

*The Temple of Solomon Could not Stand  
On its Water Tower*

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**THE FUNCTIONING OF  
THE TEMPLE OF THE JEWS**

**THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
OF PURIFICATION RITES  
BY LIVING SPRING WATERS**

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1/ The examination of the Rites of Jewish Worship in the Temple of Jerusalem, with the obligations of having a continuous ready supply of Living Spring Waters in considerable quantities and under an adequate head of pressure, allows us to understand the immense underground Hydraulic System that had been built and put into service deep in the impermeable bedrock beneath the Haram, to ensure the prerequisite functioning of the Temple in accordance with exacting religious Laws.

This monumental underground Hydraulic Installation, miraculously preserved in the rocky underground bedrock of the Haram by Muslims piety, was confirmed by the survey and measures carried out by the Archaeologists of the 19th century, and thus allows us to demonstrate *infra* that the Temple of Solomon had been built **downstream** of the giant underground Cisterns, which served as "Water Towers" that supplied the religious needs of the Temple.

In point of fact, these giant Cistern-Reservoirs, cut into the bedrock and positioned in cascades upstream of the Temple,

- ensured the numerous rites of Purification which had to be in strict conformity with the Biblical Precepts that imposed the exclusive use of Living Spring Waters ; and these purifying Waters could in no case be stagnant or drawn by hand or with a recipient.

- ensured an unlimited supply of waters having an adequate high pressure to cleanse the Court of the Temple, when it was covered with blood and viscera from the sacrifices of a very great number of animals.

**Now, only the careful examination of the Rites of Purification can permit us to understand the complexity of the underground Hydraulic Installation that the Jews were obliged to set up in order to allow the Temple to function in strict compliance with the Demands and Prescriptions of the Eternal as proclaimed and required in the *Torah* (*Pentateuch*).**

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2/ The Sanctuary, established by Moses, contained the Moral Contract between the Eternal and the Jews, set out in the Ark of the Covenant.

In order that the spirit of this Contract remained alive generation after generation, different rituals were instituted, destined to ensure the permanent cohesion of the Jewish community, sanctified by its adhesion to the contractual Moral Laws given by the Eternal.

This unending recognition of the Contract contained in the Ark of the Covenant was thus maintained daily by an unalterable system of worship offered up to the Eternal with Purification rites, sacrificial rites, various offerings and prayers.

This Worship was hereditarily exercised by the Priests, issued from the family of Moses, that is to say by the descendants of his brother Aaron, who in their duties as Priests were aided by the members of the Tribe of Moses, the Levites, equally exclusively consecrated to the Worship in the Temple.

3/ In order to be worthy of this exclusive Moral Contract, the Eternal demanded that the Jewish People in return be 'pure' or 'purified', as witness of their devotion, their respect of the Moral rules, and their exclusive consecration to the Almighty.

This requirement of absolute Purity, for legitimate and exclusive consecration to the Sacred, implied that the Jews were informed of what the Eternal considered as 'impure'.

The *Torah (Pentateuch)* and certain Prophets provided a list, which was not exhaustive, of what is considered as 'pure' and 'impure' :

The following are a few examples of what is defined as pure or impure :

-A- There are animals that are pure and animals that are impure. All direct or indirect contact with impure animals renders man impure. *Leviticus Chapter 11*

-B- All cadavers, human or animal, are impure. All direct or indirect contact, with impure cadavers renders man impure. *Leviticus Chapter 11; Numbers 19*

- C- When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is impure and renders the man impure. All direct or indirect contact, with this man renders man impure. *Leviticus Chapter 15*

-D- Sexual relations between man and woman make them temporarily impure  
*Leviticus Chapter 15 verse 18 : If a man lies with a woman and there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in waters and be impure until evening.*

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- E- The leper and all infectious disease having a bodily manifestation render impure. All direct or indirect contact, with this sick person renders man impure. *Leviticus Chapter 13 verse14*
- F- When a woman has a discharge of any kind, she is rendered impure. All direct or indirect contact, with this woman renders man impure. *Leviticus Chapter 12 verse15*
- G- Mould on clothing or on the walls of a house renders all contact impure. *Leviticus Chapter 13 verse14*
- H- Objects and recipients having been in contact with something impure, or having belonged to non-Jews, are impure. *Leviticus Chapter 14 verse15; Numbers Chapters 19, 31, 21*
- Etc.-

