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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF PURITY/IMPURITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS AND THE LETTERS OF PAUL

by
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ABSTRACT

This work is a comparative study of the usage of the purity language by Jesus and Paul. A simple reading of the Gospels and the Pauline corpus shows that the concept of purity and impurity is used in different contexts by Jesus and Paul, a fact that is due, I suppose, to their different cultural settings: Palestinian Judaism versus Roman culture.

In order to trace the meaning of impurity the concept was analysed as it is employed in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple sources. It was found that Biblical Judaism placed strong emphasis on ritual and moral impurity, including the diet regulations of Leviticus. Ritual impurity was usually due to natural conditions of the body that were not unwanted, such as menstruation blood, semen, sex and birth, a few specific deceases and contact with dead bodies. Ritual impurity was contagious by contact. Moral impurity was not, but it was a defiling power due to grave sins, such as sexual immorality, bloodshed and idolatry, which polluted the sinner, the sanctuary and the land, even from a distance. The food regulations are interpreted as pedagogical means to remind the people of the importance of worshipping one God only. Since the impure animals were typically hybrids, we argue that the mixture of worshipping YHWH and BAAL was an hybrid cult that created moral impurity.

Second Temple literature interprets priestly purity rules to include all Jews, giving rise to the doctrine of generational impurity that, in turn, served the purpose of maintaining a strict border between Jews and Gentiles. In the Qumran milieu we find a developed ontological dualism, the cosmology of which included the teaching of the two spirits, each representing two opposing kingdoms. The gestalt of Satan developed from being a member of God's court to an independent personage with his own host of demons.

Roman culture is a complex concept. The philosophers had a world view quite different from that of the uneducated masses. The Stoics referred to uncontrolled sex as impure, since passions as such were seen as unwanted. Roman religion, as found in the cult of the Vestal Virgins, defined the loss of virginity as the ultimate impurity, which put the entire Fatherland at risk. In popular culture there was a vivid conceptualisation of demons and spirits and a full-blown art of astrology and magic. The aetiology of sickness as demonic attacks was commonplace.

When our inquiry of the two cultural contexts is over, all the relevant scriptures of the Gospels and the Pauline letters are analysed. There proved to be a significant difference between the Synoptics and John. Exorcisms and impure spirits are found in the three first gospels only. John operates with the idea of Satan in the context of moral impurity, but he presents no narratives that include demons. The Synoptics present the teaching and practice of Jesus with a strong focus on demons as impure spirits with the ability to speak and to harass people. They are empowered by Satan and they represent the evil opposition of the kingdom of God. Jesus nullifies ritual impurity altogether and even modifies moral impurity, reserving the terminology for evil intentions coming from man's heart.

In the Pauline corpus, we find the terminology employed differently. Evil powers are not denoted as impure spirits and there are no narratives or any teaching of exorcism. Paul uses the term much like the Stoic philosophers, to denote sexual immorality.

Our inquiry concludes by stating that Jesus uses the term impure to denote ontological impurity as experienced in mental, spiritual and physical destruction, due to demonic presence. Paul uses impurity, mainly as an ethical category denoting individuals who have succombed to temptations of the human nature, *sarx*.

The common denominator between Jesus and Paul is the belief that the holiness of God is stronger than any demonic presence. According to Judaism, impurity was dangerous because it drove away the presence of God from the Temple and the people. Jesus is exercising the power of God and is never prohibited by the presence of impurity. Paul believes that the powers of impurity were conquered at the cross, and therefore not worth mentioning after the death and resurrection of Jesus. While Jesus exorcised demons, Paul encourages his readers to stand firm in the Christian virtues, so that the Devil would flee from them. If the Church did not do this, it became polluted. Paul perpetuates the idea of moral impurity as a defiling force which prevents the presence of God. In the Church, this is manifested as lack of love and consideration for the poor, a situation which prevents the protection of God. As in the Temple, the remedy was sacrifice; in this case, the blood of Jesus, which was remembered and honoured during eucharist. And as in Judaism, it required repentence and a will to do better.

PREFACE

This thesis has been accomplished thanks to the wonderful possibilities available in computer science. In my case, it has been crucial that the study could be undertaken from my home, at times in between other responsibilities to church and family.

My seventh grandchild was born just four weeks ago and, amazed by seeing the infant so perfect yet so helpless, I have asked again as I often have done before: What is a human being? How can it be understood that some children, at least during the course of history, have been regarded impure and others pure? What is the rationale for this categorisation? Did the concept have a real meaning or was it just a rhetoric symbol, employed according to the different cultures' flexibility to differences?

Is impurity a concept which should be included in Christian thinking? If so how? Is there something in cosmos which is impure and should therefore be avoided? Or does the concept just express the danger of life and the worry every grandmother feels, seeing our own little girls becoming mothers to new generations.

The comforting result of this study has been to discover the basic Christian thought, that the holiness of God can no more be threatened by the impurity of weak and perishable humanity. Whatever the nature of cosmic impurity is, God is always there, as God.

Even though the practical arrangements have been optimal, the theses would not have been written without important help. The comments from Prof Dr Stephen W Need and Prof Dr Francois P Viljoen have always been very helpful. I have had total academic freedom to explore the subject as I wanted; still I have been guided forward at every junction.

My personal problem is that I work fast without seeing details, as one should when undertaking a study of this character. So my constant admiration and gratitude has gone to Peg for her incredible skills of observing details, and working with so much piety on every chapter.

Vinterbro 9th September 2007
Ragnhild Schanke

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In much contemporary thought on Christian ethics, the concept of impurity is almost synonymous with sexual behaviour that is perceived as inappropriate, such as infidelity, promiscuity and homosexuality (see Abata, 1975; Arnold, 1998). Teaching on the practice of exorcism, on the other hand, often refers to 'impure spirits', thereby denoting an intelligent spiritual being, some even alluding to a connection between such beings and impure lifestyles (see Horrobin, 1991; 1995). From a different perspective, Goodman has offered a scholarly study of reported occurrences of evil spirits, comparing her findings to the biblical presentation of the phenomenon (1988).

As well as its obvious ecclesiological concerns, the theological understanding of impurity has a profound bearing on the ethical discourse with regards to ontology and anthropology. The apparent lack of understanding in Christian circles of the nature of impurity seems to suggest that there is some confusion over the distinctiveness between impurity and immorality. For this reason, I propose to research the concept as it was understood in the teaching of Jesus as found in the New Testament gospel accounts, on the one hand, and in the letters of the apostle Paul, on the other (see Neyrey, 1991; deSilva, 2000; Poorthuis & Schwartz, eds, 2000).

In recent scholarship, the concept of purity/impurity has been analysed from a number of different angles, including those already cited. Social anthropologists (see Douglas, 1966), specialists in Leviticus (Milgrom, 1970) and historians of the Early Church (Fonrobert, 2000) have all made vital though incomplete contributions to the study. As such, their work will help to provide a contextual background upon which to promote and provoke further discussion.

According to the writers of the New Testament Gospels, Jesus was often engaged in disputations with the Pharisees over rules of purity/impurity. These confrontations highlight the core of the theological disagreements between first-century Judaism and the teaching of Jesus, though their diversity can hardly have been of a cultural or linguistic nature since they lived in the same milieu. Moreover, even if the authors of the gospels have faithfully preserved Jesus' attitudes towards purity/impurity, there are still significant differences between his teaching on the subject and that of the apostle

Paul. Jesus and Paul operated with different aetiologies for purity/impurity. Jesus exorcised demons from sick people and spoke of impurity of the heart. Paul, by contrast, saw things much more in terms of church practice and discipline. Jesus saw impurity in spirits of infirmity, whilst Paul saw things such as sexual impurity as central. This difference was more than just a linguistic matter; it reflects a real cultural discrepancy.

The central question of this thesis, therefore, is: "What is the basis for the difference in understanding of the concept of purity/impurity in the teaching of Jesus as found in the New Testament gospel accounts on the one hand and in the letters of the apostle Paul on the other hand?"

The questions that naturally arise from this are:

- How was the concept of purity/impurity understood in Rabbinic Judaism, Graeco-Roman philosophy, and popular culture in the first century CE? In what ways does this understanding provide the background for the uses of this concept by Jesus, the gospel writers and Paul?
- How might the terminology of purity/impurity in the gospels and Paul's letters be most appropriately classified?
- What differences are there in the use of the concept of purity/impurity by the gospel writers and the apostle Paul?

The main aim of this thesis is to determine how the concept of impurity/purity is understood in the teaching of Jesus as found in the New Testament gospel accounts, on the one hand, and in the theology of Paul as found in the letters that bear his name, on the other, and to compare the two understandings.

The objectives of this study must be seen in their relationship to the aim. I intend to reach the following three synoptic objectives:

i) To determine how the concept of purity/impurity was understood in Rabbinic Judaism, Græco-Roman philosophy and popular culture in the first century CE as a potential context for their use by Jesus, by the gospel writers and by Paul.

ii) To classify the terminology of purity/impurity as used in the gospels and in Paul's letters.

iii) To identify the differences in the use of the concept of purity/impurity by Jesus, the gospel writers and in Paul's letters.

The central theoretical argument of this thesis is that there are aetiological and anthropological differences between Jesus and Paul's use of purity/impurity language. The language of purity/impurity is used differently in the teaching of Jesus, as found in the New Testament gospels on the one hand, and in the letters of the apostle Paul on the other. A simple reading of the relevant texts reveals that Jesus used purity/impurity language mainly in the context of impure spirits, while Paul used it in relation to cult, sexual immorality and genealogy. It is widely accepted that the purity/impurity language was used in three different contexts in the ancient world: (i) cultic; (ii) moral; and (iii) genealogical (Hayes, 2002). This thesis will add a fourth: the ontological/spiritual.

This study will mainly be based upon Historical Critical Methodologies (Krentz, 1977) and Literary Criticism (Beardslee, 1970). It will analyse the concept of purity/impurity in a number of various contexts in order to derive the meaning in different kinds of *Sitz im Leben*. It will include standard exegetical analysis, as found in most biblical commentaries (Brown, 1997, Zimmermann, 1974, Morgan and Barton, 1988). It will also pay attention to the different *genres* in play. It will offer a critical reading of interpreting the exorcism stories by sociostylistic theory (Klutz, 2004). The letters of Paul call for structural analyses (Hallbäck, 1983). Concerning the context of the apostle, studies of Roman culture will be analysed (Meeks, 2003), and Paul's interpretation of Palestinian Judaism (Sanders, 1977) as well as rabbinic Judaism will be examined (Davis, 1980). The research will be undertaken from within the broad framework of the modern Protestant tradition, drawing from both Lutheran and Baptist influences, the latter necessarily implying some criticism towards Lutheran anthropology.

CHAPTER 2: PURITY AND IMPURITY IN FIRST CENTURY JUDAISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to determine how Jesus and Paul understood and employed the concept of purity/impurity. They were both Jews, but preached and taught in different milieus. One important difference, which is obvious at first glance, is that Jesus used the term 'impure spirits' as a synonym for demons, while Paul did not employ this denotation at all. Jesus was known for his exorcisms, while Paul never mentions such a phenomenon in his letters. Jesus speaks bluntly about two kingdoms, God's and Satan's, and shows thereby that his cosmology has a significant dualistic trait. Paul teaches also about an evil counterpart, but he does so in a terminology other than the purity/impurity language. Paul will be examined within the context of Roman society; Jesus will be analysed according to the Gospels, and after linguistic analyses are undertaken of the purity/impurity conceptualisation in Judaism. These will show how the concept developed from the Hebrew Bible to central Second Temple sources.

There seems to be a difference between the monotheism of Biblical Judaism and the dualism of Jesus. Such an evaluation depends on how one understands the phenomenon of impurity in Judaism. It will be argued that the concept of impurity, as used in the Hebrew Bible, actually does denote a spiritual power that is antagonistic to the holiness of *YHWH*. This idea of impurity is, however, not clearly expressed until the Second Temple Period. In this period there was a tendency to require priestly purity from lay people, a change of practice that does not necessarily alter the meaning of purity as a concept. The idea of impurity will be traced back to Leviticus and the Genesis narratives will be employed as the key for interpretation. The interpretation of impurity as an ontological category has had its advocates, one of whom is Levine (1974: 55), who comments upon the purification sacrifice by stating "...that the distinct objectives of magical activity and those of the cult proper, converged in pursuit of the common end of eliminating destructive or demonic forces identified as the sources of impurity". On the other hand, we have Milgrom (1991: 766), who states with equal conviction: "The monotheism of Judaism exorcised demons".

Milgrom (1991: 732-3, 767-7) argues that the purity regulations of Judaism symbolise the dualism of the forces of life and death. Douglas (2000b: 151) sees impurity as a symbolic expression for what "imposes God's order on his creation". Klawans (2000: 27) differentiates his definition of impurity after having decided whether ritual and moral impurity are in question; and Neusner (1988: 83) observes that the meaning of impurity differs in the various contexts in which the concept is employed, although he only works with the concept of ritual impurity.

The different occurrences of the terminology in question will be analysed by employing the categorisation that seems to be generally accepted by scholars of Judaism:

- ritual impurity
- moral impurity
- animal impurity and
- genealogical impurity.

But the fundamental question is: What is impurity? It will be argued that ritual impurity was the threat of a destructive agent, who was an enemy of God and mankind, trying to destroy human life and therefore, perceived as a danger to procreation. Impurity was also the mark of the same demonic power: an active and intelligent force, trying to destroy mankind's ability to make moral decisions. Moral purity was a condition for maintaining the relationship with God, his protection and blessing. Moral purity included obeying God's commandments and dietary regulations, simply because God had given them.

The common denominator in purity understanding, which is reflected in all of the mentioned sources, is that God is holy, and that holiness requires purity. Impurity is dangerous, because it prevents the presence of God. So our question is: Which phenomenon is it that has the power and ability to dismiss the presence of God, even from his own Temple, his own people and his own land? Was it seen as nothing but a symbolic expression for what God decided he did not want? Or was it experienced as an antagonistic force with existence in its own right? We shall in this chapter argue that the symbolic language of impurity expresses a cosmology which included a demonology. We suggest that it was not clearly pronounced for the same reason as the name of *YHWH* was not pronounced: The danger of the power imbedded in the name.

The result of this enquiry will form the cultural background into which Jesus preached and taught, healed and exorcised. The texts of the Second Temple Period show how the impurity concept was employed by the generation Jesus addressed.

2.2 RITUAL IMPURITY

2.2.1 Introduction

Moses summarised the goal for the religious life as a calling to the Israelites to "walk in the ways of the Lord" and thereby "choose life, so that you and your children may live" (Deut 30:15-16, 19). The alternative was choosing death and to be cursed. The term 'Life', should be understood in a multiple sense. It was life as a principle, or as Milgrom (1991: 46) says it, "the forces of life", as well as a full lifespan of at least seventy years, in addition to a long-lasting generational line. So when an Israelite was blessed with the "forces of life" he had children, lived till he grew old and belonged to a collective body: the people. According to the Genesis narratives, humans were created perfect, in the sense that they were healthy, unblemished, capable of working hard and of bearing children. Nowhere in the Bible is a Jewish man portrayed as unable to father a child. Women, however, were often struggling with barrenness. The "forces of life" are seen radiating from God as a life-giving force, a life-sustaining energy called 'blessing', or as we shall argue, the "forces of life" were the blessings granted by a personal God, who knew about and responded to how people lived.

The "forces of death" is an expression for an energy that could make a person miserable, since everything touched would be marked by destruction. When a person is cursed, the forces of death would cause him or her to die in misery, with no children. His/her name would be forgotten. It is commonplace to see the "forces of life" as divine, connected with holiness and purity, but what was hidden behind the "forces of death"? Our question is: How was the Biblical material regarding purity/impurity understood in the first century? Keeping in mind, that impurity and holiness are antonyms, we shall analyse some texts of importance in order to see if and how demonic presence was implied by the concept of impurity connected with body impurity, here referred to as ritual impurity, which was a contagious condition that could pollute the Temple and invalidate the sacrifices.

2.2.2 **The Impurity of Procreation**

Procreativity was a blessing and an obligation. A person who walked in the ways of the Lord could expect to profit from the covenant blessing, which included children. But if the regulations of the Law were not observed, "The fruit of your womb will be cursed" (Deut 28: 18). The promise of life and blessings raises the question of how Palestinian Judaism understood the relationship between piety and sex, marriage and reproduction, holiness and impurity. And since the ideal life situation was sometimes amiss, it prompted the question of the relationship between curses, impurity, infertility and sexual deviance. Elizabeth Abbot (2000: 192) has analysed the idea of celibacy in the history of all the major world religions. Regarding Judaism, she reports however to have found no such ideal: "Judaism teaches that God is just, He would not subject them to pain or suffering without a divine purpose. Such a God, therefore, wants his people to experience all the wondrous aspects of the life he created, including sexuality."

Marriage was, in ancient Judaism, seen as an obligation and as a source of joy. This is reflected in the wording of an ancient wedding blessing: "May you make joyful these beloved companions just as you made your creatures in the Garden of Eden.... Blessed are you, O lord, who makes bridegroom and bride rejoice" (Abbot, 2000: 193) It was the parents' duty to arrange marriages for their daughters. A story from the Palestinian Talmud tells about Hananaia who, while studying with Rabbi Akvia in Bnei Berak, received a message from his wife: "Your daughter is grown, come and find her a match". Rabbi Akvia communed with the Holy Spirit and said. "Anyone who has a grown daughter should go and find her a match (Theodor and Albeck, 1965: 1232, in Boyarin, 1993: 157)". Marriage was a religious duty. Choosing celibacy was, in effect, as murder. Rabbi Eliazar ben Azariah said:

> *Anyone who does not engage in procreation is a murderer and diminishes the Divine image, for it says, One who spills blood of a human, for the sake of the human the blood will be spilt, for in the image of God he made the human, and as for you, be fruitful and multiply.*
>
> (Josefta Javamot 8:7, in Boyarin, 1993: 134.)

Abbott (2000: 193) observes that some Rabbis found themselves involved in a conflict of interests between the love of Torah and the love for their wives. Some thought it better to study when young and marry afterwards, while others married young and tried to combine the duties and joys of both. It was every student's duty not only to study the Torah, but "to study the Torah in purity" (Bab Tal Yoma 72b). So it may, at first glance,

seem logical to think that the Torah should be studied before marriage, since sexual intercourse would necessarily make the student ritually impure. But the opposite was actually the case. Bodily impurity was not something to be avoided. The impurity was not lasting. On the other hand, one who was unmarried could probably not study the Torah "in purity" being distracted with sexual needs, so only married men should be the leaders of prayer (Taanith 16a, in Boyarin, 1993: 139). The discussion goes like this:

> *The sages have taught: On studying Torah and marrying a woman? He should study Torah and then marry, but if he cannot manage without a wife, he should marry and then study Torah. Said Rav Yehudah that Shmuel said, "The halakha is that he should marry and then study Torah." Rabbi Yohanan said, "a milestone around his neck and he will study Torah!?" And they do not disagree; that is for us and that is for them.*
>
> (Kiddushin 29b.)

Having a sex-life made a man capable of studying the Torah without the disturbance of constant sexual desire and he was, therefore, able to "study in purity". The concept of purity employed here shows influence from the stoic meaning, associating impurity with sexual desire. On the other hand, the responsibility of marriage might also be a disturbance. But domestic worries were not denoted as impurities, even if they conflicted with learning. And since the study of Torah should, ideally, last for a very long time, many Rabbis recommended marriage at an early age. Celibacy was not even seen as an honorable lifestyle. The Jerusalem Talmud compares the man who takes a vow of sexual abstinence to "a man who takes a sword and plunges it into his heart" (Test.Naphtali, 9.1, in Greenberg, 1996: 197). Rav Huna said: "Anyone who is twenty years and not married, all of his days are sinful" (Bab Tal, in Boyarin, 1993: 40). In particular, the Babylonians thought that marriage should be arranged as soon as the boy reached puberty, preferably at the age of fourteen, since without sex it would be impossible to concentrate on his studies (Boyarin, 1993: 140).

In marriage, sex was not only a privilege: it was the man's duty to the wife. One marriage contract, based on Exodus 21: 10, stated: "I will feed you, clothe you and have intercourse with you, in accordance with the customs of Jewish husbands" (Ketubbot 61b ff, in Boyarin 1993: 143). The Mishna understanding of the obligation of the Jewish husbands was to satisfy his wife regularly, with no pause longer than one or two weeks.

If he extended this period without her consent he had to divorce her and pay her the divorce settlement.

> *If one takes a vow not to sleep with his wife; Bet Shammai says two weeks, and Bet Hillel one week. The students may go away from their homes for study of Torah without permission for thirty days and labourers for one week. The season (required frequency of intercourse) which is mentioned in the Torah: for the tayyalin (full time students or unemployed), it is every day, for labourers twice a week, for donkey drivers once a week, for camel drivers once in thirty days, for sailors once in six months; these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer.*
>
> (Ketubbot 61b ff, in Boyarin 1993: 143.)

However, sometimes students of Torah felt the need to be away from their wives for a longer period, a situation which was discussed in the Mishna and argued from the Bible:

> *The students may go away from their homes for study of Torah without permission for thirty days and labourers for one week: With permission, how much? As much as he wants. But what is the correct behaviour? Rav said: One month here studying and one month at home. For it says in matter of the labour brigades, one goes and one comes for the months of the year (1 Chron 27: 1). Rabbi Johanan says, one month here and two at home, for it says, "One month they will be in Lebanon and two months at home".*
>
> (Ketubbot 61b ff, in Boyarin 1993: 144).

So what was a person to do, if the obligations were met, and pregnancy did not occur? Shir Hashirim Rabba (1-31) says:

> *We will rejoice and be happy with you (Song of Songs 1: 4). There we have taught: If a man married a woman and remained with her for ten years and had no children, he is not permitted to refrain from procreation (i.e., he must divorce her and marry another).*
>
> (Boyarin, 1993: 54.)

The narrative goes on telling about the deep love between a barren woman from Sidon and her husband. When the Rabbi demanded their divorce she was offered to take with her the most precious item in the house. As her husband slept she ordered the servants to pick him up and take him to her father's house. When he woke up and asked why he was there she said: "There is no object in the world which is more precious to me than you". They went to Rabbi Shimon the son of Yohai. He stood and prayed for them, and they were remembered (she became pregnant). The union was blessed, although, the semen made both parties ritually impure. But ritual impurity should not be avoided, only purified.

So, why did semen create impurity? The obvious symbolic meaning of semen is life and an emission of semen carried the potential for a new life. One of the points in the narrative of The Fall was God's cursing the serpent, saying that the seed of the woman should one day destroy him. The serpent, therefore, became an enemy of procreation; every time there was potential for new life demonic powers would want to prevent life from coming into being. As the classical observations of Douglas say, "Impurity is danger". The covenant blessing of procreation was threatened, since most probably conception would not occur. Both parties were impure for one day. As long as a man was in this state, he could not enter the sanctuary. But it was not a danger that should be avoided. On the contrary, it was a danger that should be sought! One had only to observe the purification regime to become pure again: "... he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening" (Lev 15: 16). The same purification is also required from the woman he has been with (Lev 15: 18). "The purification symbolises the victory of the forces of life over death" (Milgrom, 1991: 46). It demonstrates that there was a deep connection between "walking in the ways of the Lord" and the promise of life through the blessing of "the fruit of the womb". On the other hand, if the husband had failed to fulfil his marital duty, and therefore had been "sinning against his wife", according to a Talmudic story he risked his own life. For the wife of a learned man sat home waiting and when she realised that she had been forgotten, "a tear fell from her eye. He was sitting on a roof (studying the Torah). The roof collapsed under him and he died" (Boyarin, 1993: 147).

Menstrual blood bore the very same message as spilled semen. No conception had taken place. The power of death had won. The menstruation blood (not the woman) was strongly contagious. It marked the places where the woman had sat and lain with the force of impurity. "The impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening" (Lev 15: 19). Sexual intercourse during the period of menstruation carried the death penalty, *karet*, premature death before the age of sixty (Milgrom, 2000a: 1758). Still, it is remarkable that no purification ritual was required from the woman after the period was finished, although it may only mean that it was taken for granted and, therefore, unnecessary to mention (Milgrom, 1991: 934). Nevertheless, the observance of *niddah* was and remains one of the most important and lasting duties of Jewish women to this day. Impurity, as such, was no transgression and the impurity was not lasting. So ignoring the prohibition of sex during

menstruation must be categorised as moral, not ritual impurity, and it will be dealt with as such.

Biale (1984: 148) argues that there is an historic shift in the understanding of menstrual impurity, starting already in the biblical period:

> *After the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE) an evolution in the law of niddah had taken place. The justification for these laws had shifted from the realm of purity to the realm of sexual taboos. This transformation became even more pronounced in the Mishnaic and Talmudic literature which developed after the destruction of the Second Temple.*

The topic of menstrual impurity was an important one. The Mishnaic and Talmudic Tractate of Niddah deal extensively with questions of menstrual impurity (Fonrobert, 2000: 23). Fonrobert analyses how menstruation was conceptualised in the language of the Rabbis. She concludes that study of the etymology of the term '*niddah*' is inconclusive with regard to understanding the rationale of the impurity law (Fonrobert, 2000: 16). The root of the term can be either n-d-d: to depart, flee, or wander; or n-d-h: to chase away or put aside. Milgrom (1991: 744-5) defines the term as expulsion or elimination. He states: "N*iddah* came to refer not just to the menstrual discharge but to the menstruant herself, for she too is excluded from her society". This is strongly gainsaid by Fonrobert. The menstruant was excluded from the temple, but certainly not from her society. The term *niddah* does carry connotations of 'the ostracized woman' or 'abhorrence and repulsive' (Fonrobert, 2000: 17). The only consequence for the menstruant was that she was not sexually available for her husband, as the following passage from the Babylonian Talmud shows.

"Rabbi Akviva said: 'When I went to Gallia they used to call a niddah galmudah.'
'What is a galmudah?'
'She, who is weaned from her husband.'"

(bRosh Hasana 26a.)

Fonrobert shows that the apparent inconsistency in biblical texts regarding the menstruant is due to the two different strata in Leviticus itself. The priestly concern of Leviticus 15 (P) is focused on purity as a cultic matter with regard to the Temple. The concern of Leviticus 18 and 20 (H) is to define illicit sexual relations prohibited by the penalty of *karet* (Fonrobert, 2000: 20). The belief that human hardship was divine

punishment was the common theodicy, an explanation that was suitable for observing the *niddah*.

> *Adam was created as "the blood of life of the world", Eve caused his death therefore Women must observe niddah. Adam was the pure Challah (leaven) of the world, Eva caused his death, therefore women are given the Challah presept. Adam was the light of the world, Eva caused his death, therefore women must light the Sabbath light.*
>
> (p. Shabbat 2, 5b, 34, Gen. Rabbah 17:7, in Baskin, 1984: 7-8.)

Failure to observe these three precepts causes women to die in childbirth (Kraemer, 1992: 95). A woman who had made herself available for her husband might conceive and give birth, but the powers of death would still take her own life, according to God's will. Neglecting *niddah* was therefore life-threatening.

The taboo of the menstruation blood does not express a general blood taboo. There was no impurity connected with blood from wounds. It was also different from vaginal blood, when this was seen as a discharge different from menstrual blood. And the rabbis were allegedly able to see the difference. This caused a practice of seeking examination of blood, a process in which the woman played an important role. She presented her own 'informed' opinion of the cause, since the Mishna said that she could attribute the bloodstain to whatever reason she chose (mNid 8:2, tNid 6:17, 7:4, in Fonrobert, 2000: 117). From this practice developed the concept 'blood of lust', which indicated that if the blood was declared pure, she could have sexual intercourse with her husband. (Fonrobert, 2000: 117).

Ruling concerning miscarriages came in two kinds: those concerning possible miscarriage, which probably was a very early abortion, and where it was uncertain whether it was a discharge of blood or a discharged foetus (usually before 6 weeks of pregnancy), and a later abortion. So, both an early and late abortion carried the same degree of impurity.

> *The woman who is subject to a doubt concerning five miscarriages and the woman who is subject to five confirmed miscarriages both bring a single offering. And she then is deemed clean so that she eats animal sacrifices. And the remainder of the offering is not an obligation for her.*
>
> (Keritot 1: 1, 2, 7; 3:2, 4, in Neusner, 1991:12.)

The degree of impurity after five miscarriages requires a single offering, which shows that it was experienced as a rather severe degree of danger. The power of death is obviously present and there is a danger that the woman will never be able to complete a pregnancy. We see that the forces of death are met with the purification offering, demonstrating the struggle and dualism between death and life. The Leviticus law (Lev 12: 2-8) concerning impurity after childbirth has a very long history of effect. Not only in antiquity, but also in the Catholic Church, there has been a ritual for 'churching' women after childbirth. Since the notion of cultic impurity was so obviously present in the prayer and the penance it functioned as a purification ritual, for the woman was not allowed to participate in Eucharist before she had been 'churched'. The second Vatican Council (1962-65) replaced the liturgy with a blessing and timed it to occur at the baptism of the child instead of ten weeks after birth (Korte, 2000: 313).

According to Leviticus, the woman who gives birth to a boy is impure for seven days, then the boy is circumcised. She must wait another thirty-three days for her own purification. The woman who gives birth to a daughter is impure for fourteen days. Then she must wait another sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding. In both cases she was required to bring a burnt offering and a purification offering and the priest would "make atonement for her" (Lev 12: 7).

The word which is translated as 'conceives' is *zara*, actually meaning 'conceive semen' as in the word 'inseminated'. The very same word, *zehrah,* is used in Genesis 1: 11-12, as well as in 3: 15, for seeding and bringing forth young. Using the creation story as an interpretive framework, we are reminded that the seed of the woman should crush the head of the serpent. This drama is taking place every time a child is born. The extreme degree of impurity in the case of childbirth symbolises the spiritual forces behind the dangers that will meet the helpless newborn in a world where the serpent is still alive and active. Douglas (2000b: 181) presents an explanation as to why the woman is impure eighty days after the birth of a girl and only forty days after the birth of a boy. She sees this as a consequence of the boy's relationship to the blessings of the covenant. The circumcision was a ritual for protection. Douglas raises the question of why the child needed protection. She admits that there was a fear of demons in the population, but she insists that, "... but in this religion no seeking out of causes, still less propitiations of demons are allowed...Leviticus cannot say that outright because of the eschewed magicality" (Douglas, 2000b: 181-2).

The idea that circumcision gave spiritual protection is strengthened by the fact that an atoning offering was presented as a purification offering. This does not imply that the birth was connected with sins, but we agree with Douglas that it may have been seen to have a prophylactic effect (Douglas, 2000b: 182), although this is not actually supported in Second Temple Texts. We do, however, find an explanation in the Book of Jubilees - developed themes from the creation narrative - saying that Adam was created in the first week and Eve in the second.

> *For this reason the commandment was given to keep in their defilement, for a male 7 days, for a female twice 7 days. After Adam had completed 40 days in the land where he had been created, he was brought into the Garden of Eden, and Eve was not brought in until the eightieth day, And for this reason the commandment is written on the heavenly tablets, in regard to her that gives birth.*
>
> (Jub 3:8-14, in Neusner, 1973: 55).

Based on the Genesis narrative, we agree with Douglas that there is a need for protection both from the enemy of humankind and from natural dangers as well. That childbirth was interpreted in the light of the creation story is attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

> *In the first week (Adam was created... until) he was not brought to the garden of Eden and a bone (from his bone was taken to become the woman)....but she (Eve) had (no name?) until she was not brought to him (Adam)... For holy is the garden of Eden and every fresh shoot that is in it is holy (as it is written, if a woman conceives and bears a child) then she shall be unclean for seven days ... (the rest is a quotation from Lev 12).*
>
> (CD4Q265 Fr. 7.)

The connection between living a holy life and the blessings of the covenant, in contrast to sin and destruction, is also attested in the literature of the second Temple period, showing that God allowed destruction by the hand of the destroyer, in CD called Beliah and Melkiresha. A sacrifice was probably felt to be in order just in case there were any unwitting sins.

> *And so shall it be for all the members of His Covenant who do not hold steadfastly to these (precepts). They shall be visited by destruction by the hand of Beliah. That shall be the day when God will visit. For they shall hope for healing, but he will crush them.*
>
> (CD4Q265-73, VII.)

Later, we find a rabbinic explanation for the sacrifice after childbirth that seems to have developed from real life experience: "When she kneels in bearing, she swears impetuously that she will have to intercourse with her husband" (BT Niddah 31b, in Neusner, 1994:73). The Torah therefore ordained that she should bring a sacrifice, since in such cases, it was better to give a sacrifice than to insist that she kept her oath! (Neusner, 1994: 73.) We believe, however, that rationale should first be sought in other Levitical texts. And we believe that the theme of the vulnerability of the new born is parallel to the newly planted fruit tree. 'Tree' is often used as a metaphor for humans (Nielsen, 1989: 73) and we find that the fruit should be regarded as 'uncircumcised' for the first three years after the tree is planted (Lev 19: 23-25). Again, we see that the covenant blessing given to Abraham is the protection that life needs, and appreciation for this is shown by observing a period of impurity, the time when the demonic forces of death are especially active.

According to the narrative of The Fall, God had declared enmity between the serpent and man. Procreation was therefore the logical target of the force of destruction. New life is always fragile, so conception, birth and infancy are vulnerable situations in which God's protection was needed especially. On the other hand, procreation was not only in the interests of mankind but it was also important to God. The serpent was God's enemy also, and should be crushed by the seed of the woman. So procreation was a religious duty, in which God and mankind were allies.

2.2.3 **The Impurity of Sexual deviance**

Sometimes the expected blessing did not manifest itself in procreation. Sexual deviance did occur. While marriage was mandatory for men, it was prohibited for those who were categorised as *'saris'*, often translated as 'eunuchs', an overarching term for a number of sexual deviances (Schanke, 2003: 35-48). Though there is not much sexual phobia to be detected in Judaism, sexuality was not highly valued when it was separated from procreation. The childless marriage was seen as a misfortune, even interpreted as a curse. In cases when the only effect of sexual deviance was infertility, the condition was rather difficult to predict before the marriage was contracted and consummated. So some men died without an heir. The right of the deceased to have an heir by Levirate marriage is documented in Deuteronomy 25: 5 –10. If the brother of the deceased refused to marry the widow, she would go up to him in the presence of the elders, take

off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." This ceremony was called *'calitsah'*, and there were discussions among the rabbis about how this should be practised; with regard to Leviticus 20: 21: "A marriage between a man and his brother's widow is unclean". The Samarians, according to the rabbis (b.Qid.76a), condoned levirate marriage only with a childless widow whose husband died after the betrothal. However, if her husband died after the marriage was consummated, levirate marriage was prohibited (Milgrom, 2000a: 1758). So part of the rationale for granting *'calitsah'* to a *'saris'*, may be doubts about the consummation of the marriage. Nissinen (1998: 120) says *de facto* the same: "Broadly speaking, 'eunuch' can mean anybody who finds marital life impossible". The Rabbis were pondering gender ambiguity, related to who could bring the first fruit of the harvest (Ex 23: 19) and who was allowed to utter the appropriate declaration (Deut 26: 5-11). The *Mishnah* used terms like *'tumtum'*, persons of doubtful sex, and *'androginos'*, androgynous people (Bikkurim1, 5, 4, in Nissinen, 1998: 101). Nissinen states that it is difficult to know what was meant by the discussion, but it is clear that the rabbis differed between these two groups. At least we know that there was confusion regarding the obligations of granting a *'saris'* this privilege (Str-B 1991: 806). Rabbi Joshua complains about the different opinions on the subject: "I have heard that a *'saris'* is granted *calitsa*h and that *calitsah* is arranged for his wife, and also that a *'saris'* is not granted *calitsah* and that no *calitsah* is arranged for his wife, and I am unable to explain this." (Yebamoth 8 (folio79b) in Malik, 1999.) The text continues with two conflicting explanations by the Tannaim. Rabbi Akibah said:

> *I will explain it: A 'saris' adam is granted calitsah and calitsah is also arranged for his wife, because there was a time when he was in a state of fitness. A sharis shamma is not granted calitsah nor is calitsah arranged for his wife, since there never was a time when he was fit.*

The moral point was that a *'saris shammah'* had been made childless by God and should be left that way. The *'saris adam'* was a victim of the general corruption of nature and it was therefore the task of society to see to that the original plan of God was fulfilled by granting him an heir. The interpretation of Rabbi Akibah was supported by Rabbi Joshua Ben Bathyra, who told about a *'saris adam'* he knew in Jerusalem whose widow had been allowed to marry her brother- in- law (Str-B, 1991: 806).

How should the rabbis be able to differentiate between the different deviants? That was a problem of much consideration in antiquity and it was important, since an impure *'saris'* would pollute the temple. When the *'saris shammah'* lacked every defining anatomical characteristic, it was very difficult to know who he was. In the discussion over *calatsah,* the rabbis obviously understood that the childlessness had nothing to do with barrenness in the wife; it was an inborn condition in the male, but without physical signs. It had to do with gender deviance and it must have been a shameful condition, since the *'saris shammah'* often, or usually, lived secretly with the condition. When society suspected deviance, an interest was taken in detecting the problem and disclosing the *'saris'*. People were looking for something that might give the 'saris' away. They were searching for small signs of gender deviance, very much like Polemo, the second century *physiognomist*, trying to detect femininity in secret *cinaedi*, the feminine homosexual man (Gleason, 1995: 55). The rabbis would look for signs of deviance, like the absence of pubic hair, soft hair, the absence of a beard and smooth skin. However, they suspected that there might too be deviants without these traits. For some reason, they looked for more subtle signs, trying to detect phenomena like their urine not forming an arch, the lack of froth in the urine, lack of fermentation of the urine, the wateriness of their semen and a lack of sweat from their bodies after running during the rainy season (Yebamoth Viii 80 b, in Malik, 1999). The signs they were looking for were derived from the ancient belief that effeminacy had to do with temperature and moistness. Actually, the signs they were looking for were quite coherent with Aristotle and his theory of the male being cooler and drier than the female (Malik, 1999). There was something womanish about the *'saris shammah'* that did not show on the outside. In Talmudic Judaism we find different criteria for gender categories. The *'saris adam'* (emasculated males) contra *'saris shammah'* (born eunuchs) was only one system. The *Mishnah* divided deviant men into three categories: congenital eunuchs, eunuchs made so by men, and persons of indeterminate anatomical sex (Zavim 2.1 in Kuefler, 2001: 258).

Sexual deviants, *'saris'*, were certainly unholy, but not *per se* impure, although they were categorised differently from barren women. While we find Hannah praying in the sanctuary (1 Sam 1-17), *'saris'* with physiological defects were explicitly excluded from the assembly of the Lord: "No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord" (Deut 23: 1). "No man who has any defect, is disfigured or deformed" (Lev 21: 18) "...or has damaged testicles" (Lev 21: 20) may

do so. This corresponds to the demand for physical perfection, also found in animal sacrifices: "You must not offer to the Lord an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn or cut" (Lev 22: 24). As the sacrifice, the priests should be physically perfect too. The connection between holiness and wholeness is clear. The root word r-p-', the basis of the Hebrew word for healing and healer, was closely related to wholeness as well as holiness. A defect did not express lack of purity, but it indicated lack of holiness. However, barrenness in women did not prevent their religious participation as lay women, so why were eunuchs excluded from the sanctuary? Isaiah treats eunuchs and foreigners according to the same ordinances (Isa 56: 3-4). To be deviant was different from being blind. The blind or blemished person was only excluded from the priesthood. But eunuchs and foreigners were excluded from the Temple; we suggest that the reason was suspicion of impurity. Even if the foreigner wanted to live according to the Law, they were vulnerable to the customs of their kinsmen and who knew about the intimate life of a eunuch?

Barrenness in women did not create impurity. It was a misfortune, a lack of blessing or a penalty, *'ariri'm'*, caused by God. In the Genesis stories of the patriarchs, barrenness was a recurring phenomenon. Abraham's wife Sara (Gen 11: 30), Isaac's wife Rebecca (Gen 25: 21), and both the wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel (Gen 29: 31, 30: 22), as well as Hannah (1 Sam 1: 15) and Elisabeth (Luke 1: 7) struggled with infertility. God "opened the wombs" as an answer to prayers. This is noteworthy, since God's promise after The Fall was that the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3: 15), making fertility the basic premise in the cosmic dualistic drama. Infertility was therefore in the direct interest of Satan. Moreover, according to the same narrative, the serpent was expected to "strike the heel" of his enemies, human beings. This dualistic perspective is present in many of the narratives concerning barrenness and the struggle with barrenness not only demonstrated that the powers of death were allowed to strike women, but also that God was in charge of both life and death and able to open the womb of those who were barren. The Hebrew word for barren, *'akar'*, denotes 'uprooted', in the sense of being torn away from the family stock and left to wither without progeny or successors (Jastrow s.a.). Boyarin points to how ancient Judaism conceived procreation differently from Aristotle. While many of the surrounding Greco-Roman cultures thought that the woman provided the material and the father the form, in Rabbinical Judaism the parents both provided the matter and only God could provide the living soul, *'nefesh'*. The parents provided the eye and God provided the capacity to

see. Parents provided the genitalia, but God provided the ability to procreate. This meant that God blessed the procreation organs and let them operate as male and female in the life-giving process (Boyarin, 1997: 9). So, when conception failed it was regarded as a spiritual problem expressed as a bodily blemish. Semen was understood as the physical matter that would become a new human being if God provided life. Every sexual intercourse, as well as any ejaculation, showed that semen was spilled and, therefore, not blessed. The semen that actually reached its goal in sexual intercourse was in great danger of being spilled too. Usually, conception did not occur. When it did, it was a proof of God's presence and blessing power of life.

During the period of the Apocrypha, the responsibility of raising many children to be good Jews caused some sobering advice: "Desire not a multitude of unprofitable children, though they multiply, rejoice not in them, except the fear of the Lord be with them . . . better it is to die without children than to have them that are ungodly (Ecclus. [Sirach] xvi: 1-3)".

The pain of the barren was, however, not that the children had grown up ungodly, but that the faithful Jews themselves never got the opportunity to fulfil the Law by teaching it to the next generation:

> *Who gloried in the performance of all the commandments, but found he could not impart them to "those who should come after him. Such a one is reckoned as if 'menuddeh', cut off from all communion with God, like unto him who voluntarily disregards all the precepts of the Law (Pes. 113b); he is accounted as already dead, together with the pauper, the leper, and the blind (Ned. 64b), for all the enjoyment that is left to him in life. "Weep sore for him that goeth away, that shall return no more nor see his native country" (Jer. xxii. 10), was interpreted by R. Judah as being applicable chiefly to him who dies without children.*
>
> (M. Ḳ. 27*b* in Jwe Enc Barren.)

In Talmudic Judaism, barrenness is seen as a curse or a punishment from God. But since it was explained as a condition in the woman, the man could still be a priest, although such an example is not found in the OT. In Luke 1: 5-7 we read about the priest Zechariah, who did not have children because Elizabeth was barren. However, she eventually conceived and bore a child as an answer to prayer. In popular culture there was a variety of remedies against barrenness, but the Bible is consistently presenting only one solution: prayer. This indicates that fertility is an act of God, part of the covenant blessing and granted to the faithful.

2.2.4 **The Impurity of Sickness and Death**

The taxonomy of impurity, as symbolic expression for the dualism life – death, is clearly detectable in the dualism sickness: health and bodily perfection – imperfection (Milgrom, 1991: 767). Although bodily perfection was required in priests, only a few specific unhealthy conditions created ritual impurity in lay people, according to Leviticus. These were irregular genital fluxes in both sexes and scale disease recognisable by a list of symptoms. The common denominator in sickness as impurity was not that the body grew weak and disabled but rather that the disease apparently lived a life of its own, growing and spreading and producing liquid. Abnormal genital discharge in men (Lev 15: 2b-15) created impurity and, after the condition was healed, needed purification. Loss of semen symbolised death. When semen was spilled during intercourse, the couple remained impure until the next evening. The impurity from the loss of semen was contagious. It was, however, worse when the discharge was due to an infection. Impurity contracted while ill could only be cleansed afterwards by a purification offering, *'hattat'*, and a burnt offering. "In this way he (the priest) will make atonement before the Lord for the man because of his discharge" (Lev 15: 15). We find the same procedure in the case of abnormal genital discharge in women (Lev 15: 25-30). A woman who spilt blood that was not normal menstrual blood was impure and the blood was contagious as long as the condition lasted. The purification regime was exactly the same as for abnormal male discharge.

Semen and blood are both symbols for life. During menstruation and intercourse it was always the case that blood and semen were wasted. It was a dangerous situation when the forces of death and the forces of life struggled against each other. When the discharges were abnormal this could be interpreted as if the force of death for some reason, perhaps sin, had conquered the body and made atonement necessary.

Scale disease was the other condition which made people impure (Lev 13: 1-59). The text offers a list of symptoms which the priests were expected to examine in order to determine impurity. People with festering or running sores were contagiously impure, since liquid was a powerful means for transmitting impurity. The counterpart was water, which had the capacity to purify after the sickness was healed. Water was, however, not sufficient in these cases. The purification regime was considerably more comprehensive in cases of skin diseases than for genital discharges. On this basis, we will argue against Milgrom's interpretation that impurity due to sickness was merely a symbolic

expression for the natural struggle for life. Milgrom's own arguments are based on the symbolic meaning of semen and blood as symbols for life. If this were the hermeneutical key we should expect to find the most powerful purification rites in cases of abnormal loss of semen and blood. That is not the case. Purification from abnormal genital discharges in both sexes was achieved by water for a period of seven days and an offering was made of two doves or two young pigeons (Lev 15: 14). When a person was healed after an infectious skin condition the purification was far more complex. It required water, time, removing hair, the sacrifice of birds, sprinkling of blood, and the sacrifice of two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an '*ephah*' of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil. Finally, the priest made atonement for the person, and he or she would be clean (Lev 14: 1-31).

We see that impurity was not caused by any kind of disease. A fever was certainly seen as a curse (Deut 28), but a person with pneumonia, or a person who had tuberculoses and vomited blood was not ritually impure. Sickness did not usually create impurity, so the key is not the danger of a life-threatening disease but rather the visible destruction, which apparently lives off the sick body's resources. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the destructive power of mildew was categorised as impure; though it did not attack living bodies, it affected clothes and houses, and thereby created impurity that could only be purified by priestly intervention. It should be noticed that there are degrees of impurity that are reflected in the different degrees of purification rituals:

1. Mildew on clothes (Lev 13: 48-59): Purified by water after all signs of mildew were gone.
2. Mildew on house (Lev 14:49 – 57): Purified by water after 7 days, and sprinkling of bird's blood.
3. Abnormal genital flow (Lev 15: 1-15, 25-30): Purified by water, and offering of two young pigeons the 8th day as sin offering, *hattat,* and burnt offering, *asam*.
4. Skin disease, running sores (Lev 14: 1-32): Purified by blood of birds, and cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop, dipped into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water, and two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old as guilt offering, sin offering, burnt offering, and wave offering.

Water is used as purification in all four cases. Mildew on clothes is more easily purified than in houses, which require blood in addition to water. If the meaning of the purification rituals was to remind the people of the forces of life and death, the principle of life is more obvious in a house than in clothes. If, however, there was active and conscious motivation behind the destruction, it was a more drastic action and a more serious attack to ruin a family's house than a piece of clothing. The same argument should be applied to the two incidents of purification after sickness in human beings. If Milgrom is right in assuming that impurity is a symbolic reminder of death and that semen and blood are the strongest symbols of life, then one should expect the strongest purification rites when semen and blood were the very cause of impurity. However, this is not the case. The ritual for purification of skin conditions is far more comprehensive than after abnormal genital discharge. The impurity which was related to scale disease may have originated in sins, especially sacrilege, that had caused the punishment. This means that, originally, there was moral impurity in play and this could only be purified by regret, atonement and forgiveness. Hence the poetic proclamation, "Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases" (Ps 103: 3). The connection between sin and sickness is heavily testified in the OT. But contrary to this, there is Job's voice saying, after he had claimed his innocence and accused God for his unjust destiny: "I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know (Job 42: 3). There is not a single example in the OT of healing by exorcism and no demons or impure spirits of disease are presented in the texts.

