnte ... als Aufforderung zu einer Imitatio Dei verstanden werden: 'Heilig werden, wie Jahwe heilig ist,' Nachahmung seiner Heiligkeit."

9. Ibid. "Aber gerade hier führt sorgfältige Erwägung auf den fundamentalen Unterschied der Heiligkeitstat Jahwes vom Heiligkeit-Üben des Menschen." J. Milgrom makes a similar point regarding God's call for holiness. "That which man is not, nor can ever fully be, but which he is commanded to emulate and approximate, is what the Bible calls 'holy'. Holiness means imitatio dei - the life of godliness" ["Leviticus," IDBS (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 544].

created order. It was argued above that according to P, God embodies and creates order. From God's divine ordering of things in P's creation account springs life, harmony, perfection and ultimately meaning. God's holiness is most fully characterized by these acts of God. The cl/uncl laws relate directly to this divine ordering of things.

For P the cl/uncl regulations appear to express symbolically God's order, and to that extent also His holiness. In examining the regulations it was argued that the themes of order and life stand over against disorder and death. All those animals which exemplify disorder through their movement or are considered "meat-eaters" are perceived as unclean. All animals that are carnivorous or associated with death, plagues, uninhabited or deserted buildings, ruins or the wilderness, and which are not domesticated or controllable but swarm about, all of their "kind" do not reflect God's order and are thus considered unclean. The Israelite, by eating only from those animals considered clean, affirmed the principles of order and life and at the same time practiced an imitatio dei, consuming only that "kind" of animal which was acceptable to God on the altar.

A corpse is also defiling because it stands in sharp contrast to the life giving God. The "holy" Israelite is to avoid contact with that which is dead because this would also bring about a mixing of kinds. That which is identified with God can not identify or reflect, through contact or mourning rites, that which is opposite to God, death.

The loss of life-fluid (blood) and the potential

presence of the spheres of disorder and death may also have made the birthing experience a defiling one for the Israelite mother. Death, especially at the very beginning of life(!), and the disorder which this event may have created, also would stand in sharp contrast to God.

In 'leprosy', be it in humans or inorganic materials, it is the uncontrolled spreading, graphically symbolizing unleashed disorder, which appears responsible for creating the state of uncleanness. The 'leprosy' in humans may also have led to premature death but the emphasis appears to be clearly on the contrasting theme of order/disorder.

Finally, a disorder in the sexual organ, that part of the body which is most closely associated with procreation, also was considered defiling because of its affiliation with death. In the sexual realm, one which is almost as basic as the food realm, P seeks to affirm order and life.

In summary, then, one can state that the unclean animal, the birthing mother, the corpse, the 'leper' and the one with a 'discharge' have one thing in common. Each is not a suitable symbolic recreation of holiness: the nature and essence of God. All that stands in contrast to order and life, symbolic of God, is unclean. Where one finds adumbrations of disorder or death, there one finds uncleanness. In short, uncleanness is that which does not symbolically reflect God's intended order. Thus the laws function in such a manner as to recreated within the Israelite, holiness and a desire to preserve/recreate divine order.

P seeks to show that in all of life the principle of

Godly order is to guide God's holy people. To this end all of life is seen as living in the presence of God. As God is creator of order, life and perfection, Israel is to live within His order, affirming life and striving to reflect and reproduce His perfection. Thus to be holy means not only to affirm divine order in the universe, but also to recognize one's own place in that order and one's responsibility to maintain that divine order.[10]

Being declared holy, Israel is not to be "mixed" with anything which in any way reflects that which stands in contrast to God. By mixing the spheres of the holy and the profane, not only would one become unclean, but this action could ultimately threaten the very existence of Israel. In all of life the Israelite is encouraged to reproduce holiness symbolically in his/her life.

It would appear that for P the cl/uncl laws served to push the sphere of holiness into the far reaches of the mundane. To be sure, P was aware of the ongoing tension and struggle between the Israelite's declared state of holiness and the propensity to "mix" in some way the opposing spheres. Yet, observes von Rad, "P too knows of a final condition of things where the holiness of Jahweh will attain its goal, since 'all the earth will be full of the glory of God' (Num.

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10. Evan M. Zuesse, in "Taboo and Divine Order" [JAAR 42(1974), 482-504], argues that: "The deeper function of taboo, in short, is to define the divine life" (p. 493). He further observes that to accept "taboos is nothing less than to affirm order in the universe and one's own responsibility in maintaining that order" (p. 494). This appears to be true also for P.

14:21).[11] Von Rad observes further that this gradual growth of the sphere of the holy, and the swallowing up of the secular, will eventually be "so complete that the most insignificant objects in everyday use, the pots in the houses and the bells on horses' harness, will be as holy as the vessels in the Temple ... 'in that day' (Zech. 14:20f.)."[12]

As the priest serving in the tabernacle lived in the presence of the holy God, so Zechariah, along with P, envisages the day when the profane is swallowed up by the holy. On "that day" God will re-establish his divine order for the whole of creation. On that day "He will swallow up death for ever" (Isa. 25:8). God's holiness will radiate to the ends of the earth and all will live within that holiness: divinely ordered life will be enjoyed by all. Although this was not a present reality for Israel, P sought to use the cl/uncl laws in a symbolic way to recreate even now the divine order, harmony, perfection, etc., which was originally present in God's creation of the world.

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11. Old Testament Theology, Vol. 1, p. 279.

12. Ibid.



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