4/ From all these various Biblical Prescriptions, general Rules could be progressively established, as principally :

a- Certain elements are always impure, 'by nature', or 'by state', as for example certain animals, dead bodies and idols : all contact with these agents renders the Jew impure and excludes him from the community (the Mosaic camp). Only appropriate rites could purify the Jew who had been corrupted by such permanent impurity.

b- Human beings, in particular, can become 'temporarily' impure, for example :

- Women during menstruation
- Man and woman having had a sexual discharge, normal or abnormal, or having had sexual relations
- Persons affected by skin disease including lepers
- Persons having committed a grave moral fault
- All contact with an impure person also renders the Jew temporarily impure.

Human beings, temporarily impure, could be purified by appropriate rites.

The same goes for certain objects, recipients, homes or places that could have been rendered temporarily impure and could also be purified by appropriate rites.

5/ Different methods of Purification had been decreed by Moses, in a detailed, but **very dispersed**, System given in the *Torah (Pentateuch)*.

In each case the finality of all Purification was to permit the person who had become temporarily impure to be able to return purified to the Jewish community, so that he could again take part in the sacred worship of the Sanctuary :

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Leviticus : Chapter 15 : verse 31:

The Lord also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying :

Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their imPurity, so that they will not die in their imPurity because they would have defiled My Tabernacle that is among them.

The whole of the system of Mosaic precepts of Purification are presented in the Scriptures in a form that is quite parceled and lacunary.

And, sometimes, Moses himself indicates that he is simply offering a few examples, implying by this that it will be for the Priests to generalize in a coherent system the complete process of Ritual Purification.

Thus when the Sanctuary functioned, first the Priests, and later the Rabbis, successively established a complete Purification System to render coherent and compatible the different principles of Purification, which had been described in a dispersed or incomplete fashion in the *Bible*, and to draw clearly the grand Principles as well as the general Rules of application.

6/ On this basis, and more specifically in relation to the Rules of Purification by Living Spring Waters, the Priests and later the Rabbis adopted three main lines of conduct :

**A-** in order to avoid the least mistake, it was always the strictest and most extreme formulation amongst all those that figured in the *Torah*, which, in the case of ambiguity or doubt, was to be taken as an absolute Reference for deciding on the general Rule for Purification.

**B-** Further, the Priests specialists of the Law were led to adapt the Rules of Purification by Living Source Waters prescribed in the *Torah* to the climatic conditions and hydrology of Jerusalem at the time the Temple was built.

**C-** And later, when the Temple was destroyed, the Rabbis progressively amplified the transposition of the Worship from the lost Temple with its Rules of Purification by Living Waters to the whole of the daily life in the Jewish community, both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

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Thus, in turn and in the same manner as the Priests before, the Rabbis were led to adapt the Rules of Purification by Living Spring Waters to the climatic conditions and hydrological resources of the different regions inhabited by the Jews, as well as to the development of civilization relative to the habitat and technological progress of energy and hydraulics.

7/ Therefore, concerning the specific problem of the Purification by Living Spring Waters in the Temple of Jerusalem, we can refer, on the one hand, to the basis of the Scriptures of the *Torah (Pentateuch)* that established the first Principles of the Rules of Purification by Living Spring Waters, and, on the other hand, to the very detailed Rabbinic Texts, which constitute the ultimate form in the millennial evolution of these same Principles of Judaic Purification.

However, inside this long evolution, we, in fact, have relatively very little information on the System of Purification by Living Spring Waters such as it was really practiced in the first, second and third Temple of Jerusalem,

In consequence it is necessary to try to reconstitute the System of Purification by Living Spring Waters, as it functioned in the Temple of Jerusalem, with the help of a few rare pieces of evidence from different scattered sources and with the help of archaeological evidence.

In other words, it is necessary to recreate the missing links in the evolution over thousands of years of the Purification Rites by Living Spring Waters, of which are known only, on one hand the starting point given by the Bible, and on the other hand its ultimate Rabbinic form. This long evolution had in effect commenced with the Holy Scriptures established long before the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and it came to its conclusion with the Rabbinic texts that were compiled a few centuries after the Temple had disappeared.