During the first century, Jewish understanding of the impurity of disease as demonic activity is found in sources other than the Tanak. A pure person may be either common or holy. According to Leviticus the requirements of holiness and perfection were valid for priests only, although the sectarians and the Pharisees of the Second Temple period tended to require the same degree of holiness from lay people as well. At Qumran the list of ritually unqualified men was "updated" (4Q266 Baumgarten, 1992: 505-6, in Milgrom, 2000: 1822), and included, "anyone who speaks softly with a staccato voice". This was the hallmark of a sexually deviant man, soft and feminine (Gleason: 1995). On the other hand, even blemished priests ordained to serve in the Temple were employed in the Wood Chamber, the farthest from the Temple building. Such a person was allowed to blow the trumpets and pronounce the priestly benediction from the porch (Milgrom, 2000: 1824). Holiness required perfection.

In rabbinic tradition we find much attention given to two conditions of body impurity: namely, the *'zab'* (from whom there is a discharge from his member); and the *'sara'at'*, (the person who carried scale disease). It was argued for the possibility of the *'zab'* being regarded as pure, as opposed to the *'sara'at'*, who was considered impure and contagious. An examination had to be conducted, so that an adequate sacrifice could be offered (B. Talmud Folio 35a). Even in Rabbinic tradition sickness was often seen as a spiritual phenomenon:

> *R. Alexandri also said in the name of R. Hiyya b. Abba: Greater is the miracle wrought for the sick than for Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. [For] that of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah [concerned] a fire kindled by man, which all can extinguish; whilst that of a sick person is [in connection with] a heavenly fire, and who can extinguish that?*
>
> (B. Talmud: Tractate Nedarim, Folio 41a.)

In first century Judaism was sickness, in principle, seen as a demonic attack or as divine punishment? Obviously both: magic spells were used in popular culture as protection against demonic powers. At the same time, according to the Bible, God was always seen as the author of *'nega'*, the term more commonly used by the Rabbis to include all kinds of skin disease (Milgrom, 1991: 776). The term literarily means to be 'touched' or 'attacked': hence, to be 'stricken' (Strong, nr: 6879). In accord with biblical monotheism, the curse of disease, as well as the testing of Job, came from God. The belief that scale disease was a divine, punitive action is so common that Milgrom labels it a 'universal phenomenon'. It is widely understood in Babylonian, Greek and Persian religion, as well as amongst the sectarians of Qumran, as a punishment for sins against the deity, not against mankind (Milgrom, 1991: 821).

Finally, a dead body was always ritually impure. The power of death had succeeded and the impurity of the dead body was contagious. Priests were restricted with regard to burying their own parents, since they should always be holy (Lev 21: 11).

2.2.4 **Summary**

We have shown that cultic impurity was an expression for the danger of, the power of, and the process of destruction and death. By observing the purification regime the people would always be conscious of the holiness of the one eternal God, as different from the perishability and vulnerability of human existence. Even if death was experienced as a powerful enemy, Biblical Judaism taught that God was in control: "See

now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand" (Deut 32: 39).

The blood taboo is not only related to defilement but also to purification. Blood belonged to God, who was the source of life, and its purpose was revealed to Moses: "I have given it (the blood) to you on the altar, to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood which makes atonement for one's life *(nefesh)*" (Lev 17: 11). Unlike pagan sacrifice, where people offered blood as a gift in order to appease the deity, the blood was God's property, which he gave as a gift to men. Blood was a crucial factor in the two expiatory sacrifices, '*hattat*' and '*asam*'.

2.3 MORAL IMPURITY

2.3.1 Introduction

The first scholar who articulated that the Pentateuch presents two different kinds of impurity was Hoffman (1843-1921), distinguishing between defilement that stands in opposition to purity and defiles the body, and defilement that stands in opposition to holiness and defiles the soul (Klawans, 2000: 13-14). The book of Leviticus deals with moral impurity as different from ritual impurity by employing specific linguistic connotations for this category. Klawans shows that the term 'impure', '*tame*', is used in both cases, but the terms 'abomination', '*towebah*', and 'pollute', '*khaw-lawl*', are reserved for the actions which cause moral impurity (Klawans, 2000: 26).

It must be noted that not every sin creates impurity. The anthropology, as well as the concept of God expressed in Ps 103: 12-14, says that God is merciful with the weakness of mankind and forgives their sins, alluding to the narrative telling that mankind is created from dust. However, there were sins that were so grave that the sinner became defiled in a drastic way. We shall, in the following, see how the defiling force of sin defiled not only the sinner but also the sanctuary and the land. What is the nature of such impurity? Is it a God-given judgement of human sins or is it related to a demonic force that causes humans to sin?

2.3.2 **The Biblical Narratives**

The opening narratives of the Hebrew Bible have two themes: the creation of the world by God; and The Fall of man, due to the choice of Eve and the seducing activity of the serpent. The serpent tempted her by appealing to her desire to be like God, knowing 'good' and 'evil'. Kaufmann (1972: 292-3) points out that Eve already knew 'good', having experienced life in the created paradise, which God himself had declared 'good'. But, 'evil' she did not know. The tree is conceived, then, not as the source of knowledge in general, but of the knowledge of evil, without which mankind's comprehension is incomplete. The serpent plays the role of the seducer who reveals evil to mankind and rouses the desire to know it. Mankind was created as morally responsible, able to make free choices, a freedom which was exercised when Eva ate of the forbidden fruit. And forever after, mankind has been able to choose evil, knowingly. The first sin had been committed, and the couple expelled from the Garden of Eden. God could not trust them. He needed to separate them from the tree of life so that they would not sin again and thereby, live forever in a sinful state (Gen 3: 22). The teaching of the narrative is: Sin is intolerable in the presence of God, in Eden as well as in the Temple and it does lead to expulsion from Eden and exile from the land of Israel. The narrative points towards both ritual and moral defilement. Awareness of sexuality and of the functions related to procreation is the main concern of ritual impurity and grave disobedience and evil are the sources of moral impurity.

The legends of Gen 1-11 contain an ancient substratum. The material deals with universal questions, not merely the concerns of Israel. Monotheism entailed the question of theodicy: the basic question of how the one omnipotent God could be a good God in a world where evil existed in a powerful way. The narratives deal with the three sins that we shall show, according to Leviticus, were considered grave enough to produce the force of moral impurity, a vital concern of the Second Temple literature.

- Bloodshed is the theme of the narrative of Cain and Abel.
- Illicit sex was the crime of the giants.
- Idolatry was the theme of the Babylon confusion, demonstrating that the nations of the world were not able to understand the message of Israelite monotheism.

Furthermore, the narrative of the flood shows that sin and moral impurity lead to expulsion. Only Noah survived, because he was "righteous and blameless and walked with God", which are the exact characteristics of moral purity. The narrative of The Fall also says something about the question of why people do sin: the serpent tempted them. We will argue that, in the Second Temple period, moral impurity was seen as a spiritual condition, or state, involving not only God and mankind, but also an enemy of both of these parties: the demonic forces. Moral impurity had become ontology.

2.3.3 Symbol or Reality

The topic of impurity has been given renewed attention in contemporary scholarship, although there has been greater focus on the investigation of ritual impurity rather than of moral impurity. Neusner analysed the idea of impurity in both ancient Judaism (1973) and in Rabbinic Judaism (1994), but he has very little to say regarding moral impurity. His conclusion, however, is: "Two important ideas about purity and impurity come down from ancient Israel: first purity and impurity are cultic matters; second, they may serve as metaphors for moral and religious behaviour, primarily with regard to sex, idolatry, and unethical action" (Neusner, 1973:108). He recognises that there are two different kinds of impurity in the *Mishnah*, the Judaism he refers to as, "The Judaism of the dual Torah", but only at a conceptual level. He sees ritual impurity as ontology, an indicator of holiness, but moral impurity is only a matter of speech, a metaphor for evil (Neusner, 1994: 71). What Neusner does not discuss is the nature of evil. We will argue that evil is not just a characterisation of immoral acts, but it is a force that changes people when it is not actively resisted. Douglas (in Neusner, 1973: 140) criticises this dichotomy, arguing for a single symbolic system: "Since it is clear that the Temple rules and sex rules and food rules are a single symbolic system of analogies, they do not converge on any point, but sustain the whole moral and physical universe simultaneously in their systematic interrelatedness".

Klawans has observed that recent scholarship has developed in two different directions: one is following Neusner, by focusing on ritual impurity and avoiding moral impurity. The other takes Hoffman's point of departure, by recognising two different systems of defilement based on the biblical texts rather than anthropology. Hoffman differentiated between impurity as opposed to purity (what we refer to as ritual impurity) and defilement as opposed to holiness, what we refer to as sin causing moral impurity. He

emphasises that moral impurity marks the sinner, body and soul, and that the sinner for this reason is rejected by God. The defilement is not symbolic but concrete (Klawans, 2000: 13-14).

Though Milgrom is strongly influenced by Douglas in his understanding of dietary laws as symbolic, he employs a different vocabulary when he is dealing with impurity and the '*hattat*' sacrifice, wrongly called 'sin offering' according to Milgrom, who translates the term as "purification offering" (Milgrom, 1991:253). Milgrom differentiates between physical and spiritual impurities. Physical impurity is what we call ritual impurity, while spiritual impurity is "caused by inadvertent violation of prohibitive commandments", for which there is no purification rite (Milgrom, 1991: 254). Milgrom does recognise the distinctive nature of the defiling force of sin. He argues that sin does not defile the sinner, but the sanctuary and the land. He has developed a specific description of which sins have the power to defile the sanctuary: bloodshed, idolatry and sexual immorality. These are the concepts Klawans (2000: 29) works with in his analyses of moral impurity, the characteristics of which are as follows: "Moral impurity is best understood as a potent force unleashed by certain sinful human actions. The force unleashed defiles the sinner, the sanctuary, and the land, even though the sinner is not ritually impure and does not ritually defile". Klawans agrees with Milgrom, that grave sins - idolatry, incest and murder - create moral defilement in the individual who sins. He is totally clear about the reality of moral impurity, as opposed to its having just a symbolic meaning: "We are dealing with perceived effects that result from actual physical processes". And, "People who commit sexual sins defile their persons, so that they suffer a degradation in their status," and more precisely, the impurity "brings about legal and social consequences.....the general ramification of this, being real" (Klawans, 2000: 34). In the following, we shall develop further our analyses of sin and moral impurity by focusing on the force which is behind evil.

2.3.4 Impurity, Sin and Evil

Kaufmann observes that Jewish demonology has not derived from spirits and devils, not from a primordial evil root, but from sin. On this basis, he argues that evil did not belong to the metaphysical, but to the moral realm, to the realm of sin (Kaufmann, 1972: 65). Linguistically, the vocabulary expressing sin - such as '*hatta't*', '*awon*' *and* '*pesa*' - are referring to actual wrongdoings by people, more or less voluntarily. The

very fact that sins could be committed accidentally raises the question of moral responsibility. The Law of Moses differentiates between sinning by accident and sinning consciously. But even a person who sinned without even knowing he was guilty needed to be atoned for (Lev 4:2, 5:17, 22). The practice of purification sacrifices for the sins the sinner did not know about, tells that sin was not only a matter belonging to the ethical realm. Ethics has to do with knowledge and understanding and empathy. Cultic life belongs to the metaphysical realm. There are cases in the Bible where sin is given personal attributes. We read that sin was crouching at the door, desiring to have Cain in its power. Sin is not just the result of man's bad choices or actions; it is a real power that Cain needed to master (Gen 4:7). Just as the serpent could communicate with Eve, sin is experienced as an oracle within the heart (Psalm 36:2).

Sins sometimes have to do with evil, and evil comes in different degrees. The strongest is perhaps the term *'beliyya'al'* which is the basis for the name of the demon Belial (2 Cor 6:15). It is employed (Deut 15: 9) as an evil, but yet fascinating thought. It describes Nabal, who deceived David (1Sam 25: 25) and the two men who brought false accusations against Naboth (1 King 21: 10, 13). The similarities between the characteristics of both Satan and the serpent in Eden are striking. Evil is a power that makes people sin. Evil men, *'beliyya'al'*, should be cast away like thorns and burned up (2 Sam 23: 6-7). Evil is experienced as a force that overrides a person's will and makes that person sin without wanting to or even knowing it. Sin has an existence of its own and does not disappear unless it is purged away. We are dealing with ontological dualism. Against this it may be argued that even the evil spirit that bothered Saul was sent from God. This spirit was described as *'ra'*, meaning evil, dangerous and harmful. It is also translated as 'injurious spirit', as a just punishment from God. This more monotheistic interpretation of ontology still gives room for a moral dualism, expressing how the world is experienced by human beings.

2.3.5 The Defiled Sinner

Since moral impurity is caused by sinful acts, we need to analyse the term 'sin' in order to find out if it was perceived as moral misconduct or the result of demonic influence. After Adam and Eve had sinned, they met God in the role of judge, who accused them of disobedience. The question was: Whose fault was it? Adam started by suggesting God and Eve as guilty parties: "The woman you gave me... ". Not only did he blame

Eve for seducing him, but he went to the root of the problem: God had given him a woman to be his helper, and this is what he got! Eve on the other hand blamed the Serpent, but admitted that she herself had eaten. God then pronounced the sentence: the serpent was cursed, Adam would have to work hard and Eve would have childbirth to worry about. This division of guilt raised the question: What did the serpent have to do with moral impurity?

Collins (1998: 30-51) presents the different solutions that were discussed in the second Temple period's literature. He points out that the narrative of the giants in the book of the Watchers was actually more often found in these sources than an exegetical discussion of the sin of Adam and Eve. In the apocalyptic milieu, people were concerned with a metaphysical framework, within which various theological questions could find meaning (Collins, 1998: 154). The myth of the watchers, as found in Genesis 6, gave some answers to the question of human responsibility for sin. Supernatural beings, called "sons of God", revolted, visited earth and fell in love with natural women. Their offspring became huge and wicked and this resulted in God sending the flood. The union with human women is assumed to be sinful because it mixed two different kinds of creature. In 1 Enoch 12-16 the story is expanded: the spirits of the giants became evil spirits on earth. "Evil spirits came out from their flesh, because from above they were created; from the holy watchers was their origin and first foundation" (1 Enoch 15: 8-10). In this way, the revolt of the watchers became the ultimate cause of and connection between demons and human sin.

By focusing on Adam and Eve, the Book of Jubilees sees this differently. Sin did not originate in heaven but on earth. Pure angels came from heaven to teach sound ethics to the newly created humans. Unfortunately, they became attracted to human women and giants were born. These became demons who survived the flood, since spirits do not drown. "The unclean demons began to lead the children of Noah's sons astray and to mislead them and destroy them" (Jub 10: 1). The demons organised themselves with a leader called *Mastema*. The spirits had God's permission to destroy and mislead mankind, much like Satan in the Book of Job. They were active agents in testing and tormenting people, but not ultimately responsible for human sin as such.

From the time of Sirach, in the early second century BCE, the Torah of Moses was an object of study and discussions in wisdom schools. Sirach suggests a solution by implementing the term *'yeser'*, 'inclination', understood either as an evil inclination or more neutrally as man's ability to think and feel. In Sirach, as in the Bible, the *'yeser'* is the natural inclination of mankind. Later, even rabbinic teaching to some extent personified 'the evil inclination' as Satan and the angel of death, to whom they ascribed attributes, aims and forms of activity that directed mankind (Urbach 11: 472, in Collins 1998: 34). Ezra stops short of saying that God created the evil heart, but the sages were consistent in emphasising the balance expressed in the statement that the evil inclination is met with the wisdom of Torah (Sifre Deut. §45). Sirach acknowledges that humanity was created in God's image and says it like this: "God filled humanity with knowledge and understanding and showed them good and evil" (Sirach 17: 7).

In the Community Rule of Qumran we find a strongly developed dualism with regard to moral impurity. Good and evil represent spiritual powers, both created by God to influence men: the spirit of truth and the spirit of wickedness (1QS 3: 15-19). The spirits were given to men so that they should know good and evil and thereby, be able to make choices. However, the powers of these spirits are so strong that they actually compromise the will and the possibility to choose freely. This problem was solved, on the theoretical level, by the teaching of predestination. "The wicked were ruled by the Angel of Darkness, and all their wicked deeds are caused by his dominion" (Collins 1998: 39). Each individual was born with a certain number of good and evil spirits. In concordance with pagan horoscopes, there was supposed to be a correlation between physical appearance and spiritual status. A good looking person would probably have seven parts in the House of Light and two parts in the Pit of Darkness. A less fortunate individual would have uneven teeth, thick limbs, a hairy body and his spirit would contain eight parts of the Pit of Darkness and only one part of the House of Light. (4Q186).

In the early Temple period the term 'the accuser', *'ha satan'*, referred to a member of God's heavenly court, who though evil, was not able to act freely without God's permission. The third and second century, however, witnessed the emergence of Satan as a clearly defined being, sometimes called *Mastema*, or *Belial*, or various other names. He was the supernatural leader of the forces of evil. He was an enemy of both God and the righteous and was blamed for most of the maladies that befell humanity (Cohen

1989: 83). Regardless of the power balance, mankind was always in danger of making wrong decisions by being tempted, or tested, or dominated by evil spirits. Moral impurity was understood as ontology.

2.3.6 The Defiled Temple

Grave sins produced moral impurity, which defiled the sinner but was not contagious by contact. This meant that a righteous person did not become impure by relating to or touching an adulterer. An adulterer and a murderer could even visit the Sanctuary without defiling it more than their actions already had (Klawans, 2000: 29). The reason why sinners were excluded from the sanctuary was because their sins made them unworthy of encountering the sacred (Klawans, 2000: 65). Moral impurity did contaminate the temple, even from a distance. Jews were united with the sanctuary in a spiritual way, a union not limited by physical distance. The nations who sinned did not pollute the temple, because they did not have such capacity. The ability to defile was a function of the degree of expected holiness. And since the Israelite people should be a holy people, their ability to defile the sanctuary was greater than that of pagans; and the priests met stricter requirements than the laity. The antonym of moral impurity is not purity but holiness (Neusner, 1994: 57). Milgrom (1991: 256) says it like this: "The impure person needs purification and the sinner needs forgiveness." The sinner's remorse is his/her inner purification (Milgrom, 1991: 254). However, there was a collective crisis if the sinner did not repent. Milgrom (1991: 260) speaks of the "priestly picture of Dorian Gray", whose lifestyle was revealed only on his portrait, not on the individual himself. In the same way, even if the sinner seemingly lived unmarked, the sanctuary was defiled for ever. This was a classic topic: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? (Jer 12: 1.) This question found its answer in the collective life experience of Jewish society: When the sanctuary was defiled they would all experience the consequences of the absence of God. The function of the sacrifice, '*hattat*', was to purify the sanctuary from the impurity transferred from the sinner. Sin was not just a case between the people involved. Sin affected God.

The purity of the Temple was of crucial concern for the whole nation. If the temple was defiled, the presence of God would depart. The blessing, upon which the people were so dependent, came with the presence of God. The abominations of certain sins were so appalling and repugnant to God that he would chose to leave and with his absence,

people would be in danger of exile. This connection between sin, defilement of the Temple and exile was understood differently in the different milieus during the Second Temple Period. The biblical foundation for this belief developed gradually. The historical books of the Torah were focused on the connection between the contamination of idolatry and the presence of the Lord in the Sanctuary. The priestly traditions are strongly concerned with the presence of God in the community of Israel. This concern is articulated in the command: "Make them build me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them" (Ex 25: 8). And when the Tent of Meeting was completed, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex 40: 35). Klawans (2005: 70) suggests that it is of importance to recognise that the concern with attracting and maintaining the divine presence, expressed in the notion of *'imitatio Dei'*, developed into an organising principle. The ideal is to have the sanctuary on earth as it is in heaven. This means that there is no place for impurity or sinners.

> *42 For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the Lord. There I will meet you and speak to you;*
> *43 there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory.*
>
> (Exod 29: 42-43.)

The presence of God, the *'Shekinah'*, should fill the temple. In this atmosphere were the daily sacrifices for purification brought forth. Impurity was cleansed. But there were no sacrifices that undid the harm of grave transactions. So when people sinned defiantly, the force of impurity was abhorrent to God and his blessing presence departed, not only from his house, but also from the land.

2.3.7 The Defiled Land

> *33 Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.*
> *34 Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the Lord, dwell among the Israelites.*
>
> (Num 35: 33-34.)

Kaufmann (1972: 159) points out that safe and peaceful living in the land is an important concern in the Torah, although, when Torah speaks of the causes of national punishment and exile, general morality is not mentioned. The typical sin leading to exile

is idolatry. Although, he observes that in chapters 18-20 of Leviticus, a work in which many socio-moral injunctions are found, it is said explicitly that exile is the result of "the sins of impurity". Deuteronomy, however, threatens with exile only for idolatry. In the prophetic books the demand for morality was obvious: "Extortion and violence cannot be atoned for by prayer and sacrifice, for the cry of the oppressed ascends to God and drowns out the prayers of the oppressor" (Kaufmann, 1972: 160). Moral purity becomes a distinct premise not only for individual piety, but also for national safety. The Book of Jubilees has the same understanding of moral impurity as Ezra and Nehemiah. There are strong warnings against the influence of the sins of the gentiles. Klawans presents passages which show clearly that moral impurity was believed to defile the sanctuary as well as the land. After having dealt with idolatry, worship of demons, sexual indecency, mixed marriages, it concludes as follows: "If one does this and shuts his eye to those who do impure things and who defile the Lord's sanctuary and to those who defile his holy name, then the entire nation will be condemned together, because of all this impurity and this contamination." (Jub 30:15 in Klawans, 2000: 47)

The main concern of the Temple Scroll is ritual purity. However the notion of the defiling force of moral impurity is clearly detectable, seemingly in agreement with the Hebrew Bible. One difference it noticed by Klawans: bribery is a sin which is added to the list of defiling sins: "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgement. And they shall not show partiality in justice, and shall not take a bribe...the bribe perverts justice....and defiles the house because of the sin of iniquity" (QT, LI: 11-15, in Klawans, 2000: 49). The Damascus Document contains two important new views. First, the category of sexual impurity is expanded to include "taking two wives in their life", which may mean either bigamy or remarriage after divorce. It is probably not referring to a second marriage after the death of the first wife, since it says "in their life". Second, the author blames sins, such as unchasteness, arrogance and defilement of the sanctuary, on demonic seduction: Belial had been running unbridled amidst Israel and had fooled inhabitants of the land into confusing sin with righteousness (CD IV: 12-19).

The Biblical and early Second Temple Period texts all focus on the purity of the Temple as a condition for valid purification rituals. If defilement had occurred from cultic impurity or sin in the priesthood or the people, repentance and purification were strongly stressed. The sectarians, however, had given up on the Temple. They believed it was defiled to such a degree that the sacrifices preformed there were invalid and the presence of God had vanished. The situation for the inhabitants of Israel was dramatic, and it seemed obvious that the end was near. So, in this situation, the sectarians developed what Collins calls "Realised Eschatology" (Collins, 1998:152). The temple had once been the place of purity, where God's glory had rested and blessed the people with prosperity and security. The new temple was believed to be the community taking great pains to maintain priestly purity by demanding this standard from all its members. The power of their purity was thought to be strong enough to atone for the land and thereby, eventually bring back the blessing of God. This was not done quickly. The land was strongly defiled, but in due time God would provide victory in the war against the sons of the darkness and a new time would come. The community not only expected to have a purifying and atoning role to play in that respect, but also they would take possession of the new land of Israel. The community expected that at the '*echaton*'.

> *God will then purify every deed of man with his truth; He will refine for himself the human frame by rooting out all spirits of falsehood by the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deed with the spirit of holiness; Like purifying waters he will shed upon him the spirit of truth to cleanse him of all abominations and falsehood.*
>
> (1.QS 4: 20-1, in Newman xx 48).

The sectarians believed that sin produced impurity that was contagious. For this reason, the members of the community would not eat together with the outsiders (1QS V: 13-14, in Klawans, 2000: 79). The sins are not limited to the biblically distinguished sins of sexual sins, bloodshed and idolatry. Purity from sin required both repentance and purification. This is the phenomenon Milgrom (1989, in Klawans, 2000: 51) calls 'homogenisation', referring to the practice of the sectarians, which indicated that they differentiated neither between moral and ritual impurity, nor between purification and atonement. This shows four things.

- First, purification had become spiritualised. Spirit, not waters or burned sacrifices, should purify the 'the new human frame'.

- Second, it is evident that moral misbehaviour needed to be cleansed, for it was contagious by contact.
- Third, all sins had defiling power.
- Fourth, all kinds of impurity had defiling power affecting the holiness of the community and causing the presence of God to vanish.

The consequence was that if purification and atonement did not take place, the war against the forces of darkness could not be won.

2.3.8 Summary

Moral impurity is, according to the Biblical texts, different from ritual impurity. Moral impurity is not contagious by contact and it cannot be removed by any purification offering. Leviticus ordains no purification ritual that cleanses such guilt. However, moral impurity comes into being when grave sins are committed and it defiles first the sinner, then the sanctuary, and finally the land. It must be coped with by atonement or punishment and ultimately exile. The most striking signifier is probably that moral impurity undoes what the sacrifices normally achieve. While the purification rituals purified the impure, the force of moral impurity affects the sanctuary, not by contact, but by the fact that sin has taken place even from a distance (Klawans, 2000: 26-31). Though God allows Satan to tempt and seduce, each individual is responsible for his/her own morality. At Qumran, *Belial* is seen as being able to overpower people and sins are therefore the result of demonic dominion. This could be atoned for by the pure and holy community, who saw themselves as the Temple providing God's presence in the land.

2.4 IMPURITY IN DIETS

2.4.1 Introduction

The Leviticus demand for pure diets is the background for controversies between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, according to the Gospels. The author of Acts gives an account of Peter's reaction when he, in a vision, was presented with impure species. He rejects the food, knowing that he would nullify parts of the Law of Moses if he ate it. The historicity of the narrative in Mathew 15 and Mark 7 will be discussed in chapter 4. In this chapter we shall aim to show the background for purity in diets.

Evidence for the interpretation of purity before 70 AD derives from writings that originated in very different milieus: in the Apocrypha, Pseudigraphia, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Pharisees' concern with food purity is reported in sources like Josephus, the New Testament authors and the later Rabbis (Neusner, 1973: 32). Philo has his own figurative interpretations. Before presenting modern anthropological explanations, an overview of the traditional interpretations of impurity in animals and food will be provided. Finally, we shall examine if and how these shed light on what 'purity and impurity' meant in some Second Temple Period texts concerning dietary rules and purity.

2.4.2 **Traditional Theories**

Houston (1993: 68-124) compiled a summary of the different attempts made to explain the rationale behind categorising animals as pure and impure. The traditional theories are presented as hygienic, aesthetic, moral-symbolic, or cultic. These theories are all attempts to answer the different authors who pondered the dietary rules of the Hebrew Bible. Some of these theories will be presented in order to illuminate how dietary rules were conceived in Palestinian Judaism and how the terminology of 'purity and impurity' was employed.

The hygienic argument advanced by Maimonides was:

> *The food which is forbidden by the Law is unwholesome. There is nothing among the forbidden kinds of food whose injurious character is doubted, except pork and fat. But also in these cases the doubt is not justified. For pork contains more moisture than necessary (for human food), and too much of superfluous matter... The fat of the intestines makes us full, interrupts our digestion, and produces cold and thick blood.*
>
> (Guide 3.48, p 370 in Houston, 1993: 69.)

He employs the same logic when he is exegeting Leviticus, maintaining that fish are creatures of cold fluid, with fins and scale, always dwelling in the lower turbid waters, which make them easily cause death. The blood of birds of prey is dark and thick, giving rise to the bitter fluid in the body, which is almost black and tends to cause heart-problems. Unfit animals will harm the procreative organs and the seed will not beget at all, or at least not in the best way (Lev 11; Houston, 1993: 69, 136, 141). It is not impossible that this Aristotelian theory of humours played a role for some educated Jews, especially in Diaspora culture, but we do not know that it did. Neither have we

found this argument in the texts of Palestinian Judaism. However, Maimonides offers an additional explanation based on the aesthetic concern. Although this was based on cultural subjectivity, and as such not a universally functioning theory, it seems probable in his context. Based upon the principle that, "The Lord enjoys the removal of the sight of loathsome objects", Maimonides found the pig to be just such a disgusting animal, polluting its environment. If it were allowed to eat swine's flesh, the neighbourhoods in the cities would look as bad as the French countryside! (Guide 3.48: 370 in Houston, 1993: 71.)

The theories that have gained much attention are the Moral-Symbolic theories. These can be traced back not only to the medieval theologians, but also to the ancient ones. Origen found it only natural that the hyena was considered impure, due to the disgusting way they mated. A modern scholar like Goodman (1986, in Houston, 1993: 74) argues that the general intentions of the dietary rules were to teach people to "promote a specific kind of human character through establishment of a certain tone or quality in human behaviour and relations". He finds support in Maimonides, who saw the limitations of the dietary rules as useful to "... restrain the growth of desire, the indulgence in seeking that which is pleasant, and the disposition to consider the appetite for eating and drinking as the end of (human's existence)" (Guide 3.35 :330, in Houston, 1993: 75).

Milgrom develops this argument further by stressing the importance of disciplining one's appetite as a means of preventing human beings from becoming dehumanised by the violence involved in the of killing of animals. *Contra* this argument, Wright (1991) points out that the mere restriction of species, without any restriction of quantity eaten, does not clearly teach restraint and that the designation of the forbidden species as 'unclean', 'abhorrent' and 'abominable' is not the most obvious way to teach reverence for life (Houston, 1993: 77). Furthermore, though both medieval and modern readers have found this explanation to be satisfactory, it has not been documented that this was a motivating factor in Israel during the first century.

Cultic theories have been presented by, among others, Noth (1962), who argues that the impure animals were important in pagan cults. This was refuted by Kornfeld (1965), who showed that the opposite was the case: usually, pure animals were used in Canaanite cults as well as in Jewish sacrifices. His own cultic argument was that impure

species were often associated with the sphere of death. In developing this idea, he had to adopt a rather broad definition of 'realm of death' and Houston has argued that, in so doing, he has created a concept into which any species whatever, if necessary, can be stuffed (Houston, 1993: 74).

Neusner (1973) sees the phenomenon of 'purity and impurity' as a symbolic system in terms of ethics, which he calls 'a system of ideas'. He argues against two other different views; Smith and Kaufman, who focus on Israelite monotheism, while Levine (1974) sees impurity generally as the working of destructive and demonic forces. Neusner agrees with Levine, who in this case sees impurity in animals as a reflection of the requirements of the temple sacrifices. This concern is developed further by Houston (1993) who suggests an alternative cultic theory. He believes that the notion of pure animals was developed at the sanctuaries and played a role as perfect and whole in every respect.

2.4.3 **Comparative Theories**

Modern anthropologists have offered different kinds of theories. They have tended to explain cultural phenomenon as symbolic systems. Only two will be mentioned here: Harris (1979) promoting what he calls 'Cultural materialism'; and, of course, the social anthropologist Douglas, who is an institution in herself in this field of scholarship.

Harries does not deny being influenced by Marx, although he does modify the impact from Marxist epistemology by employing Hume's empiricism. The practical meaning of this in our context is that he refutes what he sees as ideological symbolism. He tries to interpret the dietary rules of Leviticus as an outcome of Israel's ecological and demographical conditions. Even if there was an actual cohesion between available meat and pure animals, it was not what motivates a whole nation's eating habits necessarily. Often the case is the opposite: what is rare is luxurious. The reason why we do not eat cats and dogs in western culture is not due to lack of these animals.

Douglas develops the old symbolic theories to meet modern scholarly demands (Milgrom, 1991: 719) and to become a very useful tool for our inquiry. Her point of departure is to address the biblical texts. Instead of speculating over past explanations for dividing creatures into 'pure and impure', she insists (1997) that the text itself

should be the interpreter of that. She turned to the Torah, the text that in first century Israel was considered sacred in the capacity of divine revelation. In this context, purity rules were observed based primarily on the fact that this was required by God. Despite some criticism of Douglas (Houston, 1993; and Milgrom, 1991: 666), her major principles have not been affected and still prove valid. In our context, the focus will be on the notion that the system of pure and impure animals was a micro-cosmos of the world, according to the Levitical view (Grabbe, 2000). Douglas presents two important points concerning impurity in land-animals: the blessing of the covenant; and the danger of the hybrid.

2.4.4 **Diets in First Century Judaism**

We have noticed that Peter links his abstinence from impure animals with habits. He had never eaten such food. We have no reason to think that Peter, son of John, came from a priestly family. His habits suggest that ordinary Jews observed the dietary rules of Leviticus primarily because God had said so. This is remarkable, since the literature of this period does not focus much on impure animals. With the exception of the Book of Jubilees, purity as such is of no major concern in the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic writings (Neusner, 1973: 33), and impure animals are hardly mentioned at all. This explains why Houston, in his analyses of impurity in animals, makes no reference to these writings, except for brief reference to an old story about how Elieazar preferred to die rather than eat pork (2 Macc 6: 18-31, in Houston, 1993: 14).

The milieus that were very much focused on impurity were the '*yahad*' and the '*havurah*' (Neusner, 1973: 33). '*Yahad*' was the Qumran community founded by Temple priests, who saw themselves as continuators of the true priestly line. They saw the Temple as defiled and, as such, incapable of serving the cultic and spiritual needs of the people. The presence of God had left Jerusalem and had come to the Dead Sea (Neusner, 1973: 50). The community focused on purity and followed purity rules more strictly than Leviticus demands and far beyond the interpretation of the later Rabbis. But the literature created and valued by the *Yahad* has very little to say about impurity in animals. The author of the book of Judith says that Judith only ate her own food, indicating that the gentile's food was impure (Neusner, 1973: 36). Milgrom reports two more incidents: *Yahad* considered all of a dead animal as impure, not just the flesh (11QT 51:4-5 in Milgrom, 1991: 668). And they forbade the bringing of dogs into

Jerusalem, "Lest they eat the bone of the sacrifices and the flesh attached to them" (MMT B 58-62, in Milgrom, 1991: 653). Josephus takes it for granted that purity laws governed the Temple, but he did not explain why certain species were abominable to the Lord.

Havuarah was the commune of the Pharisees (Neusner, 1973: 64). Evidence of this group is found mainly in later rabbinic Judaism. The material attributed by later Rabbis to the pre-70 Pharisees is thematically congruent to the material in the New Testament. Neusner (1973: 65) takes these writings to be accurate in substance, if not necessarily in detail. One of the main traits of the *Havuarah* was their concern with food. Every meal was to be eaten as a rite, though it all took place outside the Temple. The meals were eaten in private homes, but the family members were to be in a state of priestly purity as if they were Temple priests. Remarkably, we have not found any rationale for why some species were considered impure.

The lack of a rationale for impurity in animals leads us to believe that there was no specific understanding of the concept of impurity that related to animals, as different from the general understanding of the phenomenon. This accords with the opinion of Douglas: "Appeals to medical or aesthetic principles are not the way to interpret the enigmatic law of Leviticus: The only safe path is to trace the contrasts and parallels the book itself develops. The impurity of an animal kind is part of the technical meaning of ritual impurity" (Douglas, 2000b: 145).

For this reason, it may be suggested that the dietary law was given as a pedagogical tool to teach the Israelites about purity and impurity. Douglas also points out that the dietary rules were made for the people of Israel; what is designed as impure for them was not impure for the whole of humanity. It is a typical feature in Jewish religion to maintain a certain practice in order to teach the people. For example: the slaughter of the Easter lamb was done in order to remember the goodness of the Lord.

> *In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*
>
> (Ex 13: 14, Deut 6: 20-25.)

Likewise the Israelites were commanded to have tassels in their garments in order to remember the Law.

> *Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 38 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.*
>
> (Num 15: 38-38, Deut 22: 12).

The practice was a constant reminder. It was read in food and clothes. Remember daily, when your own needs for food and clothes are met, there is purity and impurity.

With this we are back to our starting-point: What should the notion of purity and impurity help the people to remember? In order to establish this, we should focus on the reason given in the two texts, where two topics emerge: identity as a nation chosen by God; and the Character of God.

> *Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.*
>
> (Deut 14: 21.)
>
> *I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. 45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.*
>
> (Lev 11: 44- 45.)

Douglas argues that purity symbolises monotheism. She does this to the extent that she interprets it as more: actually, monism. Her theory is that the destiny of the binary birds and the binary goats is a matter of chance. She argues that there is no God who chooses. 'Pure and impure' are both part of the totality that is God (Douglas, 2000: 247-251).

It has already been argued that the Israelite religion was monotheistic with dualistic elements. And if impurity in animals is interpreted as part of a symbolic system, our problem is to define what impurity was. Douglas points out that impurity in Leviticus did not have a meaning by itself; its meaning must be found in the general structure of cosmos (Douglas, 2000a: 33-45). So, what in cosmos should impurity represent? What was dangerous? According to Genesis, God had promised to protect both the land and its inhabitants, including the animals (Gen 9: 12, 15, 17). This follows from the blessing pronounced in the creation story, that all creatures should be fertile and multiply (Gen 1: 22). The laws of Moses are the explicit assertion of God's lordship of

the people of Israel, as well as of their livestock. The domestic animals were even included in the Sabbath observance (Ex 20: 8). The pure animals were those that came under the terms of the covenant of their masters.

2.4.5 **The Blood Taboo**

Blood carries a specific meaning in Judaism. There is no room for doubting its spiritual symbolism, since the text says that God himself explained it to Moses. It was strictly forbidden to digest blood because that would be to digest '*nefes*', life. Israelites were to slaughter the animals in the tent of the meetings, where the blood was taken proper care of; even foreigners should drain the blood and bury it. Anyone who ate the blood, or failed to drain the blood, should be subject to '*karet*', which meant death before the age of 60 (Neusner, 2002: 151) by the hand of God, who knew that blood had been eaten (Lev 17: 12-14). The fact that the prohibition included foreigners is noteworthy and shows the extraordinary importance of this command. To kill the animal as painlessly as possible is a sympathetic trait in Judaism, but that does not explain the death penalty for failing to drain and bury the blood.

The etymology of the concept 'soul' is a development from 'throat' and 'appetite' (Milgrom 2000: 1471). We suggest that the word once denoted the two pipes: oesophagus for food and the trachea for air. After this concrete meaning had faded, the term still denoted a dual meaning, 'breath of life' and 'person', implying that the specific character of the living person has individual urgings, values, intents etc. '*Nefesh*' then means not only vegetative life, but a living individual, men and animals. And this life, which invigorates each individual personality, was God's own breath (Gen 2: 7) and should not be digested.

> *Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood - I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people.*
>
> (Lev 17: 19.)

Two main reasons were cited by medieval commentators: first, to prevent worship of other gods; second, the life in the blood belonged to God. Milgrom (2000: 1471) observes that this rationale is only partly correct. The reason God gave to Moses was:

> *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*
>
> (Lev 17: 11.)

The notion that the breath of life was God's own breath is found in the creation narrative. This meant that God's breath was the source of life, found in humans (Gen 2: 7) and animals (Gen 1: 30). The very same notion is found in the myth of the flood, where it says that God made a covenant with all the creatures that had the breath of life in them (Gen 9: 10). So when people are allowed to kill animals for food, they actually murder a creature with God's life in its veins.

There has been a long intellectual history, which Klawans calls evolutionistic, arguing that sacrifices stem from very early paganism, before the practice was adopted into the Jewish religious system as symbolism. Klawans refutes this, claiming that the practice of sacrifice, as well as the notion of purity, is part of the same interpretation of reality that has been symbolically expressed in a meaningful way from a very early time.

2.4.6 Summary

There appears to be a meaningful rationale behind the dietary rules. This is based upon the pedagogical effect of symbolic acts related to the body and accords with other commandments such as the Easter meal, curly hair, tassels in the garments: all working as a daily reminder of the most central elements of the Jewish faith. The most obvious symbolism of the dietary law was to avoid every species which did not qualify completely within its kind. Hybrids were not allowed. This practice, it is suggested, encapsulated a deeper meaning, as a reminder to keep absolute boundaries between God and idols, as well as sin and righteousness. The concept 'impure' is in this case used in its most practical and chemical sense: 'impure' is what is mixed.

2.5 IMPURITY AND DUALISM

2.5.1 Introduction

The concept '*akathartou pnevma*', so often used in the Gospels, is found only once in the Septuagint: "On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the Lord Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land" (Zec 13: 2). Does this indicate the notion of a threatening spiritual power in opposition to God? Did Zechariah imagine a future battle where the idols and spirits of impurity would form a threat to *YHWH*?

Levine (1974) argues that impurity, as such, represented demonic forces. Kaufmann's thesis (1972: 64) is, however, that the 'domain of impurity' is a state of being, or a situation, and demons do "not ever play a role of destructive powers". Milgrom (1991: 766) also claims that, "Israel's monotheism had exorcised the demons". Halpern (1987: 79) points out that the discussion regarding impure spirits in relation to monotheism should start with defining monotheism. He shows that the western, modern concept of 'God' carries different connotations from how 'god' was understood in ancient, polytheistic societies after the word has "undergone peculiar semantic restrictions". Consciously or unconsciously, western readers will be likely to employ the definition given by Kaufmann (1972: 29-30), who sought the mark of monotheism in the idea of a god who is the source of all being, not subject to a cosmic order, and not emergent from a pre-existent realm; a god free of the limitations of magic and mythology. Other cosmologies may include a range of divine entities less powerful than the high-god, but still active. When Kaufmann argues for his so-called 'radical monotheism', it is not because it is 'un-monotheistic' to have a benign creator opposed by demonic evil. He argues from the standpoint of the lack of textual evidence, claiming that even the serpent was one of the creatures of the field, not portrayed as an evil enemy, but as "cunning" (Kaufmann, 1972: 69). It may be argued, however, that Scripture mentions a variety of different spiritual beings, all actively working against God's interests. In the following, textual evidence will be analysed in order to find out whether Milgrom's claim is supported: that the idea of monotheism, as such, by necessity "exorcises demons".

Other scholars have observed that it is rather meaningless to work with strict borders between magic and religion. Lesses (1998) shows how magic is an integral part of early Jewish mysticism. It is based on a world view that was ordered as a hierarchy: the God on the top, angels and demons between heavens and earth, and the underworld from which the dark forces acted. The *Hekhalot* literature is traced back to the first century, though it had its prime time from 4th through 8th century (Lesses, 1998: 25). It describes how to gain power through adjurations and rituals, instructions for ascents to heaven, the liturgy of the angels and descriptions of God and the divine world. It also teaches about adjurations for healing and exorcism. Sefer ha-Razim complains that the art of bringing 'spirits of impurity' down was about to be forgotten (Sefer ha-Razin 1: 176-93, in Lesses, 1998: 364). Lowy (1958: 19-38) observes that fasting, linked with procedures of purification, was a very strong means of increasing magical power, procuring visions

and dreams, as well as achieving a successful exorcism. Such was the *Sitz im Leben*, in which the Bible was read and interpreted. In the following, some of the basic Biblical concepts associated with evil and impurity during the first century are examined in order to see how the notion of ontological dualism was dealt with.

2.5.2 The Serpent

Kaufman (1972:65) points out that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was only a "beast of the field": not the sea serpent, or the dragon, or *Rahab;* and therefore, not an anti-god. Kaufman does not, however, discuss the meaning of metaphor, which we are dealing with in the Genesis narrative. It was very common for biblical writers to communicate theological messages by images in a metaphoric language. Nielsen (1989: 28) studied the use of metaphor in the Old Testament and points to its capacity to express fundamental, theological statements. The narrative of The Fall makes it reasonable to interpret the metaphor of 'serpent' as representative of death-bringing evil and deceit. The power of death, however, was not a property of the serpent, but it was in God's hand. It may be argued that the serpent of Eden did function as an anti-god, according a less comprehensive definition of god than that of Kaufmann's. The Genesis narratives, read as the context of the concept of good and evil, creation and destruction, imply a specific anthropology. Adam was created from dust, men's nature, '*sarx*', was weak, but yet endorsed with the qualities of reason, empathy, and willpower. The serpent did all the evil he could do, which was conceiving and tempting, knowing that eventual success would lead to death and therefore, put an end to God's project. But all he could do was to persuade men to follow his advice. The same limitations are found in *YHWH*'s own relationship with mankind; Adam and Eve were created with a will of their own, allowing them to choose. The serpent's weapon was deception, tempting with the ability to know good and evil, but without mentioning the cost of this knowledge: moral responsibility. God's way was to inform Adam and Eve about the law of the Garden of Eden as well as the consequences of breaking the law. Neither God nor the serpent forced the humans to do anything. The Biblical God is not portrayed as the omniscient, all-powerful god who rules over each individual's destiny, simply because he has chosen not to. The anti-god in Eden was allowed to be there and to put Adam and Eve to the test.

When the author of Genesis 3 chose to illustrate deception through the metaphor of a serpent, it should be noticed that he chose an animal that Leviticus categorises as impure. The serpent is the metaphor for "the most cunning animal", so the connection between deception and impurity was thereby established. And, as if that were not enough, the Lord even curses the serpent and declares enmity between him and humans. This means that we are dealing with a dualism which implies the existence of a force able to hurt, kill (Gen 4: 8) and, in effect, even destroy humanity. The forces of evil have a defiling power. This dualism builds symbolically upon the food regulations of Leviticus: "Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground" (Lev 11: 43-44).

The next time we read about serpents is in the context of Egyptian sorcerers and magicians. All the staffs became snakes, but Aaron's snake swallowed up the others' snakes (Ex 7: 9-12). Again we see that snakes are symbols for destructive power. But this time it is clear that *YHWH's* power to destroy his enemies is by far the most powerful. We are not dealing with a dualism that indicates that God only gives life and the enemy only brings death. It is not an unqualified life-death dualism, but rather a dualism between good and evil. God has the power to destroy evil. Worth noticing is: when God brings death it is symbolised by an impure animal: the snake.

The third time we read about a snake is during the long walk in the desert. The people were bitten by snakes and made very sick. The destructive potential of the snakes was being experienced. Then the Lord told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. "Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived" (Num 21:8-9). Again, it is being demonstrated that God had the power to terminate the effect of the snake's poison. The serpent was a defeated enemy, symbolised by the healing being experienced when people looked at the feared enemy hanging defeated on the pole.

Deception is presented as a fatal danger to human beings. It is symbolised by the impure animal, the serpent. The serpent is given human faculties like language, intelligence, the ability to pursue an intention, responsibility and moral consciousness. The serpent represents a spiritual personality. We can agree with Kaufman that he is not resented

strongly enough to be an anti-god; but from the human perspective, he is perceived as an evil force with great power due to his intelligence and cunning ability. His ambition was to destroy God's project with this earth and the human race. As such, he was seen as a part in the dualistic struggle; for if God is siding with humanity, then the serpent is indirectly his enemy as well.

2.5.3 Satan

Kaufmann argues that Satan never was seen as "the symbol of a cosmic evil principle, but by virtue of his biblical role as seducer and tempter" (Kaufmann, 1972:65). Actually, there is no example of Satan tempting anyone. Satan is mentioned by name only three times in the Hebrew Bible. The first incident seems to be as a result of theological interpretation. The authors of Israel's historical books report that David decided to take a census of Israel. According to 2 Samuel 24: 1, the anger of the Lord against Israel was so strong that he incited David to take a census, while according to 1 Chronicles 21: 1 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census. Satan is understood as a spiritual individual, able to influence the thinking and desires of humans. It is noteworthy that Satan and *YHWH* were using the very same method: "Inciting David to take a census". With regard to the question of dualism, Satan was not portrayed as God's enemy, but rather Israel's enemy. On the other hand, what he did was no different from what *YHWH* himself did in anger. So the two stories can be read as God working through Satan, being a member of the Divine court. Monotheism is not the least threatened. Satan being an angel co-working with *YHWH* is the picture we also find in the case of Job. The sons of God presented themselves before *YHWH* and Satan was amongst them (Job 1:6). He accused Job of being faithful to *YHWH* only because of the Lord's blessings, so he suggested that it was time to test Job's devotion and he was allowed to do that. Satan could do nothing without God's consent. The third time Satan is mentioned by name is in a vision by Zechariah (Zech 3: 1-2). Joshua, the high priest, was standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan was present to accuse him. However, Satan's accusations were unfair and, though he was rebuked for that, he was not in any way treated as an enemy of God, or as an anti-god.

The idea of Satan developed from a being under God's control, entitled the adversary, '*hassatan*' in the Hebrew Bible, to the cosmic opponent of God we find in the New Testament, named Satan in Hebrew, and the Devil, '*diaboles*' in Greek (Wray and Mobley, 2005: 97). This change can be detected in the intertestamental literature of the Second Temple period. The main characteristic is that the Satan figure in these texts acts independently (Wray and Mobley, 2005: 112), often commanding a loyal legion of demonic cohorts known as impure spirits. In the literature of Biblical Judaism, Satan represents neither a dualistic force of evil, nor is he an impure spirit. Satan's cultic purity can be taken for given, since he was able to present himself before the Holy one. So, biblical dualism is not found in the personage of Satan, but rather in the symbolism of the serpent and the impurity which characterised him.

2.5.4 Impurity and Idolatry

The study of the development of Jewish monotheism presents two different schools of thought. One, called 'The Mosaic revolution school' - claiming that there was a distinct monotheistic faith accepted from the time of Moses - was presented by Kaufmann. The other - claiming that Israel produced monotheism no later than the time of Deutero-Isaiah (ca. 540-520 B.C.E.) - was advocated by scholars such as Robinson and Widengren (Halpern, 1987: 79-80). To make images of gods was forbidden. Was it because idols were useless ideas of non-existent gods, or because idol-worship attracted a different, even demonic power? The defiling force of idolatrous sin is articulated in the Holiness Code (Ex 20: 3-5). The worship of images was forbidden regardless of whether the object was in heaven, on or under the earth. *YHWH* does not present himself to Moses as the only God, but as the jealous God. Halpern draws attention to the concept of monolatry. Though there may exist other supernatural beings, *YHWH* was the only one deserving to be worshipped and sacrifices were not to be given to any other deity, or angels, or demons.

However, no idol is denoted as impure. Moses did not attract impurity through physical contact when breaking the golden calf; nor did Josiah, while getting rid of "idols and other detestable things". The mark of ritual impurity is contagion by contact. Idols, however, are not denoted as impure in themselves. There is no cultic impurity, as in demonic power or energy, which can contaminate by physical contact. Idolatry was a voluntarily committed sin, which produced moral impurity. Moral impurity did,

however, not only contaminate the sinner but also the sanctuary and the land. This contamination did not occur by contact but rather from a distance (Klawans, 2000:27). "Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favour; I will not look on you with pity or spare you" (Ezek 5:11). Worse was, of course, sacrificing children to Molech (Lev 20:2-5). Molech is probably the Akkadian *Malku*, known as a god or a demon of the underworld (Milgrom, 2000: 1770-71). Milgrom (2000: 1728) states: "The juxtaposition of Molech, the god of the underworld, with necromancy demonstrates that they show the common characteristic of being forms of chthonic worship". The location of Molech worship in *ge'hinnom* gave rise to the tradition that hell is called *Gehenna*, for which *Malik* is an agent (Milgrom, 2000: 1771).

Even in a grave case like this, cultic impurity is not produced. We see again that ritual impurity does not denote 'bad'. Moral impurity, however, does. When grave sins were committed, as murder combined with profaning the name of the Lord, it should be punished by stoning to death. It says explicitly that this action defiles the sanctuary. Sin defiles morally but idols do not defile ritually. Idol-worshippers defile the Temple regardless of their entering it or not.

2.5.5 **Impurity and Occultism**

> *"Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God (Lev 19:31).*
>
> *"I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people."*
> (Lev 20: 6.)

The question is: What was the relationship between impurity contracted from idolatry and occultism? When a person voluntarily seeks an impure spirit, knowing that the bodies of all dead people were ritually impure, did the individual who sought dead spirits become both ritually and morally impure? It can be argued that the pagan gods, if they had existence at all, were void of power - except as a concept in some people's minds - and therefore, did not even have the power to defile. But the existence and work of spirits are never denied, or their ability to function at some level. The author of

Leviticus seems to say two things: mediums and spiritists defile the cultic (19: 31) and those who prostitute themselves by seeking a medium defile themselves morally.

What happened to Saul after he demanded of the woman in Endor to bring up Samuel for him (1 Sam 28:7)? The author seems to have taken it for granted that the spiritist would succeed in bringing the spirit of Samuel back and that Samuel would actually speak to Saul. There is, however, no reason to think that Samuel's spirit was considered ritually impure and the text says nothing about Saul's impurity or need of purification. He had, according to Leviticus 20: 6 committed a serious sin. However, the term used in Leviticus 19: 31 is '*tame*', which can mean both ritual and moral defilement. If Saul became ritually defiled it was not contracted from Samuel, but from the medium. The medium seems to have had a defiling power. Any occult practice was defiling. By occultism we understand any interaction with spiritual powers other than *YHWH* and his angels. It includes ghosts, which are the spirits of dead people, as well as demonic spirits and fallen angels, such as Satan himself. Milgrom (2000: 1772) concludes his comments on Leviticus 20: 1-6 by stating that, "the battle against necromancy formed a distinct phase in the monotheistic revolution, a battle - to judge by the biblical record - that was never won". Consulting the dead was categorised as idolatry, even by the rabbis. "If you contaminate yourself by them, take note of what you are exchanging, what (i.e. the Lord) for that (i.e. the dead)" (*Sipra Qedoshim* 7:11, in Milgrom, 2000: 1702).

There seems to be scholarly consensus that monotheism developed gradually in Israel, culminating in the Second Temple period. Also, there seems to be consensus that folk religion involved a variety of occult practices, such as astrology and magic. At the same time, there was a renewed focus on the demonic forces, especially in the sectarian milieus. We have argued that defilement from demonic attacks, as well as occult activity, indicates a dualistic element in Judaism as late as in the first century and expressed in the terminology of purity/impurity. In order to substantiate this view, an analysis will be undertaken of the development of monotheism, as well as of demonology, magic and angelology.

2.5.6 **Monotheism or Dualism**

By dualism we mean a cosmology where there are two powers, each the enemy of the other. It pre-supposes the existence of a demonic realm from which demons interfere with humans, trying to obstruct the will of God. Dualism, as we use the term, does not mean that both parties are equally powerful, but some power must be exercised by both parties. *YHWH* as the Holy one is obviously the God of the Jewish cosmology, but did he have a powerful spiritual enemy who managed to harm his work? The concept 'spirit of impurity' is found in Zechariah 13: 2: "On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the Lord Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land." Does this indicate a threatening spiritual power in opposition to *YHWH*? Did Zechariah imagine a future battle, where the idols and spirits of impurity would form a threat to *YHWH*? Levine (1974) argues that impurity, as such, represented demonic forces. Kaufmann's thesis (1972: 64) is, however, that the 'domain of impurity' is a state of being, or a situation, and that demons do "not ever play a role of destructive powers". Milgrom (1991: 766) also claims that, "Israel's monotheism had exorcised the demons". The concept of monotheism in first century Judaism, particularly with regard to the concept of impurity, requires further examination. We shall argue that we have observed a notion of impurity that represented an antagonistic or demonic power in Second Temple Judaism.

With the exception of the Book of Jubilees, purity is of no major concern in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Neusner, 1973: 33). However, on the few occasions where purity/impurity is discussed, the concept has a specific meaning: moral impurity. 1 Maccabees frequently alludes to the pollution of the Temple. The primary source of impurity was idolatry. Neusner (1973: 34) sees impurity as:

> *Uncleanness is concrete and this-worldly, not a metaphor for some higher meaning. While the interpretation of impurity as caused by idolatry is commonplace, its importance cannot be overstated. The purification of the Temple was a major concern of the Maccabees; its pollution was seen as a horror.*

II Macabees is likewise focused upon the pollution of the Temple, expressing disgust with pagans who had sexual intercourse in the Temple. The Psalms of Solomon 2:3 refer to "utterly polluting the holy things of the Lord, profaned with iniquities the offerings of God" (in Neusner, 1973: 35). Impurity is caused by adultery and idolatry. The Assumption of Moses refers to the pollution of idolatry. It also introduces a new

source of impurity: impure thinking, the impurity of the mind (5: 3, in Neusner, 1973: 35), an idea that is developed later in the Gospels as pure/impure in heart (Matt 5:8, 15:18). In the Letter of Jeremiah, we find the concept of ritual impurity in connection with sacrifices to idols being polluted by the touch of women in menstruation or in childbirth. Josephus argues that moral impurity comes from sin but that ritual impurity after sexual relations in marriage comes from the father's suffering after having given away "a partition of the soul" (Against Apion 2: 203).

We will argue that Neusner's interpretation of impurity as "concrete and this-worldly" is not supported by the texts to which he refers. Agreement may be given that it was not merely a metaphor, but if it was 'this-worldly' material it should have been possible to identify it. The impurity of the Temple, for whatever reason it had occurred, was something specific, spiritual, and therefore 'other-worldly'. For example; impurity of the mind came from sin and sin was, as argued earlier, a spiritually defiling force. Death was the consequence of sin, so that whenever life was at stake the force of death was present. Even as just a potential threat, it remained a spiritually defiling force capable of defiling the sanctuary. This interpretation is developed strongly in the literature of the Dead Sea community. In the following, we shall see how the concept of impurity was related to the dualistic understanding of the 'Two Spirits' in Qumran sources.

2.5.7 Cosmology and Impure Spirits

At Qumran, the sectarians based their interpretation of evil, not so much on the narrative of The Fall (Gen 3), but rather on the myth of the giants (Gen. 6), a narrative elaborated upon in 1 Enoch, the Book of the Watchers. Evil originated in a rebellion in heaven, as Hanson (1977: 195-223) shows. The created world was good, but an angelic figure named *Asael* (later identified as the demon Azael in Lev. 16 at Qumran in 4Q180) decided to rebel against God. Sons of God visited the earth and had intercourse with human women, which resulted in the birth of giants. These unions are described as sinful in the Book of the Watchers. The spirits of these giants became the evil spirits on earth (1 Enoch 15: 8-10, in Collins 1998: 31). In the Book of Jubilees, however, sin did originate on earth. The angels came down in order to guide humans in moral living, but fell into sin when they became attracted to human women. In this account, too, the spirits of the giants became evil spirits, "the unclean demons began to lead the sons of Noah astray and to mislead them and destroy them" (Jub 10:1, in Collins, 1998: 31).

We see, in this literature, that demons are identified as impure spirits and evil spirits. The stigma of impurity may have had a double cause: the sin of illicit sexual unions when transgressing divinely appointed boundaries between the species and their violence and destruction. The demons operated by divine permission. They were allowed to influence humans, but were still not responsible for human sin, since humans could resist them. They functioned as an inclination to evil, an evil force to which the Torah was the antidote (Sifre Deut. §45, in Collins, 1998: 34). Being made in the image of God, human beings have an innate knowledge of good and evil (Sirach 17:7, in Collins, 1998:35) even without knowledge of the Torah. In the literature of Qumran, we find this theme developed as a teaching of the two spirits, identified as the Prince of Light and the Angel of Darkness (1QS 3: 20-1).

Newton (2005) analysed the concept of impurity at Qumran. He observes that the community was extremely concerned with the issue of purity. In biblical texts, purity was associated mainly with the Temple cult. Since the community at Qumran understood itself as a spiritual temple, the requirement of purity was crucial. The terminology of purity/impurity is employed in discussion concerning admission into the community, maintenance of status once a member, and in cases of exclusion (Newton, 2005:10). Impurity in one individual would pollute the whole assembly. The members of the community believed that the Temple had been so polluted that the presence of God had departed. They saw themselves as a replacement for the Temple of Jerusalem, having formed a "holy house of Israel and a foundation of the holy of holiest for Aaron" (1QS.8.5, 6).

Their cosmology had strong dualistic elements. Monotheism is maintained by belief in One God, who was powerful enough to create the world according to his will and wisdom. God had created mankind to govern the world and he had appointed for him two spirits in which to walk: the spirit of truth and injustice. The children of light are ruled by the Prince of Light helped by the heavenly angels, while the children of darkness are ruled by the Angel of Darkness, Belial, assisted by evil spirits or demons who seek to overthrow the sons of light (1QS 3:15-24). The children of light live in "admirable purity", which is reflected in the terminology used when a person was excluded from the "purity of the congregation" (Vermes, 2004:31). Belial is mentioned nearly forty times as the leader of the sons of darkness.

People were categorised in three groups:

- First, the holy and purified members of the community.
- Then, those who had not qualified, but who had repented and needed to go through the process of purification.
- Finally, those who despised the very idea of entering the community.

Of such a person it was said: "Unclean, unclean he shall be all the days of his (life) despising the judgement of God in order not to be disciplined in the community of his council" (1QS 3:1-6, in LaSor, 1976:70).

The War Scroll tells about the coming of the messianic war, in which the traditional enemies of the Jewish people are marked for destruction. The names of the nations, originally designated as biblical enemies, now refer to the surrounding nations on all sides during this period. Belial is the archangel of evil, the heavenly leader of the lot (the preordained group) of evildoers. The Sons of Darkness are all those who represent evil and oppose the sect. It was described as a battle fought by the holy and purified ones against the evil and impure sons of darkness. Impurity was the result of impure spirits who were personal, demonic powers. The sons of darkness were seen as sinners who were dominated by the spirit of Belial (CD 12:2). The different angels or demons were attributed specific qualities, according to the task each had. We find the spirits of greed, wickedness and falsehood, as well as spirits of humility, goodness and wisdom. The demonology was based upon belief in individual powers that operated with specific ability and intention. The demons working for the angel of destruction could actually destroy a person's health. The impure spirits could, however, be scared away. When the holy congregation sang praises to God they frightened and terrified "all the spirits of the ravaging angels and the bastard spirits". (4Q510 1, 4Q511 10, in Collins, 1998:142.)

The question remains: How did the sectarians understand ritual impurity due to natural events, such as menstruation, birth etc? According to Neusner (1973: 54), there was no difference between the different kinds of impurities at this time: "The impurity of the menstrual woman and that of the arrogant person are not distinguished in any way." The community is the dwelling place of God and if his glory, '*shekinah*', was present, then the purity would be as it was in heaven. And in heaven there were no such functions as menstruation, semen, birth, or death. This motivation for purity, the

"imitatio Dei', may have been the reason why the community was as angelic as possible. Within this perspective, both sin and procreation and death were properties of the world and, as such, irreconcilable with the holiness of heaven.

The struggle between the two spirits represents a world view that was monotheistic in the sense that God was above all, allowing it all to happen, without being threatened. But still, dualism on a different level is easily detectable, and scholars have debated to what degree the sectarians were a dualistic society. In this, we side with Collins, who claims that, "the dualism is simultaneously psychological, moral, and cosmic. There is a synergism between the psychological realm and the agency of the supernatural angels or demons" (Collins, 1998:41). Moral impurity, therefore, was due to demonic influence or domain. It was not a metaphor because concrete demons caused it by their presence. Ritual impurity was also seen as a problem, since it was not an expression of holiness and angelic life, but testified to functions related to nature and the world.

2.5.8 Summary

We have not found it substantiated that the sectarian milieus of the first Century were less monotheistic than Biblical Judaism. One obvious difference is in the graphic descriptions of demonic powers. But these have no more independent power than the figure of Satan presented as belonging to God's court. They do more evil because they are allowed to do so. Biblical texts present the serpent as symbolic of Satan as a tempting spirit, unable to do any harm without God's explicit permission. It becomes a puzzle that free will was bestowed upon humans; since the human character is portrayed as so weak that it never really qualified for such a privilege. If there is a culturally dependent belief in demonic powers, it is expressed in a symbolic way, never fought against, but rather avoided. At Qumran, the demons are more colourful, stronger, more evil and active, and the human will was very limited. There are strong elements of predestination, which portrays God in the role of the ruler of cosmos. People who are chosen participate actively in the struggle and even plan to be involved in the final struggle, believing that with God's help they will be victorious.

2.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The purpose of this analysis has been to determine how the terminology of impurity was employed in first century Jewish society. At this point, it should be apparent that the understanding of purity has been subjected to some change from the Biblical sources to the Second Temple literature. It is also crucial to understand that the concept carried different contents in three different contexts: ritual purity, moral purity and impure diets based on the notion of impure animals.

The question was: How was impurity conceived? Was is a symbolic categorisation, or did it denote the presence of a real demonic power? How dangerous was impurity and why?

Purification, as such, is a dynamic phenomenon, which occurs in varying degrees. The system it functions within defines people and objects by four different states: holy, common, pure and impure. Purity is the absence of impurity and commonness is the absence of holiness. Holiness and impurity are active forces, able to extend their influence, while commonness and purity are static (Milgrom, 2000b: 29). There is an absolute boundary between the holy and the impure; these forces are antagonistic and become dangerous when they meet. The purpose of Israel's cultic life and purity regime is to purify the people so that they are capable of receiving God's presence in their midst (Exod 19: 10-11).

Ritual impurity usually comes into being through natural and positive processes. There is nothing sinful or unwanted in marital intercourse, childbirth and taking care of the dead. However, in relation to skin disease and genital fluxes, there were cases that did prompt the question of God's punishment, but no sin is identified as being the source that necessarily produces these ailments. Since impurity *per se* was an active condition, it is only reasonable to see the two mentioned sicknesses as active, destructive powers which could attack and destroy a human being. The ordained purification regime differed according to the seriousness of the attack. It varied from just letting some time pass, to laundering and, in severe cases, making a sacrifice. A person who became impure was guilty of impurity if he or she did not subject himself/herself to the purification ritual that was ordained. The impurity was contagious and, if purification was ignored, after a while the population would become polluted. If impure people

approached the sanctuary, the altar would be polluted and the presence of God would depart.

Moral Impurity functioned differently from ritual impurity, although the final consequences were the same. Moral impurity was a condition caused by grave sins. The sins that caused this state were identified explicitly as sexual sins, bloodshed, and idolatry. It was not contagious by contact, yet its defiling power was devastating by nature. Collectively, the people of Israel had promised God to keep the commandments of the Sinai covenant. God had promised to bless the people if they kept their part of the pact. So when an individual decided to commit acts of sin, he or she abandoned the whole nation. The collective, which had been betrayed, had only one possibility: either to influence the sinner to repent and have the sins atoned for, or punish the sins, often with death. If this was neglected, in reality it was a passive acceptance of the sins committed: the pact was broken, and God was no longer committed to be present. This was the theological rationale behind the conceptualisation of the defiled sanctuary. The Temple was now a place filled with people who had allowed sin. The priests were not holy any more, the collective guilt of the nation resulted in the defilement of the altar, which meant that the presence of the Lord departed and the land was no longer protected. The expression that 'the land would vomit its inhabitants' must be read as an expression that denoted exile, because impurity was actually perceived as an active force. Moral defilement was understood as a demonic influence. Temptation was a direct influence from the serpent which was luring in human thought.

The purification practice indicates that defilement of the sanctuary was a frightening thing. The procedure described in 2 Chronicles: 29 was a very thorough cleansing, lasting for weeks before they could even start to bring their sacrifices; and removing the artefacts that had been used in idol-worship was the very core of the purification. The extent to which idols were seen as evil or void of powers is a focus for discussion. However, if idols were nothing but a misconception, why was it necessary to use blood to remove the impurity? If idolatry was nothing but going astray from God, why was it not sufficient to repent and worship? A purification ritual is all about removing something. The cleansing may have been symbolic, but not void of meaning. Impurity was seen as an active, destructive power that was removed from the sanctuary. And the Holy One could again dwell amongst his people. Moral impurity was a metaphysical reality, not a symbol of immorality.

Impure diets, however, seem to be symbolic expressions of spiritual dualism. No impurity exists in these animals that can be purified. They were characterised by their hybrid features. The problem for the Israelites was not that they abandoned *YHWH* and chose Baal: in reality, they worshipped them both. They believed that *YHWH* was the stronger, but as an extra insurance they felt they should safeguard themselves with some extra worship. They never abandoned the Temple, but brought other gods into it. The diet regulations reminded the people of this lack of a boundary between the God of Israel and foreign gods. The impurity contracted from eating forbidden foods must be classified as moral impurity. The person who ate became morally impure and consequently, defiled the sanctuary and finally, the land. The holy God of Israel could not abide amongst a people who ignored his commandments, thereby indicating that they did not acknowledge him as the one and only God.

The purification rituals, as well as interpretations of the biblical texts studied, reflect the cosmology of first century Judaism. Tambiah (1985: 131) argues that any society insists that its members accept its cosmology and that the concept of reality consists of "conceptions that cannot be subject to the criterion of independent validating experience". Such concepts include the relationship between life and death, this world and the other world, the realms of the gods and the ancestors, humans and animals, etc. In other words: the interpretation of purity and impurity in Palestinian Judaism must be seen as being incorporated in a world view, a morally defined hierarchy of all creatures that made up the cosmos and the transactions between them. This culture saw a close connection between the human and the divine realm. It included animals, people, angels of different ranks, demons and a demonic leader, and God. God was holiness, demons were impure spirits. Though monotheism gave God a superior role in the drama, both holiness and impurity were seen as active forces and thus, there was a dualistic, antagonistic relationship in the very nature of human experience of life. Here was a hope for future victory, for the life of people as it was lived on earth was very much influenced by the relationship between holiness and impurity. Modern Jewish scholars may interpret this as the struggle between the forces of life *contra* the forces of death, an expression which is probably more academic, *salongfãich*, than the conceptualisation which has been labelled primitive and naïve, as opposed to religion which has been treated with a little more respect (Klutz, 2004 1-9).

We have chosen to use the Genesis narratives as an interpretive framework for biblical cosmology. We find here aetiologies of creation, sin, life, death, God, angels, humans, animals and supernatural beings as the giants, the serpent and Satan. Monotheism was an overriding principle and occultism, necromancy and sacrificing to other gods strictly forbidden. There were prophetic voices claiming that idols were nothing, but the practice of the people tells that idols were often seen as having some power and needed to be worshipped in addition to *YHWH*. In the era of the Second Temple, this imbedded dualism developed into belief in a cosmic struggle, in which everybody had to participate, as is expressed in the well-known exegesis of Ps 91:7: "Everyone among us has a thousand demons on his left hand and ten thousand at his right" (in Penny and Wise, 1994: 627). The protection against being conquered by the enemy was purification and holiness: impurity was the hallmark of demonic powers that were real entities, capable of harassing human beings physically and of seducing them to sin.

We shall, in chapter 4 and 5 see that a modified dualistic cosmology was the point of departure in the teaching of Jesus and Paul. We shall see that some concepts were redefined by Jesus and exchanged for other denotations by Paul. The question is: Did Jesus and Paul share a view of impurity as a powerful demonic presence? The terminology used by Jesus and Paul is obviously different, but how about their conceptualisation? When they did use the impurity language, did they thereby want to express having the same cosmology as did the authors of the Hebrew Bible, or were they influenced by their own contemporary usage of the terminology of purity and impurity?

CHAPTER 3: PURITY AND IMPURITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to examine - with specific reference to meaning and to the semantic field - the concepts of purity and impurity in the context of the Roman society within which Paul worked. Paul was obviously influenced by OT and post-OT Judaism. It is, however, debateable as to what extent he was influenced by the non-Jewish ideologies of the Greco-Roman world (Brown, 1997: 83). I do not intend to answer that question, but to ponder on the linguistic coherence between Paul's thinking about purity and the different interpretations of this term in the milieu he addressed. This means that, even if Paul was not directly influenced by the Greco-Roman concept of impurity, he may have chosen to use it to communicate a message relevant to his audience. This approach would have been acceptable to him, according to his own statement about his strategy:

> *To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.*
>
> *(1Cor 9: 21.)*

This does not suggest that Paul was willing to change or adapt his central message. Important concepts - for example, the meaning of the cross - were explained whenever he expected his audience to be unfamiliar with them. However, no material has been found in his letters that elaborates on the concept of impurity. He uses the word as if it was commonly understood.

The terminology of impurity was used in popular culture in a variety of contexts. In the Roman world during the first century we have sources showing that the masses believed in pollution, spells and curses, and felt the need for purification rituals. Drawing mostly on astrological and medical texts, it is demonstrated that ordinary people were very much concerned with the danger of defilement. Moreover, the danger of impurity was experienced in real life as sickness, deviance and death. An important question here is the aetiology of disease. What was the role of impure spirits and demons? Although

Paul never healed anybody by exorcism, the popular belief was that there was a close relationship between sickness and the intervention of spirits. This belief is strongly reflected in the cult of the Vestals, who needed to live in celibacy in order to protect the homeland from possible dangers (Gill, s.a.) Here we find a symbiotic connection between sexual renunciation and the blessings of the people. A pure and dedicated virgin was the best protection against the intervention of impure spirits.

The Stoic philosophers, however, did not share this interpretation of reality and did their best to reveal what they saw as nothing but the folly of superstition (Arnold, 1911). Still, they too sometimes employed the terminology of pollution. However, when they did, it was always in a particular context and meaning. When a philosopher like Seneca warned his audience against impurity, it will be demonstrated that he was addressing moral questions, usually concerning sexual ethics. Purity was, in the vocabulary of the philosophers, just another word for chastity. This was a logical derivation from their concept of the imbedded rationality of reality. Luke tells us that Paul was familiar with Stoicism and that he actually debated with the Stoics over the concept of God (Acts 17: 18), but the question is how influenced he was by their ethics.

Finally, a number of pericopes in Philo's writings, in which he uses the words purity or impurity, will be examined. By bringing in Philo, we have an example of how a Jew with an understanding rooted in the Levitical meaning of the concept actually writes when addressing an audience that lived in the Greco/Roman culture. Even if Philo did not influence NT thought, he may give some indication as to how the concept of purity/impurity was understood in a Roman context, which may bear some relevance to Paul's linguistic considerations. Philo does draw on both traditions. He employs the terminology as metaphor when he is addressing matters from the holiness code, although he is much in line with the Stoics on ethical questions. This means that it was fully possible to use the term in different ways. Our next question will be how Paul actually used it. In this chapter, a foundation will be laid that will enable us to pursue enquiries such as:

- Did Paul think in terms of impure spirits, as his audience did?
- Did he communicate in a more philosophic way, as Philo demonstrated?
- Did he find his own original way?

3.2 POLLUTION TABOOS IN GRECO /ROMAN CULTURE

No teaching is found in the Pauline corpus that directly reveals how Paul interpreted the nature of sickness. He did heal people, empowered by a gift that produces what he calls "the things that mark an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12). He mentions the gift of healing in his list of spiritual gifts, but he never explains sickness as demonic activity. Neither is the power of exorcising spirits of infirmity listed as a spiritual gift. The author of Acts does, however, work with such an interpretation.

> *11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul.*
> *12 So that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.*
>
> *(Acts 19: 11-12.)*

The question is: How well did the author of Acts know Paul's theology? Brown (1997: 324) has discussed this topic and he argues against Walker (1985) and Goulder (1964) that the author of Acts betrays no knowledge of the Pauline letters and is silent about many of the principal theological themes stressed in those letters.

Sickness is usually treated as a natural occurrence (Gal 4:13), but there is one exception:

> *29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*
> *30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*
>
> *(1Cor 11: 29-30.)*

So, does Paul understand these sick people as demonised by an invading impure spirit? He does not say. He only observes that there is a connection between neglecting the unity of the church at the Lord's Table and sickness. In the following, we shall see which interpretations the members of the church were likely to have held.

Pollution was of concern to the masses in popular culture in Roman society. In almost every part of the ancient Mediterranean, one can find notions of ritual pollutions and purifications (Parker, 2004: 553). Martin (1995: 139) observes that it is actually unclear what is meant by 'pollution', that scholars do not always notice that there were degrees of concern about pollution among the ancients and that there existed a diversity of opinions about the susceptibility of the individual, as well as the social body, to contamination. Parker points out that the pollutions generally recognised by the Greeks were birth, death to a limited degree, sexual activity and homicide, except in war and

cases of sacrilege. Diseases, and above all madness, were also viewed in this way, as were extreme pollutions such as incest, parricide and cannibalism. (Parker 1995: 553) From this list of possible subjects and for the purpose of analysis, two are chosen for comparative purposes: namely, disease and sex, since these are subjects that are dealt with in the Pauline letters as well. There are various sources available that can be used to analyse the meaning of the concept of impurity in Roman culture, such as plays and texts for entertainment, contemporary medical books and astrological writings including the interpretation of dreams. As Martin (1995: 146-47) shows, there were two different aetiologies of pollution, imbalance and invasive powers. Both aetiologies could result in sickness, which was seen as impurity. The problem of disease was apparently of a different nature to wounds incurred in an accident. If a person stumbled and fell, he was not polluted, even if he was bleeding. However, a sick person was easily dealt with as impure. Impurity was not connected with blood-taboos but rather with the phenomenon of deterioration.

3.2.1 **Disease as Internal Imbalance**

The ancient medical writings interpreted disease as the result of an imbalance between bile and phlegm, heat and cold, or wet and dry. For a number of different causes, though mostly due to foods and sexual intercourse, the body could be too dry, wet, hot or cold. This was the conventional wisdom for centuries after Hippocrates. Galen defines it clearly: Health is a sort of harmony *(Hygiene,* 1.5). So what did Hippocrates (*Affections,* 19) mean by stating that "... a person that is phlegmatic after chronic fevers becomes unclean, *akatharsos"?* The condition was interpreted as one of impurity; the fever had started a devastating process. The body needed to get rid of the impurity, which had penetrated the tissue, *sarx*. Again, what was impurity conceived as? It was not something that attacked or entered the body from outside, but a phenomenon that caused the human tissue to become corrupted, *phtheirontai*. It was like a destructive power. It could happen because of the natural ability of human flesh to become corrupted as a result of an imbalance between the natural elements of the body. The same principle was applied to the aetiology of plagues, interpreted by Sextus Empiricus (*Against the Professors* 5.2.) as imbalance in the cosmic elements. At least among the educated classes in the early Empire sickness was acknowledged as an imbalance of elements in the human body.

3.2.2 Disease as a Demonic Attack

There were, however, competing interpretations. Many people held traditional beliefs, which perceived disease as an attack from the gods or the demons. Impurity was, according to this understanding, a spiritual invasion with destructive power. Something strange from outside invaded the body and created sickness. Celcus complained in the first century CE about people still believing such nonsense (Martin, 1995: 153). So, how old was this belief?

In Homer's *Odyssey*, disease is understood as an attack by an evil demon, *kakos daimon* (10. 64, 5. 396.). In Hesiod's famous story of Pandora's Jar, evil spirits were sent out into the world; both the earth and the sea were full of evil powers, sent out in order to attack humans with diseases and plagues. This ontology accords well with what Plinio Prioreschi observed: The concept of the divine origin of disease was typical of the tragedy (Prioreschi, 1992: 396). The idea was so widespread that the Hippocratic author of *The Sacred Disease* had difficulty in his attempt to argue with the masses, who believed that symptoms like those of epilepsy were caused by avenging gods. He solved the dilemma by discussing the concept of the *natural*. If the gods are part of our world, then it follows that both they and diseases are natural entities and that, as such, there is a connection between them. The author developed this view to include divine healing. He disagreed with the idea that there were certain sacred diseases as opposed to other natural ones, especially madness, epilepsy and impotence. Sickness happened for natural reasons which might include the intervention of gods, but so was healing, "the gods are the real physicians" (Martin, 1995: 154). Pliny the Elder attributes even the healing herbs to the gods and Herphilus calls drugs "the hands of the gods". However, Hippocratic doctors opposed the popular use of purification rituals, arguing that they were ineffective. In our interest, it is remarkable that these rites were widely acknowledged in popular culture. In Greek folklore, the Olympian gods were unpredictable, capricious, demonic and dangerous. A bilingual curse tablet calls upon a "... demon of impurity (*demon im(m)unditi(a)e*)" to pursue someone. Another spell compelled a disease-demon to attack someone's body (Horsley, 1977: 12).

Ordinary people dealt with a concept of reality that included spiritual beings interacting with people. In this frame of reference, it made sense that disease was an infliction from outside the human body; it was a destructive and devastating force often denoted as an impure spirit that polluted the individual as it caused sickness and eventually death.

3.2.3 Impure Sexuality

Sexual intercourse was not in itself seen as a polluting factor in Greco/Roman culture. The ethical considerations of the philosophers were primarily about the moderation and control of passions. However, there were sexual practices that were seen as impure *per se*. In this section, we shall try to detect which ones, in order to analyse why they were interpreted as impure and thereby try to reveal the meaning of impurity that they carried.

According to the principles of astrology the twelve signs of the Zodiac assigned the newborn's gender, and it was believed that the planets and luminaries adopted the gender of the sign in which they appeared. The newborn child's gender was directly influenced by the gendered universe. If there was a mixture of the gender determinants, there was a possibility that sexual impurity would be practised. Analyses of astrological texts that denote sexual impurity in this context have been made by Barton (1994), Gleason (1995), Brooten (1996) and Malik (1999). The importance of astrologers like Firmicus Maternus lies in their preserving earlier sources, often through lengthy quotations. From this, we can see how constant the understanding of gender terms was over a period of at least five hundred years (Brooten, 1996: 132, 139), a period lived in by the New Testament authors.

According to Firmicus Maternus, *eunouchoi* were born when Mercury and Saturn were in the ascendant together in a feminine sign. He obviously saw *eunouchoi* as a broader overarching term including "men without semen and those who are unable to have intercourse *(qui coire non possint),* obscene, disreputable, impure *(impuros),* lewd *cinaedus"* (*Mathesis* III 9.1 in Malik 1999). The author describes persons who are sexually promiscuous with men, playing the passive role within relationships, and labels them as 'impure'. The problem is that they are unable to have intercourse with women. They are not real men; there is some kind of gender confusion. Here, impurity denotes deviance, an inability to "come to natural intercourse" and being captured by the unnatural, *contra*

naturam (*Mathesis* 5.2.11 in Brooten, 1996: 137). Elsewhere, Firmicus Maternus describes a configuration that results in the birth of men polluted by vice who wanted to serve 'real men' while they themselves preferred the passive role and that of so-called 'masculine female prostitutes'; according to Brooten, they might have been lesbians who served women (*Mathesis* 8.27.8f in Brooten, 1996: 135). So, pollution is either gender confusion or prostitution or, in the worse case, both together.

Barton (1994) too, has analysed Mathesis, and ponders the meaning of 'impure intercourse' in marriage:

> *The Moon, Saturn and Venus in the seventh place, that is, on the Descendant, make perverts with effeminate softness of body who dance on the stage and act in ancient fables, especially if Mars is in square aspect. For then he makes them addicted to all kinds of base vice; they also practice impure intercourse with their wives (Mathesis 6, 31, 38-9 in Barton 1994:165).*

This probably refers to oral sex, since Mathesis elsewhere describes how certain configurations make "... the native impure of mouth" (*Mathesis* 7.25.3 in Barton 1994: 165). Parker also observes that cunnilingus is viewed as a man being used by a woman, and, as such, he behaves as a passive partner. In the Roman sexual system, the dividing line concerning sexual gender roles is active versus passive. Thus, for a man to give oral sex renders him to passive with respect to his mouth, and the disgrace is the same whether he is serving a man or a woman (Veyne 1985: 31, in Parker, HN. 1997: 52). Impurity here blurs the categories of the gendered universe.

Deviance came in many degrees. Some were *publici cinaedi,* male prostitutes who served real men by allowing themselves to be penetrated. These individuals provoked the ideals of the Roman *vir* in every way. The impurity was due to both unnatural manly desires and to the lack of control a man was expected to exercise. Hephaistion apparently understands impurity in the same way. In referring to same-sex brothels, he employs such terms as "impure, illicit and licentious" (*Apotelsmatika* 2.21; §§ 23-25 in Brooten 1996: 139).

Ptolemy makes systematic comments about how the planets influence the sexual behaviour of both men and women. The optimum constellation produces men who are pure and solemn in sexual intercourse, meaning those who only want natural heterosexual intercourse. Temperate women were called *pure* (*Tetrabiblos* 4.5; §§187-

89 in Brooten, 1996: 127). Vettius Valens, in the *Anthologies* (2.17; §§ 66-68 in Brooten, 1996: 129) describes female homoeroticism that was due to the necessary masculinisation when Venus was in the aspect of Saturn: "But if they are also in servile signs of the zodiac or divisions of the zodiac, (the natives) have impure, *akathartois* passions and unnatural (*para physin*) pleasures".

Here we see that impurity has to do with acting contrary to the laws of nature. Gleason (1995: 133) observes the same phenomenon in her study of Roman manhood. There was a competition in masculinity, defined as rhetoric, between the notoriously disputatious Diocles and Bagoas, who actually was a eunuch and as such not a man at all. The essence of Diocles's argument is that eunuchs are unclean. They are neither men nor women, but "... composites, hybrids, monstrosities outside the pale of human nature". Impurity in this context obviously denoted the blurring of gender categories, which were established by nature).

We have seen that impurity is a state of uncontrolled sexuality, or of sexuality that is out of order. It may be excessive or it may be practised with a partner in a manner that blurs the natural categories of productive sexuality.

3.2.4. **Summary**

In Greco-Roman society, impurity was used in two different contexts with different meanings. The concept was applied both to spirits and to people. When a spirit was called impure, this denoted either an evil spirit or a destructive power. An impure spirit would harass people, not only by inflicting sickness upon them, but also by making them impure and contagious. The supernatural being, personal or impersonal, had the ability to defile nature and natural beings. A defiled individual could be physically sick or mad, or the person may have become confused about gender identity and practised unproductive sex, contrary to nature. This was the popular opinion. Philosophers and educated people interpreted such phenomena differently. The aetiology of sickness was sought in nature, and the concept of impurity was employed metaphorically to people who had excessive or illegitimate sex. It was actually a concept that indicated lack of will power and poor control in relation to the needs of the body, which resulted in low morals.

In the Pauline congregations there were probably representatives of both classes: some were educated and strong people, but many would think according to popular folklore. The concepts Paul chose to use would have been understood as an expression of his cultural standing, as well as an indication of his own concept of reality.

3.3 THE PURITY OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS AS A SOCIAL NECESSITY

The reason for including an analysis of the cult of the Vestal virgins is that the topic is the subject of an amount of classical literature where the words purity/impurity are employed. The cult was practised in Rome at the time when the primitive church was established and it is commented upon by authors who lived in the same context as the audience of the apostle Paul. It will be demonstrated that in a number of instances the term is employed in a context clear enough to reveal the word's meaning. Women were allowed to play little role in the public religious life of Rome. The most notable of several exceptions to this rule was the role played by the Vestal Virgins (Fowler, 1899; Young, 2002). The Temple of the goddess Vesta was located in the southwest corner of the Roman Forum and, with such a prominent localisation and unique content, the cult was probably known of even further from Rome.

3.3.1 The Cult of Vestal Virgins

The priestly office of the College of Vestal Virgins was created in the 7th century BC by the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius (Plutarch, *Life Numa* 79). It lasted until the Christian Emperor Theodosius I forbade it in 394 CE. It was a well established cult during the life of Paul, being regularly observed by people living in Rome. According to the second century Roman antiquarian, Aulus Gellius, the first vestal virgin was taken from her parents, "... as though she had been captured in war", and led away by the hand of Numa Pompilius. Originally, there were two, then four, and then finally six Vestal Virgins. King Numa also appointed the high priest (Pontifex Maximus) to preside over the rites, to prescribe rules for public ceremony and to watch over the Vestals (Kraemer 1992: 82). The virgins were chosen and taken away between the ages of six and ten, originally from patrician and later, from any freeborn family. Selections were made by lot from among those qualified. The winner was taken by the hand and the Pontifex Maximus said: "I take you, you shall be the priestess of Vesta and you shall fulfill the sacred rites for the safety of Roman people" (Gill s.a.)

The Vestal Virgins were to give thirty years of their lives to serve the goddess Vesta, who was an ancient goddess from the pre-republican days of the agrarian society. It is noteworthy that she was not anthropomorphised as the other gods and goddesses in the pantheon were. She was conceived as the pure essence of fire (Frazer, 1994: 152). She was the heart and essence of the city and of its survival, just as the hearth fire was the centre and essence of the home and family. To serve Vesta was to serve Rome. After the Vestals retired from being priestesses they were then allowed to marry and live a normal life.

The challenge was that Vesta had to be served by virgins: pure humans must serve the sacred essence, and a pure human was obviously a virgin. Ovid elaborates on this in *Fasti:*

> *Why do virgin attendants minister to the goddess, you ask? ...No wonder that a virgin is delighted by a virgin attendant and welcomes chaste hands to her rites. Don't imagine that Vesta is anything but living flame; you won't see a single substance born from flame. And so she's rightly a virgin, she doesn't produce nor receive any seeds, and she loves her virgin associates. For quite a while, I stupidly thought there were statues of Vesta. I soon learned there weren't any in the domed rotunda. A fire that never goes out is hidden in that temple; neither Vesta nor the fire has a single likeness.*
>
> (Ovid, 249ff, in Nagle 1995: 159.)

Fire is an old symbol of purity. It separates the pure from the impure and it is dangerous in its power to destroy. Yet it was appreciated as a practical necessity for Roman daily life. No one could bake bread without fire. Still, it was pure essence; it is spirit as opposed to matter. This goddess of fire needed to be worshipped by women worthy of doing so. She loved purity and, consequently, her virgin priestesses. However, she required sexual renunciation, accepting them only as long as they had not received any seed. There is no doubt, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ii 67), that she was required to be "undefiled by marriage". This is an interesting point, because Roman women were usually not seen as defiled by marriage. On the contrary, being married was an honourable duty during the regime of Augustus. However, a Vestal Virgin obviously represented a different category. Providing that the Vestals' purity was intact, the goddess would in return guard the city and bless the citizens with peace and prosperity.

The main duty of the Vestals was to guard the everlasting fire which blazed upon the altar of Vesta, its extinction being considered as the most fearful of all prodigies and emblematic of the extinction of the state (Dionysius, ii: 67). However, this was not the worst possible scenario. It was serious because it indicated impurity in a Vestal; the Pontifex Maximus stripped and scourged the Vestal responsible for the failure in the dark, with a screen interposed and rekindled the flame by the friction of two pieces of wood from a *felix arbor* (Dionysius, ii: 67). She was then subjected to an investigation of her purity, meaning her chastity. It is of crucial importance to notice that the extinction of the fire was an indication of possible impurity, while failure to keep it burning did not make the virgin impure. She was punished for her lack of attention, but she was still capable of continuing her cultic service, given that her chastity was proven. Impurity in a Vestal was unforgivable. According to the law of Numa, she was simply to be stoned to death (Bekker 1838: 148, 259), but a more cruel torture was devised by Tarquinius Priscus (Dionysius, iii. 67) and inflicted from that time forward. When/if condemned by the college of pontifices, she was stripped of her vittae and other badges of office, scourged (Dionysius, ix: 40), attired like a corpse, placed in a close litter and buried alive. In every case, the paramour was publicly scourged to death in the forum (Gill s.a.)

3.3.2. **Purity as a Social Symbol**

Beard studied the phenomenon of Vestal virginity first in 1980 and again with a totally new perspective in 1995 (166-177). She studied the problem of categorising the Vestals. Not only did they blur the boundaries of gender: they were dressed in a *stola,* the garment designed for married Roman women, and their hair was arranged in the style of the Roman bride on her wedding day. Her relationship with the Pontifex Maximus mirrored in legal respects that of husband and wife. Still, she was a young virgin. The Vestal also enjoyed privileges that otherwise belonged to men. Bird observes that the sacrality of the Vestals was marked by the ambiguity of sex and gender roles. From the debate that followed, Staples (1998) observed that the recorded attributes of the Vestals did not so much indicate ambiguity, but rather presented a status outside all known categories of gender, a perfect symbolic representation of "the undivided collectivity of Rome" (Beard, 1995: 168). Along these lines, de Cazanove saw them as sacred because of their extra-sexual nature (Beard, 1995: 168). This prompts the following question: Did cultic purity include a state of non-sexuality or of all-sexuality? The goddess of fire,

Vesta, was female but her essence was fire, which is not gendered, although that might actually be debatable (Lakoff, 1987). Gender properties are defined by culture and this is as far as Beard goes in her new analysis. Our question is, however, not about Roman definition and negotiation concerning gender roles, but about the definition and understanding of the meaning of sexuality and holiness to society.

Vesta was the goddess of the hearth and the symbol of the home. Early Roman religion had been a family affair. The head of the family, the paterfamilias, was in charge and all rites and worship were connected with the welfare of the family and farm. The seat of the family is the home and the focus of the home is the hearth. Indeed, the Latin word *focus* means hearth. Tending to the hearth was the task of the unmarried daughters, as the paterfamilias was caring for the crops or livestock and the mother was in the kitchen or at the weaving loom. Near the hearth was the food cupboard, which was watched over by spirits, who ensured that all was well in the Roman household. As time went by, Vesta became the symbol of the Roman homeland and her cult was honoured not only in the humble home, but also at citywide festivals for the well-being of Rome itself.

So: why virginity? According to Staples (1998: 35) the Vestal's virginity represented life and death, and stability and chaos for the Roman state. When disaster struck, it was taken as a sign of impurity in a Vestal. Hallett (1984: 85-88) points out that the timing of several instances of Vestals being punished for unchastity was after military defeats. Pomeroy (1975: 211) interpreted this as evidence of the Roman predilection for associating the level of Roman political integrity with the integrity of Roman women. From this it can be seen that the symbol at stake was impenetrability. The body is a classical symbol of the state (Douglas, 1973: 98). The crucial points of the city wall were its gates. The gates and doors needed to be guarded by spirits (Fowler 1911: 75). So the female orifices are symbols of the gates. A virgin guards her body just as the goddess guards the gates of Rome. A sexually defiled woman symbolises the homeland invaded by foreign men and that is social impurity.

3.3.3 Purity, Blood and Fire

The office of the sacred virgins included other matters as well. They had to present offerings to the goddess at stated times. They had to purify the shrine every morning with pure water, meaning that it must come from running springs and not be polluted by going through the pipes. In this context, purity is used with a more general meaning, simply that of being clean. Water was pure in itself, just like fire. However, it could become polluted. Clean water was a means of purification, and even the shrine needed daily purification since it was visited by many people whose purity was uncertain. Impurity was a contagious phenomenon.

The Vestals had to make the sacred salt-cakes that were to be used during the feasts of Vesta (Rose, 1959: 203). Thereby, they performed the same function as the daughters in a Roman household usually did at home. The cakes were thrown into the fire as a sacrificial plate or dish. Fowler (1911: 71) sees this as proof of Vesta being the spirit of the fire and the spiritual embodiment of the physical welfare of the family, except that the Vestals also provided for the spiritual condition essential for the well-being of the whole city. The state of purity and sanctity was, according to Pliny, manifested by the ability to see visions: "Even today we believe that our vestal Virgins can root runaway slaves to the spot by a spell, provided the slaves have not left Rome". (Plin. e. *Nat. Hist.* XXVIII,13 in Gill s.a.)

Great expectation was attached to the Vestals' intercession on behalf of those in danger and difficulty (Suet. *Jul.* 1). If they chanced to meet a criminal as he was led to punishment, they had a right to demand his release, provided it could be proved that the encounter was accidental (Gill s.a.). They were trusted with wills and could testify in court, being believed without having to take an oath (Gill, s.a.).

On April 15, the Vestals participated in a public sacrifice. This was one instance where they performed a male priest's ritual of handling blood in a sacrifice in a fertility rite. (Fowler, 1899: 71 and Frazer, 1994: 495).The combination of blood and death, purity and virginity with the essence as fire obviously constituted the most powerful rite, loaded with symbolism. The unborn calves, cut out from their mother, represented potential life. Their blood was therefore filled with life-giving power. This blood was mixed with the blood of horses, which were sacred animals in the sanctuaries of the god Mars. Mars fathered the first Roman, Romulus, which was the reason why the

people of Rome considered themselves to be the children of Mars. Consequently, they saw Mars as a protector for their daily needs as well as in war (Gangale, 1998). The blood mixture contained the power to sustain life and fertility as well as food and peace. The blood became even more powerful when the pure virgins handled it; and the presence of the goddess Vesta was manifest as the fire consumed the sacrifice. It was the ultimate sacrifice, with purity produced by chastity as an integral part.

Only a consecrated virgin was considered sufficiently sexless and gender-neutral to present a blood-sacrifice. The Vestals were cultic and capable of performing the same rituals as a male priest not living in celibacy. However, her service was of greater impact. So the goddess Vesta had the essence and the power to protect and bless Rome. This energy flowed freely and generously, as long as she was worshipped by virgins so dedicated that they did not even miss normal family life.