8/ The Jew, who had become impure by direct contact with an impure person, or by contact with an impure animal or object, or by eating an impure food, or by having sexual relations or discharges from the body, or by breaking the moral rules, etc., had to undergo a complex Purification process allowing him to be readmitted to the Israelite community, and a fortiori, to be readmitted to the Worship in the Sanctuary. The Purification of Jews having become impure, must necessarily take place by the submission to different ritual procedures, and more often by the application of a combination of these different Rituals.

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Amongst these different Rites of Purification, used separately or together, depending on the degree of impurity, are the following principal categories in order of their application :

**A-** Purification by Waters :

This Purification is described in different scattered verses of the Bible, under various forms, which go from simple washing of the body and clothes to the total immersion of the naked body, as is specified in the corresponding case, the strictest condition being indicated in *Leviticus : 15-13* and consisting in the immersion in the Living Waters of a Spring.

**B-** Purification by the passage of time :

Purification for a benign case is generally carried out in the evening at sunset, and in some cases, after the impure person has carried out the other prescribed Rites, by washing or by total immersion in Living Waters.

Concerning impurity that is spread over a period of time, such as in the case of menstruation or following birth or illness, several days or even weeks are prescribed before Purification can be definitely pronounced and celebrated by a Priest.

**C-** The Purification by the sprinkling with holy oil and/or the blood of an animal sacrificed in the Sanctuary by a Priest, with the impure person offering the sacrifice standing outside of the Tent of Meeting.

**D-** The Purification by sprinkling of the impure person by the Priest with purifying waters composed of Spring Waters and the ashes of the Red Heifer, which had been sacrificed and burnt, outside of the camp, according to a special ceremony.

**E-** The Purification by destruction or by fire, or washing by immersion of recipients, objects and places that had become impure.

9/ The different indications concerning the Laws of Purification given in the *Torah (Pentateuch)*, either are presented in a lacunary fashion, or most probably refer to implicit Prescriptions, which are only prescribed for certain precise cases, and did not need to be re-specified for each of the cases in question.

The most complete and exacting formulation of the Ritual concerning the integral process of Purification by the Living Spring Waters is given in details in *Leviticus 15* relatively to a man having an infection of his sexual organs.

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*Leviticus 15* had earlier defined the impurity of a man having this kind of infection as well as the contaminating effects that this impure man had on his entourage, who, from this moment, should also be purified :

*Leviticus : Chapter 15 : Extract :*

*15 : 1-7 :*

When a man is affected by a sexual infectious disease his impurity is in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge. The man is impure.

Every bed on which this impure person lies becomes impure, and everything on which he sits becomes impure.

Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and immerse in the waters : he remains impure until evening.

And whoever sits on the thing, on which the impure man has been sitting, shall wash his clothes and immerse in the waters and he remains impure until evening.

Also whoever touches the impure person shall wash his clothes and immerse in the waters and he remains impure until evening.

*15 : 13-15 :*

Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his Purification.

He shall then wash his clothes and **immerse his body in spring living waters** and then he will be fully purified.

Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the Lord to the doorway of the Tent of Meeting and give them to the Priest and the Priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the Priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the Lord because of his discharge.

*15 : 16-18 :*

Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall immerse all his body in the waters but remain impure until evening.

As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with the waters and be impure until evening.

If a man lies with a woman and there is a seminal emission, they shall both immerse in the waters and be impure until evening.

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Thus *Leviticus 15* presents a sort of “digest” of the whole Biblical problematic concerning the Purification by the Living Spring Waters :

And on this founding basis, the Priests first, and then the Rabbis, built up gradually a global and coherent System of Prescriptions in order to respond to all conceivable cases needing Purification by Living Spring Waters.

***Leviticus 15 : 13* specifies that the Purification in the waters must be made by **immersion of the body in Spring Living (running) Waters.****

This very specific obligation, which does not figure in other equivalent Prescriptions of the same *Leviticus 15*, or in other chapters of *Leviticus*, was nonetheless extended overtime to the whole Process of Purification by Living Spring Waters.

And this extension functioned either by the concern to avoid any error or omission, or because in the minds of the Priests at first, then of the Rabbis, this obligation, once having been formulated in the Scriptures, became implicit and normal for the all Purifications of the same kind, which should be carried out by immersion of the body in the Living Spring Waters.

This is how was progressively imposed the fundamental notion of Purification by ‘Living Waters’ (in Hebrew *mayim hayyim* : gushing directly from a natural Spring, in radical opposition to ‘drawn waters’ (in Hebrew *mayim she’uvim* : waters, -removed from its spontaneous genuine source and natural flow which made them “live“-, that is to say : disrupted and “killed” by the hand of man.

10/            However, the *Torah* added, in an indirect and incidental manner, another possibility for the Source of Purifying Living Waters : it is waters from a well supplied by an underground Spring, or by renewed ground waters, such as an artesian well.

This underground configuration was assimilated to an active surface Spring.

This incidental Biblical source is found in *Leviticus 11* where certain verses detail the manner in which the contact with a dead body renders impure all those who touch it.

Now, in one of these verses of *Leviticus 11*, the *Scriptures* specify that amongst the rare things that the dead body can never render impure, is the spring and the well made of the collection of waters, from which Purity gushes, on the surface or under the ground, thus rendering them ever-incorruptible.

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*Leviticus 11 : verses : 35-36 :*

And any thing whereupon any part of the carcass of an animal falls shall become impure : whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down : for they are impure, and shall render you impure.

Nevertheless a fountain or well, wherein there is a collection of waters, shall remain pure : but who touches their carcass shall become impure.

The different *Targums* (ancient translations of the Old Testament in Aramaic) as well as the *Septuagint* (early translation of the Old Testament in Greek), concerned by the fidelity and the full comprehension of the original Hebrew Text, confirmed, each in its own manner, the sense of the words 'waters collection wells', and enlarge its meaning, either by applying it to a generalized practice, or clarifying it with the use of vocabulary from *Genesis* that evoked the first Gathering of Waters at the Creation of the World by the Eternal.

Therefore the cisterns or wells mentioned in *Leviticus* and the interpretations given in the *Targums* help define the kind of cisterns or wells in question.

The *Targums* are the Aramaic translations of the *Bible* : Aramaic having been the dominant and common language of the Near East established progressively by invasions from the east.

As is often the case for ancient translations, the translator is at times led to explain the sense of a term, lost or transformed, so as to adapt it to contemporary circumstances, and to render it comprehensible and coherent with the whole of the original Text.

And at times these translations show that the original Hebrew had been transformed, or had disappeared.

The principal *Targums of the Torah (Pentateuch)* or the compilations of the *Targums of the Pentateuch*, are those of Onqelos, of pseudo-Jonathan, and of Neophyti.

Now, as far as the verse 36 of *Leviticus 11* is concerned, the three translations give the same meaning, and clearly indicate that cisterns or wells should be the point of convergence of underground surging Waters, which should be issued directly from springs, or from non-stagnant rain waters.

Consequently, underground Living Waters that gather naturally from subterranean Springs hold by definition the necessary Purification virtues in the same manner as surface Springs :

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Leviticus 11:36 :

Targum Onkelos :

However, a spring or a well, which are gathering waters (remain pure if a cadaver falls in).

Targum Jonathan :

But, springs and lakes (a pond or a lake supplied by an underground spring or a course of living waters), which are gathering points of waters (remain pure if a cadaver falls in).

Targum Neophyte :

Only, a spring, or a cistern which is gathering running waters (remains pure if a cadaver falls in).

Septuagint :

But the waters of a spring, of a lake (of a pond or a pool, supplied by an underground spring or a course of running waters) or the waters of gathering streams of waters, remain pure (if a cadaver falls in).

Consequently, and a contrario, Cisterns which are not fed by an underground Spring cannot provide purifying waters.

As will be examined infra, all these insurmountable Religious Rules did determine the grandiose Hydraulic Installation of the rocky underground where the storing Cisterns providing Purification Waters to the Temple of the Jews were installed, that is to say in the rocky underground of the Jewish Citadel (nowadays Haram) that overlooked and protected the Temple, which, therefore, could only stand **downstream from its "Water Towers"**.

11/ The word 'Mikveh - Mikwaoth' designates a basin, natural or man made, for ritual total immersion of the body, in order to purify the person in Living Waters issued at their source from Springs :

And no human being can intervene directly or with a recipient in the flow of these Purifying Living Spring Waters.