3.3.4. Summary

We have seen that study of the Vestal Virgins provides sufficient cases where the terminology of impurity is employed in the context of a religious cult. Moreover, it is demonstrated that purity was used as an idiomatic expression for chastity. In a cultic setting, like the one studied, sex was juxtaposed with holiness and, as such, rightfully labelled impure. This is worth noting, since Paul also employs the metaphors of bridal mysticism and sees the church as a purified holy community separated from and untouched by the profane world. This leads us to the following question: Did Paul use the concept of purity/impurity in a cultic, symbolic sense? And did virginity have a spiritual value?

3. 4 PURITY AND IMPURITY IN STOICISM

Stoicism was the dominant philosophical movement in the Roman Empire from about 300 BC to 250 AD. To a large degree it was based on the philosopher, Zeno, who had developed an approach to understanding reality based on the study of logic, physics and ethics. Did the concept of impurity have a place in the cosmology of Stoicism, which in principle was holistic (JA 691)?

Paul was highly aware of the cultural bearings upon religious experiences and expressions. It is reported in Acts that he was engaged in several disputes with both Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Act 17: 18).

> *Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*
> *21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*
> *22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,*
> *23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1Cor. 1: 20-23).*

Paul admits here that the Gospel he preached would seem foolish to people enlightened in Greek philosophy. So, indirectly, he distances himself from the philosophers, of whom the Stoics were the dominant school. Still, it is not difficult to see that they belonged to the same time, with many of the same thoughts and ideals. It will be shown that this was often the case in moral questions (Boman, 1981; Hauken, 2000).
Paul does not often employ the terminology of purity and impurity. The Jews probably thought he did it too seldom. So, how did Paul's understanding of purity concord with the Stoic usage?

3.4.1 The Nature of the Stoic Gods

The Stoics developed the art of logic to include linguistic philosophy, rhetoric and epistemology. Stoicism was empiric, although sensual experience had to be interpreted according to some basic principles. Diogenes (7.132) tells us that Stoic physics had three general divisions:

- the investigation of the cosmos;
- the elements that make up the cosmos;
- and causal explanations of what occurs within the cosmos.

The universe is said to fall under two principles: an active principle, which is rational, and a passive principle, which is matter without any qualities. The rational, active principle is further described by the Stoics as being God, who is eternal and penetrates all matter, being the "craftsman" of all things (Diog. 7.134). Cicero (*Gods* 2.24) credits the following claim to Cleanthes: "Everything which lives, whether an animal or a vegetable, lives because of the heat contained within it. From this, one should understand that the nature of heat has within itself the power of life which penetrates the

entire cosmos". The cosmic *pneuma*, the soul of the world, is also the divine soul, which accounts for the connection of things in the universe: "These things [meteorological phenomena], and the mutual harmony of the parts of the cosmos, certainly could not happen as they do unless they were bound together by one divine and continuously connected pneuma" (Cicero, *Gods*, 2.19).

Pneuma was seen as a substance, although not in terms of the Cartesian dualistic concept of spirit/matter. The Stoic cosmology is holistic in the sense that *pneuma* is a kind of matter proper to the soul and, in form, matter is a symmetrical blend of airy and fiery substance; for it is not possible to say that it is either air alone or fire alone, since the body of an animal does not appear to be either extremely cold or extremely hot, but rather is not even dominated by a great excess of either of these... (Galen, *Soul*, 4.783).

The Stoic god is the active rational principle, always functioning in the interests of what is best for the universe. We are told that the principal concerns of divine providence are "... first, that the cosmos be as well suited as possible for remaining in existence, second, that it be in need of nothing, but most of all that it should possess surpassing beauty and every adornment" (Cicero, *Gods*, 2.58). The fact that everything that occurs on earth is due to divine providence is what led the Stoics to identify god as the active principle with *fate*: "... the common nature and the common reason of nature are fate and providence and Zeus" (Plutarch, *Stoic Self-Contradictions* 34, 1050a-b [II-81]).

The Stoic attitude towards religion underwent a distinctive change. Zeno of Elea (490-425BC) represented, in the main, the critical attitude; his tone is revolutionary and atheistic. With Posidonius (135-51BC) begins the subordination of philosophic principle to religious sentiment. Arnold (1911: Ch. 10) explains how the philosophy was influenced by more popular ideas as time went by. All through the Roman period the Stoics held a consistent theoretical position. The teaching of the Stoics on theology followed a clearly defined programme. Four dogmas were established:

1. that gods exist;
2. that they are living, benevolent, and immortal;
3. that they govern the universe; and
4. that they seek the good of men.

The gods, according to the Stoics, form a *natura*, a department of the universe, a category including one or more individuals; hence, the title of Cicero's work, *de natura deorum,* that is, "... of the class of beings called gods." Philosophy, according to the Stoic interpretation, brings us in the end into touch with this world of deities. We are led up to the supreme Reason, the Logos or Word, whose divine being permeates the universe.

3.4.2 **Daemons**

In the Roman period, we see that the gods are borrowed from popular mythology; they neither possess the divine attribute of immortality, nor is the attribute of benevolence prominent in some of them. There was thus a constant tendency to assign them to an order of nature of lower rank than the deity. Such an order was already constituted by the popular belief adopted by the Stoics that the whole universe is full of spirits or demons, some kindly, others mischievous. Highest in the former class stand the divine messengers, angels, who keep watch over the affairs of men throughout the universe and bring reports thereof to God (Arnold, 1911: ch.1).

Daemons are included in this cosmology, but they are not endowed with the evil qualities we know from the biblical portraits of unclean spirits, and are not in contact with an evil power like Satan. In the Rigveda and in the poems of Hesiod, they are presented as officers of a benevolent sovereign. Furthermore, we find them early in Roman literature identified with the stars; this may account for the special recognition of the twins, Castor and Pollux, as kind daemons who protect sailors from shipwreck. There are also spirits that are careless, idle, or mischievous, whom the deity may employ as his executioners. Demons were also understood as the souls of men parted from their bodies, some good and some evil. All beliefs of this kind are especially characteristic of the type of Stoicism introduced by Posidonius. There was no connection between demons and impurity. Stoicism does not include the idea of cultic impurity, so there was no need for sacrifices or purification rites. Thus Zeno in his book '*the State*' forbids the making of temples and images, because they are unworthy of the deity. The Stoic condemnation of sacrifice is mostly expressed by silence, but it finds words in Seneca. Although they denounced the whole existing system of public worship in principle, the Stoics did not feel themselves prevented from taking part in it as a seemly and ancient custom and the Roman Stoics took special pride in the reputation of

the city for attention to 'religion,' that is to say, to the ritual observances due to the gods. This called for a new interpretation of rituals. So the Stoics actively developed their own ideal of worship, namely the rendering of praise and honour to the gods by means of hymns. "It is reasonable," said Zeno "to honour the gods. But it is not reasonable to honour the non-existent. Therefore gods exist." (Arnold Ch. 10, http://www.geocities.com/stoicvoice/journal/1202/ea1202b1.html1 1/03/06)
This, however, does not mean that the Stoics were unfamiliar with the terminology of purity and pollution and in the following section, we shall see a number of examples of how the concept was employed.

3.4.3 **Ethics**

The Stoics' ethical teaching is based upon two principles already developed in their physics: first, that the universe is governed by divine absolute law; and second, that the essential nature of humans is reason. Both are summed up in the famous Stoic maxim, "Live according to nature", which means, according to reason. In this maxim, there is a second aspect. It also means that men should conform to nature's divine laws of the universe. Virtue, then, is the lifestyle according to reason. Morality is simply rational action. It is accepting the universal reason, not the caprice and self-will of the individual. The moral man is a wise man who consciously subordinates his life to the life of the whole universe and recognises himself as a cog in the great machine.

So, what was the problem? If reason was the solution, was ignorance the problem? Yes and no. According to Arnold (Chapter 14), ignorance was a sin, meaning that it would cause the ignorant person to fail to achieve the aim of life. However, passions were the greater challenge, because they were the active opposites of reason. Passions were powerful and irrational and, as such, were able to put up a fight against reason and virtue. The way from ignorance to wisdom was that of self-discipline and self-knowledge. The problem with passions was not understood as a spiritual struggle against sin.

Foucault (2002: 51) found the terminology of impurity in his analyses of the history of sexuality. During the first century AD, much attention was given to the need for caring for oneself, indicating the value of self-examination in order to correct whatever was not perfect. This would lead to self-transformation into a better individual, which was

interpreted as salvation through purification. This was especially important when procreation was in order. In order to get a beautiful - *euteknia*- baby, the body needed to be purified which, according to the physician Soranus (*Mal. fem.*1, 10 see Foucault 2002: 148), was achieved by observing certain diets. He compares this inner cleansing with the farmer who cannot sow seed before he has cleansed the field. The term *pure* is used in its most simplistic and obvious sense. The energy of the body should be concentrated on the conception of the baby, not on digestion, which would prevent the seed from maximising its potential.

Marcus Aurelius uses the term impurity in an informative way. He writes about his happiness and gratitude for having "rescued the purity of my youth" (*Meditations* 1, 17): purity here means chastity. He does not, however, reserve the term purity for describing marital intercourse, but describes his long time waiting to "become a man". According to Epiktet (see Foucault, 2002: 195), it was preferable but not mandatory, to limit sexual experiences to marriage. Musonius Rufus thinks differently. He is very sceptical about the constant hunt for pleasure, which led to shameful and illicit relationships. According to his Discourse, sexuality is for marriage and is intended for procreation only.

> *Men who are not wantons or immoral are bound to consider sexual intercourse justified only when it occurs in marriage and is indulged in for the purpose of begetting children, since that is lawful, but unjust and unlawful when it is mere pleasure-seeking, even in marriage (Musonius,* "The Roman Socrates" *Discourse XII: "On Sexual Indulgence" (see Lutz, 1947: 87).*

He answers an hypothetical question about extramarital affairs as follows:

> *A man who has a relationship with a mistress or an unmarried woman does not violate anybody's rights and does not deprive anyone of the possibility of an heir. So the problem of a relationship of this nature is not that somebody gets harmed, but it is all about impurity, in the same way as the pig enjoys its own filthiness (Musonius, Reliquiae XII: 63-64 [My translation]. See Foucault, 2002:197).*

So impurity is used as a metaphor. However, the question is still, for what? Is the person spiritually impure? Is it his body or his soul? We need to examine more references from the writings of the age to detect the usage of the term. So far, we have seen that it relates to pleasure and the control of the need for pleasure. The younger Seneca argued as follows in his essay "*On Marriage*":

All love for someone else's wife is shameful. But it is also shameful to love one's own wife immoderately. In loving his wife, the wise man takes reason for his guide, not emotion. He resists the assault of passions, and does not allow himself to be impetuously swept away into the marital act. Nothing is more depraved than to love one's spouse as if she were an adulteress. Those men, however, who say they couple with a woman only to beget children for the sake of the state or the human race should at least take animals for their models, and when their wives' wombs swell, they should not destroy their posterity. They should show themselves to be not suitors but husbands. (In Ranke-Heinemann 1990: 11.)

So what could mankind learn from animals? Seneca's contemporary, Pliny, may have planted this idea by idealising the elephant's sense of purity due to its capability for modesty and moderation:

Out of modesty, elephants never mate except in secret...They do it only every two years and then, it is said, never for more than five days. On the sixth day, they bath in the river. Until then, they do not return to the herd. They are unacquainted with adultery (Pliny, Natural History 8, 5 in Ranke-Heinemann 1990: 14).

Pliny implies that the elephant has a ritual bath after mating. Though the elephant was monogamous, it felt the need to cleanse itself after the act and before it felt capable of resuming social life in the herd. Sexuality, even in the most moral context, was connected with impurity.

The elder Seneca had been troubled by the decline of moral standards in the younger generation. He wrote in the first century AD about the retrogression of rhetoric and masculine dignity:

The young men of today are too indolent to study anything properly... They enhance their degradation by curling their hair and deliberately weaken their voices to imitate the ingratiating accent of female speech. They compete with women in bodily softness and sexual passivity, decking themselves out with refinements that are positively unclean inmundissimis.

(Contr. 1 prol. 8 Trans. Gleason in Gleason, 1995: 109.)

Impurity in this context may refer to the mixture of gender categories or the uncontrolled passion that is implied by alluding to passive homosexual actions. Seneca refers to the young men as being born *emolliti*, a term often used to connote the despised *cinaedi*, who were known for both their effeminacy and their sexual lust. Of course, the lack of control was in itself a feminine trait, so the use of *impure* here may very well be used to characterise the young hybrids who had compromised their manhood. Lucian entertained his audience by presenting an individual who, after having

seen a eunuch and a castrated priest, felt he had to return to his house and leave it again in order to start his day afresh. These were described as "... composites, hybrids, monstrosities outside the pale of human nature" (Lucian, *The Eunuch* 6 in Gleason 1995: 161) and, according to Gleason, were "... readily stigmatised as unclean".

Stoicism had an impact on legislation. Moral thinking was good not only for individuals: it was universal. Even in juridical texts, we can detect the notion of impurity. The paterfamilias had the right to kill his wife for adultery, his daughter for unchaste behaviour, and his son for passive homosexuality, for the young man had shamed the family by submitting himself to playing the female sexual role. An adult free man of any good standing who had let himself be penetrated could be punished: "A man who of his own free will who suffers *stuprum,* or impure outrage, is fined the half part of his goods". (Pauli Sententiae 2.26.12-13 in Richlin1993: 567.)

Again: what was impure outrage? Was it the promiscuity or the blurring of categories? *Stuprum* was certainly a sexual offence, but which one? A Roman free man could do whatever he wanted with respect to his body, except seduce a married woman or any individual who belonged to a free man. He could visit the brothels and have sexual relations with his slaves of both sexes, as long as he acted according to the norms for male sexuality. He was obliged to be the penetrating subject. To be a penetrated object was to conform to the female nature. So "impure outrage" had nothing to do with uncontrolled lust. The *impurity* of the outrage was an expression for the blurring of boundaries. Douglas (1966) ponders on the connection between impurity and penetrability, or the impurity of penetrability. She sees the body as a symbol of society, as a system with boundaries. Jorun Solheim develops this idea in her introduction to "*Rent og Urent*" (Purity and Danger) (see Douglas, 1997: 15) and has observed that every opening makes the individual vulnerable as well as society. A Roman free man was not free to be penetrated. Society interpreted it as dangerous for him, as well as for the community. It would destroy his masculinity and it would destroy the greatness of the Roman Empire. This kind of symbolism was expressed by the concept of impurity. We see that impurity, according to the Stoics, could not be redeemed by religion. Sacrifices were not the remedy for impurity. It was a strictly moral category. However, it was not necessarily a result of someone being harmed. So what were the criteria for impurity and what was the remedy?

Stoic ethics cannot be understood separately from logic and cosmology. The universe is organised according to some principles and functions by natural laws. Its imbedded intention expresses the wisdom of Logos and the laws of nature serve life. Sexuality is therefore logical when it serves procreation. My impression from reading the Stoic philosophers is that they were not very concerned with impurity and did not employ the terminology of impurity very often. In order to check this assumption, I searched six books by Seneca, as a test case, using page, http://www.stoics.com

I searched for *pur*, hoping to find all grammatical forms of purity in his *Epistles* and *Essays*. I hit eight (8) occurrences of terms derived from pure/impure, which are underlined below:

- *"Discuss for me justice, duty, thrift, and that twofold purity, both the purity which abstains from another's person, and that which takes care of one's own self."*(Ep.1-329.)

Here, he expressively says that there are two meanings for the concept of purity. One covers sexual transgression by having sexual relations with a person who belongs to another individual. This could be someone's spouse, son, daughter or slave. The other meaning can be seen in the art of self-examination, in order to remove every unwanted thought or feeling. This was the highest possible virtue (Foucault, 2002: 55).

- *"But that other man, upright and pure, who has left the senate and the bar and all affairs of state."* (Ep.2-105.)

A pure man is a man of integrity; he is pure in the sense that his motives are not mixed.

- *"Whenever he castigated our pleasure-seeking lives, and extolled personal purity, moderation in diet, and a mind free from unlawful pleasures, the desire came upon me to limit my food and drink."* (Ep.3-239.)

Purity here is juxtaposed with bodily pleasures.

- *"That which could be done, can be done, if only we purify our souls and follow Nature; for when one strays away from Nature, one is compelled to crave, and fear, and be a slave to the things of chance."* (Ep.3-127.)

A person who purifies his soul lives by reason and according to the laws of nature.

- *"Now assuredly it were fitting that men, thrusting out covetousness from which springs every evil of the heart, should conspire for righteousness and goodness, that piety and uprightness along with honour and temperance*

should rise again, and that vice, having misused its long reign, should at length give place to an age of happiness and purity." (Ess.1-433.)

Here, purity denotes piety.

- *"And your son who was so handsome in body and under the eyes of a dissolute city had been kept pure by his strict regard for chastity."* (Ess.2-77.)

Here, purity denotes chastity.

- *"Though he was a young man of the rarest beauty of person, and was surrounded by such a great horde of women, the corrupters of men, he lent himself to the hopes of none, and when some of them in their effrontery went so far as to make advances to him, he blushed with shame as if he had sinned even by pleasing them. It was this purity of character that made him seem worthy of being appointed to the priesthood while he was still a lad;"* (Ess.2-87.)

Here, purity denotes chastity.

- *"Their faces are cheerful, as are ordinarily the faces of those who bestow or receive benefits. They are young because the memory of benefits ought not to grow old. They are maidens because benefits are pure and undefiled and holy in the eyes of all; and it is fitting that there should be nothing to bind or restrict them, and so the maidens wear flowing robes, and these, too, are transparent because benefits desire to be seen."* (Ess.3-15.)

The fact that benefits are pure and undefiled means that gifts should be given with only one motive, and not defiled by expecting anything in return.

Seneca used the terminology of purity and impurity to denote bodily pleasures and moral integrity in general. Considering that there was a clear dualism between passion and reason, he used the term purity to denote a good quality that was not mixed with a different one. His employment of the concept of purity is actually a metaphor for how it is used in alchemy or chemistry. Pure gold corresponds to pure reason, and the alchemists knew how difficult that is to acquire!

So, what was the logic of purity, understood as chastity? Why did Seneca feel that it was shameful to love his wife immoderately? Again: it was contrary to the purpose of nature. The moral law was reason and passion was the opposite of reason, so passion was opposed to the moral law, which was the principle of the universe. Sex should therefore be practised according to natural law. Reason was polluted by passion. So, immoderate sexuality was impure.

3.4.3. **Summary**

The Stoic concept of impurity was an ethical category. The philosophers in Paul's milieu were strongly convinced about the degrading effect of human passions and bodily pleasure. Their moral teaching was, in this respect, much stricter than Jewish morals and family ethics. Contrary to both the OT and the rabbinic schools, celibacy was regarded as a praiseworthy and superior lifestyle, even in marriage, and was the ideal of a life of purity. The laws of nature provided for the existence of the cosmos. Impurity was a threat to the ordered universe, even to life itself, although not as a spiritual phenomenon. The threat did not come from the gods, but from people who lived in impurity, meaning immorality.

3.5. PURITY AND IMPURITY IN PHILO

One of the aims of this thesis is to establish how Paul understood the concept of purity/impurity. So, why bring in Philo? Philo and Paul were contemporaries. Both were Jews of the Diaspora and residents of famous intellectual centres: Alexandria and Tarsus, respectively. Both were thoroughly conversant with the Gentile life of their time and both were trained in Judaism: Paul in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel and Philo in Alexandria. Both were of high social standing in their respective communities: Philo was a relative of the Alabarch, Alexander; and Paul a member of a Jewish family that boasted Roman citizenship (Andrews, 1950: 400). These similar experiences may suggest a common notion of the meaning of the terminology of purity/impurity.

3.5.1 Stoicism in the *LXX* and Philo

The debate about whether Philo influenced the New Testament authors has continued for a hundred years. The question has focused upon the use of metaphors in Hebrew and the possible influence of Philo upon John's use of the concept *Logos*. However, as Watson (1907: 193) noted a century ago, the influence of one writer upon another cannot be directly inferred from the use of common terms or a similarity of ideas or expressions. For two writers may be entirely independent of each other and yet may express themselves in a very similar way. There are terms and ideas that belong to a milieu and a culture that have become the common property of anyone writing in that particular atmosphere of thought. We are safe in saying that a term belonged to a particular age, but it is not thereby proved that one writer borrowed it from another. The question is still unsolved (Brown, 1997: 91). It may therefore be considered probable that Philo and Paul actually did use the concept of purity/impurity to connote the same idea, quite independently of who influenced whom, especially if they addressed the same audience. So the next question is: did they?

Paul and Philo probably did not move in the same social circles. Deissmann (1957: 69) demoted Paul from the high social status previously assigned him and placed him in the middle class of society because his Greek, while good, was not in the classical style (Andrews, 1950: 400). His rabbinical training has been questioned and his classical education has been evaluated and found too light (Andrews, 1950: 1). Philo, on the other hand, had an excellent Greek education and discusses the subject of encyclical instruction more than once. Grammar, music and geometry were subjects with which he was familiar. Moreover, he expected that rhetoric would make man truly rational, while its twin sister, dialectic, enables him to refute the arguments of the sophists and cures that great disease of the soul: deceit. His numerous quotations from and references to the Greek poets are further evidence of his broad culture (Andrews, 1950: 2).

Philo's notion of the linguistic meaning of the terminology of purity was demonstrated in writing during the first century, and he usually addressed an enlightened audience. Secondly, he used the same Septuagint texts concerning the Levitical concept of purity that Paul was familiar with. The reformed theologian, Capellus, writing in 1650, thought this probable. He was the first to try to show that Paul quoted from the LXX. Kautzsch had in 1869 counted 84 OT quotations in Paul and studied the text of them

but, on account of the many deviations, felt that Paul was citing from memory (Schoeps, 1961: 27). So, even if Paul and Philo did not address the same audience, they had some common background. Furthermore, according to Schoeps, they both had specific interests that were in conformity with the LXX translation.

First to be mentioned is the missionary purpose of the LXX translation (cf. for example LXX Jer. 3:19 as compared with the Massoretic Text: "*I appoint you for the heathen*", and many other texts) and its universalistic position, which enables Paul (Rom10: 20) in the style of the LXX translation to apply Isaiah (65:1) to the gentile world. Paul even pictures God as a missionary, as one who changes his methods of working in order to make a greater impression on men (1Cor 1: 21). Another important matter in the LXX is the tendency to understand Judaism as a moral law, disconnected from the covenant. Schoeps points out that it is well known that the *Old Testament* idea of the *Torah* is best explained as instruction embracing both law and doctrine. In the LXX translation, a shift of emphasis towards legalism takes place and the *Torah* comes to imply a moral way of life prescribed by God. Hence Dodd (1934: 4 in Schoeps, 1961: 28) speaks of "a hard legalistic way". Apart from the passages where he has allegorised in the manner of Philo, Paul implies that he has an understanding that is in harmony with the LXX rather than with the original.

If this is correct, the reading of LXX may have had some bearing upon the understanding of purity and its dogmatic meaning in the Hebrew original. Also, we may expect to find purity understood in terms of ethics. Before we go to the material, in order to analyse the passages where the term functions in a literal context, we need to address the relationship between Philo's theology and his philosophical training. Did the seventy (70) translators of *Leviticus* and the Stoic philosophers have the same understanding of impurity? How did Philo handle these two cultural inputs? Analytic reading of Philo's texts is one possible way to find this out, knowing how consistent Philo was with respect to his hermeneutical ideas about the twofold meaning of the Bible: the literal and the allegorical (Goodenough, 1962: 130ff). Did he understand impurity metaphorically? If so, what was the interpretation? Or, was it an actual condition? If so, meaning what? Philo was a communicator, obviously able to choose words that conveyed his intentions well. So, what was he saying?

3.5.2 Purity in *Allegorical Interpretation*

Analysis of Philo's three books, focusing on allegorical interpretation and searching for terms related to impurity, resulted in the following findings:

Book 1

XV (52): Philo associates here with the Jewish notion of impurity in nature (Lev 19: 23). He sees fruit as a metaphor for virtue and the correct concept of God. More and better quality fruits will be produced, provided wrong opinions are eradicated. A life without these qualities is compared to a barren tree, barrenness being the ultimate token of impurity. Impurity is in this case used as a metaphor for false and atheistic opinions that prevent all production of virtue.

XXV (77): Wisdom is like gold, purified in fire from deceit, metaphorically speaking. What is interesting is that Philo acknowledges that there is wisdom (gold) in other lands as well. He indicates, thereby, that he does not believe in genealogical purity. Purity is a state available for all people and the wisdom of God is granted to the true philosophers. Since God is the source of wisdom and is the creator of all mankind, he is the source of everything that has proved to be honourable, regardless of genealogy.

XXVIII (88): The created mind, being more spiritual, is purer than the material factious mind. Philo operates with two concepts of mankind, the created perfect man and the factual man burdened by earthly limitations and conditions. The mind of the created being was consequently more pure, simply because it had no involvement in situations of earthly life. Philo uses pure here in a mystic sense, as opposed to the profane mind of earthly man.

Book 2

VIII (27-29): The second book contains only one pericope where the term impurity is used. Here, Philo points out that he is "speaking symbolically", stating that passions are purified by reason. So, here, reason is the remedy and not the goal for purification. It is the human passions that need purification. Moreover, the result was the moderate, disciplined and sober practice of natural affections. If this is not achieved, people will be enslaved by their passions. So purity here is used as a symbol for ethical purity, which is the responsibility of every wise man.

Book 3

XXXIII (100): A purified person is one who understands the mysteries and uncreated objects. Moses is used as an example of such a person, because he knew God. The mystic has had his mind purged from the limitations of sense-knowledge and is therefore able to conceive spiritual knowledge. Purity is used in a mystical context.

XLIII (125): Philo here refers to Aaron, who was endowed with a "consecrated and purely sacrificial intellect". This meant that "reason [was} entering (into the opinions) together with holy opinions, and [was] not abandoning them". Philo goes on to use images from cultic life to describe the individual who seeks spiritual truth and is aided by purified reason when seeking truth in a mystical context.

XLVII (139): Impurity here is employed as ethical purity. According to Philo's way of thinking this means the ability to restrain from bodily and physical pleasures, for he claims that "he who devotes himself as a slave to one of them, namely, to pleasure, is impure".

XLVIII (141): Here, the same point is taken a step further: "... he washes his whole belly and all the pleasures which it knows, and all which pursue it, and cleanses them and purifies them from all uncleanliness, not being content with any partial cleansing".

Moreover, it is not only an act of will. It comes from an intrinsic desire for holiness. "But he is disposed to regard *pleasures* so contemptuously that he has no desire for even the necessary meat or drink, but nourishes himself wholly on the contemplation of divine things."

Philo here says that purity nullifies material and natural needs, expressing the platonic dualism of the body and spirit, based on the relationship between ethical and spiritual life.

XLVIII (143): The purified person rejects "the whole of pleasure", including the pleasure of foods, "which originate in the superfluous ingenuity of cooks and makers of delicacies and laborious gourmands". Impurity has connotations of bodily pleasure and gluttony. Ethics are at stake here.

L (147): The love of virtue and the love of food are juxtaposed as are wisdom and lack of control of anger. However, Philo admits that the need for food is impossible to ignore, so food may be regarded as a gift from God as long as it is purified from anything unclean. Impurity here refers to dietary rules. Mandatory purification is an ethical requirement in a cultic context.

LI (150): If there was any suspicion of adultery, Moses ordained a procedure to detect this. If the result was that a woman "has not been polluted by passion, but has kept herself pure in respect of her legitimate husband and sound reason, her proper guide, she shall have a productive and fertile soul, bearing the offspring of prudence and justice and all virtue".
Impurity here denotes ethical impurity.

LXXI (200): Philo offers a comment on the pains of giving birth. He believes that both pain and pleasure are caused by the "medium of our outward senses", both experiences being "peculiar to the woman, who is a symbol of the outward sense". He is thereby implying that a person who is virtuous and has a purified mind is manlier since "the outward senses have the least degree of power over him". Again, purity refers to ethical purity, since it is in a person's power to purify his/her mind. Women who lived in celibacy had done just that, and had therefore enjoyed a deep knowledge of God. This theme is elaborated in *The Contemplative Life* 87-88: "...both men and women together, under the influence of divine inspiration, becoming all one chorus, sang hymns in thanksgiving to God the saviour, Moses leading the men and Miriam leading the women".

There is an element of mysticism in this, since ethics in its deepest sense is spiritually motivated and therefore closely related to a spiritual life. Klawans (2000: 64-66) has studied the topic of sin and purity in Philo, who, he has concluded, acknowledges both cultic and ethical purity. He suggests that Philo works with an allegorical relationship between cultic and ethical purity. However, in the *Special Laws,* ritual purity has not been found at all. I totally agree with Klawans' definition of ritual purity, when he says that it is usually caused by natural processes and affects our bodies, and can only be resolved by ritual purification (Klawans, 2000: 64). In the books examined, twelve incidences have been found of the relevant employment of the concept of purity, six

referring to ethics and three where it is used metaphorically. Then there are three cases where it can be understood in a mystical sense.

Klawans (2000: 65) ponders on the nature of ethical impurity, saying: "Moral defilement in Philo's thought is by no means metaphorical, it is simply non-physical". However, it is after all the non-physical world that is the true reality for Philo.

I believe there is a word and a concept for what Klawans refers to as "non-physical" and that is spiritual or mystical. Purity is not always used to denote ethics or cultic life. As Klawans observes, there is a relationship between them. However, this relationship is not necessarily of an allegorical nature, but a real spiritual power. Impurity is a defiling and destructive force. Purification is a real remedy. Still, it is a fact that Philo uses the terminology of purity/ impurity most often in the context of wisdom versus pleasure. We should therefore expect to find the concept of impurity employed in cases where sexual morality is at stake. In order to investigate if this is the case, an analysis has been made of the four books on Mosaic Law, structured according to the Ten Commandments, and called "*The Special Laws*". The material contains matters of both a cultic and ethical nature. Mosaic Law is strongly focused upon purity, so our question is: How does Philo employ the concept of impurity when writing about the Mosaic laws?

3.5.3 Purity in *The Special Laws*

In order to answer this question of how Philo understood purity, a search was undertaken of the four books on *The Special Laws* on the computer, as Word-documents for 'defile', 'pollut' and 'pur' in order to hit all words related to the purity word-groups.

Book 1

XIX (101-102):

> *But since the priest was a man before he was a priest, and since he is of necessity desirous to indulge the appetites which prompt him to seek for the connections of love, he procures for him a marriage with a pure virgin, and one who is born of pure parents, and grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, selected for their excellency with reference both to their virtue and to their noble birth.*

The argument seems to rest upon the understanding of impurity as contagious. Hayes (2002: 70) has, however, observed that this was probably not the reason. The need for a pure lineage was due to danger from the influence of foreign religions. So it was not that a consecrated priest could be polluted either by impure people in his genealogy or by cultic impurity in his wife. It is not said how his relatives could have become impure, but it is explicitly stated that sexuality is a defiling entity in women. A priest could only marry a virgin, and was not even allowed to look at harlots. This was the law, even in a case where the harlot had repented and purified herself. A virtuous genealogy is expressed by the term 'pure', but in the second temple sources the rationale behind this was that of ethical concerns.

LI (282): Philo is here deals with the impurity in divorced women and widows. These women were to be avoided, since they were defiled by the sexual experiences they had endured in lawful marriage. He states quite pessimistically: "For what time can be long enough to efface those defilements, I indeed do not know". He believed that sensuality defiled the soul, regardless of circumstances. So impurity was not unethical behaviour, but a result of having experienced bodily pleasure.

XX (105): Philo was of the opinion that sexual experiences, even in a legal marriage, would not only cause impurity of the woman's body, but would affect her soul as well. So a pious man would look for virgins when he wanted to marry and start a family, "in order that the sacred seed [might] be sown for the first time in a field which [was] hitherto untrodden and pure".

XX (106): The experiences of sex in marriage had harmed the woman's soul as well as her body, "but the woman who has had experience of another husband is very naturally less inclined to obedience and to instruction, inasmuch as she has not a soul perfectly pure".

XX (107): The High Priest had to have an exceptionally high standard with regard to marriage questions. Not only had he to marry a virgin, but also it had to be someone who had never even been a hypothetical candidate for intimate life. In Philo's mind sex does pollute the body and soul.

> *Let the high priest, therefore, take a pure virgin to be his wife; I say a virgin, meaning not only one with whom no other man has even been connected, but one in connection with whom no other man has ever been*

named in reference to the agreement of marriage, even though her body may be pure.

XXIII (113): In this pericope, we encounter impurity as a problem solved by certain regulations for priests in mourning. Regular priests were allowed to mourn for the close family, even sisters, provided they were virgins. The High Priest was, however, absolutely forbidden to mourn. This follows from the fact that "destruction follows creation", and that the priestly office is in the service of life. Death causes impurity, and the purified High Priest should have nothing to do with it either physically or mentally. Impurity in connection with death carries a mystical meaning.

XXIV (119): Sexual dreams are called "impure dreams". This focuses not only upon bodily discharge as mentioned in Leviticus (15: 32), for the emotional experience is polluting as well, simply because bodily pleasure is seen as polluting.

XLVIII (256-261): This pericope is seen by Klawans (2000: 64) as a typical example of how Philo works out the relationship between ritual and moral impurity. He reveals Platonic influence in his concern for the purification of the soul from passions and various sins resulting from them. Sexual sins are seen as polluting powers that defile both body and soul. Sexual attraction as such is called "unlawful passion", which would make the person impure and even defile the sacrifice.

XXIX (150, LIII 292): An appetite for food was interpreted as polluting since it was a bodily demand. "Being a profane, and impure, and unholy thing, [it] is driven beyond the territories of virtue, and is banished as it ought to be," as it tempts people to give in to "the pleasures of the belly". The reason why honey was not allowed as a sacrifice was possibly due to the belief that the bees were born from the putrefaction and corruption of dead oxen. Realising that this was dubious, Philo gives an alternative reason, which to him was self-evident: The sweetness of the honey was not fit for the altar because this functioned as "a figurative declaration that all superfluous pleasure is unholy".

Book 2

XIX (92): In this second book, Philo develops further the Mosaic legal material. Purity is underlined a few times and likened to indifference to sacred matters (II 6). Philo also

offers a political comment about unjust taxation, which defiled the whole lives of greedy people.

VII (30): Here, Philo repeats the necessity of virginity, connoted as purity.

XV (56): The new material in this second book lies in the emphasis Philo lays on the purity of the Sabbath, "which some have denominated as the virgin, looking at its exceeding sanctity and purity". Another way of understanding the Sabbath was to see it as motherless, since the day was "produced by the Father of the universe alone, as a specimen of the male kind, unconnected with the sex of women." Again, we are reminded of how impurity was linked with sexuality.

Book 3

In Book 3, Philo again concentrates on sexual matters. He mentions incest briefly (III (14)) and bestiality at some length (VII (42), VIII (45 – 50)). Then he proceeds to adultery, meaning unfaithfulness on the woman's part. After describing the magical means by which adultery should be revealed, he concludes with these words: "...a woman who has committed adultery differs in no respect from the beasts, whose connections with one another are promiscuous and incessant; but she who is pure from all such accusations is devoted to that manner of life which befits human beings" (X :52-57)

XI (64): In Roman society, the body could be insulted in two ways: sexually or by violence (Walters, 1997: 39). For this reason, no free man could be punished corporally. In accord with this, Philo writes about men who defile widows or divorcees by violence. The woman surely is defiled, but not as much as if she had committed adultery. Again, we see that impurity is connected with crossing the boundaries of a person's body. The common denominator between violence and sexuality is that both are the results of temper and passion or "intemperance", as Philo said.

XIV (81): Philo employs the term "defiled" again when he discusses the problem of men believing they are marrying virgins, but finding out that it is not so. Women who are not virgins are impure: "... but because they have given in marriage as virgins, those who have been defiled by others..."

XV (89): The last subject to be discussed in Book III is impurity in murderers. If they flee into the temple in order to attain asylum, they should be taken and given up for execution. Here it is clear that what is at stake is ethical purity. Even if the murderers had "washed themselves, and sprinkled themselves, and purified themselves with the accustomed purifications; but those who are guilty of indelible crimes, the pollution of which no length of time will ever efface, may approach and dwell among those holy seats;... "

Klawans states (2000: 65): "For Philo, if anything, it is the ritual impurity that is the metaphor." Klawans argues that the murderer was excluded from the temple because he did not deserve to be in the presence of the holy. Philo implies, however, that the impurity is present in the temple even after the murderer has left it: "The impurity will never be effaced". It is like a polluting and destructive energy. This shows that impurity is not a concept used as a metaphor for cultic purity, but that it is conceived of as a real entity. When life is threatened, the power of death is at work in a spiritual or mystic way.

XVI (91): Pondering on the situation where the relatives of the murdered person might, in rage, slay the murderer so that his blood would be shed inside the temple, Philo follows up with one more reason, this time referring to the cultic meaning of blood: "... for then the blood of the sacrifices would be mingled with the blood of murderers; that which has been consecrated to God with that which is wholly impure".

The misdeed would have affected the blood of the killer and there would be a real danger of contaminating the sacrifices. This is an instance of the scary relationship between ethical and ritual purity.

Book 4

VII (40): The last book offers very little material concerning impurity. It is, however, mentioned in relation to oaths, which would defile the name of God, meaning that the term is used in an allegorical way.

X (59): There is one pericope in which purification is used metaphorically. Philo offers advice to judges, demonstrating how he understands the connection between purity and virtue: "My good man, let thy ears be *purified*". They will be *purified* if they are continually washed out with a stream of virtuous language.

XVIII (105, 106): Finally, Philo describes at length clean and unclean animals, representing the allegorical interpretation that connects purity to intellectual abilities, and impurity to the flesh.

3.5.4 Summary

In the three books of allegorical interpretation that have been examined, twelve incidences of the relevant employment of the concept of purity have been detected. The terminology is used six times to denote ethical purity and it is used three times metaphorically. The other three cases may be understood in a mystical or spiritual sense. It seems that Philo does not use the terminology principally as an allegorical tool. So the next question is: Which violations were considered impure?

In the four books of *The Special Law,* the terms pure, impure and defile were used on twenty-two occasions in various forms. As well as the one case when impurity was linked to dietary laws and cultic rules, the terminology of impurity is used in the context of sex, passion, pleasure, violence, gluttony, and greed. Every case has to do with lack of bodily control. Philo used the category of impurity as a conceptual framework for experiencing bodily pleasure, especially sexual intercourse. In this respect, Philo is a full-blown Stoic in his approach to the nature of reason versus the passions. In addition, there are two cases where the context is murder, resulting in impurity that is contagious and lasting. In these cases, impurity is more than a metaphor; it is non-physical, but it is very real. It is spiritual.

3.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The purpose of this analysis has been to determine how the terminology of impurity was employed in Roman society. It should be apparent at this point that there were different types of understanding and of usage, depending on social background, on education and on the concept of reality.

In popular culture, we find vivid concepts of impurity as an ontological phenomenon. There were three aetiologies for impurity:

- it could be a condition caused by a power, a demon or spirit that had influenced or attacked the individual;
- it could have been designed in nature in the heavenly stars;
- it could have been transferred from one impure person to another.

This accords well with a firm belief in destiny. If an individual became a so-called impure, perverted prostitute, it was not due to lack of will power or an inability to endure poverty, but it was written in the stars, or the fate could be due to a spell.

After a person died, it was crucial to guard the doors in order to prevent impure spirits from entering. Sickness was seen as an attack or a punishment from an avenging god. The remedy for impurity was of a religious nature, taking the form of charms, sacrifices or lesser purification rituals.

Against this general background, it is interesting to see how differently impurity in a Vestal virgin was dealt with. She was not treated as other human beings were. She was held responsible, as if she had the willpower to resist any temptation. She was treated as belonging to a separate category. Cultic purity ruled out female sexuality. A purified and dedicated virgin was not a real woman. So it follows logically that she was not limited as if she were a woman. In rituals, this meant that she had tasks and privileges corresponding to those of male priests, like participating in certain sacrifices in public rituals. However, it was not only the definition of gender that she blurred. A Vestal was responsible not only for her own chastity but, in effect, for the social purity and well-being of the whole population. So she became the embodiment of the goddess who in herself was pure energy or pure essence and who, in the dedicated Vestal, channelled

her power through a personality, giving her energy intention, responsibility and willpower.

We have seen that it was more serious to violate the vow of chastity than to extinguish the eternal fire. To forget about the fire was an ethical transgression that did not create impurity. It could be a sign of possible impurity in the college of Vestals and might suggest an investigation, but it did not prove or create impurity. Ignoring the fire was certainly punished, but the fire was lit again in a special ceremony and the energies of the goddess again flowed undisturbed. Impurity caused by sexual encounter could, however, not be tolerated, or punished, or forgiven. The Vestal's mistake could not be expiated. So the polluted Vestal had to be nullified; she was not killed, but she was removed from the face of the earth. The Roman homeland was again pure and impenetrable.

The Stoic philosophers' use of the terminology of purity and pollution was of a different nature, derived from their concept of reality. Though the Stoics believed there were spiritual beings, they did not see them as impure, dangerous or malevolent. They fulfilled their own meaning as elements of the cosmos, which was again organised by the laws of nature. This was a valid approach to ethical questions as well. The laws of nature were life giving and life supporting. A person who behaved in a way that was contrary to the purpose of the natural laws was putting himself and society in harm's way. If his yielding to passions caused his unwanted behaviour, he qualified to be labelled impure. The logic in this is that his ability to reason was polluted by passions.

Philo could not have agreed more. In the four books of *The Special Laws*, he offers twenty-five pericopes in which he directly addresses the topic of purity/impurity. Fourteen of these pericopes deal with sexuality, either concerning virginity or deviance. One is about grief, one about gluttony, one about indifference to sacred matters, one about bribery, one compares the Sabbath to a virgin, one deals with violence and two with murder, one connects impurity with a false oath, and one associates purity with virtue. Only one pericope is about impurity in animals, being presented in a descriptive way, according to the Law of Moses. Apart from this last pericope, we have twenty-four cases, one of which is a general plea for virtue. Virtue seems to be used interchangeably with having control over one's sentiments, needs and feelings. Twenty cases are about the body and the problems of passion, mourning, anger or appetite. These are, of course,

related to the complaint about indifference to holy matters. There is only one case that deals with matters connected to the first commandment: namely, false oaths defiling the name of the Lord. There is only one case of an ethical character that is not directly linked to bodily pleasures and that deals with unjust money.

The material Philo has commented upon uses the concept of purity/impurity more than two hundred times. In his writing, the concept is used much more selectively. Though he adores Moses, he has not applied the Mosaic vocabulary of purity to the same cases as the author of the Pentateuch did. When Philo writes about purity, he means purity from the power of the passions. First and foremost, impurity is linked to inappropriate and uncontrolled sexual actions.

This means that we can narrow the use of the impurity-related terminology in Roman society down to two main meanings.

- In a philosophical milieu, it was usually employed to denote lack of self-control in sexual relations.
- In popular culture, the concept denoted contact with the spiritual world.

In the next chapter, we shall analyse Paul's employment of the concept of purity/impurity. Being trained in Jewish theology, and having knowledge of the exorcisms practised by Jesus, one would expect him to show intellectual inheritance from both Jewish and Roman cultures. We have seen that impurity in Roman literature was always seen as a negative. In Judaism, however, only moral impurity was negative, since ritual impurity usually was natural and should not be avoided. Paul addressed both Jews and Gentiles, educated people and popular culture, which suggests that when Paul used the concept of impurity he was running the risk of being misunderstood, since the term had different connotations in the different cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 4: PURITY AND IMPURITY IN JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to determine how Jesus defined the concept of purity/impurity. In chapter 2 we analysed his intellectual context, such as Biblical Judaism and literary sources from the Second Temple Period and the contemporary sectarian milieu, in order to establish an insight into the usage and semantic field of the concept. However, since Jesus is reported to have redefined the concept by nullifying parts of Leviticus and adding new meaning to the concept from the sphere of demonology, we are faced with the question of how accurately the gospel authors have quoted him. In other words; what did Jesus say and mean? This question is especially valid since the Gospel authors differ in their presentation of Jesus' dealing with impurity. The synoptic authors report a number of exorcisms of impure spirits, while John has none. This prompts the question: Did Jesus understand impurity as an ontological category, and thereby suggest an ontological dualism we do not find in the Hebrew Bible?

In order to track the impurity language of the historical Jesus we shall examine the concepts employed in the relevant pericopes with the Synoptic Problem in mind. Since our survey will be undertaken with the presupposition of early dating, the possibility of a full blown church developed mythology is seen as unlikely. We do not look for the theology of the Church at the end of the first century, but we must, never the less, acknowledge the possibility of the text being influenced and interpreted by the theology of the authors as well as interdependence between them.

It is today widely accepted that Mark wrote in the 70s, Matthew and Luke worked independently of each other by editing Mark and supplying with sayings from the Q-source, between 80 and 90. Meier (1991: 43-44) holds this to be the best argued theory, although he sees other options. Dating the Gospels is of relevance to our research question, since the terminology of impurity seems to have been changing as the Church developed its own identity. We, however, cannot see that witnesses from the ancient sources have been proven invalid, a view that is strongly argued in the work of Wenham

(1992). We can, of course, not repeat all his arguments, but only summarise his points into three categories.

- First; the method should be to start with Acts, because it is the latest, and work backwards. Hemer (1989) presents fifteen (15) reasons why Acts was written before 70, of which thirteen (13) are considered strong and quoted by Wenham (1992: 225-226). Hemer offers an analysis of the milieu presented in the Gospels, as well as in Acts, and he argues that his findings are more typical for the pre-70s than afterwards, an observation which may have direct relevance for the use of the concept of impurity. If there had been a Jewish war and the temple was destroyed, it would most probably have been mentioned, or at least the cultural changes it brought should have been detectable.
- The second argument involves the ancient witnesses, who lived very early, or were well informed, or both. The most important ones are Papias (Eusebius, HE 3.39.16), Irenius (Adv. Haer. 3.1) Pantaenus (Eusebius, HE 5.10.3), in addition to the almost unanimous patristic tradition.
- Thirdly, there is some external evidence in the form of the fragment 7Q5, which was found in cave 7 at Qumran, a cave which had been closed since the year 68. The fragment fits well (although not beyond any doubt (wikipedia)) with Mark 6: 52f, according to O'Callagen (1972: 91-109).

Acts has an abrupt ending, which suggests that the author never had the opportunity to finish it. Hemer agrees with Harnack in dating Acts to the year 62 (Wenham, 2000: 269). If this is right, the Gospel of Luke was known to Paul. Wenham interprets the expression "... the brother whose praise is in the gospel" (2 Cor 8: 18), as a documentation of Paul's acknowledgment of the Gospel of Luke in the mid fifties. He reads the text '*en to evanggelio*' literally, instead of "for his *service* to the gospels" (NEB, NIV) or "for his *preaching* the gospel" (RSV). His point is that "The Gospel" was already understood as the title of a written account when Paul was writing his letters (Wenhan, 1992: 230-238). This makes it probable that the Gospel of Luke was written in the early or mid 50s. The witness of Luke is especially important in our context, since he reported from the ministries of both Jesus and Paul. Did Luke leave Acts unfinished because he died; maybe executed as were Peter and Paul? If that is the case, both his works were written before 70. According to Eusebius and patristic tradition, Mark wrote for the Christians in Rome with Peter's approval after the

'exodus', which may mean after the departure from Rome, where they had worked from 42-44. This means that Mark may have written his Gospel about 45. The patristic tradition testifies to the existence of a collection of Aramaic or a Hebrew collection of *Logio* attributed to the apostle Matthew (Wenham, 1992: 116 – 136). We hold it probable that Matthew wrote a collection of sayings in Hebrew or Aramaic very early. The Gospel, as such, may have been written in Greek, or translated into Greek later. The universal tradition of the early Church puts Matthew first, which means a date around 40 (Wenham, 1992: 238-243). Dating the Gospels early does not in any way solve the 'Synoptic Problem', although it limits the possibility of a mythology developing out of control of the eye-witnesses. The possible impact from the theology of the early Church must still be considered, even if the biographies of Jesus were written only ten or twenty years after his death.

The topic of impurity was much debated in Judaism, as shown in the numerous cases of rabbinic debates. In the context of gentile mission it was crucial, in order to define the border between Judaism and Christianity. The Apostle meeting in 49 decided not to let the matter become a stumbling block to new converts and agreed to limit the demands to three kinds of food restrictions and adultery. Luke does not refer to any words of Jesus, only to what was customary. This raises the following question: Was the saying which nullifies a large part of Leviticus (Matt 15: 11-20, Mk 7: 1-23) unknown to the Apostles? Or was it taken for granted?

Meier (1991) presents five primary criteria as tools for deciding which words were original words of Jesus. These are: the criteria of contradiction, discontinuity, multiple attestation, coherence, and rejection (Meier, 1991: 168-177). In this chapter we shall apply these criteria and bear the question of historicity in mind throughout the exegetical work with the relevant pericopes.

The main concepts of this chapter, purity and impurity, formed the structure of the Jewish concepts regarding the relationship between God and mankind. We have identified this as the map of reality, in which the continuum of holy, pure, common, and impure, is a decisive factor. In stating that the concepts of 'purity' and 'common' are passive categories while 'holiness' and 'impurity' imply activity, we follow Milgrom (2000b) against Kaufman (1972). Sanctification is a process which takes place in degrees, as well as defilement. Our question is whether 'holiness' and 'impurity' thus

represent an ontological and/or ethical dualism. We shall also draw from Otto (1958) and analyse the concept of holiness as the numinous and opposite to the defiling force of impurity. The holiness of YHWH was understood as powerful, even dangerous, but still vulnerable in Judaism. The *Shekia* of the Lord could be driven away by impurity and it could kill the irreverent.

Jesus' approach to impurity demonstrates a different practice with regard to the Biblical dualism of holiness and impurity. We shall see in this chapter that Jesus revealed a new concept of holiness, demonstrating that the *Shekina*, the spirit and glory of God was more powerful than even the strongest defiling force. Jesus states and demonstrates that no ritual impurity could cause the presence of the Lord to vanish.

When he nullified different kinds of impurity, what was the concept of purity Jesus worked with? We shall investigate four options:

- either it was a state which Jesus did not believe represented danger any more;
- or it was symbolic for something which was not valid any more;
- or the spiritual situation or map had changed;
- moral impurity was not created from legalistic transgressions, only from evil.

4.2 REINTERPRETING IMPURITY

4.2.1 Introduction

The controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees, which is recorded in Matthew 15: 11-20 and Mark 7: 1-23, was probably held by the Jews as the most startling thing Jesus ever said (Barclay, 2001: 138). For in this saying he does not only criticise the superficiality of the Jewish religion as it was practised, he actually wiped out large sections of the book of Leviticus by nullifying the concept of ritual impurity. Jesus here demonstrates that he neither shared the understanding of purity that was accepted in the Qumran community, nor did he agree with the interpretation of the Pharisees. By the above mentioned saying, Jesus cancelled not only the tradition of the elders and the oral tradition, but he also cancelled the Scriptural basis of Judaism. Purity was no *adiaphora*, purity was seen as "an enacting of his or her status as a member of God's

holy people" (deSilva, 2000: 277), as well as protection against "unseen powers that may react in a hostile and destructive way" (deSilva, 2000: 248). Since the purity-system, as such, was fundamental in Israel's religion, the consequence of Jesus' saying was, in reality, a new religion.

The concern with impurity was based on fear of defiling the sacred space which God had demanded should to be kept holy, so that he could dwell there. Jesus' pronouncement nullified several purity rules. This challenged more than the priesthood, since keeping the Temple pure had practical consequences for everybody. If Jesus was right, people did not have to worry about impurity after sexual intercourse, contact with menstruates, women after childbirth, people with a skin disease, and those who had abnormal genital discharges, as well as those who would have to take care of a dead relative. Ritual impurity was *de facto* declared invalid. Also, this single saying, implicitly, cancelled genealogical impurity in Gentiles. And as if that was not enough, it nullified moral impurity caused by neglecting the Biblical list of forbidden foods, providing it was not done with any evil intent, which indicated that ethics should be founded in love and not in legalism.

Sanders argues (1985: 266) that this controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees was constructed in the early church, since Jesus actually lived by the Law to a degree acceptable for lay people, and there was no reason for the Pharisees to criticise him. To this we will say that Sanders is partly right; Jesus probably lived according to the Law, but he taught differently and defended his disciples when they were criticised, which was the case in this pericope. We also agree that the narrative is a construct, but not necessarily a late one. An early author would also be able to recapitulate several incidents into one narrative in order to demonstrate a case.

Our question is: Did the historical Jesus really redefine the concept of impurity to the extent that he nullified scripture? If he did, to whom did he say it, and why?

4.2.2 **Redefining Impurity**

We shall in the following examine Matthew 15: 11-20 and Mark 7: 1-23, arguing that the much debated question of the pericope's status as an original saying of Jesus may well have been so. We have argued that Matthew wrote his Gospel first, in Hebrew (or

Aramaic) and as early as in 40. Further, we believe that the reason why synoptic theories are still unsolved is that Matthew's account was edited when it was later translated and new material was added. So, some material is originally from Matthew and some is later, from oral or written sources. Our point of departure is, however, that Matthew 15 was written first and that Mark 7 was dependent on and written in line with the profile of Peter's teaching in 45.

There are several topics mixed together in these verses. Modern scholarship has explained this by pointing to different layers of redaction. The abolishment of purity and dietary laws are seen as a reflection of the Christian Church, while the question of hand washing is perceived as early material (Ottenheijm, 2000: 130). This is probably even more complicated, since the scholarship of Judaism shows that there is a difference between 'hand-washing' and 'hand-purity' (Milikovsky, 2000: 152), of which the latter was the earliest concern and in play during the time of Jesus. It was also debated whether defilement occurred by eating or only by touching impure food, as f. ex. the first fruit and even Scripture, which were seen as holy enough to be dangerous, and therefore able to cause impurity and death (Milikovsky, 2000: 154). In between the verses which are directly relevant to our topic we find other topics as well. However, all the different topics in both of the accounts were relevant in 40, as well as in the 30s. Both authors were familiar with the impurity debates that persisted in Jewish circles.

If Matthew was the apostle who had been a tax collector, as the patristic tradition holds to be true, he may have been an eye-witness to a number of episodes when Jesus disputed with the Pharisees over matters in the Law. Sanders is obviously correct, that this specific story is constructed (Sanders, 1985: 266), but that may have been done in order to preserve some main principles about impurity.

Matthew was probably present at the apostolic council reported in Acts 15, and it may seem strange that he is not reported as having reminded the assembly of the new principle for purity that many of them had heard from Jesus in person. It seems that the apostles did not feel free to allow Gentiles any dispensations from the Mosaic Law, and no quotation from Jesus is mentioned. On the contrary; the Jerusalem Church adhered to the Mosaic legislation concerning food polluted by idols, meat of strangled animals and from eating blood (15: 20). The question of following Mosaic Law was even raised as a question of salvation (15: 1). So why does it seem as if none of the apostles or church

members had any recollection of the new and important principle taught by Jesus in 49? Or did they? We see that the question which was presented was circumcision, a matter Jesus never taught about, according to our sources. Since the narrative in 15 is about purity, it may not have been considered directly relevant to the question of circumcision. Judging from the conclusion of the meeting, it seems that it started with circumcision, dealt with Gentiles as believers, and ended with forbidden diets. This indicates that the whole principle of following the Law was considered, including purity matters. Peter probably remembered the incident and maybe he told about his vision of the impure food that the voice of the Lord declared pure (Acts 10: 1-31). The fact that no such argument is reported does not prove that it never happened. Peter chose to argue by pointing to the experience which many had witnessed; that God had given his Holy Spirit to Gentiles and purified their hearts by faith (15: 8-9). This was finally accepted and the question of salvation was solved. The principle established was that Gentiles should find it easy to become Christians. The Mosaic requirements that they agreed to present were not expressions of obligations to Moses, but simply those that the Gentiles and Jews in Diaspora were accustomed to. Neither circumcision nor kosher diet was considered necessary for salvation. If they believed that Jesus had taught that the written Law was binding in purity matters, they could not have done this. The whole conversation in 49 indicates that the majority of the assembly, and all of the apostles, had the teaching of Jesus on purity embedded.

In the following section, we shall offer an attempt at reconstructing the parallel to 15 as we find it in Mark 7. Our guess is that Mark and Peter had a copy of Matthew's account during the time they worked together in Rome. We imagine that they read 15 and discussed the content. Mark seems to have found the pericope confusing, since he reads it as a parable (7: 17). We suppose that Peter used this opportunity to teach Mark and to tell him (again?) about his own experience with the voice he heard in the vision.

According to Matthew, Peter is actually the only disciple who is explicitly mentioned as being present during the incident. He did not understand the point, and asked for an explanation, which Jesus explained to be about hand-purity (Mat 15: 15). This was probably also Peter's understanding. This meant that he thought that Jesus only reacted against the oral tradition, not Scripture. So Peter would have remembered his own understanding when he read and explained to Mark: the principle of outward impurity also included diets. This he had understood when he, in year 37, was totally amazed by

the thought that he should ever eat impure food and associate with Gentiles (Acts 10: 1-31). He says flat out that he had never eaten forbidden food. So when he started to think differently, it was not because he had heard it from Jesus, but rather that it had come in a vision from "the voice of the Lord" three years before he wrote his gospel.

While Matthew is consistent in his focus on hand washing, Mark claims that the meaning of the story was that Jesus thereby "declared all foods as pure". It is said as an explanation by the author, not as a quotation from Jesus. It is almost a verbatim account of what the voice had said to Peter, according to Acts 10. In the same way as Peter needed to be told three times before he was able to grasp the point, in Mark's version the disciples were also told three times: first, as part of the crowd (7: 15); then again, alone with Jesus who scolded them for being so dull (7: 18); and the third time, when he was elaborating the idea (7: 20).

We follow Cranfield (1959: 241) in identifying that the ending of the quotation from Jesus occurs after the statement about the food leaving the body; "*katharidson panta ta bromata*" was Mark's note of explanation, rather than an indirect quotation from Jesus. Jesus implied that the food regulations of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 were nullified, although he did not say so directly. Since Peter was unable to apply this principle in practical life, he needed the revelation that is reported in Acts 10 and therefore, he could explain it to Mark, who then explained it in writing by adding, "In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean".

Both Gospels bring the same dramatic statement: Only immorality creates impurity. Both authors are in agreement about the point that impurity of the body was nullified and that impurity was created by evil thoughts and actions. Impurity, thereby, became a synonym for sin. Klawans finds this conflict story "extremely significant" (Klawans, 2000: 148) because it demonstrates that Jesus regarded sin to be morally defiling, with the consequences it had for the relationship with God. Ottenheijm (2000: 131) points to the fact that the pericope shows that not only immoral deeds created impurity but immoral intentions as well.

The radical point in this story is not that Jesus acknowledged the defiling power of moral impurity, in principle, but rather that he defined immorality as evil and not as obedience to Scripture. It was of course also sensational that he denied the defiling power of all kinds of ritual impurities, as well as genealogical impurity. This was a drastic measure, and the question is: Did he really say this, or is it a later addition? We shall in the following put the saying in Matthew 15: 18-19 and Mark 7: 18-23 to the fivefold test as defined by Meier (1991: 166-177).

The criterion of contradiction is defined in order to identify sayings which must have been embarrassing to the early church. In this case, it is possible that Peter's own experience in a vision had become known as trustworthy after the baptism of the family of Cornelius, and therefore it was very easy to add these words as an explanation of the incident.

The criterion of discontinuity focuses on sayings that are obviously original sayings of Jesus, since they would be contradictory to both Judaism and the early Church. Our saying was certainly not a quotation from Judaism, but its content is found in the theology of the church. The problem with this criterion, as such, is that it leaves us with a caricature of Jesus as totally detached from both his own culture and the thinking of his followers (Meier, 1991: 172).

The criterion of multiple attestations will to some degree be dependent on which theory of the synoptic problem one works with. In our interpretation we have two witnesses: Mark, who may be dependent on Matthew. It is surprising to us that Luke has not included this pericope, since it is much in line with Pauline theology. The content of the saying is also fully in accord with John, although he seems to have chosen the concept of sin instead of impurity. This shows that moral impurity was, after some time, often denoted as sin, a less Jewish expression. In many cases the meaning would have been the same, if the purity language had been employed; for example, in John 1: 29, "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" alludes to sacrificial blood and could have said, "... purified the impurity of the world".

According to Meier (1991: 176), the criterion of coherence should be used after the three former criteria have been used to establish what the original sayings of Jesus probably were. However, in this case, coherence with the unanimous teaching of the Church is very strong. If the exclusiveness of evil as impurity was not taught by Jesus, it is difficult to see how that was introduced and how it could be accepted by the Apostolic Council. The idea of impure animals was abolished in 49. The Law of Moses was thereby neglected. We do not find it likely that the apostles of Jerusalem would have done that had Jesus not said so. If it was extraordinarily radical for Jesus to nullify Leviticus, it was probably not any easier for the apostles in Jerusalem.

We believe the proof of the authenticity of our pericope is found in the fifth criterion: the execution. It is an historic fact that Jesus was rejected to the degree that the Jews demanded his execution. This means that he said more than was often debated between the Rabbis. To discuss the oral Law was a legitimate thing to do, but to nullify the written Law was intolerable. It was considered better to let one man die than to see the whole nation perish.

Not all of the Mosaic impurities are specifically dealt with in the Gospel literature; there is, for instance, nothing said about the impurity of semen and vaginal bleeding from natural causes. With regard to impurity of certain sicknesses, corpses, and Gentiles, there are, however, narratives which demonstrate that Jesus meant just what he said: so-called ritual impurity was of no offence to God, since it was void of defiling power. The glory and presence of God was experienced in people regardless of Jesus' ritual condition, even when he was met in the capacity of mediator between God and mankind. For, according to the Gospels, Jesus puts himself in positions where he did contract impurity by physical contact, space, and table fellowship. In the following, we shall analyse the texts which deal with these cases.

4.2.3 **Ritual Impurity and Danger**

We recall the diagram by Milgrom (2000b: 29), showing the system of Biblical purity. People and objects can be holy, pure, impure, or common. A pure person can be either holy or common, and a common person can be either pure or impure. A holy person is always pure and an impure person is always common. Pure and common are static states signifying lack of impurity, respectively holiness. Holiness and impurity are

antagonistic active forces. The biblical dualism is not between purity and impurity, but between holiness and impurity. Since holiness is a property of God, the purity map described the procedure from impurity to the holy sphere. For many Jewish believers in the first century, holiness and impurity were real spiritual forces; both were dangerous, although in different ways. Faced with the immense power of a holy God, people would tremble and feel the need of protection, or 'covering' as Otto says (1958: 54). Purification rituals were such a 'covering', believed and experienced as real protection against the numinous, awesome power. Purity is the state in which a person is as godlike as possible. This pursuit of purification, in the understanding of the Temple constructions, is seen as a miniature cosmology and as acts of *Imitatio Dei* (Klawans, 2005: 62). Thus impurity is experienced and interpreted as an active, or potentially active, destructive force. It is encountered as sin, in the inclination that makes people do what they do not want to do, or as sickness: it attacks body and soul. Impurity was the term which denoted the force that caused YHWH to leave the sanctuary and the people. Nothing could be more frightening than that. So when Jesus opposed the purity regime he was seen as an anarchist leading the people out of God's protection.

Douglas (2000) argues that impurity was actually dangerous, according to Leviticus. In the context of Jesus, this was not only a cultic experience. The concrete danger in the first century was the possibility of losing the temple, since the occupying Roman power could actually destroy it, were the religious practices to become provoking to them.
We also recall that holiness and impurity were antagonistic powers that could not operate together. And the danger was connected with the belief that impurity would dominate over holiness and God would vanish. A life on earth without the presence of God meant life without protection and blessing. We must notice that Jesus did not nullify the danger of impurity altogether. He only argued against ritual impurity and maintained moral impurity as real impurity: an active force of sin, able to defile a person. As there were specific sins mentioned in the Bible, grave enough to create impurity, Jesus presents his alternative list: evil thoughts, evil words, and actions like murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and *blasphemiai*, slander (Matt 15: 18-19). Breaking of the seventh and eighth commandment is added to the list, while idolatry is substituted by *blasphemiai*, usually employed in contexts where the content was directed towards God. This is the term used in the saying regarding the unforgivable sin: blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3: 29). This sin occurred when people confused the Holy Spirit in Jesus with an evil spirit. While idolatry could

be seen as confusion over which God to worship, *blasphemiai* was the inability to identify the Holy Spirit from the impure spirit.

Matthew presents a list in accord with the defiling sins mentioned in the Torah; Mark (7: 15-23) offers an extended vice list that most people would recognise from everyday life: greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, arrogance and folly, which means that moral defilement is in most people. He is, also, quite specific in defining which conditions do not create impurity: nothing from outside that goes into the mouth, which is aimed at the food restrictions in Torah, and not eating without washing the hand, which targets the tradition of the elders.

The principles we can derive from these texts are: there is no danger in ritual impurity. Moral impurity, however, comes from evil hearts and truly defiles a person. We have seen that the rationale in ritual impurity may have been fear of the forces of death. What Jesus implies is that there is no reason to fear destruction and death, since God is stronger. There is no danger in wasting semen or blood; it is safe to take care of the corpse. Though a disease may seem to be an active force, there is no demonic power that can overpower the God of life.

The controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees over dietary regulations was extremely important because, in this case, he did not defend himself by pointing to the priority of a higher ethical value. It is not like the words, "You have heard... but I say unto... ", where his standard is even higher and stricter; and it is not a matter of interpretation, an art the Jews were very familiar with. Jesus goes against Scripture, nullifying the dietary rules, the symbol of Israel being different from other nations. The reason given in Leviticus was: "Be holy as I am holy". Israel should be a different people, separated from the neighbouring nations, who worshipped idols. Israel's holiness needed to be protected and guarded. What Jesus now says is that holiness does not need that kind of border to sustain its power. The message of Jesus was that the people of God should be holy by being inclusive and compassionate and generous. The only protection a person needs is to watch their heart from evil.

There is a shift from seeing holiness as totally different and separated, to seeing God as engaged in human life. The new holiness code of Jesus has been called the 'The Compassion Code' (Borg, 1998: 139). The old saying, "Be holy as I am holy", has become, "Be compassionate as God is compassionate". This indicates a shift in the awareness of danger. It is not ritual impurity that defiles a person, but moral impurity; in other words, sin, defined in such a broad sense that it becomes almost inevitable. While moral impurity in Judaism was created by grave sins, which normally could be avoided with ease, the anthropology of Jesus is that people normally are caught in a state of moral impurity, due to the weakness of human nature (Matt 26: 41).

4.2.4 **Skin Conditions and Flux**

We have argued that the nullification of different kinds of impurities from both tradition and scripture, as recorded in Matthew 15 and Luke 7, was probably implied by Jesus. Since the textual evidence can be interpreted either way, we need to examine the actions of Jesus, to see how they correspond with the saying. Skin condition was an impurity which was contagious and unacceptable in the Sanctuary, since it would threaten the presence of God. So how did Jesus live according to this law? In all three versions, Matthew 8:1, Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 5:12-16, Jesus touched the leper and thus, became impure himself. This does not mean that he broke the purity law, as Warrington (2000: 35) claims. The fact that Leviticus 5:3 says, "He is guilty", only means that those who become defiled are responsible for being purified. He was certainly allowed to touch a leper whether he wanted to help him physically and practically, or by the laying on of hands. Ritual impurity was usually not a bad thing. He only showed that he cared enough to go through the trouble of purifying himself, in case he wanted to visit the temple. On the other hand, if he did respect the Leviticus way of thinking, and felt that he jeopardised the presence of God, which he needed in order to perform a miracle, he probably would not have touched the leper. The procedure of Jesus was, however, different from the healing of Naaman, whom the prophet Elisha healed from a distance (2 Kings 5: 14). There is another incident, reported only by Luke, about Jesus healing ten lepers (Luke 17: 11-19), this time without attracting impurity. The lepers stood at a distance, raising their voices to gain Jesus' attention, without coming near enough to make him impure. Luke seems to make a point of their keeping a distance, thereby revealing his own repugnance of leprosy (Koet, 2000: 102), or showing consideration to his Jewish readers.

Jesus also contracted impurity when he was touched by a woman with an abnormal haemorrhage (Matt 9:18-19; Mk 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56). According to the logic of Leviticus, the impurity of the woman should have been dangerous to the holiness of Jesus and therefore, would have made him non- productive. In the ministry of Jesus it had become known, however, that his power was not threatened by people's impurities. Obviously, this must have felt strange; people wanted to touch him in order to get healed, still were careful not to do anything wrong. We read in Matthew and Luke that the woman only touched the hem of his garment, being careful to defile him as little as possible, and in Mark 6:56 we read that people begged him to let them touch the edge of his cloak. We see that Jesus healed impure people by touching them. Since he also could heal from a distance, it seems that he touched the impure in order to make a statement: ritual impurity does not prevent the presence to God.

4.2.5 **Death and Corpse Impurity**

The defiling force of death was seen as dangerous if the sanctuary became contaminated by contact. People should, of course, take care of their dead relatives, but there were specific restrictions on priests in this regard (Lev 21:1-3). The rationale was that the priests had to be holy to represent God, and death was a force that was not in God. So priests should avoid corpse impurity as much as possible. The prophets, however, did not function within such a framework. They were anointed for other purposes than the cultic. So there is no indication of Elijah having provoked God by allowing himself to be defiled. Elijah put the widow's dead boy on the bed and stretched himself out on him three times as he shouted to God. He certainly did attract impurity and would have had to purify himself before entering the Temple. But the widow saw that the power of God was in the prophet, and concluded: "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings: 17:24).

Jesus was seen by many as a prophet and, as such, a lay person. The purity restrictions had, however, been sharpened during the second temple period, so many thought that even lay people should live up to the priestly standard. Death and corpse impurity was an issue that may have had a provoking capacity. Jesus argued that impurity comes from inside only and therefore, he should be expected to demonstrate this. However, it seems that Jesus tried to downplay the stigma of death in the narrative of the healing of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5: 35-43, Luke 7: 11-17). Even though everybody in the village had seen

the dead girl, and sent out a messenger to tell Jesus it was too late for healing, Jesus claimed the girl was only sleeping. Allowing only a few people to witness the happening, he touched the dead body and she rose up. Even the force of death could not prevent the Divine power in Jesus. However, it seems as if this fact is communicated with the same degree of secrecy as often is found in Mark. Even the lepers who were healed were forbidden to tell anyone (Matt 8:4).

The same point is made in the case where Jesus meets a funeral procession and revives the young man after having touched the bier (Luke 11:12-15); although, in this case, he only attracted impurity in the second degree, according to the rabbinic system of graded holiness (Koet, 2000:101). Koet suggests that Luke felt the need to minimise the scandalous aspect of corpse impurity in connection with the raising up of the dead. Maybe that was done by the witnesses, or by the author, in order to communicate the message without such a stumbling block. The same tendency is found in Acts. Peter did not touch Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-42), although he did enter her room, and Paul claimed that Eutychus was not really dead (Acts 20:9), thereby avoiding contamination at the cost of making the miracle seem lesser.

When Jesus revived Lazarus, he ordered someone else to roll away the stone. He did not go into the tomb, but shouted into it. Again, we see that he avoided contact with death; he also asked others to remove his contaminated grave clothes. Maybe he was careful with regard to corpse impurity on this occasion out of regard for the appalled spectators, who already had shown reactions concerning the smell (John 11:43). The result was that many became believers. Others reported the incident to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who immediately called a meeting of the Sanhedrin, expressing fear that the Romans would take the Temple away from them if this was allowed to continue.

Even though Jesus did not fear impurity from dead bodies, he did show some reluctance in touching corpses. It was not with regard to the Mosaic Law, since it was not forbidden for him, as a lay person: his concern must have had a different reason. Klutz (2004:134) indicates that several items of evidence have been presented to show that there was a notion of the demonisation of death in first century Judaism. A rabbinic anecdote from the first century sage, Yohannan ben Zakkai, interprets the red heifer ritual of Numbers 19: 1-10 as a type of exorcist performance: "....a man defiled by contact with a corpse, he too is possessed by a spirit, the spirit of uncleanness....."

(Klutz, 2004: 134-5). If this was a popular opinion, and it probably was, it is understandable that Jesus was a little reluctant, at least with regard to the spectators. As Neusner (1987:194-200) shows, the rabbis shared the common understanding of the demonology of their time

4.2.6 Gentiles and Heretics

Jews who lived in antiquity differed in their opinion of whether or not Gentiles, by their mere presence, had the capacity to defile an otherwise observant Jew. Many believed that this was a danger only in the case of *avoda zara*, alien cult or idolatry. This was due to the belief that pagan cults diffused impurity. From this concept, many Jews thought that to associate with pagans without distinction was included (Tomson, 2000:73). This idea is derived from a very ancient *halakhic* concept based on the impurity of idolatry and involving two important *halakhot*. One concerns the impurity of land outside Israel and the other the impurity of non Jewish homes in Israel (Tomson, 2000:83). In the second temple period, observing Jews differed in their opinion as to which degree it was necessary to avoid contact altogether with Gentiles. The Gospels have accounts of Jesus crossing the borders of Israel and engaging in conversations with Gentiles. In many cases this could be necessary even for observing Jews; they only needed to be purified afterwards. Jesus' contact with pagans went further. Not only did he converse with them, but he touched them and healed them too. Again, we see that this would in many people's sight be very disturbing. If Jesus was functioning in the power of YHWH, how could that work while he was in contact with impure people? Jesus seemed to appreciate these concerns. According to Mark, he was very reluctant to exorcise the impure spirit from the daughter of the woman from Syrian Phoenicia (Mk 7:24-30). He answered by letting her know that his healing power was the food of the children of Israel; and that she was a dog who might get some, if there were some left. Her answer was smart enough to compensate for her ethnicity. She did not get insulted, but she immediately accepted the characteristics of being a dog. She reminded Jesus that even dogs do eat at least some crumbs. By this, she indicated that she was not asking much. Jesus' healing power was greater than what the children of Israel could make useful. There was enough for them and even some more, which would otherwise be wasted. Jesus was impressed with her insight and faith and engagement; he proved that whatever impurity this woman might be carrying, it did not hinder his healing power. Neither did people with wrong doctrines. The people of Samaria were conscious of purity, but as they

regarded only the five books of the Pentateuch as canonical, there were plenty of reasons for declaring them heretical, if not pagans, especially their sacrificing only on Mount Gerizim. So, how did the power of Jesus work in the impurity of borderline pagans/heretics?

There are three significant references to Samaritans in the Gospels. We meet a woman who had had five men (John 4:7-40). Maybe she was a barren woman, since she had been left by five husbands. For some reason, she was very interested in theology and Jesus engaged in dialogue with her. Another is a narrative told by Jesus when the Pharisees tried to test him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered that doing works of compassion was better than having the right creed (Luke 10:25 -27). The third reference is in the narrative of the ten lepers who were healed. One of these was a Samaritan and, though the other nine were Israelites, they did not return to thank the healer. Only the Samarian returned and threw himself before Jesus, who declared him saved by faith, without questioning his ritual status or his concept of the Bible.

4.2.7 **Summary**

We have shown that impurity was understood as dangerous in the awesome presence of God, within which everything unholy would be consumed. There may be two rationales for this, working separately, or in combination: the belief that natural functions of the body with regards to health and procreation were contrary to God's nature. So purification was therefore to cover over these conditions in order to imitate God and, thereby, be capable of enduring his presence in the Temple (Klawans, 2006:56-66). An alternative rationale is that the mentioned situations were of a character that involved the possibilities of life or death (Milgrom, 1991: 733). These two motifs can well be combined, since life was the primary aspect of God, and humans imitated that by having God's life, *nefesh,* in them (Neusner, 1974:177). Thus, death was a condition of impurity.

With this background, it is understandable that Jesus was seen as dangerous when he cancelled the concept of ritual impurity altogether. However, it is not correct to say that Jesus made it easier than the Hebrew Bible prescribed to obtain a status of purity. His sharpening of the ethical qualifications was set to a standard that made it very difficult

for people to obtain moral holiness. This topic will be discussed further in the following chapter.

4.3 IMPURITY AND HOLINESS

4.3.1 Introduction

The Hebrew word *qadosh* is translated both as 'sacred' and as 'holy' in English Bibles. The word 'sacred' denotes more of the cultic aspect of the semantic field of the terminology, while the word 'holy' denotes a moral element also. Originally, it meant that which was separated from the profane world, belonging to the divine sphere. This meaning is strongly present in Judaism: in YHWH's fury, his jealousy, his wrath and consuming fire (Otto, 1958:76). People who were holy were sanctified, in order to have a connection with God that others did not have. Germanic languages do not make the linguistic distinction between 'sacred' and 'holy', neither does the Hebrew Bible. The Greeks had three different concepts (with their derivations) for the holy:

- *Hieros*, denoting the essential holy, taboo, the divine power, or what was consecrated to the deity. The word is used once in NT about the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15).
- *Hosios* indicates divine commandment and providence. It is used seven times, mostly in the pastoral letters, never in the Gospels.
- *Hagios* was originally a cultic concept of the power of gods who were different from the world. As it is used in NT, it also denotes that which is dedicated to God and it contains an ethical element. This is the term almost always used in NT, and consistently employed in the LXX to translate *qadosh.*

We suggest that the concept of *shekinah* - so often employed in the Qumran literature - covers the cultic, awesome and glorious content of the concept of holiness, which was experienced as God's presence and character. Since 'holy' and 'pure' were used almost interchangeably (Borg, 1998:8), there was need for a concept reserved for the greatness of God.

We shall see, in the following, how the concept of holiness contains both an ethical element as well as the numinous, and we shall relate these concepts to the ministry of Jesus and his use of the concepts of holiness, purity, and impurity.

4.3.2 Holiness as Morality

Poorthuis (2000: 111) observes that the Biblical meaning of the concept of holiness has vanished from much of the post-biblical literature. In the Genesis narratives we find the holiness of God as 'otherness', a God who establishes boundaries between the holy and the common by letting the angels guard the tree of life and the gates of Eden. The Biblical narratives portray God as one who rages passionately; who denies Adam and Eve access to the tree of knowledge for reasons we do not understand; who refuses Cain's sacrifice, though he gave what he had; who would not let the people of Babel build a tower into heaven, though they worked efficiently together; and who spotted Moses in the wilderness not having circumcised his sons and, for this reason, "the Lord encountered him and sought to kill him" (Ex 4: 24). The concept of God in the Genesis narratives is one of mystery, awe and passion.

Rabbinic, Gnostic and Patristic interpretations of the Genesis myths have had a tendency to transform the numinous element of the Biblical narratives into moral categories. God becomes less mysterious, less different, less awesome, but more comprehensible and reasonable: more human, so to speak.

Philosophy of religion has presented holiness as morality expressing the intrinsic good. Kant, for example, believed there was a holy will that obeys the law unconditionally, realising itself in the sense of moral duty (Otto, 1958:5).

The tendency to identify moral impurity as sexual immorality can be detected very early in the history of the church. Married couples were advocated to live in celibacy, in order to live "pure and holy" lives. The saying of Jesus about those who has made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven was quickly interpreted as choosing celibacy for God's sake. The concept of making oneself a eunuch was otherwise known to mean something very close to a vasectomy (which pagan priests did for the sake of Cybele). Men who could not produce children were not real men and were called eunuchs. The Church fathers - Tertullian, Ambrose, Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome - all wrestled

with the theological and practical implications of the Lord's holy eunuchs. The concept of celibate marriage became very real (Abbot, 2000: 49).

We believe that the author of Hebrew 13:4 argues against celibacy in marriage, although such a message is curiously hidden in many translations. The texts: "*Timios ho gamos, kai he koite amiantos,*" has become "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure". The translators have, for reasons we can only guess at, translated both the adjectives *timios* and *aminantos* as if they were verbs in the subjunctive. The statement does, however, make good sense as it was written. Very early it became necessary to declare sex in marriage as not defiling, different from adultery, which God would judge. This reading has obviously been discussed very early. Some scribes apparently saw it as a warning, and therefore we read "*gar*", (for, to express cause, or continuation (BAG), while others saw a contrast between non-defiling sex in marriage and adultery, and wrote "*de*", (but, however, and, to emphasise a contrast (BAG)). We have no absolutely safe criteria to decide which manuscripts contain the original text, but in this case we will argue that it should have been translated as follows: 'Marriage is honourable, and whatever goes on in bed does not defile. Adulterers, however, will be judged by God.' If the author wanted to warn the readers against uncontrolled passion (as the Stoics did) or against adultery, it would have been reasonable to use verbs instead of adjectives. Holy lives were, however, confused with constrained lives, an understanding which has lasted in the Western churches up to our own time.

Since the concept of holiness, in western belief-systems to a large extent, has become an ethical category, the concept of God is about to lose a fundamental dimension. God is too often seen as a rather prudish *gestalt*, watching human beings' smallest moves, usually with disapproval. It has become easier to disagree with God than to love God. And in such a position the very concept of God becomes smaller and smaller, until it vanishes. We see that many people have been attracted to the impersonal concept of God, which is found in eastern religions or New Age groups. Here they find a spiritual being that does not resemble their old-fashioned aunts. This does not mean that we consider the importance of ethics a minor issue.

We have seen that Jesus regards evil thoughts and actions as a defiling force which prevents the presence of God in a person's life. According to 15 and Luke 7, supported by a number of narratives about his ministry, he nullified not only ritual impurity but also some kinds of moral impurity. The food restrictions were not given as protection against evil. They were simply God's command, and God's will should be obeyed whether it seems reasonable or not. The impurity transgression created was moral impurity, which was not contagious, but still serious to the perpetrator himself. Jesus gave his audience a new criterion by which to identify sin. It was not founded in the Law, tradition or revelation, but it was founded in the understanding of evil. It included evil thoughts, intentions as well as deeds. It presupposes empathy, so that one can understand how other people are hurt. And it presupposes self understanding, so that one can reveal one's motives and foresee how one's actions will affect other people. Sin, or moral impurity, is a destructive force, but its counterpart, love, is even stronger. Jesus does exemplify this principle by mentioning several virtues in his teaching. There is a strong plea for ethical holiness in the teaching of Jesus: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5: 48). The old idea of purity as 'Imago Dei' has gotten an ethical interpretation. The old continuum between defiled and holy, in Jesus' teaching, is given an ethical dimension. Evil defiles, whether it occurs as thought, intentions, or deeds: but goodness sanctifies. The narrative of the judgement shows that people were either cursed or saved, all according to their actions (Matt 25: 31-46). The fact that the actions, good or bad, had been done unwittingly of the consequences, demonstrates the point that it was not done for the strategic purpose of saving oneself. Those who were saved had acted in love. Jesus' concept of moral impurity, or sin, and holiness is found in a number of sayings and narratives. In the Sermon on the Mount we find requirements so radical that they seem unrealistic. But that does not mean that Jesus substituted the Jewish casuistic legalism with his own. The ethics that purify are subject to the evaluation that is necessary in every case of conflict. Judas thought that Mary wasted money on the perfume she anointed Jesus with, but Jesus saw it as an act of love (John 12: 3-5). The ruling principle was: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2: 27).

The Biblical concept of holiness, understood as a force contrasting with sin and moral defilement, is the foundation for the concept of God as the ultimate guarantee for justice in this universe. We shall see that it was a major concern in the teaching of Jesus to combine a notion of the sacred with ethics that one could be excited about. If God is only power, only energy, everything is allowed. If God is like electricity, he helps and kills without knowing the difference. Religious life in first century Judaism was not like the art of manipulating electricity. Temple worship was based on a concept of a God who knew; he was a God of moral consciousness, who was able to judge the sinner who secretly led the blind the wrong way and withhold justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow (Deut 27: 18-19). Even secret sins defiled the temple and God was able to curse and exercise *caret.* Religion was based on taking God seriously, not magic, or knowing secret ways of manipulating him.

Jesus operated with a concept of God as the guarantee for human morality. Sin is defined in the context of impurity, which means that sin alienates the sinner from the holy sphere. We recall that moral impurity is not contagious by contact, yet it did pollute the sanctuary. This was a well established understanding of the defiling force of sin and it is not gainsaid by Jesus. The narrative of the judgement shows this clearly: those who had not taken care of the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned, were not fit for life in God's holy presence (Matt 26:46). Jesus presented God as the highest judge; he did not present the concept of a God who was indifferent about human suffering. Kvalbein (1998: 223) sees the ability to identify "one of the least of these brothers of mine" as the critical question. He points to the fact that it has been interpreted as poor and suffering people in general, but argues that its historical meaning must have been the suffering Christians, since the Church was seen as a family of brothers and sisters (1998: 227). We would also argue that Jesus defines his new family as those who do the will of his father (Matt 12: 50). We see this in connection with the parable of the widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18: 1-7). The woman prayed for her right and clearly, poor Christians are praying for their daily bread as their right, as human beings. The connection between charity and holiness is that by taking care of poor Christians one is answering their prayers on behalf of God. That means one is in contact with the holy one and one serves as his messenger. We suggest that this is the meaning of Matt 5: 8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God".

Jesus did not say that he expected people to fulfil the ethical ideal he preached. So how was a person purified from sin? The Apostolic Council said that the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles were purified by faith (Act 15: 9). Jesus said, according to John, that people are purified by his word (John 15: 3). The cleansed tree bears fruit, and the fruit seems to be to "Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15: 12).

According to Judaism, the sinner had to meet certain requirements in order to be forgiven: "When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged" (Num 5: 6-7).

This is, in principle, what Jesus teaches his disciples: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt 6: 12). Forgiving others was the condition for being freed from guilt. "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt 6: 14). The validity of the sacrifices was dependent on the willingness of the sinner to repent and confess and make restitution. In the same way, the sacrificial blood of Jesus was seen as purifying to sinners who asked for forgiveness and were willing to forgive their own debtors. The power of life in the sacrifice was stronger than the power of impurity and sin. But it was not magical, it did require a decision to live in love, of which the willingness to forgive one's own debtors was a proof.

There are also textual examples of ethical impurity as demonic influence. John, who never reports of exorcisms, employs the term 'impure' to Judas. Jesus said that the disciples were purified by his words (John 15: 3), although not Judas, who was about to betray him (John 13: 10-11). The idea that temptations are Satanic in origin was also seen in the case of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Moral impurity is a fact only after the person has given in to the temptation, as Judas did. Sin has a defiling effect in the understanding of all the Gospel authors, as well as in Judaism.

4.3.3 Holiness as the Numinous

Otto (1958:28) observes that people generally show a strong attraction to the mystic and occult. The very idea of a ghost being in the next room would make people shiver; if they knew there was supernatural activity going on, it might be scary, but still very intriguing. He contrasts this with the fact that the Christian Churches have not succeeded in communicating God in a way that creates a numinous feeling of awe and trembling. Sacredness is attractive, prudence is not. Otto argues that Jesus, as well as his earliest followers, actually were bearers of this intense energy, in a way that became a signifier of primitive Christianity. Many self-proclaimed prophets have had an enormous self-consciousness and belief in their mission. They may even have been believed or obeyed. But it has not much to do with the awe of holiness. Otto (1958:156) states:

> *The immediate intuitive "divination", of which we are speaking, would indeed not come as a result from such statements by the prophet about himself, they can arouse a belief in his authority, but cannot bring about the peculiar experience of spontaneous insight that here is something holy made manifest.*

He exemplifies this with a quotation from John (4:42), an avowal, which he believes followed the early Christians' experiences and actually, was the foundation upon which the apostles were able to build the Church: "We have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ".

Much attention in this study has been given to the destructive power of impurity, which by its nature will strive to overwhelm the power of holiness. Holiness has to do with perfection, being whole, healthy and procreative. The spirit of the Lord gave people artistic abilities (Ex 28:3); it was seen in the beauty of architecture, colours, as well as song and the music of the Temple. Sensing the holy lifts the spirit and is overwhelming in a positive way: exactly the opposite of the negative and overwhelming that is experienced by the victims of demonisation.

Borg develops the theme of Jesus as a 'holy man', as a spirit-person who is in touch with the Holy, as the awe-inspiring Mystery, the sacred 'other'. Like Jewish spirit persons, Jesus was known for his intimate communication with 'the sacred', being able to mediate the power of the sacred into this world in the form of miracles, especially

healings and exorcisms (Borg, 1998: 88). Jesus differs from other spirit persons in various ways; of interest here is that he did not require withdrawal from his followers. He did depart from the crowds for short periods of time to pray, but he demonstrated holiness *within* society. His followers could practise their faith in their everyday contexts. In fact, holiness was best practised in relationship to other people. The test of one's capability to love one's neighbour is more challenging in a neighbourhood than in the desert.

Borg (1998: 147-8) observes that Holiness is understood by Jesus as a transforming power. In Judaism, holiness was understood to require protection, insulation from sources of defilement. Thus, for Israel, holiness necessitated separation from the defiling power of impurity. In the ministry of Jesus we see that holiness was understood to overpower impurity, rather than the converse. We have seen that Jesus did not fear ritual impurity, but touched people who should keep their distance from others. This is, however, not just a kind act that shows his willingness to suffer impurity. It is especially important in the context of Jesus as mediator of holiness. The miracles were performed due to God's healing presence and they demonstrated that Jesus, in the power of holiness, triumphed over the power of impurity in such situations.

4.3.4 **Holiness in the House of the Lord**

Moses and the people of Israel sang praises about God's holiness: "Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? (Ex 15:11.) And God revealed himself to Ezekiel by saying: "And so I will show my greatness and my holiness" (Ez 38:23).

We have seen that the terms 'holiness' and 'purity' were used interchangeably in several milieus in the first century. This was possible because the concept of holiness had lost its dynamic meaning. The Esseens believed that holy living was impossible in the present society, which was dominated by Hellenistic practices adopted by the Maccabean dynasty. Isolated from the world, they referred to themselves as 'the men of holiness', 'the men of perfect holiness', 'a house of holiness', and 'building of holiness' (Vermes, 1977: 88,168,170 in Borg, 1998:146). Having adopted the metaphor of the human body as the Temple, they saw themselves as the pure place in which the *Shekinah* of the Lord would dwell.

Purity is a passive concept denoting a state. Purity has no independent existence; it only describes the state of people, objects, time or place. Holiness, however, is a concept which denotes something that exists, even at a totally abstract level, and what exists needs space. The idea of a house of YHWH, where his holiness dwells, demonstrates the conceptual difference between holiness and purity. Purity cannot dwell, or come gradually, or leave. Holiness would come and stay providing impurity was removed by purification rituals.

However, the majority of the community acknowledged that the place to experience holiness was in the house of the Lord, the Temple. The terminology of the body and the church as a 'temple' for the Holy Spirit is not fully developed in Jesus' ministry, but according to John, it did start there after he had cleansed the Jerusalem Temple: "But the temple he had spoken of was his body" (John 2:21). Luke, especially, presents Jesus as a person filled with the Holy Spirit (4:1). He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (4:14). He was led by the spirit (4:1) and anointed by the spirit of the Lord (4:18). There was a strong correlation between the concept of Holiness and the concept of the Holy Spirit. Yet - there is one difference which can hardly be overstated: while holiness vanished from the Temple when the degree of impurity became too strong, the Holy Spirit overpowers ritual impurity.

Given that Jesus considered himself as a Temple for the Lord, and that the holiness of the Lord was active within him, it is noteworthy that he taught that ritual impurity had no defiling force. Jesus, the living temple, put himself in positions by which the Jerusalem Temple would have become defiled and the presence of God would have decreased. Jesus showed no fear of ritual impurity. That does not mean that he did not usually abide by the regulations of his context, but he broke the rules when it served a purpose, though never in fear of impurity.

It must however not be downplayed that Jesus still believed in the existence of impurity caused by the defiling force of sin. His body, the temple for the Holy Spirit, had not been ritually defiled. He could entertain with sinners, but there was no defiling force in anything which came from the outside. The Gospels do not employ the metaphor of the body as temple in a collective meaning. In these texts, only individuals are filled with the spirit, each temple being defiled from each individual's heart. So what about the holiness of the church? The question then arises: Why should sinners get expelled from

the fellowship, according to Matthew? We suppose we are dealing with qualified sinners, according to Matthew's recorded list of sins that create impurity (Mat 15: 19). The situation is that the sinner produces moral impurity; given that impurity is an ontological category, as argued above, this means he is attacked by Satan. It is critical that the sinner realises his position, and gets help to do that. If he refuses to repent, it is up to the fellowship to try and convince him. If this does not work he should be regarded as a pagan and a tax-collector (Matt 18: 15-17), which means that he is regarded as morally impure. And we know from the Gospel's narratives what that meant: they were reputed to be immoral people, but still Jesus associated with them in a way that sometimes, as in the case of Zacchaeus, made them want to change. Jesus does not say that they needed to be excluded because of moral defilement.

We never find a single case in which Jesus himself dismisses a person from his presence because of impurity. Even though he knew of the evil plans of Judas - that Satan had entered him (Luke 22:3) and that he therefore qualified as morally defiled - Jesus offered him the bread at the Passover meal. If there was one occasion where Church discipline would have been in order, this should be the day. But Jesus showed no fear of moral pollution. If Judas had waited, he would have heard the words: "This is my body given for you" (Luke 22:19).

It seems unclear whether Jesus thought moral impurity defiled the church, or only the sinner himself. He could have argued for exclusion on the grounds of the culture of the organisation. He never indicated that he saw the new community as the new Temple. His reaction to the problems with the purity of the Temple was entirely different from the Qumran's. They left the Temple, believing God would dwell in their midst instead: Jesus cleansed it.

We believe that Jesus saw the mission of the Temple, as the body of his followers, in a prophetic light. He had by his actions, declared foreigners and others who did not meet the required standards of holiness - such as those who were sexually deviant - as pure. They were not stigmatised because of "evil thoughts from their hearts", but from conditions beyond their control.

We will argue that he cleansed the Temple expecting the prophecy of Isaiah to be fulfilled:

> *4 To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant - 5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. 6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant - 7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.*
>
> (Isa 56: 4-7.)

4.3.5 **Summary**

We have shown that a spiritual struggle stands between holiness and impurity. These are both dynamic forces seeking to expand their territories. In Judaism, holiness was seen as dangerous, requiring protection, which was provided by the purification regime. With Jesus this is modified, so that holiness overpowers the defiling force of impurity. He nullified ritual purity as well as genealogical impurity. And he changed the criteria for moral impurity.

Impurity resulted from evil. Jews had accepted the dietary rules simply because this was how God decided to keep the nation holy. It would not seem proper to question God's rationale. In the ethical teaching of Jesus the requirements served a purpose: to create peace, righteousness, mercy etc; all are ethically valued and are recognised in any moral system. Jesus is realistic about ethical dilemmas, and he defended David who ate the forbidden holy breads in time of hunger. Jesus does not nullify the concept of impurity as a state which alienates people from God. On the contrary, just as people who had contracted ritual impurity were obliged to be purified, those who sin are obliged to be purified through seeking forgiveness and living a life in love. The ethical code of Jesus is based on the same things as those which caused impurity in Judaism, although it has excluded useless actions and included a number of vices that we may see as feelings, attitudes and intentions.

We have noticed that moral impurity was seen as a consequence of evil. Evil is used as a spiritual category, not only as a label of unwanted behaviour, mistakes or accidents. In the same way as John said that "God is love", to denote the spiritual power of love as well as the character of God (1 John 4: 8), in the first century one could say that evil was the nature of Satan. Evil was seen as a power which manifested first inside the person, then in actions. So moral impurity is not only an unwanted state, it is the result of a demonic influence which causes people to hurt themselves and each other. It is dangerous with respect to the shaping of one's personality, as well as the actions committed. The connection between evil, Satan, and impurity will be further analysed in the following.

4.4 EXORCISM AND DUALISM

4.4.1 Introduction

In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus employs the terms 'impure spirits', 'evil spirits' and 'demons' interchangeably. Luke, especially, is conscious about showing this. He describes a person who had a "*pnevma daimoniou akathartu*" (Luke 4:33), Mary Magdalena had had "*pnevmato ponero*" which were seven "*daimonia*" (Luke 8:2), and a man who had a "*pnevmati to akatharto*" was driven out in the desert by "*tou daimonos*" (Luke 8:29).

Luke also points to an incident which shows that people believed that Beelzebub was the prince of demons (Luke 11:15) and that Jesus accepts this understanding, employing the name/title 'Satan' for Beelzebub (Luke 11: 18). Thus, we are presented with a cosmology that is different from the one in the OT, where demons were hardly mentioned, and Satan was a member of God's court, unless the conceptualisation of impurity actually expressed the demonology of the Hebrew Bible.