In this way only, the Purification Ritual can acquire its supreme sacred character, which culminated in the Temple of Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) destined for the Purification of All Israel sins and which constituted the absolute archetype of all human Purification :

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*Mishnah : Order Moed : Tractate Yuma : Book VII : chapter 8 :*

For the sins committed by man before the Eternal, the Kippur atones for sins, but for the sins committed against his fellow man there is no other pardon than to satisfy directly him.

How happy you are Israelites, cried Rabbi Akiba, you have only to render count to Our Father in Heaven, and it is He who will absolve you with these words : (Ezechiel Chapter 36 verse 25) 'I will pour pure waters upon you and you will be purified'. and he also said (Jeremiah Chapter 14 verse 8) 'The bath (hope) of Israel is God, and, in the same manner as the ritual bath (Mikveh) purifies impure persons, in the same way God will purify Israel.

**12/** The frequent difficulties caused by not having Spring Waters directly available, as well as the generalization of the Rites of Purification outside of the Temple, in regions where the hydrological resources were very different, led progressively the Priests, followed by the Rabbis especially after the destruction of the Temple, to broaden and adapt the theological rules for the application of hydraulic means relative to the rules for immersion of the body in baths of Purifying Waters (Mikveh).

It is in this manner that rain waters could in certain cases be assimilated with Spring Waters, on condition however that certain complex rules concerning its storage and utilization be applied.

The whole of the dialectic of these Rabbinic Rules, progressively imposed, are known through Talmudic literature, in particular in the *Tractate Mikwaoth* of the *Order Tohoroth* of the *Mishnah* and through its additional declensions (*Tosefta*).

Resuming and simplifying the Theological Principles for the use of the Mikveh, the Priests and then the Rabbis were led to establish a hierarchy of degrees for Purification Waters, as they had been led to define the principles for the different types of imPurity and different consequent degrees of Purification.

Hereafter is the classification of Mikvehs, by ascending order in Degrees of Purification, given in the *1<sup>st</sup> Chapter* of the *Tractate Mikwaoth* :

(- Between the presentations of the following different categories of Mikveh, relatively complex explanations, which are amply developed in the continuation of the *Tractate Mikwaoth* are sometimes given in this first chapter, of which we present, only, the basic definitions -) :

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Mishnah : Order Tohorot : Tractate Mikvaot : 1:

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There are **six degrees** in the classification of waters basins (Mikveh):

These are in ascending order :

**(A) - The 1st Degree : ( the inferior Degree)**

The different basins (that collect rainwaters but contain less than 40 Seahs (300 litres) permitting the immersion of the entire body)...

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The waters in these basins, the waters in the cisterns, the waters in the ditches, the waters in the caves, the waters in the cavities, totalling less than 40 seahs (300 litres) have this in common :

All these places contain waters that are judged to be pure, as long as the rain continues to fall (or flows naturally), but after the rain has ended these places if there are near dwelling places or near a path are judged to be impure (because they risk being rendered impure by human contact); and those that are apart are judged to be pure (having conserved the original Purity of the rain) on condition no men have passed nearby.

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**(B) - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree** in ascending order :

The basin in which the rain has not stopped falling.

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**(C) - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree** in ascending order :

The basin (having the specificities of the first two degrees conferred by rain waters) containing more than 40 seahs (300 litres), because the whole body can be completely immersed, as well as different objects (voluminous).

**(D) - The 4<sup>th</sup> Degree** in ascending order :

Wells (supplied by an underground spring) even if the quantity of waters is small, because the volume can be increased by adding waters (drawn from elsewhere) without lessening its original purifying power (according to an important rule explained elsewhere)...

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**(D) - The 5<sup>th</sup> Degree** in ascending order :

Hot waters or those ferruginous (thermal like in Tiberias), which have a purifying power, as long as they are flowing.

**(E) - The 6<sup>th</sup> Degree** in ascending order (The **supreme perfect Degree** as it is the most exacting example that figures in the *Torah*) :

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Living Waters (issued from a Spring), because they can purify by immersion he who is affected by a sexual infection (*Leviticus Chapter 15 verse 13*), can supply Purification Waters for lepers (*Leviticus Chapter 14 verse 15*), and can be used for the sacerdotal preparation of the purifying mix with the ashes of the Red Heifer (*Numbers Chapter 19 verse 9*).

From these initial basic definitions of the different Degrees of Purification, the Rabbinic System for the prerequisites of the Mikvehs was developed with numerous ramifications that resulted in extremely complex Rules.