Klutz (2004) shows that many scholars have tried to interpret the exorcism narratives, without taking into consideration how important it is to understand demonology as an integrated part of the Jewish map of purity/impurity. He argues that modern scholars have tried so hard to solve (what seems to them as) problems, that they have "neglected to analyse the inferring meanings, identifying emphasis, and recovering cultural

context" (Klutz, 2004: 82-83). Klutz shows how scholarship has developed from seeing magic as primitive, manipulative, and illogical, as opposed to religion, which has had an image of being more sophisticated. This perspective is now about to change. It is commonplace to realise that magic was widespread in the early Christian centuries. But it is not quite so easy to define the difference between what some would see as magic and others as a devout sacrament (Downing, 2004: 86). We are, thereby, reminded that exorcism was an art practised not only by pagan magicians, but also by Jesus himself, according to the three first Gospels. The question in play, in Jesus' own context, was not whether or not it worked, but by whose power it worked. Jesus denoted demons as impure. Was the concept of impurity used as a symbol for evil, or did it denote the actual connection between impurity and the demonic world ruled by Satan. Could the word 'impure' be used interchangeably with 'satanic'? If so, which consequences did that have for the early Christians' concept of monotheism?

4.4.2 **Demons as Impure Spirits**

The concept *daimon* in classical Greek was derived from *daiomai,* which meant to divide. The word may have been connected with the god of the dead, as the divider of corpses (DNTT 1: 452). There seems to be a deeply rooted perception of a connection between death and the demonic. This element is also found in Judaism, where the sphere of death was marked with extreme impurity and defined as a strictly forbidden territory.

When Jesus encountered a demonised person he did so, apparently, with a pre-understanding of what an impure spirit was. The term 'demon' was not a symbolic expression for evil on a general level. It was not treated as a 'destructive energy', whatever that might be. Energy can hardly be destructive *per se,* since energy is blind. energy, whether found in nature or in physics, does not have the ability to discriminate the destructive from constructive. The fire of the ovens that warms our houses is the same energy which burns it to the ground. The water which destroyed the world in the flood was the same water which was used in purification rituals. The conceptualisation of impurity as a 'force of death', as Milgrom says, raises the question of ontology on a fundamental level. If the Israelites did believe in such a 'force of death' called 'impurity', what kind of force would that be? Death was not seen as a mystery. Modern people may be estranged from death, but in a culture where people died at home, death

was experienced as natural, imbedded in creation and willed by God, who had decided to limit man's lifespan to 70 + years. Death happened when people killed, after diseases, or from starvation; there was no mysterious 'force of death'. Death was very comprehensible. Whatever is alive dies from predictable and logical causes. We must bear in mind that only two health conditions - skin condition and genital flux - were labelled 'impure'. To die, 'old and full of years' was actually a good thing.

A corpse was, nevertheless, seen as ritually impure and to contact dead people in *sheol,* the sphere of death, indicating a different reality, was a grave sin. Milgrom has not shown that there was a conceptualisation of a 'force of death' that works without the ability to discriminate. Death was in God's hand. Purity and pollution can hardly have been understood as "the abstract codenames for system and order and its contravention", as Neyrey argues (1991: 274-75). Neyrey has not presented any evidence for the Israelites' understanding of semen, menstrual blood and birth as a 'system out of order'. Ritual impurity was not a bad thing. It was connected with danger in confrontation with the holy, but it should not be avoided, especially not by lay people. If the concepts pure/impure were sociological labels, they would both be treated as passive denominators. The dynamics of the concept of impurity, and the danger that was connected to it, say that it was seen as more.

Jesus had conversations with demons. Klutz (2004:126) shows that features of the narratives about demons belong to the religious realm of the first century, not modern sociology. He claims to have found, "... evidence for an interface between demonology and impurity in early Judaism". His analyses show that the prominence of the demon-impurity nexus in the exorcism accounts indicates that it must have been present in early gospel material and was probably presupposed by Jesus himself (Klutz, 2004: 127).

To characterise demons as impure spirits, however, was not common. The term 'spirit of impurity' (Zech 13: 2) is found once in the OT, but not associated with demons. Neither was the combination of demons and impurity used at Qumran. 'Evil spirits' is employed, but most often it is referred to as Belial. However, the terminology was employed in the Book of the Watchers. The giants, who were bastards from spiritual beings and human women, were seen as demons and impure spirits. If this was the background for Jesus' demonology, it is obvious that he saw them as spirits with human

traits, most importantly intelligence and language. Thus, they were not 'a force of death', comparable to electricity, but personalities who caused purposeful actions that were a hazard to people. They may have been called 'impure' because they were a mixture of two categories. Or they may have been labelled impure because the giants were associated with evil, leading to death and destruction in the flood. We favour the suggestion of Klutz (2004: 125) that demons were categorised as impure as a ritual term, based on the ritual practices of the Temple. Demons were thus classified as impure because they represented the complete opposite of holiness.

When everybody pondered who Jesus was, the demon feared that he was about to be destroyed, and identified him saying: "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" (Luke 4:34). This shows that the demons were personalities with supernatural knowledge, and natural feelings (Matt 8: 29; Mk 3: 11). The demon's claim to know who Jesus was may have meant that he was trying to gain power through knowledge of his name and identity (Marshall, 1978: 193). This again indicates that the demons themselves saw their encounter with Jesus as a power battle. The dualism was expressed in their using the title "The holy one of God", which Luke juxtaposes with the impurity of the demons.

From this, we must conclude that Jesus and his biographers saw impure spirits as beings with intelligence, linguistic ability and evil capacity. They were capable of tormenting people, physically and mentally. In fact, many of the exorcisms of Jesus were actually physical healings. An impure spirit was in alliance with Satan and opposing Jesus as the holy one of God. The battle was fought in people's souls, as temptation to sin or victory over temptations, but the battlefields also included people's bodies. As impurity and holiness were ethical opposites, of which the person had a great deal of control and was counted as guilty if he sinned, healings and sicknesses were situations in which the divine force overpowered the demonic force that had troubled innocent people.

4.4.3 Impure Spirits and Sickness

We have so far seen that Jesus, according to the Synoptics, defined impurity as a satanic power and demons as spiritual individuals with evil intent and capacity. We shall, in the following, try to argue this position further, by analysing some narratives of healings by exorcism. There is, in fact, no clear boundary between these two types of intervention. There were degrees of demonisation, but Satan was seen as the cause of physical as well as mental distress. For example, the woman who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years and was bent over - a condition we probably would have diagnosed as Bekhterev's disease - was told that she had been bound by Satan (Luke 13:11,16). However, not all healings are denoted as exorcisms, but enough are to demonstrate in which contexts Jesus saw demonic involvement.

Klutz (2004:128) has made a point of the Gospel authors' employing the concept of 'impure spirits' without explaining what they meant by it. Apparently, they expected it to be understood. Or, it could have been the other way around: maybe the juxtaposition of the traditions of impurity and demonology also hints that Jesus' exorcisms may have been interpreted as instantiating certain aspects of his unconventional teaching on impurity. If we say that the healings were the properties of the essence, and the essence was the realm of impurity, the demonic realm of impurity is proven to exist. Klutz (2004: 128) has observed the obvious, but underplayed the fact that Jesus' exorcisms did stand in continuity with his teaching. So what **did** Jesus teach about? We will suggest that he taught about the character of God and ontology, the kingdom of heaven, and its opposite. In this teaching the demon-impurity nexus was highly controversial. Jesus healed to help the sick. His compassion is explicitly mentioned as motive. He healed in public to demonstrate his teaching about God as holy and compassionate. He healed on the Sabbath to show that the will of God was to see people delivered from pain rather than observing the holy day. He healed the lepers to show that the power of God was there for the so called impure, demonstrating that there was no impurity in them that could disturb the holiness of God. The presence of God did not vanish in contact with those whom Moses had labelled impure. The concept of holiness was expanded to include compassion. The demand to avoid moral impurity and be holy, was expanded to, "Be merciful, just as your Father is (*oiktirmones)* merciful (or rather compassionate) (Luke 6:36).

Many scholars have worked with the assumption that the healing and exorcism stories were symbolic expressions for sociological reality. We understand both kinds of miracles not as symbols, but as signs. A symbol has the capacity to remind people of whatever one associates with it. A sign *(semeion)* has the capacity to let people experience the reality from which the sign has gained its content. Jesus did not draw a heart on the napkin to symbolise love, he washed their feet. Exorcisms demonstrated that the power of the Holy Spirit, which worked through Jesus, scared the demons because they knew their time was limited. As such, it was a prophetic eschatological action, demonstrating the qualities of the Kingdom of God here and later.

Jesus did teach about impurity as a result of evil thought, words and actions. But the aetiology of impurity was a demanding lesson, so he showed them. His point of departure was a man who was tormented, who lived among the graves, who hurt himself and others. Jesus did not need to explain the problem of impurity. The demonic aspect of the tragedy, the destruction of a human life, was obvious to everybody in that village. This was used didactically, to expose the nature of impurity. The damage the man did to himself and others was a sign of what the power of evil does. It hurts the victim as well as the community.

The ministry of Jesus was, by the apostles, seen as a fulfilment of the Genesis promise that one day the offspring of Eve would crush the head of the serpent. Jesus obviously saw himself as the destroyer of Satan, as John wrote (1 John 3:8). Satan had not succeeded in preventing the offspring of Eve from multiplying. Time had come to crush the serpent's head. So as an expression for danger, ritual impurity in the context of semen and menstrual blood was no longer meaningful. By the birth of Jesus it was no longer necessary to observe the regime of ritual impurity in order to express the danger people lived under when Satan tried to prevent Eve's offspring from living. The healing narratives indicate that the serpent is still alive, but his head is hurt. Sickness is experienced in good people as well as in bad. Jesus never suggests that sickness is God's way of teaching people how to behave. Sickness was interpreted as Satanic oppression (Acts 10:38) and it is not fair. Peter's mother-in-law was not punished for anything; she was not cursed by God, even though fever is listed as a divine curse in Deut 28:22. In the Hebrew Bible there is a certain connection between sin and sickness. Health is promised as part of the blessing of the Covenant, which was dependent on the

Covenant being kept, and sin would bring a whole range of misfortunes upon the people, including sicknesses (Deut 28: 15, 29: 1).

Nothing demonstrates ontological dualism better than the exorcism and healing stories. Because they do not only exemplify evil in demon-possession and sickness and pain, but also show the character of God as holy, and that the content of the concept of holiness is not only the numinous, not only righteousness: it also includes compassion.

When that is said, we should also notice that the gospel of John present Jesus as a miracle worker and healer without even mentioning exorcisms or impure spirits. It actually seems as though he had a different understanding of sickness from that of Jesus. John offers a lengthy narrative about the man who was born blind and was healed. After his healing, there is a discussion about the aetiology of his blindness, but demons of blindness are not mentioned, although the question of sin is introduced. People took it for granted that there were a connection between sin and sickness. Jesus is reported to have answered: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned. This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9: 1-41). The presentation of miracles in John is more in concord with Paul and the educated people of Roman society. It is also much like the healing stories of the Hebrew Bible, where sickness was sometimes a punishment for sin (Num 12: 10), as with Miriam; but usually, it just happened without any explanation as with the son of the widow, who was healed by the prophet Elijah (1 Ki 17: 20). The healing was the point, not the aetiology

In the synoptic Gospels we see a dualism that was experienced in real life. The glory of God was demonstrated by overpowering the destructive power. It could be argued that this shows how the demonology of Jesus was nothing more than interpretations influenced by sectarians and popular culture. However, if the Synoptic Gospels were written as early as we have argued, the testimony of Peter must be of importance. According to the Synoptics, impure spirits were observed as intelligent beings, who were capable of conversation, could negotiate, and then do what they had to do. We will suggest that demons are encountered, or identified as demons, only when the exorcist is able to threaten them. When the impure spirits met Jesus they exposed themselves. At the time when John wrote, exorcisms were seldom if at all, though healings still happened. In our opinion, John wrote decades after the synoptic writers and in a different milieu. Peter and Mark wrote close to the time when the exorcisms by Jesus

happened. The eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus reported that they saw spirits of specific infirmities leaving the person. It was also a time when observing purity rules was important for Temple worship. This is how it was observed and reported by all the synoptic authors.

In the Hebrew Bible, people with certain illnesses were labelled 'impure'. In the ministry of Jesus, people are not called 'impure' even though they have an impure spirit living inside of them and destroying their health. This means that the demon was not seen to have a defiling ability, and purification was not needed after the exorcism. This may indicate that the anthropology of the narrative reported by John was, in principle, typical of the healing ministry of Jesus: Sick people were not impure, and their trouble was not a caused by sin. In other words: there is no connection between moral impurity and impure spirits of infirmity.

4.4.4 The Two Kingdoms

The most direct teaching about dualism is probably found in the confrontations with the Pharisees over exorcism (Matt 12: 22-28). There was no disagreement concerning the factual happening. The demonised man was blind and mute and he had become well. Their argument was over the interpretation: by whose power, God's or Satan's? The Pharisees saw both these as powerful enough to give sight and speech to the man. And Jesus does, in this case, not argue the power of the two parties; he only argues their intentions and their different natures. So, what does this reveal concerning the monotheism of Jesus?

Both Jesus and the Pharisees professed a monotheistic faith. However, their common cosmology contained two fundamental principles, each powerful, functioning in polar opposition to each other. There is an element of 'bi-theism' in this, in the sense that the two powers represent good and order, *contra* evil and chaos. Jesus' exorcisms proved that not only was God stronger than the demon under the domain of Satan, but also that it would be totally out of character for a demon to heal the demonised. The day Satan started to heal people he would destroy himself.

The Pharisees were seriously provoked by Jesus' miracles. This was probably because they did not find him worthy of having such a power. In Neusner (2002: 119-125) we might find an explanation for this: God has the freedom to do what he wishes, including choosing people to do specific miracles. The usual was, however, that the rabbis were the miracle workers. Rabbinic Judaism, from its formative age, recognises a class of miracle workers favoured by Heaven but not qualified by Torah-learning. They assumed that miracles worked and all prayers were answered if the person was of an exemplary character. God responds to deeds of such nobility and self-abnegation. He cannot, however, compel people to perform such deeds, but he is himself compelled to respond to them. A person who has these qualifications can work miracles. This extraordinary virtue is called *zekhut* in Hebrew. It cannot be translated and it has no synonym. But it does have the antonym: Sin. *Zekhut* means, "The heritage of supererogatory virtue and its consequent entitlements" (Neusner, 2002:122). In Rabbinic Judaism *zekhut* stands for the empowerment of a supernatural character that derives from the virtue of one's ancestry, or from one's own virtuous deeds of a particular kind; specifically, deeds not enforced by others, but impelled by utter generosity of the heart.

The way the Pharisees spoke about Jesus indicates that they doubted that his piety was sufficient. He did drink and dine with sinners, which they found disgusting. They did not even use his name; they just said *hutos,* 'this one', translated 'this fellow' (NIV Matt 12: 24). The element of detestation of demonised people is also observed by Beare (1981: 277) even though they had to admit that he was a successful exorcist.

There is a distinct moral dichotomy between sin and *zekhut,* each belonging to their separate kingdoms with their appurtenant priests. Each kingdom has the capacity to interfere in nature. The Pharisees tried to identify the kingdom of Beelzebub in the lack of impressive piety in Jesus, while Jesus identified the kingdom of God by the characteristics of the deeds preformed. By looking for the quality of the sign as the hallmark of God, gimmicks are ruled out. By looking at the performer, one can be deceived. This is the point Paul made, saying that, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7).

Beare comments upon this pericope, very critically. After having done the usual analyses of how the narrative is construed, from which traditions the different *logi* have come and so on, he states that the story belongs to a universe of thought which is so totally foreign to us as to be all but unintelligible. We think, however, that this story has

several points worth reflecting upon. One that is very valid, even in academic theological circles: the question of the presence of the one God in traditions other than the Christian. Jesus proved his status as mediator of the power of God by pointing to the content of the miracle: the man was helped. So, what about the miracles of other Jewish miracle workers and exorcists? Beare (1981: 279) insists that the story is "wholly lacking in logic", since he obviously thinks that the Jewish exorcists could not have their powers from YHWH, and therefore Jesus had proved nothing. We see this differently. Jesus never said that he was the only person who represented the Kingdom of God. Jesus does live amongst the chosen people, from whom God had chosen prophets many times. Beare's objection was actually presented to Jesus by the disciples: "We saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us" (Mark 9: 39). Jesus, however, told them to let those Jewish exorcists continue: "For whoever is not against us is for us". Jesus seems to have seen and accepted that disciples, or followers, came in different degrees. He did not judge by their qualifications, either in dogma or ethics: he only saw the deeds. The logic was: whosoever does something good and useful is on the right side, maybe far away, but still on the right side. They are contributing to people's wellbeing as best they can. And it works. Good deeds are of God. Evil actions are of Satan.

We will draw attention to the fact that people were never reprimanded for being demonised. Not any reason is given for why some were and others were not. Even though it is associated with the satanic sphere, it is not seen as the result of personal sin. Jesus meets the demonised as victims who need and deserve deliverance. It was the spirit which was impure, not the person.

4.4.5 **Summary**

We have shown that Jesus used the terminology of impurity to express demonic presence. To him it was not a symbolic expression for anything, since the reality it denoted was dramatic. Demons could take. They had knowledge that others did not, acknowledging Jesus as the Holy one of God. Demons had some capability to manipulate nature. Their actions varied from manipulating people's hormones and autoimmune system (Bekhterev's disease, Rheumatism, Psoriasis, Multiple Neurosis), to destroying the function of their sensory organs and nervous system. In severe cases, they took control over the victim's personality and made them harm themselves. People

found these conditions so devastating that it is of no surprise that they were interpreted as demonic. But that is not even the point. Many cultures in Roman societies saw diseases as demonic attacks, without having a new religion growing out of that. In our case, the diagnosis is not the point, but the remedy is. Successful exorcisms functioned as examples and illustrations of the new teaching of Jesus, which reinterpreted and modified Judaism. The miracles gave Jesus authority to do that. His message was twofold: first it demonstrated a concept of God as holy and awesome, but also compassionate and near. The other point was that people were not seen as impure for any outward reason, not even when demonic presence was manifested as attacks on the body. There was no contagious ritual impurity in men. Even ontological impurity in demons, who were empowered by the kingdom of Satan, did not make people impure.

4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

We have shown that changes in the understanding of Judaism that took place during the Second Temple period were incorporated into the cultural background of Jesus. The difference between ritual and moral impurity, which was predominant in Biblical Judaism, became effaced in the first century, as had the difference between holiness and purity. The connection between demons and impurity had developed into a new demonology and thereby, to a new concept of reality. Jesus worked within the cosmology of his context by connecting impurity to the demonic realm. It has been debated whether this was an underlying motive for the Biblical purification rituals, but there is no doubt concerning this matter in the teaching of Jesus. Holiness was the property of God and impurity was the corresponding faculty of Satan.

In Jesus' teaching and ministry we see that he represents a novelty with regard to ritual impurity, which he defines as distinctly different from moral impurity. His teaching on this topic is recapitulated in his stating that whatever comes into the body is void of defiling power. This is in direct opposition to the dietary laws of Moses. And he says more: the only thing which does defile is what comes from evil in men's hearts. Consequently, Jesus regards only sin as defiling. Such sins are exemplified as evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and blasphemy in Matthew, and an even longer vice list exists in Mark. This covers not only the grave sins, which created impurity according to Biblical Judaism, but also thoughts and

intentions. Sin became a synonym for moral impurity in John, and it was understood to came in degrees, as we also find in 1 John 5: 7, where it says that all wrongdoing is sin, but that there is sin that does not lead to death. The same point is made when Jesus complained about the Pharisees as blind guides who would strain out a gnat but swallow a camel (Matt 23:24). We recall that defilement was seen as an active process that defiled in degrees.

The concept of holiness is crucial in religious life and practice. If holiness is understood as ethics, it nurtures a legalistic religion, emphasising discipline and exclusion. When holiness is understood and experienced as the mighty force of God's presence, the practice will be grounded in reverence and trembling before the Almighty. This creates an inner drive to Holiness, motivated by attraction to God and a desire to operate with the qualities of God, which are justice, love and compassion.

The demonology of Jesus is seen in his healing the sick, his deliverance of those mentally and physically overpowered and in his dealing with sin. The healing ministry was characterised by his commanding the spirit of blindness, dumbness, etc. to leave. Laying on of hands was exercised as a way of transferring healing power. Since Jesus saw the demons as intelligent beings, he commanded the impure spirits to leave. We never find that he prayed over the sick, as James advises (James 5:14). He also rebukes the sickness, indicating that he was communicating with an intelligent entity, or that his words had creating ability, as "be light" in Genesis. The success of this practice was, by many, seen as proof of Jesus' mediating holy power and therefore, was about to realise the Kingdom of God.

Jesus did not adopt the Jewish understanding of moral impurity. Judaism differentiated between smaller sins and grave sins, which had the defiling power to alienate the impure person from God. Sin was seen as breaking any commandment of the Law. In Jesus' teaching there is no principle between sins that defile and others. Impurity is the result of evil, not obedience to traditions, not even to Moses. The specific sins and virtues mentioned by Jesus throughout the Gospels can be universally agreed upon as hurtful or beneficial to human beings. The narrative of the temptation of Jesus shows that thoughts of temptations are ascribed to Satan (Matt 1: 4-11). Moral defilement takes place when that thought is not dismissed; if it is accepted and harboured, the person has become impure. We have seen that impurity occurs by degrees. An example

of the demonic involvement in a thought, leading to deceit, leading to murder, is narrated in Luke, as well as in the fourth Gospel, where it is reported that Satan entered Judas and made him impure (Luke 22: 3; John 13: 27). On the other hand, we see that the sense of holiness which radiated from Jesus had moral consequences too. Zacchaeus was not confronted with his wrongdoings, yet by just experiencing the presence of Jesus repentance was felt as his own desire (Luke 19: 2-8).

The opposite of impurity from sin was the holiness of God. Otto argues that holiness lost its original meaning during the period of the prophets, due to their tendency to rationalise, moralise and humanise the idea of God. The idea of the numinous was however strongly present in the message of Jesus: the Kingdom, a concept which contains greatness, marvel, "the wholly other". It was seen as a contrast to the world; it was mysterious and awe-compelling, yet all-attractive (Otto, 1956: 82).

Jesus' understanding of reality was dualistic, for he operated with two kingdoms. Mankind is subject to influence from both the holy kingdom of God and the demonic kingdom of Beelzebub. Mankind is both a victim of the circumstances, as well as a participant with a will of his own. Since impurity is interpreted as a moral category, the terminology of impurity is used to denote satanic influence, which comes from sin. However; in contrast to Judaism, there is no conceptualisation of body impurity or contagious impurity.

There is also a significant difference between the body and soul. The body can be attacked by demonic sickness and infirmity, but that does not defile the person. A person becomes impure only after having freely given in to thoughts, intentions or acts that are rooted in evil.

In Judaism there were three kinds of impurities: ritual, genealogical, and moral. In the teaching of Jesus there are only two; moral impurity, which characterises men who live in sin, and ontological impurity which pertains to demons and the Satanic sphere. This is the terminology used by Jesus, according to the Synoptic gospels. However, this conceptualisation was inherited directly from Judaism and probably sounded too Jewish to serve the purpose of the early missionaries. In John, we see that the term for moral impurity is 'sin' and the demonic world is referred to as 'darkness'.

When Jesus employs the purity language he is expressively referring to demonic powers. His concept of impurity is not merely a symbolic expression for danger, death or destruction, but impurity is the result of the presence of impure spirits, as healing and holiness shows the presence of the Holy Spirit. We have seen that the Qumran community also taught about two spirits, which were both controlled by God. In the teaching of Jesus, however, the two spirits represents two dichotomist kingdoms. The Spirit of the Lord enables Jesus to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4: 18-19). The impure spirits were personal beings, empowered by Beelzebub who attacked people's health and moral judgement. Impurity was, according to Jesus, an ontological category.

Chapter 5: PURITY AND IMPURITY IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the following chapter, we shall examine the Apostle Paul's understanding of the concept of purity/impurity. He wrote his letters in a milieu where the terminology was used in popular culture and by Stoic philosophers, as well as by Jews who lived according to the purification regime of the Torah. As shown in chapter 3, the concept of impurity was used metaphorically by the Stoic philosophers to denote sexual immorality and in chapter 2 we see that there is a difference in Judaism between ritual and moral impurity. Ritual impurity was natural, as it came from body flows, from corpses or after giving birth and usually was not unwanted, except in the case of skin disease and abnormal genital flux. The impurity was temporary, meaning that it would disappear after a certain amount of time, or that it could be purged with water. Before it was cleansed, however, it was contagious by contact. It was a religious duty to be cleansed from ritual impurity because an impure person could not come near the sanctuary without defiling it.

Moral impurity resulted from the power of sin and comes into being when grave sins are committed, like bloodshed, incest and sacrilege. All sins do not create impurity but, when it does happen, it is serious. Moral impurity is not contagious by contact, but it conveys impurity to the sanctuary and defiles the land unless it is dealt with. Purity could be re-established by atonement or punishment and, in severe cases, by the sinner being cut off from the community, or *karet*, death by the hand of God (Milgrom, 2000a: 1758).

Paul lived and preached in a multicultural community. In Jewish circles, the question of inborn impurity in Gentiles was discussed. This presentation of genealogical impurity draws heavily upon the study of Hayes (2002). Literature from the Second Temple Period shows that the idea of genealogical impurity in Gentiles developed from regulations of priestly marriages to include every Israelite. The idea of a holy people represented by the priests has become an idea of 'holy seed', which puts specific restrictions on intermarriage and the possibility of conversion. A *mamzer*, a child in a mixed marriage was of lower status than real Israelites. These issues were particularly

relevant to Paul, since he worked with converted Gentiles and had mixed marriages in his churches, in the sense that there were cases where Christians were married to pagans. Specific questions that came up were as follows: Should Christians divorce a pagan spouse? Was genealogical impurity contagious? Could the Church be defiled by pagan spouses living in sin? What about impurity in their children?

Another question of cultural relevance was the Jewish restriction on diets. Paul answers these questions by pointing to each individual's conscience. Leirvik's (2002) thesis presents the understanding of conscience in ancient Graeco-Roman culture. His work is very valuable with regard to Paul's saying that impurity from eating meat was a matter of individual conscience.

The question of ontological impurity will also be addressed. Did Paul understand the term 'impurity' as an ethical category only? Or did he share the interpretation of Jesus, indicating that impurity was a property of spiritual beings that tormented people? In order to understand his interpretation of impurity, we will analyse the scriptures in which he employs such terminology. We will ask if impurity denotes more than a certain state and status (Klawans, 2005: 29). It was also seen as dangerous, operating as a powerful destructive energy in the service of death. We showed in chapter 2, that commonness and purity were static, but that holiness and impurity were active, antagonistic entities.

Many of the verses in which the terminology of impurity occurs, appear in the letters to the Corinthian Church. The same pericopes have been analysed in depth by Martin (1995), although from a different angle. He offers many examples of how popular culture may have influenced Paul. His study is a source-bank of historical and sociological information, although it will be argued that he sometimes underrates the influence of Paul's Jewish background. If Paul saw impurity as spiritual reality, how would he communicate it? Was it dangerous in the sense that it could defile the church so that God's presence would depart?

The aim is to establish Paul's concept of impurity within the contexts of ontological impurity, genealogical impurity, ritual impurity or moral impurity. Scholars of Pauline theology have discussed the question of the authenticity of the letters, a discussion that is not included in this analysis, however. To a large degree, this is a cultural analysis and the point is not to define which sentences were written by Paul personally. Our task is to find the meaning of the concept of impurity as it was used in the intellectual milieu that developed by and around Paul.

5.2 IMPURITY AS A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

5.2.1 Introduction

While the purity regime of the Torah was very specific and meant to be practised by every Jew, or by every priest, Paul introduces a very different approach. He was, as a trained Pharisee at the feet of Gamaliel, certainly familiar with discussions on impurity matters. The rabbis often engaged in discussions over details that were not dealt with in the written Torah and they worked in an atmosphere of different schools and traditions, often presented in rabbinic sources as debates between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel. They were used to being confronted with differences of opinion and they seem to have been intellectually stimulated by the continuous reflections and presentations of new arguments. The very nature of the Oral Torah was structured as a debate or at least as learned conversations over differences of opinions. What is original with Paul's approach is that he moves the burden of proof from the intellectual sphere of Stoic reason to the more subjective, individual conscience. He drew from the old Jewish sense of the people having mutual responsibility for each other, trying to develop the same collective responsibility in the Church. In the Old Israel, consideration for the community was a strong motivation for observing the purity rules. If the sanctuary were defiled, the people would suffer from the absence of the Lord. In Paul's letters, we find this theme reinterpreted. If there was not love, the presence of God would vanish. This means that purity rules, which were integrated in a person's character, should be allowed to be observed even if others could and did argue that it was a heritage from Judaism that was no longer binding.

In the following, we shall see how Paul argued for this opinion when he was challenged by the new believers of the young churches.

5.2.2 Moral Impurity and Conscience

Paul employs the term conscience, *syneidesis,* three times in the letter to the Romans, eight times in the first letter to the Corinthian church and three times in the second letter to that church. The concept is used fourteen times in the Pauline corpus, in three different contexts, as well as six times in the pastoral letters, which will not be analysed here, although at face value they seem to be used in contexts of ethics, as in the following cases:

1. **Conscience**, *syneidesis, i*s used once in the context of the ability of the Gentiles to know the moral law of nature:

   > *..since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them* (Rom 2:15).

2. **Conscience**, *syneidesis,* is used five times in the context of the ability of believers to recognise what is morally right and wrong:

   > *I speak the truth in Christ - I am not lying, my conscience, syneidesis confirms it in the Holy Spirit* (Rom 9:1).
   >
   > *Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience syneidesis* (Rom13:5).
   >
   > *Now this is our boast: Our conscience, syneidesis testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God* (2 Cor 1:12).
   >
   > *Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth, plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience, syneidesis in the sight of God* (2 Cor 4:2).
   >
   > *Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience syneidesis* (2 Cor 5:11).

3. **Conscience**, *syneidesis,* is used eight times in the context of impurity in meat:

> *But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience, syneidesis, is weak, it is defiled* (1 Cor 8: 7).
>
> *For if anyone with a weak conscience, syneidesis, sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols?* (1 Cor 8: 10.)
>
> *When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, syneidesis, you sin against Christ* (1 Cor 8: 12).

> *25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, syneidesis,*
> *26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."*
> *27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience, syneidesis.*
> *28 But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do noteat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience's, syneidesis's sake.*
> *29 The other man's conscience, syneidesis, I mean, not yours. For why Should my freedom be judged by another's conscience, syneidesis?*
>
> (2 Cor 10: 25-29.)

Paul employs the term *syneidesis* in two main contexts: six times in relation to general ethical considerations and eight times in relation to traditional purity regulations with regard to diet and sacrificed meat. At first glance, this may seem as if Paul is thinking of impurity as an individual construct and as if reality is created with little real or objective foundation. Paul's principle must be understood, however, against the background of his primary concern - the new freedom in Christ - a truth people had integrated into their belief-systems to various degrees. Paul never says that impurity does not exist as a relevant category, or as a condition or status. However, he reinterprets impurity. Purity regulations were part of the Mosaic Law that he no longer found binding. Still, he was highly aware of the symbolic and communicative impact of eating sacrificial meat and he was concerned with the issue of marking a border between the church and the pagans. It will, however, be argued that he introduced love as the new marker of Christian identity that allowed for individual freedom and, at the same time, took a person's conscience seriously. He did not only dismiss the signals of the weaker person's conscience, but also he pleaded with the stronger individuals to show consideration.

5.2.3 Individual Conscience and Concern for the Community

The compound term con-science is translated directly in the Scandinavian languages as *sam-vittighet,* as in Latin, *con-scientia,* "knowing (something) with (some one)". S*yn-eideisis* then means 'shared knowledge'. Traditional Sunday-school teaching has been that the individual's conscience is the voice of God, an idea derived from the belief that an alert and strict conscience is alarmed by the existence of sins that both the individual and God know about. Paul, however, probably did not think of conscience as entailing the ability to receive individual messages from God. Leirvik (2002) has presented a study of the concept of s*yneideisis* and argues that the word does not refer to the knowledge an individual shares with God, but rather to self-reflective knowledge shared with other people, which makes the concept a 'relational term' (Leirvik 2002: 34). The conscience functions well when the individual has self-knowledge and the empathy and ability to be aware of other individuals' situations. It is not a spiritual or prophetic ability to achieve knowledge in ethics, but a capability for self-examination, as well as for consideration for other individuals' well-being. Leirvik argues that this was Paul's understanding of the concept. This accords well with Martin's (1995: 180) analysis, as he points out that conscience is a human ability to react to past actions, not to guide the future. To this must be added that Paul was especially concerned with the community of the believers. He saw the necessity for building a Christian culture in which vulnerable individuals would thrive and grow and the strong would pay attention to the weak.

In the wide range of historical, prophetic, nomological, poetic and sapiental writings in the Jewish Bible there is no word for 'conscience', or any other technical term that combines introspection with other-directedness in the way the word conscience does. Only once is it found in the Greek Septuagint (Eccl 10: 20), probably meaning 'knowledge' (Leirvik 2002: 37). This does not automatically mean that the idea was unknown. Leirvik suggests that its content is found in the more poetic metaphor of the heart. Both in the Old and New Testament, the concept of the heart (*leb, kardia,* respectively) is used in a self-reflective sense (Leirvik 2002: 38). The heart is the seat not only of the emotions but also of thoughts, good or bad.

> *From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.*
>
> (Psalms 73:7.)

In Job, *leb* is translated as conscience in the NIV 1984: "I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience (*leb)* will not reproach me as long as I live" (Job 27:6).

Likewise, *kardia* is translated as conscience in 1 John 3: 20 in the NEB 1970: "... even if our conscience (*kardia)* condemns us, God is greater than our conscience (*kardia)* and knows all".

Moreover, in cases where the term *syneidesis* is not used, 'heart' may be employed instead, being either pure or contaminated (Psalms 24: 4; Proverbs 20:9), divided or integral (James 4: 8). So conscience is not the ability to know what God knows. It is to know by oneself and with others. God always knows more (1 John 3: 20). These considerations are all based on a religious interpretation, of course. In modern psychology, conscience is seen as a reaction based on an individual's super-ego, or as Martin defines the concept: "Conscience is the site of the values that constitute the integrated self" (Martin, 1995: 180). This is, however, not in opposition to the biblical use. The notion of impurity in sacrificial meat was most certainly one of the values that constituted the "integrated self". Paul's point is only that the concern for the conscience of others should be among these integrated values. In the Pauline communities there were two specific challenges with regard to conscience: the relation between the rich and the poor; and between those who lived by the Mosaic regime and those who did not.

5.2.4 **A Conceptual History**

Since the linguistic concept of 'conscience' is absent in Old Testament literature, we shall see how the term was understood in Greek literature and philosophy. As Leirvik demonstrates, several attempts have been made to sort out the aetiology of the terms *syneidesis* and *syneidos.* The term appears in different Stoic schools and is found in extensive use immediately before and parallel to the New Testament writings (Leirvik, 2002: 39).

Early Greek use of the compound verbal form *syn-eidena* and *syneidesis* refer to a knowledge shared with others or to self-consciousness (Leirvik, 2002: 40). The construct *synoida emauto* is found in both Plato (*Apology* 21b, LCL) and Xenophon

(*Anabasis* 1.3.10, LCL) and is even used once by Paul (1 Cor 4:4): "... *ouden gar emauto synoida"*, literally "I know nothing by myself" or "I have nothing on my conscience" (NEB). As an example of the direct relational and moral use, Leirvik quotes Xenophon (Anabasis II.5.7, LCL), saying that one who is conscious of *synoiden auto,* having disregarded his oaths, should never be counted as happy, indicating that only if one shows the same regard to the gods as to dear friends can one happily address the gods in prayer (Leirvik, 2002:41).

The person who introduced teaching on conscience was Philo of Alexandria. He employs the term *syneidos* to refer to a specific function of the human mind. He states that there were certain rules given to the Jews by the original founders of the nation: "... inasmuch as they were detected in blameable and guilty actions, and were convicted, if not by any other human being, at all events by their own consciences, which is the sole tribunal in the world and which is never led away by any artifices of speech (On the Virtues XXXVIII (206)).

The human conscience is seen as a fully trustworthy moral guide, able to convict any wrongdoer more efficiently than a real person. Philo believed that Flaccus's conscience had already condemned him, and enforced his guilt.

> *I praise Flaccus, not because it is right to praise an enemy, but in order to make his wickedness more conspicuous; for pardon is given to a man who does wrong from ignorance of what is right; but he who does wrong knowingly has no excuse, being already condemned by the tribunal of his own conscience.*
>
> (Flaccus II (7)).

Philo describes human conscience in the terms of a person. Conscience is referred to as 'he' not 'it', and is able to love and hate. It has a purpose, which is followed zealously.

> *... for the conscience which dwells in, and never leaves the soul of each individual, not being accustomed to admit into itself any wicked thing, preserves its own nature always such as to hate evil, and to love virtue, being itself at the same time an accuser and a judge; being roused as an accuser, it blames, impeaches and is hostile; and again, as a judge, it teaches, admonishes and recommends the accused to change his ways, and if he is able to persuade him, he is with joy reconciled to him, but if he is not able to do so, then he wages an endless and implacable war against him, never quitting him either by day or by night, but pricking him, and inflicting incurable wounds on him, until he destroys his miserable and accursed life.*
>
> (On The Decalogue XVII (87).)

Horsley (1978: 582) explains: "According to Philo, this convicting consciousness is part of the nature of the soul as created by God": this accords well with Stoic ethics. Cicero (d. 43 BC) says in effect the very same as Philo: "There is no audience for virtue of higher authority than the approval of conscience" (Cicero, *Tus. Dis.* II, 26.64, in Leirvik, 2002: 43).

5.2.5 **A New Boundary Marker**

Seneca follows Cicero. They both agree that the human conscience is a powerful tool, capable of developing a good character. Seneca strongly favours individuals who seek to develop their moral ability by meditating on the inner person, examining everything that has happened during the day to make sure that their consciences are at ease. Foucault (2002: 47) sees this as a general tendency in the moral philosophy of the first century. He observes that it was commonplace to advocate introspection and self-examination. By doing this regularly, a person would be purified (Foucault, 2002: 51), an idea very close to Paul's pronouncement, "... and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled" (1 Cor 8: 7). If Paul was thinking like the Stoics, he meant that some members of the church were weak, in the sense that they were less capable of recognising right from wrong. Their moral ability was defiled, he says, but by what? According to the Stoics, there were three main kinds of passion that were dangerous: pleasure, fear and pain. In the context of the early church, a person who gave up eating meat was obviously afraid of being condemned by God for lack of moderation in eating. His or her conscience was polluted by fear. This was probably a metaphor, which Paul interprets in the next sentence as a hurt conscience, indicating a hurting individual. Both Cicero and Seneca understood moral cognition as knowledge attained through philosophy. Human conscience was informed by reason and fear was an enemy of reason. A pure conscience was a logical, sensible and peaceful conscience as opposed to a hurt one. However, the similarity between Paul and the Stoics is limited. In Stoicism, we find the notion of conscience as the voice of God, according to the stoic concept of God, *Deus intus*. This is very different from the Pauline concept of a transcendent God. When Paul says, "We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:2), his God is present as an active observer, not as the principle of reason. Even clearer is the statement that there is a difference between what is "plain to God" and "plain to your conscience" (2 Cor 5:11). Nevertheless, the difference is lessened when the terminology of the Spirit is in play. What does it mean to say that

"my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 9:1)? This seems very like Socrates claiming that he had a voice within and was guided by something divine and spiritual, *theion ti kai daimonion* (Plato, *Apology 31d*, in Leirvik, 2002: 42). However, whereas the Greek *daimonion* was thought of as coming to the person from the outside, the Stoic *deus intus* was seen as a divine genius working from within (Leirvik, 2002: 44).

Paul certainly acknowledged the Holy Spirit as communicating with human consciousness. It came from the outside, as the Greeks pictured it, and it worked within, as the Stoics thought. However, the mission of the Holy Spirit was different from the pagan concepts. While the Stoic divinity was a presence of reason, the Holy Spirit was a presence of love. Purity of conscience was kept by living and acting in love and making sure that the fellowship was a loving community. Even if it was illogical and unreasonable to abstain from eating meat, the Spirit would be in play in each person's conscience, not allowing any conduct that might cause a weak person to stumble. Leirvik argues convincingly that human conscience was understood as both self-reflective insight and knowledge shared with another individual. Paul takes it one step further by bringing in a third party: Christ. Not only is someone's weak conscience hurt, but "this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge, *gnosis*" (1 Cor 8: 11). We see that the strong person's conscience was correctly informed and that the knowledge was integrated in the person's soul, yet that this knowledge became destructive when the conscience was not functioning in a protecting and loving relationship. So, though there was no impurity involved in eating meat, it still became a sin in certain contexts: "When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ (1 Cor 8: 12)".

In the new covenant, there was a new identity marker: love and consideration for the weak, those who have misunderstood, who do not possess *gnosis* and whose conscience is misguided in matters of purity! The new holy people were neither a congregation of perfect individuals, nor were they all strong. However, they formed a community of people for whom Christ had died and their mutual love should have reflected just that. This message is Paul's main concern. Chapter 13 in his first letter to the Corinthian church, as well as a number of other verses, demonstrates this to the full. Not even circumcision, the marker of the believer's father, Abraham, was valid. The Christian

community was a brotherhood of free individuals, serving each other in love (Gal 5: 6-13).

5.2.6 **Summary**

There was obviously disagreement in the early Church concerning the Jewish inheritance of dietary rules. There was also a concern about eating meat which might have been sacrificed to idols, and many new Christians were worried about contaminating impurity if they ate defiled meat. Others demonstrated their freedom from Mosaic Law by eating foods which the weaker people considered defiled. Paul does not instruct new believers in correct practice, but acknowledges that people's consciences are different, some strong and some weak. The solution was not a uniform ethics of diets, but a generic principle of practising consideration in solidarity with the weak. The concept of s*yneideisis* refers to self-reflective knowledge shared with other people and can, as such, be seen as a relational term. This is exactly the context in which Paul employs it. He is concerned about people with a weak conscience, who are at risk of polluting their consciences by eating meat against their belief. The concept of pollution is used here to denote the internal conflicts of a hurting individual. The pollution was fear and ideas that disturbed the inner peace. The Christian identity marker was not a *gnosis* of purity management, but a loving community in which strong and liberated individuals showed consideration for the weak and insecure. The purification process was not a ritual act, but maturing in the belief of justification by faith. So, a pure conscience was a state of peace and faith.

5.3 IMPURITY AS A HEREDITARY STATE

5.3.1 **Introduction**

The topic of genealogical impurity in Judaism is analysed anew by Hayes (2002). Her point of departure is to acknowledge the distinctions between ritual and moral impurity, as argued by Klawans. However, she brings the analyses further by introducing a third kind of impurity, found in texts concerning impurity in Gentiles, namely, genealogical impurity (Hayes, 2000: 12). As Hayes notes, it is usually thought that ancient Jews considered Gentiles to be impure. The usual implication of the basic agreement has been

the assumption that Jews thought contact with Gentiles imparted impurity to that which they contacted, people and things alike. Hayes argues that genealogical impurity was not considered contagious, based on her studies of this conceptualisation in biblical Judaism, in extra-biblical sources from the Second Temple Period and in Rabbinic Judaism.

To our knowledge, this has not been gainsaid by any scholars of Judaism. Her work seems so well documented that it is here referred to as a standard work on the topic of genealogical impurity. There are three questions of relevance to genealogical impurity:

- The possibility of conversion to Judaism.
- Marriage between an Israelite and a Gentile.
- The status of children in a mixed marriage, the *mamzer*.

When Paul employs the concepts of purity and impurity, he draws on texts within a Jewish framework. In order to detect his thoughts on the subject of genealogical impurity, we shall look into the sources he himself was probably familiar with. We find all the three abovementioned topics dealt with in the Pauline corpus.

There seem to be contradictory sayings in the letters to the church in Corinth. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Paul argues against intermarriage between believers and pagans, basing his argument on the danger of impurity, although he has already dismissed that possibility in 1 Corinthians 7:12-14. Children of pagans are seen as impure. Have they inherited purity versus impurity from their parents, or did Paul think of impurity as contagious? We shall now analyse the pericopes referred to above, starting by presenting an overview of the background material for the biblical idea of impurity in Gentiles. Paul employs the biblical analogy of the holy people of God, separated from all other people, to argue for the holiness of the Christian Church as different from the world. Christians form a sanctified people and pagans are impure, but he does not explain why they are impure. So our question is: How had pagans defiled themselves? Had they done so ritually or morally, or were they simply born impure?

5.3.2 Genealogical Impurity in the Jewish Bible

According to the Biblical way of thinking, human beings were created profane. There is nothing demeaning about that. Mankind was created by God and declared 'good', but not holy. Nature was neither holy nor impure. Nature's natural condition is profane and pure. However, since human nature is weak, moral impurity may easily occur in humans and ritual impurity is unavoidable. Thus, the need for cleansing becomes urgent. Purity and holiness are required in order to be in the presence of God. The situation is that the people of Israel were the only people on earth chosen by God himself and sanctified.

> *For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.*
>
> (Deut 7: 6.)

So what about everybody else? What was the ritual status of the Gentiles? Scholars like Alon (1977: 147, 187) argue that Gentiles were necessarily ritually impure, either intrinsically or due to their idolatry. According to Hayes (2002: 19-22, 45), this view is simply not correct. She argues that the Gentiles were not ritually impure because they were not subject to the ritual purity laws imposed on the Israelites (Lev: 12-15). In the second creation narrative, Adam was animated by receiving the breath of life directly from God. This did not imply that the earth was a sacred place. The devil was already there, hiding in the Garden of Eden disguised as a snake. However, even Satan could not defile nature. Moreover, no one, neither ordinary people nor patriarchs were expected to keep a law that had not been given to them. Abraham and Sarah did not deal with purification rituals. They lived in faith and obedience. Nor were the Israelites defiled when living in Egypt; and Moses was able to come before the burning bush without worrying about having caught impurity from the people he lived with, or from his Gentile wife. In principle, Gentiles living in Israel were in the same position. If they wanted to participate in the ritual life, they could. Hayes (2002: 21) points out that the partial and full assimilation of certain Gentiles into Israelite society in biblical times was the strongest argument against an intrinsic or permanent Gentile ritual impurity. The status of the *ger*, a resident alien, indicates that they were free from impurity, since some of them even helped in building the Temple.

> *That day he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the Lord at the place the Lord would choose. And that is what they are to this day.* (Josh 9: 27.)

So David gave orders to assemble the aliens living in Israel, and from among them he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone for building the house of God.

(1 Chron 22: 2.)

I am sending you Huram-Abi....whose mother was from Dan and whose father was from Tyre...and we will cut all the logs from Lebanon that you need and will float them in rafts by sea down to Joppa. You can then take them up to Jerusalem.

2 Chron 2: 13-16.)

If Gentiles were intrinsically ritually impure, they would not have been able to participate in the cultic life of the Israelites, including the offerings, as the texts attest that they did:

14 For the generations to come, whenever an alien or anyone else living among you presents an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, he must do exactly as you do.

15 The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the Lord:

16 The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you. (Num 15: 14-16.)

The *ger* is therefore also included in the communal offerings aimed at procuring expiation for unintentional sin:

The whole Israelite community and the aliens living among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.

(Num 15: 26.)

Milgrom (1991:1055) explains this by pointing out that the *ger* was bound only by the prohibitive commandments and not by the performative ones. Certain actions caused impurity, regardless of who committed them. However, the community sacrifice was effective for the entire population, Jews or *ger*.

5.3.3 **Moral impurity in the Gentiles**

So, why were the Gentiles often denoted as impure and warned against? Why should holy people not mix with common people? Was marriage between Israelites and Gentiles forbidden, according to the following verse often quoted as textual proof of Gentile impurity?

Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons.

(Deut 7: 3.)

Not so, says Hayes. This verse is often cited out of context. Intermarriage was forbidden only with the seven Canaanite nations who lived as neighbours of Israel, as verse 4 explicitly states. Moreover, the reason was not to protect the holy people from attracting ritual purity by physical contact, but to limit the possibility of their attracting moral impurity by imitating idolatrous and sinful ways (Epstein, 1942: 158, cited in Hayes, 2002: 25).

The rationale this ban is based upon may indicate that intermarriage with Gentiles was prohibited regardless of ethnic status. On the other hand, there are examples of exogamous unions that were fully accepted because the non-Jewish partner participated in the Jewish rituals. The fact that there were bans on intermarriage with specific nationalities, like the Ammonites and Moabites (Deut 23: 4), indicates that those not mentioned were generally acceptable as partners. The reason is given in the following:

15 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.
16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

(Exod 34: 15-16.)

This accords well with the comments made on Solomon's situation:

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

(1 Kings 11: 4.)

The problem was not that he had become defiled through intimate contact with his wives, for the danger was due to the influence they had had upon him.

If the ban on intermarriage had been based on ritual impurity, it would presumably have been universal in scope. This is, however, not the case. Israelites were allowed to marry foreign women captured in war (Deut 20: 20, 21: 10-14). Perhaps this was because the victorious position of the husband would indicate that the God of Israel was more powerful than the gods worshipped by the conquered people. There is no mention of any intrinsic effects on children. The children were included in and protected by the

covenant. So, from which source did Paul get the idea that the children of pagans were impure?

5.3.4 **Genealogical impurity in Gentiles**

According to both Hayes (2000: 27) and Olyan (2000: 82-83), the partial ban on intermarriage developed into a total ban during the restoration period. Moreover, the rationale is no longer caution towards pagan influence and moral impurity, for in Ezra and Nehemiah the concern is for the purity of blood. This means that Gentiles were born defiled and that their seed, being seen as defiled, would therefore cause impurity in the children.

However, as such, this idea is not new. In the Pentateuch, this idea is developed and applied to the priests. Only Levites could serve at the altar and their holiness was preserved by a number of rites and rules. However, there is one important change in terminology from the Pentateuch to Ezra and Nehemiah: while the high priests' exogamy is referred to as a profanation of the seed in Leviticus, it is called defilement of the priesthood in Nehemiah:

> *13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity.*
> *14 A widow, or one divorced, or a profane woman, a harlot, these shall he not take: but a virgin of his own people shall he take to wife.*
> *15 And he shall not profane (ma`al) his seed among his people: for I am Jehovah who sanctifieth him.*
>
> (Lev 12: 13-15.)

It may also be worthy of note that the Bible translations differ here. It seems that the conceptual difference between profane and impure is reduced to a matter of linguistic style (the same confusion is found in Scandinavian versions also). In verse 14, we see that foreign women are seen as profane, not impure. This is not an easy thing for Bible readers to detect, since Leviticus 21: 15 also differs between versions:

NIV 1984: defile his offspring...

ASV 1901: profane his seed...

YLT 1862: pollute his seed...

KJ 1611: profane his seed...

The term used in Leviticus is actually *ma'al,* not *tame',* as in Nehemiah:

> *28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.*
>
> *29 Remember them, O my God, because they defiled (tame') the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.*
>
> *30 So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task.*
>
> (Neh 13: 28-30.)

This means, in the Leviticus case, that sons of the mixed marriage were born profane, like the mother. However, they did not pollute anything or anybody. They were not impure. In the Nehemiah case, the situation is interpreted differently. Even the office of the priesthood was defiled. So the purification was performed by separating the Levites from "everything foreign", even their own families. This was necessary because their sons, being intrinsically impure, were unable to serve at the altar. The priests themselves were also impure, having contracted impurity from their wives and this could not be removed as long as they lived together. So to keep the priesthood pure, divorce was mandatory and necessary. The impurity here was genealogical impurity. Had it been ritual impurity, it could have been cleansed, but no rite could change nationality.

Ezra takes it even further. Not only had the priests to guard their 'holy seed', but even the general population:

> 1 *After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighbouring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites.*
>
> 2 *They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.*
>
> (Ezra 9: 1-2.)

Ezra's innovation is to apply the concept of genealogical purity to lay Israelites as well as to priests (Hayes, 2002: 28). He defines Israelites born of pure (unmixed) parents as 'holy seed'. Conversion to Judaism was impossible because the impurity was innate, hereditary and intrinsic.

This cannot be the kind of purity Paul had in mind in 1 Corinthians 7: 14. In his letter, conversion was hoped for, but even without it the child of a mixed union was holy. The child had not caught ritual impurity, had not inherited moral impurity, and had not inherited genealogical impurity. However, the child of two pagans was impure. So what was Paul's reasoning? We need to search in sources closer to his time: the Second Temple Period.

5.3.5 Genealogical Impurity in Second Temple Sources

Hayes has examined the Book of Jubilees and the document 4QMMT as examples of the Second Temple sources and in order to trace the rationale behind the prohibition of mixed marriages. Ezra's 'holy seed' ideology develops into a full-blown principle of Israelite genealogical purity, which must be preserved not merely from defilement, but also from the profanation that arises from sexual unions with Gentiles. Intermarriage becomes impossible, whether the partner is a converted Jew or not (Hayes, 2002: 68). The question at stake is neither ritual nor moral impurity. The concern in these texts is the genealogical purity and sanctity of the holy people. The linguistic consequence is that the meaning of the terminology was changing during this period. The term purity in the context of marriage has a double meaning: impurity may be used in opposition to holiness, indicating intermarriage as a sexual sin (*zenut*) and as an expression of mixed nationalities creating an offspring who is a bastard, seen as 'defiled seed'. This meant that a Jew marrying a Gentile had thereby defiled him/herself forever, and that the children of this union were born intrinsically impure. The gravity of this is best demonstrated by quoting from the Book of Jubilees 30 (Hayes, 2002: 75-76).

> 7 *But if there is any man who wishes in Israel, to give his daughter or his sister to man who is of the seed of the Gentiles, he shall surely die, and they shall stone him with stones, for he hath wrought shame in Israel, and they shall burn the woman with fire, because she has dishonoured the name of the house of her father, and she shall be rooted out of Israel.*
>
> 8 *And let not any fornication or any uncleanness be found in Israel throughout all the days of the generations of the earth, for Israel is holy unto the Lord, and any man who has defiled (it) shall surely die: they shall stone him with stones.*
>
> 9 *For it has been ordained and written in the heavenly tablets regarding all the seed of Israel: he who defileth it shall surely die, and he shall be stoned with stones.*

10 And to this law there is no limits of days, no remission nor any atonement, but the man who has defiled his daughter shall be rooted out in the midst of all Israel, because he has brought his seed to Molech and wrought impiously so to defile it.

What was gained by this restricted interpretation? It can be explained by necessity. During the exile, when the people were not living in the land, the geographical definition had become meaningless. How was Jewish identity recognised? Even ritual rules were difficult to observe in a different culture and even pagans were able to live morally good lives. So, in restoration times, when mixed marriages did occur, who was a true Israelite? To whom did the covenant belong? Who were the legitimate recipients of the blessings? What was the status of the children of a true Israelite compared to the children of those who had married foreigners? As the product of an illicit union, was a *mamzer* one of the chosen people? During the critical times of the Second Temple Period, many felt the need to be able to identify the legitimate heirs of the covenant. Moreover, the measures suggested in the Book of Jubilees obviously seemed right to many Jews. It could be argued from the ideals of priestly purity and, in times of danger, that impurity must be avoided at all costs.

The same conclusion is drawn by the Qumran sectarians, though their point of departure was a little different. Their zeal and motivation meant that they practised religion in a devoted and uncompromising way. Document 4QMMT testifies to their concern with purity in the Israelite community, and there has been a long debate about whether or not this document deals with intermarriage and, if so, what the rationale was. Did the sectarians see the Israelites and the Gentiles as two radically different seeds, prohibited from mixing, for fear of national defilement? The problem is due to a difference of opinion over the translation. The document is preserved in fractions and there are missing bits that have been reconstructed by the editors in order to present a readable text. In 1994, the editors of lines B75-82 published the text with the following note: "We take this *halakah* to be a condemnation of intermarriage between priests and laymen" (Qimron and Strugnell, 1994 in Hayes, 2002: 82). Baumgarten disagreed. He presented his opinion in a private letter to the editors, claiming that the text dealt with intermarriage between the Israelites and aliens (Qimron and Strugnell, 1994: 55 n.75, in Hayes, 2002: 82). The text is as follows:

75 And concerning the practice of illegal marriage (zenut) that exists among the people, (this practice exists) despite their being so(ns) of holy (seed),
76 as is written, Israel is holy. And concerning his (i.e. Israel's) (clean ani) mal,

77 *It is written that one must not let it mate with another species, and concerning his clothes (it is written that it should not)*
78 *be of mixed stuff, and he must not sow his field and vine(yard) with mixed species.*
79 *Because they are holy and the sons of Aaron are (most holy).*
80 *But you know that some of the priests and (the laity mingle with each other)*
81 *(And they) unite with each other and pollute the (holy) seed (as well as)*
82 *their own (seed) with women with whom they are forbidden to marry.*

The sentence in question is number 80. Should the missing part read 'laity' or 'foreign women'? Hayes argues fiercely that *zenut* refers to intermarriage as the intermingling of impure and holy seed. She points out that generally it denotes sexual sins, which generate a moral impurity that defiles Israel (Hayes, 2002: 76, 89).

In this period, the conceptualisation of 'holy seed' was commonplace and was otherwise used interchangeably with 'the people of Israel'. It is not attested that lay Israelites were seen as a people distinctly different from the priestly class. The difference was that the 'seeds' of Levi had been chosen for sanctification. However, both the priests and lay people were descendants of Joseph. Only the Gentiles were *de facto* of different 'seeds'. Still, it was possible that in the strict regime of the Qumran Sectarians both cases could be labelled *zenut*. However, it is more doubtful that the daughters of Abraham would be seen as a different people. There were certainly degrees of purity and a significant difference between priests and lay people, but that only expressed the hierarchy of holiness that was acceptable within the people.

The comparisons made in lines 76-78 between species in animals, clothes and seeds in the fields suggest that it is not the degree of sanctification which is in play here, but a difference in ethnic belonging: Israelites or *gerim*. This means that the Sectarians had incorporated genealogical purity into their theological framework. So both the *ger* and the *mamzer* were impure in such a way that they could not be atoned for or cleansed.

5.3.6 **Genealogical Impurity in Paul**

Paul lived and worked in the context of both the Jewish Bible and the interpretation of his contemporaries. The question is how the background material that is presented above, sheds light upon the Pauline scriptures on impurity in intermarriage, the need for divorce, and hereditary impurity in children. We shall treat the three relevant pericopes in the order in which they appear in the letters to the Church in Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 6: 15-20, Paul argues against visiting prostitutes by employing the metaphor of the believers being members of the body of Christ. Christ is the head, and each individual is a member of the body. Martin (1995: 174-178) argues that this passage indicates a prohibition on any sexual contact with unbelievers. "Indeed, any sexual connection, marital or non-marital, with one guilty of *porneia* defiles the holy body of Christ". That is, however, not what is explicitly said. The terminology of impurity is not even used and marriage is not mentioned. What it says is simply that believers need to flee *porneia* for spiritual reasons and for the sake of the perpetrator as a member of the church, not because of the effect on the spouse. The problem of immorality is not addressed as a purity matter of contagious character. Of course, the church as a body is defiled when its members commit adultery. However, defilement does not occur through the spouses of those who live in immorality. There is no ritual defilement passed on from the immoral person to the virtuous one, which would be unavoidable in a marriage. Sexual immorality is seen as moral impurity and as in any case of moral impurity, it must be confessed as sin. So there is no textual evidence for Martin's statement that a person married to "one guilty of *porneia* defiles the holy body of Christ". The church can be morally defiled, but only by its own members' conduct. The fact that these verses were much used by the early Church Fathers to condemn mixed marriages (Tertullian, II, ii Ante-Nicene Fathers IV: 45, in Hayes, 2000: 99) does not testify to the literal meaning of the texts. It should be expected that male Gentiles did commit *porneia.* Even though the Roman ideal was to practise it in moderation, it was not unusual to have relations with the slaves one owned, whether male or female, or to visit brothels. If Paul meant to say that the believer's body was likely to be ritually defiled in a mixed marriage, we should expect him to advocate mixed couples to divorce as Ezra/Nehemiah did. This is, however, not the case. He expressly says that the marriage should not be dissolved as long as the unbelieving spouse was willing to live

with a Christian. Both parties are classified as holy and therefore, their children are holy (1 Cor 7:12-14).

Paul obviously disagrees with what Nehemiah/Ezra had to say about mandatory divorce:

> *23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.*
> *24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah.*
> *25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves."*
>
> (Neh13: 23-25.)

> *"Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will.*
> *Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives."*
>
> (Ezra 10: 11.)

Paul explicitly allows Christians to be in an already contracted mixed marriage. He is obviously not worried about the possibility of moral impurity resulting from the destructive influence of a pagan spouse, which was the reason behind the strict reaction of Nehemiah:

> *Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women.*
>
> (Neh 13: 26.)

Paul does not express any worry about moral impurity. On the contrary, the Gentile spouse is purified and sanctified simply because of the marriage, of which Hayes has noticed two kinds: moral defilement as in Ezra/Nehemiah; and an ethnic mix as in the Second Temple literature. The idea of ethnic impurity should be eliminated first. Paul was a missionary to the Gentiles and was not concerned with the 'holy seed' of Israel. Hayes suggests that Paul thinks in terms of moral impurity, which means that children normally inherit the moral defilement of their pagan parents, but that he makes a concession in the case of a new convert in an existing marriage (Hayes, 2002: 96).

Another possible interpretation is that here Paul is dealing with ritual impurity. What characterises ritual impurity is that it is contagious and must be atoned for. The impurity is a defiling and destructive force and the sacrifice is a sanctifying and reconciling one. This presupposes that Paul would have employed Levitical terminology in a New Covenant interpretation. The question was, as in Haggai: which power was the strongest, defilement or sanctification?

> 12 *If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'" The priests answered, "No."*
> 13 *Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?" "Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes defiled."*
> 14 *Then Haggai said, "`So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,' declares the Lord. `Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.*
>
> (Hag 2: 12-14.)

Since Paul, in the letter to the Corinthians, is dealing with the relationship between purity and impurity in a Christian context, he implicitly acknowledges the sanctifying power of the blood of Christ. Bearing in mind his metaphorical use of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit only one chapter earlier (1 Cor 6: 19), a different interpretation may be suggested, namely that the spouse of the Christian is sanctified, meaning that he has no defiling power, which makes the offspring ritually pure and acceptable as part of the congregation. If this is correct, it means that Paul was not making concessions for new converts, and that he did not see ritual impurity as a problem for Christians at all. So why, in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 does he totally reject marriage between Christians and Gentiles, comparing it to a union between Christ and Belial, a union which would call for purification of body and soul? Paul is obviously speaking about mixed marriages, since the phrase "yoked together" is the same as that used by Jesus in Matthew 19: 6: "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together (*synedsevksen*), let man not separate".

Here, Paul compares the couple in a mixed marriage with sacrilege. The degree of impurity this metaphor carries is grave. However, what Paul is concerned with is not ritual but moral defilement, as Klawans (2005: 153-4) argues persuasively. So, why did Paul employ such harsh language? Why is there this notable difference between the

permissive attitude (1 Cor: 6) and this restrictive attitude in 2 Corinthians 6? One understandable reason would be that he had simply reconsidered the situation. He had seen how difficult it was, especially for women, when one spouse participated in regular church life while the other spouse was against it. It must have been very difficult for women not to participate in the sacrifices that were a part of normal Roman life. Moreover, since the home was very much the domain of the woman, even men may have had difficulties preventing sacrifices taking place there with their children present. There is a corresponding shift in Paul's view of divorce. In his first letter, he has no problem with mixed marriages, but in his second he allows divorce when necessary, in order to avoid defilement of the body as well as of the spirit. So what about the purity of the children of these unions? He does not change the message from the first letter with regard to this purity. However, in the second letter, he seems to say, "Do not take the risk". This was drastic advice, implying that women should refuse to enter into marriages arranged for them by the Paterfamilias. From the legend of Thekla (Abbot, 2000: 93), the young Christian girl who wanted to travel with Paul and refused the marriage plans of her family, we learn that this was a very dangerous stand to take. So when Paul advises so strongly against mixed marriages, he adds: "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty", realising that in many cases, God was the only father the girls could depend on with regard to their spiritual life. The subordinate position of women in the Roman world often made it impossible for them to maintain a lifestyle according to Christian norms and values. So when Paul sees a mixed union as a union between Christ and Belial, he makes it clear that it may be impossible to live as a Christian in such a marriage. However, he never argues this from the idea of 'impure seed', but alludes to the many pagan sacrifices that were performed in every pagan family. Children of a mixed union were at risk of being brought up as pagans. This was, however, not always so. Timothy was brought up in a mixed marriage, with a mother who was a Jewess and a believer and a father who was a Greek (Acts 16: 1).

5.3.7 **Summary**

We have seen that the Jewish discussion on genealogical impurity was relevant to the early church in cases of mixed marriages and the children of such unions. Both the Book of Jubilees and 4QMMT treat intermarriage as the intermingling of seeds, one of which defiles the other. The terminology of defilement and profanation is, however, not

derived from the ritual purity system of Leviticus, but rests upon the idea from the Book of Ezra that the elected and sanctified people were a holy and priestly people and, as such, should abide by the holiness code with regard to marriage, in which they should be producing 'holy seed'. Otherwise the children would be defiled, prolonging the impurity of the Gentile parent. The Israelite who married a Gentile committed a sexual sin, *zenut,* and defiled himself morally. So, the Gentile partner was impure from idolatry, the abomination of his tradition; the Israelite was morally defiled from choosing a Gentile; and the children were genealogically defiled as 'mixed seeds'.

Paul strongly warns against mixed marriages. In 2 Corinthians 6: 17 he even quotes Isaiah 52: 11. "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord", implying that the church was the new temple and that Christians were not carrying the vessels, they actually were vessels themselves. Paul usually employs the terminology of impurity in two specific situations: sexual sin and idolatry. Sacrilege was necessarily practised in a pagan family and he had reason to believe that it was difficult to avoid being part of it. His point was not that there was impurity in the mixed couple, but there was impurity of mixed religious practices. He is no longer optimistic about the possibility of the believer winning over the spouse, as he was when he wrote 1 Corinthians 7: 16. The concept of impurity is clearly moral impurity, due to the sin committed while participating in idol worship and, thereby, uniting oneself with demons.

5.4 IMPURITY AS ONTOLOGY

5.4.1 Introduction

Paul's understanding of reality included evil supernatural entities. Although he never employs the concept 'impure spirits' in his letters, it is nevertheless clear that he concurs with the idea of spiritual phenomena, who operate actively and contrarily to God's plan for humanity. He does deny the existence of idols, *eidolon* (1 Cor10: 19), but this statement, strictly speaking, only preserves his monotheism, which is not in conflict with a more dualistic concept of reality on some level. On the contrary, Paul warns the believers explicitly against spiritual beings, referring to them as evil spirits, *pnevmatika tes ponerias.*

According to the Gospels, Jesus used the concepts 'impure spirits', 'evil spirits' and 'demons' interchangeably as phenomena belonging to the kingdom of Satan. Against this background, it may be reasonable to think that he chose conscientiously to adopt the expression evil spirits, *pnevmatika tes ponerias,* and avoided the term impure spirits, *akatharton pnevma*. By so doing, he avoided possible associations with ritual impurity and reserved the concept for moral impurity, which was the only kind of impurity Paul was concerned with. He sees such spirits as personal, intelligent beings, able to seduce and influence people's thinking, but we have no trace of his teaching about these spiritual beings as demons invading and tormenting people. There is a striking and consequent difference in the choice of vocabulary between the synoptic Gospels and the Pauline letters. While the terminology of Jesus included demons, impure spirits, evil spirits and a range of spirits with specific functions, Paul speaks of idols, rulers, authorities, powers and forces. Moreover, while Jesus authorised his disciples to exorcise impure spirits, Paul never suggests this. So, what was Paul's understanding of the phenomenon of destructive spiritual beings and ontological impurity?

Martin (1995: 176) observes a dualism in Paul's letters, which he interprets as being between the cosmos and the Church. He calls this "... an ethical - cosmological dualism in which Christ is opposed to 'this cosmos'". The concepts 'cosmos' and 'cosmology' are, however, not very precise terms; *kosmos* in Paul's writings carries different meanings, like the created world or human race, while the modern concept, cosmology, denotes different scientific theories about the universe. *Kosmos* is often used in the New Testament in a negative sense, since it was the realm of evil forces that could not be tolerated in the presence of the holy. In this sense, *kosmos* may be considered impure, which may be the implied meaning of the statement by John that the world was under the control of the evil one, *ho kosmos holos en to ponero keitai* (1 John 5: 19). This idea of impurity is also found in Revelation 18: 2: "Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for impure spirits *(akathartu),* a haunt for every impure *(akathartu)* and detestable bird".

We see that the concept of impurity was connected with demons by Jesus and John, but not by Paul. We shall not argue from silence and say that Paul did not believe in demons as personal and intelligent beings; we can only register that he has not given them anthropomorphic properties and he never alludes to the myth of the giants or any other theory of their characteristics or aetiology. Demons were seen, if the biblical texts

can be taken to be coherent enough to form a consistent presentation, not only as fundamentally evil, but they also belonged to a kingdom different from God's (Matt 12: 26). They were in the world, but they belonged to the kingdom of Satan. Biblical narratives portray demons as fallen angels (Rev 12: 9) thrown out of heaven (Ezek 28: 13), seeking to deceive people before they and their master Satan end up in the lake of fire (Rev 19:20). They are allowed to be in the world, but it is not their proper element. They are essentially impure and, as such, unable to be in the presence of the Holy One. Still, there is no sign of Paul seeing demons as carrying a contagious impurity. This may have been the reason why he never labelled them 'impure spirits'. A believer, who was purified by the blood of Christ, could not attract impurity by a demonic attack. In this context the impure spirit was overpowered.

So what about impurity in *kosmos*? In Paul's writing, *kosmos* was not necessarily evil or impure in itself and can hardly be said to be the negative pole of an 'ethical-cosmological dualism'. God loved *kosmos* (John 3: 16) and had reconciled it with himself (2 Cor 5:19). On the other hand, there are examples of the world being mentioned as a 'fallen' world, influenced by sin and, as such, in darkness. Contrary to this, the Church was regarded as purified and sanctified by the Holy Spirit and called to be holy (1 Cor 1: 2).

The dualism we detect in Paul will, in what follows, be denoted as 'ontological dualism', understanding human nature as the battle ground for the struggle that goes on between God and the spiritual powers, which are seen as essentially evil. The term 'ontological dualism' will denote an interpretation of spiritual reality where God works through the Holy Spirit and Satan works through forces of evil. These two kingdoms mutually exclude and oppose each other.

5.4.2 **Impurity and Exorcism**

Paul often encourages his readers to stand strong and fight the desires of human nature, *sarx*. However, he says (Eph 6: 12): "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Obviously, he believes in a spiritual world, with which people can interact and by which they may be influenced. The linguistic concepts he chooses to employ are significantly different from those we find in the Gospel literature. The struggle one may experience with people is not seen as the actual struggle, because the critical struggle is fought with spiritual powers, which Paul refers to using a common denominator, as "spiritual forces of evil" (Eph 6:12).

According to our observation, he refers to the following beings:

angeloi, Rom 8:38
archai, Rom 8:38, Eph 6:12, Kol 1:16, 2:10
dynamis, Rom 8:38
eksusai, Kol 1:16, 2,10, Eph 6:12
kosmokratoras, Eph 6:12
kyriotetes, Kol 1:16
thronoi, Kol 1:16

Impurity is never mentioned in connection with any of these powers. Paul employs different terms, all general, but with one common denominator: they all denote evil spiritual powers. He does not deal with specific demons and never reports on conversations with them. Evil spirits are treated as impersonal, destructive energies and the remedy is not exorcism but Christian knowledge, *gnosis*, based on revelation and ethics such as truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, readiness for peace and the Word of God (Eph 6: 14-17). Nevertheless, the dualism in Paul's thinking involves two different powers: not the platonic dualism between spirit and body, but between God and Satan, between holiness and sin. He chooses to express this dualism in the terminology of ontology, using terms like 'powers' and 'spirits' and in terms as 'good' and 'evil', and not the cultic vocabulary of purity and impurity.

According to Luke, Paul did perform an exorcism. Questions of historicity will not be discussed here, but it is of note that the narrative says that Paul exorcised a spirit by which the demonised slave-girl predicted the future, *pnevma pythona*. When the spirit became troublesome, Paul cast it out (Acts 16:16-18). However, the situation had nothing to do with the slave-girl being impure and the exorcism was not a purifying exercise. The slave-girl was a pagan idol-worshiper before and after the exorcism. She did not appreciate what happened, since the spirit had not troubled her, but had provided

both she and her master with a good living. Though it actually spoke truth, the exorcism was motivated by Paul's own irritation with the spirit shouting at him, advocating Paul as a messenger of salvation! Contrary to the way Paul treats the subject in his letters, Luke portrays the spirit as a personal one with knowledge and a will of its own. He also indicates that Paul was known as a successful exorcist, since the evil spirits acknowledged Jesus and Paul, but not the sons of Sceva, who were less successful in casting them out (Acts 19: 13-15). This does not, however, testify to Paul actually performing exorcisms, since the evil spirit, *to pnevma to poneron,* only said that they would have obeyed Paul if he had commanded them to leave. Paul himself neither teaches about exorcism in his letters, nor does he advocate that his readers practise it. Neither has he included any exorcism narratives in his letters. Does this mean that consciously he not only avoided the concept of 'impure spirits', but also the practice of exorcism?

There is one indication of this not being the case. In the list of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12: 10), he has included the gift of mighty powers, *energemata dynamenon. Dynamis* was an old Greek concept found in Pythagoras' teaching and denoting the power that organises the cosmos, which was a fundamental principle in Poseidonius' world view. It is also found in Jewish apocalyptic literature referring to spiritual powers in alliance with Beliah (Studiebibelen 1988 (IX): 361). The term is used one hundred and eighteen (118) times in the NT, usually denoting the power of God. In the Gospels, the term *dynamis* is also used to denote Jesus' miracles and exorcisms (Matt 11:20). Furthermore, *dynamis* is the concept Paul uses to denote evil powers (Rom 8: 38; translated as 'demon' in NIV 84). Still, *energemata dynamenon* can probably not be understood as a specific gift of exorcism. The combination of the words *dynamis* and *energeo* (translated as "mighty energies" in Matt 14:2 NIV 84) is also used to describe the ministry of John the Baptist, who was not known as an exorcist

Jesus was known for exorcising the spirits of various diseases. A close connection was believed to exist between impure and evil spirits and diseases. Peter expressed this by witnessing Jesus healing "all who were under the power of the Devil" (Acts 10:38). However, there are no traces of Paul interpreting sickness as being demonic attacks. Sickness is presented as a natural phenomenon, just as the educated society in Roman culture would have thought of it (Ch. 3). Timothy's stomach problems are an example of this. Regardless of who wrote the pastoral letters, neither Paul nor the tradition after

him, described sickness as demonic. There is no "spirit of infirmity" in Timothy, only his problems of "frequent infirmities". A diet of wine is suggested, not exorcism (1 Tim 5:23). Paul mentions his own sickness or weakness of the flesh, *di asthenian tes sarkos,* on the first occasion that he preached to the Galatians, without indicating any invasive power, although he did realise that it might be interpreted as socially embarrassing (Gal 4:13). According to 2 Timothy 4: 2, Paul also left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Paul's interpretation of sickness seems to accord well with the educated understanding of sickness. It may also be noticed that according to 1 Timothy 5: 23, Paul interpreted Timothy's recurring sickness as a lack of balance, suggesting the consumption of wine in accordance with the professional medical school of the period.

There is no mention of Paul exorcising the spirits of disease or of sickness caused by invasive powers or impurity. Nevertheless, Martin (1995:168) insists that Paul "presupposes an invasive aetiology of disease". He does mention that Timothy's sickness is treated differently, but he sees this as an exception, failing to mention Trophimus (2 Tit 4:20). Furthermore, he does not give convincing biblical evidence to establish what he sees as the rule behind the so-called exception. The example he presents to prove his case is Paul's "thorn in the flesh". However, the problem caused by the "*Angelos Satan*" was probably not explained by invasive aetiology, since it was not a case for exorcism. Paul prayed about it and was told to endure torment by the "messenger of Satan", since the power, *he dynamis,* should be made perfect in weakness, *tais astheneiais* (2 Cor 12: 7-9).

It is not said whether "the messenger of Satan" denotes sickness caused by Satan, or a real person who caused persecution. There has been some discussion about whether the problem was of a social, physical or psychological nature. Martin (1995: 168) chooses to dismiss the debate as irrelevant, since it supposedly presupposes a modern distinction foreign to Paul's culture. He argues that the concept of *asthenia* meant both sickness and weakness and that both had social consequences. However, Woods (1991) seems to have a valid point when stating that even in ancient times there was a noteworthy difference between a disease-demon and a hostile person. So, how did Paul himself interpret his hardship? There are two possibilities: the messenger of Satan was either an invasive power that brought sickness, called "a thorn in the flesh", or he was an evil person who persecuted Paul and, as such, a messenger of Satan, causing problems and suffering that are referred to as "a thorn in the flesh".

There are no examples from Paul's letters providing evidence of him interpreting disease as satanic. However, he does see a demonic power behind hostility:

> 26 *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,*
> 27 *And do not give the devil a foothold.*
>
> (Eph 4: 26-27.)

Paul says in his letter that he has decided to accept his current problem. He did accept considerable persecution during his lifetime, but would he have accepted an invasive demonic power in his own body? Martin (1995: 167) argues that it is significant that Paul's own assumptions regarding disease causation "are ruled by invasion aetiology", an opinion for which he fails to provide evidence. Paul's view was that the body was a temple of the Holy Spirit and that light and darkness could not dwell in the same temple (2 Cor 6: 14-16). According to Douglas (2000a: 42), this idea that the body resembled the altar is derived from Levitical purity thinking. She has observed that pure animals could be killed and sacrificed and that some of the meat was placed upon the altar, while some of it was to be eaten and, thereby, placed in a human body. The body of any member of the congregation of Israel was equivalent to the altar. In effect, a person could not eat meat that was impure without contracting impurity. The rules for protecting the altar were the same as those that protected the body. The idea of the Holy Spirit and demons cohabiting in the same temple is, therefore, counterintuitive. If Martin is right in saying that the "thorn in the flesh" was a disease caused by an invasive power, Paul would have seen himself as demonised.

Paul regarded the problem as settled, according to the revelation he had received. Instead of working in power, *energemata dynamenon,* he needed to work in weakness, *he dynamis tais astheneiais*. So "the thorn in the flesh" was probably not an invasive demonic power that caused sickness, but actual persecution, which he endured as a sacrifice (Phil 2:17) and which made it possible, therefore, for the power of Christ to rest upon him (2 Cor 12:7-9). This is in harmony with the mention of Alexander (2 Tim 4: 14-18), who attacked and seriously harmed him. He believed, however, that he should be rescued from every evil attack, indicating by use of the term 'lion's mouth', that there was an evil power in play. The expression 'thorn in the flesh' is only found once in the New Testament. There are, however, two similar expressions in the Old Testament: "thorns in the side" (Num 33:55) and "thorns in the eye" (Josh 23:13). In

both cases, the expression describes pagan people who inflicted problems and pain on the Israelites.

Paul certainly believed that believers could be attacked and tempted by the devil. He believed that anger could lead to sin, and he warned his readers against giving the devil a foothold (Eph 4:27). This indicates that if there was a demonic influence in a person, as an invasive power, the angry person was still not just an innocent individual invaded by demons. Hatred, discord and fits of anger were all properties of human nature, *sarx* (Gal 5: 20). These impulses needed to be controlled in order to resist the temptations that the devil would put in one's way. So, if Alexander, the furious metalworker, had given the devil a foothold and, as such, functioned as 'a messenger of Satan', does this expression indicate that Paul saw a connection between Satan and moral impurity, thus indicating that the sins were influenced by an evil power that someone had failed to ignore? We have seen that both anger and sexual lust could provide Satan with an opportunity to tempt people. So even if individuals made their own choices, both bloodshed and infidelity could have been initiated as satanic temptation, which would have been a rationale for the assumption that grave sins created impurity. If so, Paul did not employ the term 'impurity' in a symbolic sense, but rather to denote a spiritual influence.

5.4.3 **Demons, Defilement and Ritual Meals**

We saw in Chapter 3 that the concept of impurity was used in a symbolic sense by the Stoics to denote sexual immorality. In Judaism, the term is used in connection with sexual immorality, bloodshed and sacrilege (Klawans, 2000: 155). The symbolic terminology of impurity not only creates meaning, but it also constructs reality (Houston, 1993: 123). How should a sacrificial meal be understood? What did a person become involved in by participating? According to Paul's understanding, participating in a ritual meal communicates a message to the spiritual world. It includes the participants in a fellowship with all those who are present, whether they are human or spiritual beings. This is a basic understanding of the phenomenon, regardless of whether the meal is held in a pagan, Jewish or Christian context. This means that a cultic meal like the Eucharist not only symbolises sanctification, but also creates it. Consequently, participating in pagan meals not only symbolises dining with demons; it is intended to be a fellowship with spiritual entities, demonstrating that 'foreign gods' are being

honoured. Idolatry was characterised as serious sin in Judaism and, therefore, created moral impurity, an expression Paul adopts.

Christians with a Jewish background had two reasons for not eating meat. First, it might have been non-kosher; second, it might have been sacrificed to idols. In both cases, the meal would be considered forbidden. Did forbidden meat cause impurity? This was a question that may have caused difficulties to Paul's readers, since it was frequently debated in rabbinical circles (Klawans, 2000: 31-32). Regardless of how it was answered, eating forbidden food was certainly a sin in its own right, although not an unforgivable one. Much more serious was the idea of becoming spiritually influenced by sacrificial meals, which was a commonly held view. As Martin (1995: 191) explains: "Their eating constituted a sharing in the table of daimons; they became, to some extent, integrated into the very being of those daimons." This was exactly Paul's point: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's Table and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10: 18-21). So why had Paul been dealing with the question of sacrificial flesh with such latitude only two chapters previously (1 Cor 8: 4-6)?

Paul obviously did not consider a ritual meal to be magical. The ritual's meaning and its effect became a function of the participating person's own belief and attitude. This was Paul's interpretation of both the Lord's Table and the table of demons. Both meals had two possible effects, depending on the participant. A person could eat sacrificed meat without becoming united, *koinous,* with demons, as long as he/she regarded them as powerless and ate the food without regarding it as anything but just that. If the participant believed in the power of idols and approached the table believing he/she would gain something from it, the meal was *per se* a sacrificial meal, *eidolothyton.* This does not mean that the meal had defiling power. If it is a scam, void of power, it does not have the capacity for defiling anything. On the other hand: if it is powerful, as Paul definitely considered the Lord's Table to be, it would be either sanctifying or dangerous. It was necessary to approach the meal with an attitude that honoured the Lord. This table was not merely a symbolic reminder, but actually, to reframe Martin's statement: "... their eating constituted a sharing in the table of the Lord; they became, to some extent, integrated into the very being of the Lord". Still, Paul lets us know that some people came together and ate without regarding the Lords Table according to the

intentions of the Lord and therefore, brought condemnation upon themselves by eating (1 Cor 11: 17-34). When holiness and sin meet, it is dangerous.

> *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.*
>
> (1 Cor 11: 27.)

On the other hand, if the participants did include the poor and celebrated the Lord's victorious death, the meal would have created unity with Christ and therefore, the participants would be recipients of the blessings of the New Covenant. The difference between the condemning effect and the soteriological effect was not in the meal itself, but was dependent on the person's willingness and ability to recognise, *diakrino,* what he or she was participating in.

It is noteworthy that Paul does not employ the concept of impurity in this context, but speaks of sin. The danger he sees is that the strong individuals of the church might hurt and offend the weak (1 Cor 8:12) and that the poor might be humiliated (1 Cor 11:22). There is more: Paul sees a direct connection between not taking the cultic meal seriously and sickness.

> *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*
>
> (1 Cor 11: 29-30.)

In effect, spiritual judgment, as the cause of sickness and death, is very close to the idea of impure spirits causing sickness. What is noteworthy here is that the meal was probably conducted correctly with regard to rituals. There was nothing wrong with the cultic aspect. However, it was lacking in ethics. Poor people were not taken care of and consequently, many were weak and sick and some had died. What had happened?

Martin offers a cultural explanation of the same phenomenon, pointing to Greek myths where gods and goddesses possessed *pharmaka*, which could cure or harm, save or kill, all according to the relationship between the recipient and the god (Martin, 1995: 191).

We believe, however, that the explanation is found in Jewish dualism, expressed by the dualism of blessing and curse. If love was the new marker of holiness, than selfishness was the marker of sin and ethical impurity. Paul gives an explanation indicating demonic activity and ontological impurity, by alluding to the 'Cup of Blessing' (1 Cor 10: 16). Divine blessings presuppose the presence of God. In the Tannaitic literature, there was great concern about sin leading to the departure of the divine presence. Klawans has collected a number of incidents where this is seen as a major concern (Klawans, 2000: 118-134). So it is a condition the Christians brought upon themselves. God does not leave his people unless he is driven away. Moreover, by neglecting the meaning of the Eucharist, those who ate without sharing with the poor defiled the meal, which should have been a marker of the community of the new holy people under God's blessings (Deut 28: 1, 9). According to Deuteronomy 28, there is no middle way. It was either blessings or curses. So the dishonouring of the Cup of Blessings of the New Covenant paved the way for curses bringing sickness and death:

5.4.4 **Impurity, Exorcism and Baptism**

In Biblical Judaism, water was a purifying remedy and atonement was the resolution for moral defilement (Klawans, 2000: 27). One way of detecting Paul's understanding of impurity, is to search for resolution rituals. Indeed, baptism is such a ritual. We find it presented in the metaphorical pericope about the church as Christ's bride. Paul here indicates that the collective members were impure before they had been cleansed and made holy by Christ himself. Baptism is described (Eph 5: 25-27) as a rite of purification by water through the word.

Klawans (2000: 139) explains that the baptism of John was generally understood as purification from both ritual and moral impurity. The water was offered on condition of a repenting attitude. The individual had already purged his soul from sin and, therefore, qualified for baptism. This indicates, however, that baptism by John was the remedy for moral impurity and a rite of atonement. Even Jesus subjected himself to this baptism and, in spite of John's protest, replied: "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then, John consented (Matt 3: 15). If baptism by John had been for the purpose of ritual impurity there was no reason to protest, since ritual impurity was acceptable and unavoidable. The protest may indicate that it was cleansing from moral impurity, which John believed Jesus was not guilty of. Jesus did not confess sins,

as the others did, but he was baptised as a matter of principle, to "fulfil all righteousness".

Paul himself had been baptised on his way to Damascus. On that occasion, Ananias said: "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name" (Acts 22: 16). Why was this different from John's "baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1: 4)? Moreover, why did Paul not advocate baptism by John, but require a second baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 19: 3-5)?

The wording is not much different: John offered the forgiveness of sins based on repentance and Ananias explicitly offered cleansing from them. The difference was probably in which name purification and cleansing were offered. Paul complained that baptism functioned as initiation and adherence to a certain leader. Instead of offering an explanation of the real meaning, he declares himself glad that he had not baptised many people (1 Cor 1: 14-16). When John called people to repent, which was all he could do before baptising them as purification from the sins they had confessed. When Paul baptised in the name of Jesus, he offered purification based on the everlasting atoning sacrifice of Christ. In agreement with this view, Klawans (2000: 154) presents Paul's understanding of baptism as "the ultimate purification from moral defilement", which he finds most clearly demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11: "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God".

However, finding support for baptism as purification from moral impurity does not necessarily exclude purification from ritual impurity, or genealogical impurity as well, although Peter explicitly says that it was not so: "... and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of impurity from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God (1 Pet 3: 21)." According to Josephus, it was generally understood that ritual impurity affected the body and that moral impurity defiled the soul (Klawans, 2000: 140). A good conscience means no sins to worry about and, since there was no purification of the body, it is clear that Peter saw baptism as a symbolic atoning or purification ritual; in both cases, it had to do with the forgiveness of sin.

The fact that ritual impurity was of no concern in the early church was due to the belief that the danger of the forces of death was overcome by Jesus once and for all. So when Paul rejects one purification rite and advocates another, it is because of the symbolic meaning of baptism as identification with Jesus' death and resurrection. It was a rite made efficient by "the Spirit of our God"; and it effected sanctification from all kinds of impurity.

> *3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*
> *4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*
>
> (Rom 6: 3-4.)

Contact with death was the worse kind of ritual impurity, according to the Holiness code. Being baptised to Jesus' death and resurrection meant that the power of death was overcome. There was no danger in the natural world that could cause ritual impurity. The person who is baptised is taken out of the realm of the cosmos and becomes spiritually united with Christ (1Cor 6: 17). Furthermore, baptism is understood by Paul as a purification rite in a spiritual sense; being purified not only from the sins committed, but also from the satanic power of sin.

The death and resurrection of Christ were the rescue of mankind:

> *13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*
> *14 In whom we have redemption, redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins.*
>
> (Col 1: 13-14.)

This has been interpreted in church history as an encouragement to link exorcism with baptism. Around the third century, Pope Cornelius was the first to make exorcism a minor order. He announced that an exorcist could be a priest, deacon or someone in the sub diaconate. The minor order of exorcist was dropped by Pope Paul VI in 1972. He did not believe there was any need for it and took the view that it was obsolete. In Catholic tradition, for this purpose, the rite was reformed by Pope John Paul II. Different forms of exorcism have therefore been practised by the Catholic Church from its beginning. In preparation for baptism, catechumens receive minor exorcisms, whereby the priest prays that they be freed from sin and the influence of the evil one.

Likewise, the liturgy of baptism itself includes a renunciation of Satan and all his works and the rite for the baptism of children includes a prayer of exorcism which asks God to set the children free from original sin and make them temples of God's glory, sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within them. These rites recall that through the waters of baptism, all may participate in the victory of Christ over sin, the devil and his darkness. The prayer in Rite of Baptism for children says it like this:

> *Almighty and ever-living God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendour of your kingdom of light.*
> *We pray for this child: set him/her free from original sin, make him/her a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell within him/her. We ask this through Christ our Lord.*
>
> (http://www.katolsk.no/liturgi/messen/)

The Orthodox tradition includes the direct rebuking of Satan:

> *Be rebuked and depart ... O Satan ... through us His unworthy servants command thee and all the power which worketh with thee to remove thyself from him who hath been sealed in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our True God.... Banish from him (the candidate) every evil and unclean spirits hidden and lurking in his heart, the spirit of error, the spirit of evil, the spirit of idolatry and all covetousness ... May the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan...*
>
> (Mastrantonis, 2003.)

The practice of exorcism as part of baptism can be traced back to the third century, when the Church instituted the office of exorcist to officiate in the service of exorcism for catechumens before their baptism. Prior to the third century, the deacon officiated at this service. However, because "seven deacons, according to the Acts of the Apostles, should be appointed for each great city" (Canon 15, Synod of Neocaesaria (315 AD)), there were not enough deacons to serve all the needs of the Church. Therefore, the office of exorcist, along with many other offices (sub-deacon, reader, cantor, doorkeeper), was instituted to serve this need. The office of the exorcist is ranked higher than the readers; those who hold these offices are considered members of the clergy, appointed by the bishop (cf. Canon 26, Synod of Laodicea; Canon 10, Synod of Antioch). The exorcist was considered by the Church to have the gift of curing and was required to read prayers of exorcism in a clear and understandable voice, which was a criterion for appointment to this office. The duty of the exorcist was to prepare the catechumen (candidate for baptism) through religious instructions in order to strengthen him spiritually to renounce Satan (Mastrantonis, 2003).

During the fourth century, the exorcism of water appeared for the banishment of evil spirits from water. The exorcism of evil from water was later changed into a positive sign by blessing it instead, though its negative form was not entirely eliminated. The renouncement of Satan, the exorcism service and the blessing of the baptismal water are mentioned as occurring before the baptism ceremony for the first time in the third century (Mastrantonis, 2003). The exorcism prayers in baptism are the Church's first steps to banish evil spirits. Exorcism presupposes the teaching of the Church on the cleansing of the original sin of Adam through baptism, in adults and in infants as well.

It seems as if there has been a gradual development from ritual baths being understood as purifying baths, to the need for casting out a personalised devil, who was believed to inhabit every human being as a result of original sin, an anthropology which certainly regards humans as genealogically impure from birth; or, as St Augustine thought, from the moment of conception, which he believed was the moment of orgasm when the persons were caught up in passions and least sensible (Ranke-Heinemann, 1990: 78). Though there are many exorcism narratives in the New Testament, there are none that combine exorcism with baptism. Based on the context in which we find Paul's expression "washed and sanctified" (1 Cor 6: 9-11), it is probably safe to say that he saw baptism as a ritual that washed and purified from the ethical impurity caused by specific sins. He never states directly that baptism was a ritual which cleansed ontological impurity as well. This may, however, be derived from the idea that Christians are rescued from "the dominion of darkness" (Col 1: 13). So, being baptised to Christ included participation in his victory over evil powers. It can also be argued that both genealogical and ontological impurities were cleansed and atoned for by the sacrificial blood of Jesus, which means that there was no impurity left to cleanse, except ethical and ritual impurity caused by each individual's acts: sexual sins and sacrilege, as shown elsewhere in this chapter.

5.4.5 **Summary**

The notion of ontological impurity is based on a concept of reality in which there are spiritual beings, or a spiritual energy, that interacts with human beings. Ontological dualism means that God works by his spirit; an adversary power called Satan works through demons or dark forces, either as impersonal energies of death and destruction, or as intelligent beings consciously disrupting people's lives. Given that evil entities

exist in the world where human beings live, the remedy for rescue becomes critical. Ontological impurity is a concept used here as an overarching term for the power of evil. It may manifest itself in other specific categories of impurity and can be overcome or cleansed away following different strategies, like exorcism, piety, or sacraments.

We find no evidence for Paul including exorcism in his missionary work. On the contrary, he writes as if the problem of ontological impurity caused by evil spirits is settled. Demonic influence is seen as a result of people's choices or weakness in the face of temptation. Paul understands pagan sacrificial meals as dining with demons only if the person participating at such a meal realises that it is understood that way by the other participants, a thing Christians would naturally avoid doing. Imaginative idols have no defiling power, but the action of seeking such company is a sin which produces moral impurity in Judaism, and Paul seem to agree with that interpretation. Ontological impurity was part of his world view, according to our definition. But it was not a power that could be contracted by contact. However, it could create moral impurity through habitual sins, by "giving the Devil a foothold". Moral impurity was not just a label for unwanted behaviour, but was seen as a powerful agent. So the defiling power of sin, moral impurity, was closely linked with ontological impurity.
Paul did believe that pagans were impure, since they were expected to live sinful lives. It was not contagious and did not spread to the Christian wife and their children. He did, however, believe that the children of unbelievers were born impure, indicating a belief in genealogical impurity. If this is correct, baptism and exorcism of children of new converts would be necessary before the children were included in the church, unless the new faith of the parents was seen as having a purifying effect.

5. 5 IMPURITY AS SEXUAL IMMORALITY

5.5.1 Introduction

Paul is not foreign to the concept of impurity, but his employment of the term is most often found in the contexts of illicit sexual encounters. It is not a general term used interchangeably with sin, but sexual sins were seen as morally polluting. We have seen that the Stoics used the terminology of impurity metaphorically to express their aversion to immoderate sexual practice. The understanding of moral impurity as symbolic is also

found in much of the traditional scholarship on Judaism, including the works of Neusner (1973: 108), who claims that the idea of Levitical impurity "... may serve as metaphors for moral and religious behaviour, primarily in regard to matters of sex, idolatry, and unethical action".

Contra Neusner, Klawans (2000: 26) argues convincingly that moral impurity is no more merely a symbolic expression than is ritual impurity. He has observed that many theologians treat the subject of moral impurity as if it were only a way of speech. He shows, however, that the Old Testament sources document a factual understanding of the concept of 'moral impurity', which he defines as the result of acts so heinous that they defile the sinner, the sanctuary, and the land of Israel. Moral impurity was basically created by incest, murder and sacrilege. This kind of impurity was, however, not contagious, but it would destroy both the sinner and the community if it was not dealt with. The remedy was atonement, punishment or ultimately exile (Klawans, 2000: 27). Klawans observes that Paul was strongly concerned with the biblical and ancient Jewish notion of moral impurity (Klawans, 2000: 151) and that this is reflected in a number of incidents, which will be analysed in the following.