Thus, because of the needs to adapt the Rules to Jewish communities according to their living and climatic conditions, their hydrological resources and the most varied geological conditions, and according to new possibilities which appeared through the development of Hydraulic technologies.

The same happened with the evolution and adaptation of the Rabbinic definitions concerning the different phases of impurity, and the different degrees of Purification.

13/ Drawing waters from artesian wells nevertheless posed complex problems relative to their Purification virtues since :

- waters drawn in a recipient, which rendered them static cut them off from their original living flow (in a kind of "killing waters")
- therefore the Purification power of these waters drawn by a recipient was 'volatile, fragile and very temporary : it was progressively admitted that, other than possible corrupting contacts of any nature, the passage of one night was sufficient to render these waters totally impure and improper for Worship and for Purification Rites.

Thus drawn waters had a great inferior degree of Purity compared to Living Waters issued from a Spring, whose course had not been interrupted, or transferred through any recipient.

Nevertheless certain ancestral traditions, linked for example to the harvest festival had conserved ceremonies that attached joyous virtues to the places where waters were initially drawn. These festivals are attested to, for instance, in the last chapter of the *Tractate Soukka of the Order Moed* that describes the festivities that took place at the Temple, in the Court of Women, probably around ancient wells situated in the proximity.

These wells were nothing more than annexes, and probably of a symbolic nature, and preceding parts of the vast upstream underground Hydraulic System of the Temple which, when fully accomplished, ensured without fail the authentic **Supreme Degree** of Purifying virtues required in the Sanctuary of the Eternal, as shall be reviewed infra.

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**THE FUNCTIONING OF  
THE TEMPLE OF THE JEWS**

**THE RITES OF PURIFICATION  
BY IMMERSION OF THE BODY  
IN LIVING SOURCE WATERS  
FOR THE SACERDOTAL CLASS  
AND THE HIGH PRIEST**

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1/ The notion of Purity and imPurity in the *Torah* takes all of its social signification from the notion of Moral Purification.  
In fact other than the different physical or organic impurities, in a specific or general manner, become impure all individuals who commit an infraction against the Moral Laws prescribed by the Eternal to Moses.

And in a collective manner, other than the legal reparation specifically pronounced for any fault committed by any individual, the moral imPurity of the whole community of Israel was absolved by the Purification Ritual celebrated in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the greatest feast day in the Jewish calendar.

In the course of this ceremony, performed under the strictest and most inflexible rules, the High Priest, seeking sacred perfection, in the name of the entire Jewish community of Israel, solicited the benevolence of the Eternal and pardon for all the faults the members of the Israel community could have committed in the course of the year.

*Leviticus: Chapter 16 : verses 29- 34 :*

(The Lord said to Moses :)

"This shall be a permanent statute for you :

In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the natives, or the alien who sojourns among you.

For it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to purify you :

You will be purified from all your sins before the Lord. It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls : it is a permanent statute. So the Priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as Priest in his father's place (after Aaron's death) shall make atonement :

He shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, and make atonement for the holy Sanctuary, for the Holy of Hollies, and he shall make atonement for the Tent of Meeting and for the Altar. He shall also make atonement for the Priests and for all the People of the assembly.

Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins, once every year."

And just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so he did.

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2/ Because of the huge collective responsibility the High Priest thus assumed, the *Torah* set forth, primarily, the primordial concept of Purity and Purification that is specific to the sacerdotal class, which is to say to the High Priest, the Priests and by extension the Levites in exercise in the Holy Place.

This same concept of Purity and Purification, specific to the Sanctuary of the Jews, would be, and thereafter, extended in a certain measure to all persons exercising an activity in the Temple.

In addition to the rules of Purity imposed on all Jews, were several specific and complementary conditions, imposed on all Priests in general, and more particularly on the High Priest, to enable them to exercise their sacerdotal office.

Amongst these rules specific to the sacerdotal class figured :

-A-/ Physical integrity :

Leviticus Chapter : 21 : verses 16- 20 :

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying :

Speak to Aaron, saying, 'No man of your offspring, throughout their generations, who has a defect shall approach to offer the offertory to his God.

For no one who has a defect shall approach : a blind man, or a lame man, or he who has a disfigured face, or any deformed limb, or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, or a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has a defect in his eye or eczema or scabs or crushed testicles.