5.5.2 **Sanctification, Purity and Ethics**

The point of departure, according to Paul, was not a concern with ritual purity, or cultural considerations, values or habits, but an expressed concern with "God's will".

> *3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;*
>
> *7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*
> *8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*
>
> (1 Thess 4: 3, 7, 8).

The ultimate aim of Paul's teaching was the sanctification of the church. Moreover, doing God's will was to the believer an integral part of the sanctification process. Though it is said that holiness is given in Christ (1 Cor1: 30) by the Spirit (2 Thess 2: 30), "... for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil 2: 13), some degree of willpower and determination is also expected (Phil 1: 30). The believers were not only expected to do the right things, but also actively to avoid sin. As there is a connection between the Spirit and the person's own

effort in sanctification, there is also a connection between impurity, satanic involvement and the person's giving in to sin.

It will be argued that the concept of moral impurity denotes a real spiritual condition that has an effect on both the sinner and his/her community. It is not just employed as metaphoric language. When symbolism is in play, it is obvious, as in 2 Corinthians 11: 2 where Paul refers to the church: "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him".

In Jewish tradition, the grave sins were incest, sacrilege and bloodshed. Sacrilege was probably not very tempting to Christians, except when it came from social pressure within the family and the neighborhood. The actual situation was the question of eating meat that had been sacrificed before it came to the market, a problem Paul defined as a relative matter, to be solved according to the individual's conscience. Murder was prohibited by Roman law, so the one issue left to worry about was sexual immorality (1 Cor 6: 18-20).

Impurity caused by sin was dangerous, not only to the sinner, but to the entire church. This is a legacy from Judaism. If the sinner refused to repent and make up for the damage caused, according to Judaism, it was the duty of the community to punish the sin. Avoiding this was seen as passive acceptance, which brought guilt upon the entire population. First of all, the sanctuary was affected, but not by contact. The sinner was not ritually impure, so he would be welcome to enter the temple and the sins committed might have happened at a great distance from the temple, but the moral impurity of one individual in some way affected the spiritual situation of the whole community. This could again defile the land, making it 'vomit' its inhabitants, which ultimately resulted in exile. Moral impurity was dangerous because it defiled the sanctuary. According to Milgrom (Lev 1-16: 257), the sanctuary could be defiled at three levels: the altar, the priest and the Holy of Holiest. "Unless it was quickly expunged, God's presence would depart" and, when it departed from the sanctuary, it also departed from the land. Moreover, the individual's sin would ultimately defile the land. So, what is meant by the land being defiled? There are many references in the Old Testament to the land without the blessing power of God upon it. The land is affected by this in every way, from the climate, to growth, to sickness in the cradle and death in animals. Furthermore, the land is described as having personal qualities. It has become demonised. It can

dislike people and can actively get rid of them. It is not fertile, but is in the service of death. A defiled land does seem unnatural. The natural world was created to support life and to nourish its inhabitants. The defiled land did the contrary, even 'vomiting' its children (Lev 18: 28).

Paul probably did not worry about defilement of the land. Christians were strangers in this world, heading for a better place. However, he did employ the idea of the importance of purifying the Temple to denote the need for sanctification in the church. Paul uses the word *naos*, the holiest of the holy, rather than *ieron*, the Jerusalem Temple in LXX (Newton, 2005: 54), thereby indicating the urgency of purification so that *Shekina*, the presence and glory of God would prevail.

5.5.3 **Impurity and Sexual Promiscuity**

Though Paul himself valued the ethics of the Stoics, it is important to see how his own ethics differ from theirs. Like the philosophers of his day, and especially Epictetus, Paul advocated celibacy. Marriage was accepted in order to prevent weak people from giving in to fornication, *porneia*. In marriage, Paul demands a mutual obligation to keep the spouse sexually satisfied, not because of the bodily pleasures, but to enable the spouse to resist the temptations from Satan. He accepts this basic sexual need as part of human nature, *sarx*, which can be exploited by Satan, but overcome by taking reasonable measures. Paul himself says he was endowed with a spiritual gift, *charis*, which enabled him to live in celibacy. Even so, he never calls marital sex impure. He does not differentiate between moderate and immoderate sex in marriage, as the Stoics did (see Chapter 3). The question is: what was the connection between sex and impurity? Martin (1995:216) claims that, "Christians should avoid desire completely, and marry if necessary". Paul does not speak of sexuality but of sexual acts and desires. And whenever the subject arises, Paul treats sex as potentially dangerous. If it cannot be completely avoided, it must be carefully controlled and regulated so as to avoid pollution and cosmic invasion (Martin, 1995: 211).

Actually, Paul says nothing to recommend sexual moderation in marriage. Neither desire nor sexual acts are denoted as sources of impurity or as dangerous and, unlike Stoic writings, the idea of excessive sexual practice in marriage is never mentioned in his letters. As a good Jew, Paul sees celibacy as dangerous, not sex. Celibacy, and not

marital sex, may give Satan possibilities of temptations. His argument against marriage is not based on the dangers of sexual excesses, but on the burden of practical issues like childcare and domestic duties (7: 33-34).

Martin (1995: 217) concludes his reasoning, however, by stating that Paul meant that sexual desires must be completely avoided, in order to protect the body from pollution and demonic invasion.

> *In Paul's ethical and cosmic dualism, desire, like any other disease, is pictured as a foreign, utterly hostile, polluting agent that threatens the body. And, like any other disease, it must be cast out of the body entirely. In Paul's conception, there can be no truce, no meeting the enemy halfway. Desire is the burning disease that threatens to corrupt the body from within; therefore it must be completely avoided.*

Martin (1995: 212, 216) has interpreted his saying, "Better to marry than to burn" (7:9), as a condemnation of sexual passions and desires as such. He argues from his interpretation of 'Paul's ideology of the body' and, therefore, compares sexual desire with disease (Martin, 1995: 217). An alternative interpretation would be to compare desire with hunger and sex with food. That would be a commonplace way of thinking in Roman society. This categorisation is Paul's own, according to 1 Corinthians 6: 13: "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" - but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, *porneia,* but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Here, one can detect Paul's Jewish background. Hunger is natural, but it becomes dangerous when the need for food is not met: "Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, `Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God (Prov 30: 9)".

The folkloric demon, 'the inflamer of the heart', was not an expression used for a natural and normal married life, as Martin (1995: 213) argues. That is exactly why it only came into action through spells. Rabbinical sources focused on the duty to keep the wife sexually satisfied, requiring a break in the study of the Scriptures, which was seen as more enjoyable (Boyarin, 1993: 134). So Paul is very much in line with Judaism in the chapter on marriage. His real concern with impurity is, however, the immorality of visiting prostitutes and thereby, becoming one *sarx* with her, instead of uniting spiritually with the Lord (1 Cor 6: 11-17). The expression associated with purity here is "you were washed, you were sanctified" (1 Cor 6:11). Moreover, there is no reason to

doubt that *porneia* expressed Paul's purity-concept, since it is said directly in a number of other places:

> *... and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, akatharsia, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.*
>
> (2 Cor 12: 21.)

> *The acts of the sinful nature, sarx are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, akatharsia, and debauchery;*
>
> (Gal 5:19.)

> *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, akatharsias, with a continual lust for more.*
>
> (Eph 4:19.)

> *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, akatharsia, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*
>
> (Eph 5:3.)

> *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure, akatharsia, or greedy person - such a man is an idolater - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*
>
> (Eph 5:5.)

> *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, akatharsian, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*
>
> (Col 3:5.)

There is a connection between sexual immorality and impurity, but what does that mean? Did the acts create impurity; was the immorality due to innate impure urges in human nature, or to demonic influence through satanic temptations? Pondering these questions, we shall examine the texts regarding same-sex promiscuity.

5.5.4 Impurity and Same-sex Promiscuity

When we include the letters to Timothy in Paul's correspondence, we get three verses concerning same-sex promiscuity that are in every case characterised as impure, defiling or unholy:

> *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, akatharsian, for the degrading of their bodies with one another.*
>
> (Rom 1: 24.)

... nor male prostitutes, malakoi nor homosexual offenders, arsenokotai..... will inherit the kingdom of God.....But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Cor 6: 9-11.)

We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for unholy ...perverts (arsenokoitais).

(1 Tim 1: 9-10.)

We shall not discuss the translations of *arsenokoitai* in these verses, but only call attention to the fact that the two verses in the translation of NIV-84 are rendered as "homosexual promiscuity", not homosexual orientation or partnerships. We will suggest that Romans 1 also describes the same condition. It is explicitly stated that the male offenders left their own wives and started to lust after males, and that the women did likewise. We find no support for reading this as a reference to homosexual orientation, since the text says nothing about orientation but refers to practices in an orgy, where no one was with their own partner. If this is correct, Paul only says the same in Romans 1 as in 1 Corinthians 6, namely that all promiscuity, regardless of gender, is seen as impurity as well as sin.

It seems that impurity is used interchangeably with sexual immorality. Why would Paul choose a term so loaded with religious content? Maybe this was because he was addressing an audience that knew the term impurity from Stoic culture. This seems to be the case in Romans 1: 24-26, where the sexual acts are not only labelled impure but also unnatural, *para physin*, exactly as a contemporary Stoic would have seen it.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to "sexual impurity", akatharsian for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women (wives?) exchanged natural, physiken relations for unnatural, para physin ones.

27 In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women, ten physiken kresin tes teleias and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion, tes planes.

Paul here says that God gave the sinners over to impurity. This means God allowed the behaviour to create moral impurity, which indicates that they could not be accepted in a Christian Church without changing this lifestyle.

Furthermore, Paul links the impure to the unnatural. The question is, then, what he means by *para physein*. What was the relationship between human nature, *sarx*, and what is natural, *physin*? In this context, the term *sarx* should be read as human nature. Our objections to the *New International Version's* translation "sinful nature" is based on the creation narrative saying that *sarx* was created by God and given the spirit of life by Him. There was originally no impurity in earthly nature or in human nature. God pronounced the created world to be good. However, *sarx* was weak as dust and vulnerable to both ritual and moral pollution (Psalm 103:14). This weakness was not said to be identical to polluted nature. It did not prevent a relationship with the holy one, but appealed to God's parental compassion (v.13). So, what was Paul's opinion on nature and that which was natural, *physein*?

The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1975) lists four meanings: natural conditions, natural dispositions, natural order and natural creatures. However, the question related to the roots of the Pauline concept of impurity and the extent to which nature was seen as positive or negative. Acts contrary to nature are obviously negative, sometimes creating impurity, from which it follows that nature should be expected to be good and pure. First of all, it should be noticed that nature does not exclusively refer to the physical laws of nature. It may also mean what is culturally common and agreed upon. Surely, nature does allow men to grow long hair. How short it should be cut is a matter of culture and fashion. So when Paul asks rhetorically, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man indeed have long hair, a dishonour it is to him?" (1 Cor 11:14), it demonstrates that he employs 'nature', but means 'culture'. The idea of natural and unnatural intercourse was not an original Pauline idea. Paul is obviously in line with the Greco/Roman milieu. Brooten (1996) has analysed the cultural background of Romans 1; a few of her findings, with which other scholars generally agree, will be presented in the following.

The concept of unnatural intercourse goes back to ancient interpretations of dreams, an art which is presented by Artemidoros of Daldis in his five volume work *Oneirokritika, The Classification of Dreams*. It is basic that imagery is good if it is in accordance with nature, law *(nomos)*, custom *(ethos)*, occupation, names or times. What is contrary to these is bad or inauspicious (Brooten, 1996: 178). Sexual dreams are categorised as either natural and legal, or illegal *(para nomon)* and unnatural *(para physin)*. Dreams that were natural and legal were about a man having intercourse with his wife, mistress, prostitutes, a woman who the dreamer does not know, a male or female slave or a female friend. If the dreamer was a woman, the legal and natural dreams were penetration by a man known to her, an active male lover, and a man masturbating (Brooten, 1996: 180-81). The illegal category consists of a number of varieties of incest and the unnatural dreams for men were masturbation, female same-sex sexual intercourse with a female or male deity, a corpse and an animal. It is noteworthy that same-sex encounters are seen as the common denominator in unnatural intercourse.
A slightly different categorisation-system is found in Philo. In his treatise, *On the Special Laws*, he gives a systematic overview of prohibited sexual relations. These include incest, adultery, pederasty, the rape of a widow, the rape of a virgin and others. At only three points does Philo use the term *para physin*, sexual encounter: during menstruation, sex between a man and a boy, and relations between two species (Brooten, 1996: 247). This suggests a thinking which links natural sex to procreation. It is natural for nature to support life. The boy in a same-sex relation is not seen as a real boy and is consistently called *androgyne*. Moreover, sexual acts without the possibility of procreation are counterproductive and unnatural. Some of these were acts that carried the death penalty under the Mosaic Law.

Stoic interpretations of sex, *para physin*, are found in a number of authors. The founder of Stoic philosophy, Diogenes Laertios, defines passions as an "... irrational and unnatural", *para physin*, movement of the soul (Tobin, 1983: 79-87 in Brooten, 1996: 254). The reader is also referred to Chapter 3 in relation to this.

All of the above-mentioned opinions can be traced in Paul's letter to the Romans, although not in a pure form. He does not say that nature, *physicos*, is identical with God, but he indicates that there is a connection between the created and the creator (Rom 1: 20), which again indicates that the laws of nature are the laws of God. He points out that humans were created gendered as male and female, an argument for heterosexuality,

perceived as natural sexuality, and same-sex perceived as *para physein.* His argument does not follow Philo's worry about infertility.

In the same letter, he even acknowledges that sometimes even nature can profit from what is contrary to nature:

> *After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature, para physisn were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!*
>
> (Rom 11: 24.)

The tree was wild by nature, but was not made impure even by the grafting procedure, which was unnatural. The expression "contrary to nature" is used only twice in the New Testament, on both occasions in the letter to the Romans.

So, why did God give these people over to impurity (Rom 1: 24)? Was it because of unethical behaviour or because of acts contrary to nature? What is unnatural is usually not seen as impure. Celibacy can hardly be said to be procreative and natural. Even monogamy is probably more a result of culture than human nature. Since the grafting of trees, in Chapter 11, is seen as positive, although they were contrary to nature, we are left with only one option. Deciding whether or not an act is ethical, valuable, or sinful all depends on circumstances, purposes and results. Natural and unnatural are simply not ethical categories. So, Paul's understanding of ethical norms was probably based in culture, or revelation for that matter, but hardly in nature, in gardening, as well as in sexual ethics. Moreover, the vice list in Romans 1 was certainly grave enough to be labelled moral impurity in any culture, whether Jewish, Stoic or Christian.

Why, then, did some people choose to live in sexual immorality? Paul says that it was because of the forces in 'human nature', *sarx*, which are difficult to resist. A number of verses say just that (Rom 8: 5, 8; Gal 5: 16-17, 19; Eph 2: 3; and Col 3: 5). The dualism Paul sees is between nature, *sarx,* and spirit, *pneuma*. Both sexual immorality and impurity are mentioned as 'acts of *sarx'* or 'desires of *sarx'*. We do not find impure spirits who influence people to do what they do not want to, but we do find human nature with its impure desires, lust and cravings. If immorality was the work of a demonic power, exorcism would have been a solution. Paul, however, advises to the contrary, to hand the incestuous perpetrator over to Satan, in order to have his *sarx* destroyed (1 Cor 5:5). By so doing the church was purified. So, what about the impure person himself?

Newton (2005: 79-97) analysed the Pauline concept of impurity with regard to church discipline in the church in Corinth. He argues that Paul demanded the church to exclude those who lived in sin, in order to maintain the level of purity necessary to obtain God's presence. He observes that Paul based his reactions on the belief that the Church was the Temple of God with the requirement of an excellent moral standard: that means, he argues, that Paul demanded the church to purge itself of slanderers, greedy people, as well as fornicators and idolaters (Newton, 2005: 94-95). Newton does not appreciate the different regimes for ritually and morally defiled church members. According to Leviticus, the sinner was not denied access to the Temple. The sinner was not contagious by contact. His sin, if it was grave enough, did however defile the sanctuary, whether the sinner was present or not. Sin was dangerous to the collective because if it were tolerated, it influenced and changed the culture of the nation, so that it would cause God's presence to depart. But it did not defile the individuals who lived uprightly. However: sin and holiness could not mix. It was directly dangerous and can be illustrated by what happens when, according to recent physics, matter meets with anti-matter, causing an enormous amount of energy to be released. What people feared was the divine judgement, *caret,* which meant premature death by the hand of God. This is exactly what happened in the Corinthian Church. Those who did not care for the poor, became sick and died. So when Paul, in one exceptional case, demanded the incestuous person to be excluded, it actually saved his life.

Forkman (1972: 141 ff in Newton, 2005: 88) suggests that the delivering of the grave sinner to Satan was, in effect, to reverse the baptism process by which he once had entered the community. This may be correct, but the reason was not to let Satan kill him so that he would perish. Satan is not a danger to sinners. Satan lets people sin according to the flesh, the more the better. However, incest was not accepted in Roman society, and depending on the social standing of the family, the Paterfamilias could kill his own son for such an offence. The excluded person would probably quickly realise the gravity of the situation and return to the narrow path and be saved. The intention was to create a situation in which *sarx* - the human nature which in this case had led the man to sleep with his father's wife- would perish, in order to save his spirit. *Sarx* in this verse is usually translated 'body'; in many other contexts it is translated as 'sinful nature'. It is typical for Paul to see *sarx* as antagonistic to *pnevma*. *Soma*, however, is the temple of the spirit. Satan was not given authority over his body, only his sinful inclination. The

immediate danger for the people in the Corinthian church was not that God was about to leave the community: it was the contrary: The presence of God struck the sinners as *karet.* Therefore, they always needed to purge the church from sin, usually not by getting rid of the sinner. Each member was a temple that needed to be holy and blameless, since each person was seen as a sanctuary for the Holy Spirit. The best way to keep the temple pure was to live in love and, by that, automatically to maintain the moral standard of the community.

In the Pauline corpus, impurity is only moral impurity. Paul mentions, however, not only sin as actions but also sin as impure desires; although it is not clear that this created impurity in the person who desired, if the desires were not put into practice. In any case, the Eucharist would be an atoning ritual for sin (Matt 26: 28). Only those who lived in grave sin were excommunicated until they repented and changed their ways. Keeping the community - seen as the spiritual temple - pure, was important to the individual believer as well as to the Church, which was dependent on the presence of God, his blessings, his healing power: in other words, the *Shekina.*

5.5.5 **Summary**

Paul employs the cultic language of purity/ impurity when stressing the need for general purification of the Church. When dealing with specific moral issues his terminology is seemingly in accord with stoic philosophy, in the sense that sexual adultery and promiscuity were denoted as impurity. Paul differs, however, from the Stoic philosophers by shifting the focus from uncontrolled passion to the legality of the marriage bond. He presupposes monogamy and does not comment upon the fact that many men lived with a concubine, usually a freed female slave, who for different reasons they did not marry. What Paul does argue strongly against is adultery and promiscuity. However, our question is whether Paul used the terminology of impurity in the same symbolic way as the Stoic philosophers and our findings answer this in the negative. He sees not only a carnal union with the adulterer and the prostitute, but also unfaithfulness to Christ, with whom Christians should be united. This was not a symbolic literary expression, but a description of a real spiritual condition. The influence from Jewish prophetic literature is obvious, as moral impurity was seen as faithlessness and adultery to YHWH and did have spiritual and practical consequences. Impurity was a spiritual category, although it is not directly said to involve demonic

powers. It did, however, at least imply that the presence and the glory of the Lord would vanish from the individual and from the Church. Purification took place through understanding and repentance.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Paul employs the concept of impurity in contexts that were often denoted as impure by both Jews and Romans, educated or not. We have seen in Chapter 4 that Jesus used the term 'impure spirits' as interchangeable with 'demons'; and 'ethical impurity' as a condition defined by 'evil from the heart', a spiritual condition lacking the presence of God. Stoic philosophers used the word to denote unacceptable sexual behaviour and in Roman religion it was used to denote loss of virginity. Our question is: How did Paul understand the concept of impurity? Was it a moral category or a spiritual? Did it express his dislikes and moral opinions or did it connote an active, evil, intelligent influence? We have examined the different concepts of impurity and we will conclude by summarising the different concepts in the Pauline corpus.

Ritual impurity was nullified by Jesus. Paul is, consequently, in accord with this. There is no mentioning of impurity caused by natural bodily functions, sicknesses or death. The Jewish concern with the danger of the forces of death seems to be totally overcome by Jesus' death and resurrection.

However, Paul had to deal with situations where Christians felt uneasy about eating flesh that might have been sacrificed to pagan gods. In such situations we find that both impurity of diets and impurity of conscience cause concern. Even though Paul himself does not ask about the meat, he takes other people's consciences seriously. Paul accepts difference of opinion regarding the question of impurity of diets. In Romans 14: 14 he says that he is persuaded that nothing is impure in itself, still it is impure to the individual who believes it to be so. This is the kind of argument which is unthinkable in a different context. He could not have said that infidelity only defiles those who see it that way. Since he is persuaded that eating all kinds of food is allowed, the principle works. To the benefit of those who are less sure and in order not to defile their consciences, he allows some flexibility. His overriding principle is that consideration for others is an ethical value that should dominate the community. His aim is to enable

the community to develop in one spirit, which was not the same as in one opinion. Conscience was a relational term, meaning introspection and empathy with other people, often referred to as 'heart'. A contaminated heart was dominated by fear, which was actually contrary to the fruit of the spirit, but not a sin.

Still, if one consciously participates in a pagan religious meal, it becomes an act of idolatry, which defiles the person morally. Paul does not see the impurity of sacrificed meat as merely an outward cultic impurity. He does take sacrilege seriously. But does he believe such impurity would have a spiritual effect on the person in question? Judaism would categorise the impurity caused by sacrilege as moral impurity because it was a forbidden act. In Paul's case it is more complicated. It was not forbidden for Christians to eat flesh regardless of its history, but it is forbidden to worship other gods. By denying the existence of other gods, the factual effect of idolatry was nullified. But if participation is an expression of belief and hope for help from other deities, the meal is communion with demons. From this argument it seems, as Paul suggests, that impurity created from unity with demons must be classified as a spiritual category. In the same way, the Holy Communion, when rightfully practised, created a presence of God. If so, Paul uses the term 'impurity' not as the Stoics did, but rather in the way Jesus employed it, as an ontological category.

Use of the impurity language is most often found in the context of immorality, especially in visiting prostitutes. We find the very same conceptualisation here as in the case of idolatry. As the person united himself with demons in the first case, the immoral person unites himself with the prostitute. He does not contract ritual impurity, but the forbidden act - in Judaism as well as in Jesus, according to the Gospels - creates moral impurity.

The idea of genealogical impurity is directly dealt with. Paul does see pagans as impure people. But it is not ritual impurity which has a defiling capacity that is in play. If pagans were ritually impure they would contaminate the Christian spouse and their child would be impure. And according to Jesus, there was no such power. When Paul does use the concept of impurity, he means possibly that pagans were morally impure. He does not think highly of their moral standards. Their vices are vividly described in Romans 1, but the purity of the one party is strong enough to allow for God's presence in the whole family. So, due to the holiness of the Christian spouse, the children of a

mixed union are holy. This implies, and was directly stated, that children of pagans were impure. So what kind of impurity were such children victims of? Even though it can be argued that pagans were immoral, this judgement did not fit all and certainly not infants. Children of pagan unions were, hence, different from children of Jews and Christians. This is genealogical impurity. This may have been the reason why children of new converts were baptised. It may also have been the rationale behind the exorcism ritual performed at baptism. If so, genealogical impurity was connected with ontological impurity, understood as demonic presence.

We have seen that Paul's cosmology included satanic powers. He mentions these in a variety of ways, but never as impure spirits. He refers to demons once, but it seems as if he sees both demons (1 Cor 10: 20) and idols (1 Cor 8: 4) as powerless entities of paganism. Paul's letters give no evidence of his including exorcism in his missionary work. Whether or not he would have practised exorcism as part of baptism is impossible to know, since he did not baptise many. Paul's concern with ontological impurity seems to be limited to the moral realm. It seems that problems caused by the dominion of darkness are solved (Col 1: 13). Evil influence is perceived as the result of people's choices, or weakness in temptations. Paul does draw attention to the possibility of becoming morally impure due to specific sins, which result from satanic temptation and afflictions that occur in conjunction with human weakness. Paul employs the concept of impurity usually in the context of sexual immorality. Douglas has suggested that impurity in Leviticus denotes "matter out of place". Even if that can be argued, it obviously does not include all cases. A corpse is impure regardless of place; and an impure person may not be out of place at all, but staying at home waiting for the impurity to wear off. We have seen that immoral persons were not "out of place" in the Christian church, except in extreme cases. The church was actually the best place to be for people who needed purification, since they would be helped and taught and encouraged to live better lives. Baptism is referred to as a cleansing ritual for new converts, and the Eucharist was the atoning ritual for believers who were not yet perfect.

The Stoic influence should not be overrated, since the rationale behind the stoic concept of impurity was used as a linguistic expression to denote emotional ecstasy and uncontrolled passion. The concern with sexual sins was highly relevant in Judaism as well, but for quite different reasons. Moral impurity was, according to the Hebrew Bible, not created by passion as such, but mainly by infidelity. Impurity was often

referred to in Stoic texts to express aversion with a certain lifestyle. In the Hebrew Bible, it was employed to describe a dangerous state which needed to be dealt with, in order to avoid serious consequences through defilement of the sanctuary, and eventually defilement of the land and exile.

We recall that only grave sins created impurity in Biblical Judaism. In Romans 1, we see that God himself decided to judge homosexual and lesbian promiscuity as impurity, which meant that those people were unable to approach God. The state of impurity is also commented upon by Philo like this: "His sins made him unworthy of encountering the sacred" (Philo, Sp. Laws 3: 88-92 in Klawans, 2005: 65).

Paul employs the concept of impurity, on the general level, as the opposite of holiness (1 Thess 4:7). Holiness is, however, not to follow the strictest possible path, but rather to appreciate the freedom in Christ and the new covenant. When he writes about specific issues, we find this terminology in the context of sexual immorality, warning converts not to use their freedom to indulge *sarx*, but to serve one another in love (Gal 5: 13).

The central theoretical argument of this thesis is that there are aetiological and anthropological differences between Jesus' and Paul's use of purity/impurity language. We have shown that the aetiology of the concept, as it is found in the synoptic gospels, is clearly traced from Biblical Judaism. Leviticus forms Jesus' point of departure and, during debates over this concept, he nullifies the idea of ritual impurity by stating that, "Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him" (Mark 7: 15). Paul is completely in concord with this, stating that "nothing is 'unclean' in itself" (Rom 14: 14). However, both Jesus and Paul continue these quoted statements by defining what does create impurity.

Jesus points to moral impurity resulting from evil, mentioning the grave sins that were known to create impurity according to Judaism, such as sacrilege, bloodshed and adultery. Paul also employs the concept of impurity in the context of ethics, but his usage is more in accord with the Stoic philosophers and Roman culture, since he uses impurity mostly, but not exclusively, about sexual misconduct. He also sees a troubled conscience as a polluted conscience. However, the aetiology from Judaism is clearly detectable in his warning against participation in pagan cult.

We have also tried to find which anthropology was implied in the usage of the concept of impurity. Jesus does not seem to be influenced by the Second Temple literature concerning genealogical impurity. It is not recorded that he sees pagans as impure. Paul, on the other hand, says that the children of pagans are impure, although the impurity is not a dominating force. When one parent is a Christian, both the spouse and the children are considered holy.

Both Jesus and Paul had a concept of reality that included evil spiritual entities. But in this context they employ totally different terminologies. Jesus consequently refers to demons as 'impure spirits', while Paul uses words like 'powers' or 'principalities'. They also present their demonologies differently. The demons we read about in the ministry of Jesus usually tormented people with sickness or infirmities and could be commanded to leave when met with a stronger power. Paul does not teach about exorcisms; but he mentions evil powers as intelligent agents for an evil force that tries to influence people's choices. His advice is to stand strong and not give in. While we find a dualism in the teaching of Jesus that seems to be influenced by the strict dualism of the sectarians - that is between the power of God and the power of Beelzebub's impure demons - Paul is more concerned with the dualism between the flesh and the spirit.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Our point of departure for this research was the obvious difference in the employment of the purity/impurity language in the synoptic Gospels and the Pauline corpus. Our overarching aim was to find out if Jesus and Paul shared a common understanding of the concept and how they understood the purity language. Searching for the semantic field of the concept, we examined their intellectual *milieus,* as well as all the major passages in the Gospels and the Pauline letters that bear on our understanding of the concept of purity/impurity. Scholars have suggested that purity/impurity in Leviticus denoted a religious state, or that it was a symbolic concept indicating danger or a symbolic expression for the forces of death. We have argued that impurity was, on Jewish ground, basically an ontological concept denoting a destructive power which was able to prevent the blessing presence of God. The concept of an anti-power to God was an idea which developed in spite of the strict monotheism of Israel. In the early period, the ontological struggle was described to be between the God of Israel and other gods. As monotheism developed, the concept of an evil power surfaced, as clearly seen in the creation myths. We have suggested that in the same way as the name YHWH was believed to be too holy to be pronounced, so too the naming of an anti-god was also perceived as dangerous. The idea of an antagonistic power was therefore dealt with by employing the symbolic concept of impurity.

By the first century, impurity was not only a destructive principle, for it was even seen as an impure spirit in the shape of a personal demonic power, which had the ability to destroy, or at least harass the individuals subject to its attacks, as the narratives of Jesus' ministry show. However, this meaning of impurity is not found in Paul, who used the concept mainly in the context of ethics. This implies that the concept of impurity may have different meanings, not only in different authors, but also with regard to different kinds of impurity. We shall therefore compare the understanding of ontological, ritual, genealogical, and moral impurity in Jesus, according to the synoptic Gospels; and Paul, according to the letters which bear his name.

We have seen that both Jesus and Paul taught within the framework of a dualistic cosmology, although they denoted the destructive powers differently. We have also seen that John uses the concept of impurity differently from the synoptic authors. We have, in this study, not presented much material from the Gospel of John, simply because he

very seldom employs the purity language. There is however, some similarity in the denoting of evil powers in John and Paul. They both use the term 'darkness' to denote the counterpart of the Kingdom of God. None of them reports any exorcisms. Nor do they treat sickness as demonic attacks. The main difference between these two authors is that Paul, contrary to John, actually does employ the purity language. The terminology in the Synoptics - attributed to Jesus - is not gainsaid by Paul, but still notably different. This difference is our focus in the following analyses. We will analyse the concept of ontological impurity first, since we believe that this concept may be found implicit in the other categories of impurity as well.

While Jesus spoke of demons belonging to the kingdom of Beelzebub, Paul wrote about the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We have shown that Jesus used the terms 'impure spirits' and 'demons' interchangeably. He also shared the understanding of popular culture that many sicknesses were demonic attacks. His healings were therefore exorcisms, in which he rebuked the spirit of the specific disease. This was obviously not seen as merely a symbolic expression of the destructiveness of disease; at times, it is described in terms of real conversations between Jesus and the demons. Demons were intelligent spiritual entities, able to inflict harm on a person's body and soul. According to Luke, Jesus exorcised "a daughter of Abraham" from satanic oppression, which is presented as an impure spirit who had crippled her for eighteen years. The woman had obviously done nothing to cause this misfortune: she was neither a pagan, nor was the sickness seen as a curse due to her living in sin, and thereby breaking the covenant. The impure spirit had overpowered the promised blessing of the Sinai Covenant. When Jesus met this woman there was a confrontation between the impurity of the demon and holiness of Jesus. We recall that 'common' and 'pure' were passive states, but 'impurity' and 'holiness' were the antagonistic active powers. According to Leviticus, the presence of the Lord would vanish if the sanctuary were defiled. Impure people were, therefore, denied access to the Temple until they had purified themselves. In the ministry of Jesus, impurity was never an obstacle to his power of deliverance. Holiness was more powerful than impurity. The fact that holiness and impurity were treated as active forces with an inner drive to expand, indicates that the phenomena were understood as more than symbols, even in Biblical Judaism. The urge to influence is not a property of a status or principle, it characterises something real, like a chemical process or a personal will.

In Judaism the holiness of YHWH was frightening and glorious. In the ministry of Jesus the concept of holiness lost some of its numinous awe. God became 'Father', he came near and showed more of his compassionate nature. When people suffered, when the protective and blessing power of God was not experienced, it was explained by moral impurity in the people, and when the Temple service did not result in the blessing of the covenant, it was seen as ritual impurity in the priesthood. Impurity was treated as a real danger, since mankind was without protection when the glorious presence of the Lord lifted. It was the responsibility of the people to maintain purity, but the deceptive power of the Serpent was often too strong. With Jesus, the image of God became not only compassionate and merciful but also more powerful. Jesus worked in the Holy Spirit, the '*shekina*' or the power of God was with him, and it was never threatened by impurity. The impure spirits had to leave when they were commanded to do so. Holiness proved to be more powerful than impurity.

There is nothing in the ministry of Paul that resembles the exorcisms we find in the ministry of Jesus. Paul heals people, but he does so without referring to impure spirits. Being a Jew from Tarsus, he probably was acquainted with the phenomenon of demonic oppression. This was commonplace even in Roman popular culture. Bearing in mind that he denoted the demonic spirits as "powers, *tas archas,* of the dark world", we believe that he saw their powers limited after the victory of Jesus. Paul writes to the Corinthian Church about the message of the cross as "... the power of God to us who are being saved" (1 Cor 1: 18), and he also refers to the victory of Jesus, which "... disarmed the powers, *tas archas*, and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col 2: 15). This indicates that he believed that Christians, as the new children of Abraham (Gal 3: 7), could not be demonised after the victorious death of Jesus. As Jesus obviously had had the power to exorcise demons before his death, so after his death his presence in his church guaranteed victory over the demonic world. This does not mean that sicknesses had vanished from the church. The believers were encouraged to exercise spiritual gifts, which included the gift of healing. There is, however, no teaching in Paul about impure spirits who cause sickness. Paul expresses his understanding of the two kingdoms, but without employing the purity language. He sees the Christians as rescued "... from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Col 1: 13). And "... the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Cor 4: 20). Paul actually sees a connection between purity and the power of the Kingdom, stating that "... impurity shall not inherit

this kingdom of God" (Gal 5: 19). Of course, this does not define his purity concept, but we see a dualism between holiness and impurity which will be clearer as we, in the following section, analyse the concept of genealogical, ritual and moral impurity.

We have detected an important difference in Jesus' and Paul's anthropology. The notion of genealogical impurity in Gentiles had developed strongly in Israel during the Second Temple period. This does, however, not prevent Jesus from associating with and helping Gentiles. He was not at all concerned with impurity in the child of the pagan woman from Syrian Phoenicia, who addressed him concerning her demonised daughter (Mk 7: 26). No purification ritual was needed; Jesus was persuaded by the mother's ability to argue, so he declared her daughter delivered. Genealogical impurity is, however, directly confirmed by Paul. Although he believes that the holiness of the Christian spouse would sanctify the offspring, children of two Gentiles would be impure (1 Cor 7: 14). This would be the logical reason for baptising new converts together with their families. Water was the standard means of purification from impurity. But this does not indicate when and why the children of believers were baptised.

There is not recorded a specific teaching on genealogical impurity, neither in the Gospels nor in Paul; we only have the narrative which Luke reports (Acts 10), showing that Peter believed strongly in genealogical impurity until he had the vision in which he was persuaded otherwise. Peter's reaction shows that impurity was something that, by all means, had to be avoided, since it was contagious. Paul, of course, did not avoid Gentiles, and did not believe that genealogical impurity was dangerous to the believers. The fact that he juxtaposes impurity of a Gentile with the holiness of the spouse shows that he deals with categories that represent the two poles of the holiness continuum. It shows that genealogical impurity was a spiritual condition. So, though Paul did believe that Gentiles were impure, he did not fear impurity as a demonic power strong enough to harm his ministry. And we never find him avoiding impure people, as Peter first did. Still, it should be noticed that Paul characterises human nature, *sarx,* more negatively than Jesus does. Jesus says human nature is weak, even though the spirit is willing (Matt 26: 41), but Paul is significantly more negative in saying that *sarx* cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 15: 50), since it desires what is contrary to the spirit (Gal 5: 17). So, as holiness requires purity, the impurity of human nature, *sarx*, is in itself an antagonistic force, according to Paul. So, when Jesus sees the cosmological dualism between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Beelzebub - stating that the Kingdom

of God belongs the children (Mk 10: 14) - Paul, on the other hand, introduces the idea of human nature as being hostile to God and actually belonging to the dark side. We believe that the two different views on infant baptism in the Christian church today can be traced back to these two anthropologies. In Baptist congregations, small children are prayed for and blessed. In Catholic tradition, infant baptism has been linked to an exorcism ritual. According to Paul, the child was pure if only one of the parents was a Christian, but after St. Augustine the genealogical impurity of original sin was believed to be in every new born, and needed to be purified by water.

Ritual impurity is called impurity of the body, due to its connection with the natural functions of the body, especially with regard to life and death. Jesus nullifies the Leviticus teaching on body impurity by claiming that nothing from outside can pollute the body. Apparently, Paul differs. According to John, Jesus met the adulteress without mentioning impurity. We have shown that sexual sins, according to the Law of Moses, did create moral impurity, and Jesus treated the woman accordingly, by telling her to "leave your life of sin", although not employing the purity language. Paul, on the other hand claims that bodily intimacy with a harlot defiles the body. The adulterer sinned against his own body (1 Cor 6: 18), not by unfaithfulness to his wife, but by uniting his body to the prostitute. We have showed that sexual sins were seen as impurity which defiled the church as the Temple of the Lord (2 Cor 12: 21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19, 5:3, 5:5; Col 3:5). In these verses, it is pointed out directly that there is need for purification from "contamination of the body" (2 Cor 7: 9).

There was, in the OT, a concern with impurity and deviance. A harmed sexual organ would, according to Leviticus, make a man unfit for the priesthood, since he was lacking wholeness and therefore, holiness also. By the time of Isaiah, all eunuchs were excluded from the Temple. Same sex relations were even worse, being "detestable to the Lord". Paul describes homosexual relations as typical of Gentile impurity (Rom 1: 23), a habit which would vanish when they became baptised (washed and sanctified) as Christians (1 Cor 6: 10-11).

Jesus never points to deviance as impurity of the body. Some people were even born deviant, but there was nothing that could be done to change that (Matt 19: 12). Jesus does not repeat the Levitical restrictions regarding Temple service, but asks his audience to have an accepting attitude. However, when Paul actually writes of body

impurity, it should be remembered that he works with a symbolic understanding of both the body and impurity, employing the concept as it was normally used in Roman society: to denote sinful, unacceptable sexual behavior.

Another difference between Jesus and Paul, in the employment of the purity language, is found in the understanding of impurity as coming from outside. Jesus says explicitly that defilement can not occur from foods. Paul says differently. This is particularly clear in his vice lists, where he says that no drunkards, *methysoi* (wine drinkers), shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6: 10). Paul sees alcoholism as a defiling act of the flesh (Gal 5: 21). When Jesus performed his first miracle, the guests in the wedding had already had too much to drink, and still Jesus gave them more (John 2: 10)! Though it was not culturally acceptable to drink too much, he made a statement by even using the six jars normally dedicated for ritual purification and filling them with six hundred litres of excellent wine.

Jesus is never reported as having considered the body as impure, or foods as defiling. Paul, however, sees the body as a temple for the Holy Spirit and requires purity, in the sense that can be obtained by controlling the cravings of the body, not only with regard to sexual ethics but also wine drinking. Even though he uses the concept of impurity metaphorically, he sees lack of control as serious moral misconduct and therefore, as sin. And, as sin had a defiling power on the sanctuary, according to Levitical Purity rules, according to Paul it defiled the body.

We have shown that Jesus used the impurity language to denote demonic powers. Paul does not. However, neither of them seems to understand moral impurity as a result of demonic presence, at least not in the same way as spirits of infirmities. A person could be attacked and overpowered by an impure spirit and the sickness it brought was beyond the person's control. With moral impurity it worked differently. The sinner himself had the responsibility and the evil in him could not be exorcised. In moral impurity we recognise an understanding of the defiling power of sin, as described in the Hebrew Bible. We recall that moral impurity was not contagious by contact. However, impurity in the Sanctuary, due to sin in the people would cause the presence of the Lord to vanish. This means, in our context, that the healer had to be pure and holy. The power of the exorcist was stronger than the impure spirits of infirmity, but the healer himself, could not be morally impure. When Jesus pointed out that evil from the hearts of men

did make people impure, the obvious understanding in a Jewish audience was that evil was incommensurable with holiness and the power of God. This idea would be taken for granted by Jews (John 9: 31); likewise, Paul communicated well by employing the metaphor of the body as a Temple to the Christians in the Roman cities, where the purity of the sanctuary was guaranteed by the virginity of the Vestal virgins.

However, there is a significant difference in the vocabularies on this topic. When we compare the vice lists of Jesus (Mark 7: 21-22 and Paul (Gal 5: 19-21), we see that they are quite similar. However, Jesus said that the vices would make the person impure, which meant that the presence of God would disappear from his life. Paul says that the vices, of which impurity is mentioned as one vice, would deprive the believers from inheriting the Kingdom of God. The content of these two expressions were, *de facto,* the same. To inherit the Kingdom does not imply heaven after death. To inherit is the privilege of the survivors. Paul is addressing the Church, and he warns them against losing the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the inheritance of Christ. Even though sins will always be forgiven, a sinful lifestyle will cause the person to lose the *shekina*, the glory of the presence and holiness of God. So, when Paul does employ the purity language he does it in the same way as Philo did. It was a symbolic expression for denoting defiling sins. As moral impurity, in Judaism, had the power of defiling the sinner, the sanctuary and the land, sexual immorality and idolatry had, according to Paul, the power of defiling the body and the church. Grave sins caused moral defilement, which could only be removed by repentance and sacrificial blood. The wine, as a symbol of the blood of Jesus, in the Eucharist meal, had that power. By defining illicit sex and idolatry as impurity, Paul communicated well with his audience, both Jews and Romans. In Roman culture, sacrificial blood was seen as a redeeming means. Comparing the Jewish idea of sacrifice with the Greek is outside the scope of this study, but the differences did not confuse the general understanding of moral impurity being cleansed by blood.

Even though Jesus nullifies certain kinds of Leviticus' impurities, he actually maintains the basic idea of moral impurity. He seems to operate within the same ontological framework as he established by his exorcism practice. Impurity is not linked to human weakness, to mistakes, to passion, and lack of control. Impurity of the heart is the consequence of evil. Evil was a concept relating to the father of evil, Satan. As in the Lords Prayer: where he taught his followers to ask for deliverance from evil/the evil

one. Both deliverance, evil (spirits), and "the evil one", are concepts which are associated with his exorcism practice. When he was tempted himself, he actually rebuked the Devil, and exorcised the thought: "Away from me, Satan" (Matt 4: 10). Paul is also familiar with destructive thinking, but he does not address the Devil in order to get rid of it. He teaches his readers to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor 10: 5).

We have found two significantly different aetiologies for moral impurity in Jesus and Paul. What makes a person sin? Jesus points to Satan and Paul points to human nature. Jesus laid down the principle, stating that impurity was a function of evil. By so doing, he is consistent in defining impurity as demonic and satanic. Evil was a power which came from the source of evil, the anti-God. We recall that Satan was the tempter, and the evil deceit of Judas was interpreted as a satanic presence. So when Jesus equates evil and impure he does so whether he speaks of demons as impure spirits or as evil in people's hearts. He does not teach about how evil enters the human heart, but the temptation story indicates that the evil thoughts were planted by the Devil. Unless the evil thought is dismissed, a person becomes morally defiled. Paul has a wider definition of sin. He does not reserve the term for evil, he also includes human weakness. He thereby suggests that the sinner has made himself impure by his lack of willpower. The enemy is usually not Satan, but *sarx*, the flesh, or human nature. Paul also recognises the demonic element in sin, but he does not reserve the terminology for such involvement. He reveals typical stoic influence in his anthropology. Humans should be able to exercise control over passions, and lack of control was often labelled impurity, although there was no indication of demonic presence. Impurity is seen as sin which originates in the flesh: "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery etc." (Gal 5: 19). Jesus sees impurity as a result of sin; Paul sees sin as a result of impurity.

Indirectly, Paul acknowledges his cultural dependency and he does not demand that everyone should live exactly by the same standard. But he does appeal to each person's conscience. This freedom of conscience is advocated in questions of eating meat, which may be understood as idolatry. In this case he argues that there are no other gods, which demonstrates monotheism in concord with Biblical Judaism. However, we can still detect the Leviticus idea regarding the purity of the Temple as a condition for the presence of the Lord. When sickness occurs in the church of Corinth, it is as a result of

the congregation ignoring the needs of the poor, which makes the blessing power vanish. The only remedy was to live in love. This indicates that Paul saw sickness as a natural phenomenon that could be healed. If healing did not take place the reason was found in sin. The glory of the Lord had vanished from the defiled congregation. Jesus, on the other hand, operated with the concept of sickness as an attack by impure spirits on innocent people and the remedy was to have the authority, *exousia*, to cast the demons out.

Both Jesus and Paul worked within the dualistic cosmology of the Second Temple period. They both believed in the existence of supernatural powers, though each denoted these differently. Jesus used the impurity language to denote demons harassing people. In case of demonic sicknesses, the victims were seen as innocent. However, in cases of moral impurity there was a history of satanic temptation that had not been rebuked. Evil is never exorcised. The result was defilement, which gradually prevented the presence of the *shekina*, the glory and holiness of the Lord. Paul, on the other hand, used the term impurity to denote sexual immorality, impurity being one vice among others, and the concept was used to denote conduct out of control. Impurity would lead to sin, due to *sarx*, human nature, and the result would be the exact same as found in the teaching of Jesus: the presence of the *shekina* would vanish when the Temple, the body of Christ, was defiled and the church would be void of power.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Affections	Hippocrates, *On Affections*,
AMS	American Standard Version
ANF	Ante- Nicene Fathers
b.	Babylonean
Bab Tal	Babylonian Talmud
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
Bib	Biblia
CD	Damascus Document
chap(s)	chapter(s)
Chron	Chronicles
DAK	Det Gamle Testamentes Apokryfe Bøger
Deut	Deuteronomy
Dionys	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
DNTT	The Dictionary of the New Testament
Ep	Seneca, *Moral Epistles*
Es	Seneca, *Essays*
Ex	Exodus
Fr	Fragment
Gen	Genesis
Guide	Guide for the perplexed
HE	Historia Ecclesiastica
Hist Comp	Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium.*
Hygiene	Galen, *Hygiene*, trans. Green
JBL	Journal of Biblical Litterature
Jew Enc	Jewish Encyclopedia
JHS	Journal of the History of Sexuality
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JR	Journal of Religion
JSNT	Journal of the Study of the New Testament
JSOT	Journal of the Study of the Old Testament
JSOT ss	Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSTOR	The Scholarly Journal Archive
Jub	Book of Jubilee
K	Keriot
Ketub.	Ketuboth
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lev	Leviticus
LXX	*Septuagint*
m	Mishna
Mal.fem.	*Soranus, Traité des maladie des femmes*
Mathesis	Maternus,JF. *Mathesis,*
MMT	Ma'ase Miqsat Hattora, Qumran Cave 4
NEB	The New English Bible
Ned	Nedarim
NT	New Testament
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
p(p)	Page(s)
p.	Palestinian

Pes	Pesaḥim
Plin e.	Pliny the elder
Plin y.	Pliny the younger
Plin Nat. Hist.	Pliny, *Natural History*
Plut. Num.	Plutarch, *Life of Numa Pompilius*
Plut. Moral.	Plutarch, *Moralia: On superstition*
Ps	Psalms
Q	Qumran
Qid	Ḳiddushin
QS	Community Rule
QT	Temple Scroll
Rom Soc	*The Roman Socrates*
Sam	Samuel
Sifre Deut	Sifre Deuteronomy
SiJ	Studies in Judaism
Str-B und Strong	Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud Strong. J. Comprehensive Concordance of the Bible
Mid	Midrash
t	Tosefta
TB	Babylonean Talmud
Test Nap	Testament of Naphtali
Tra	Tractate
Tus Dis	Tusculan Disputations
YLT	*Young's Litteral Translation*