-B-/ Conjugal integrity and strict respect of hereditary transmission :

Leviticus : Chapter 21 : verse 13-15 and verse 9 :

The High priest shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take.

But rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people, so that he will not profane his offspring among his people :

-C-/ **Sacerdotal Purification by complete immersion of the body in the Living Spring Purifying Waters of a bath, situated within the Sanctuary itself, should be accomplished for :**

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- **-a-** The enthronization of the High Priest
- **-b-** Each time the High Priest had to enter the Tent of Meeting and in particular on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
- **-c-** In addition the purifying washing of hands and feet in Living Spring Waters should be accomplished before every sacrificial offerings at the altar.

Exodus : Chapter 29: verses 1 and 4 ; Chapter 40 : verse 12 :

(Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying :)

Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as Priests to Me...

Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the Tent of Meeting and immerse them in the living waters.

Exodus : Chapter 30 : verses 17- 21 and Chapter 40 : verses 30 – 32 :

17- The Lord spoke to Moses, saying :

18- You shall make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for immersions. You shall put it between the Tent of Meeting and the Altar.

**There you shall make the living waters flow in it.**

19- Aaron and his sons shall purify their hands and their feet in it.

20- **When entering the Tent of Meeting, they shall immerse their body in these living purifying waters, so that they will not die.**

Or when they approach the Altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire {burning sacrifice} to the Lord,

21- They shall purify in these living waters their hands and their feet, so that they will not die.

It shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants (High Priests) throughout their generations.

Leviticus : Chapter 16 : verses 3 – 4

(The Day of Atonement) Aaron shall enter the holy place with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

Aaron shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be on his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban : these are the holy garments of the Sanctuary.

**Before putting them he shall immerse his body in the living purifying waters.**

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Leviticus : Chapter 16 verses 23- 24 :

(The day of Atonement, after the sacrifice of the scapegoat in the desert)  
Aaron comes back to the Tent of the Meeting : He takes off the holy linen garments he had put on when he previously entered the Sanctuary .  
**Aaron shall then immerse his body (again) in the living purifying waters in the Sacred Place.**

Consequently *Exodus : Chapter 30 : verses 16-21* specify, for instance, that the Waters of the bronze Basin installed in front of the Temple serve :

- For the Purification by complete immersion in Living Spring Waters of the entire body of the High Priest before entering into the Tent of Meeting.
- For the washing of hands and feet of the High Priest in view of his Purification before approaching the sacrificial altar.

In addition *Exodus : 29 : 1 and 4*, and *Leviticus : 16: 3-4*, seem to imply that in the Sanctuary there was another basin-mikveh, for the Purification by complete immersion of the High Priest.

The Purification of the High Priest and his successors by complete immersion of the body in the Living Spring Waters of the bathes situated inside of the Sanctuary constituted thus the Supreme Act of Purification for all Israel. And this absolute sacerdotal Purification at the same time enthroned, perpetuated and permanently presented to the Eternal and to the Jewish people the total and exemplary Purity of the High Priest, thanks to whom all of Israel would be in communion with the Covenant concluded between the Eternal and Humanity, and preserved in the Holy of Holies :

And thus, once a year, during the feast of Yom Kippur, through this Purification in the Living Spring Waters of the Sanctuary the Sons of Israel would be finally and completely be forgiven for all their past faults.

In addition the sacerdotal Purification by complete immersion of the body in a bath of Living Spring Waters **within the Sanctuary** had an immediate effect, whereas, in general the Purification in living waters did not take effect until after sunset.

3/ The Worship in the Temple and the Prescriptions of Purity and Purification, at their origin and without any other consideration, were uniquely attributed to the Priests, that is to say principally the Sadducees.

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Now, the *Torah*, regarding these notions of Purity and the Rites of Purification, gives, as we have seen, varied, disparate and scattered indications of which the coherence and unity of the Purification System does not appear immediately evident, since the field of application is broad, in so far as their conditions are presented in an elusive and parceled way.

Therefore, the sacerdotal class and the Sadducees were obliged to organize a coherent nomenclature for all the Rites of Purifications.

Everything seems to indicate that the Sadducee class, with time and the desire for a coherent standardization of all these sacerdotal Purification Rites, extended the different obligations of the *Torah* by constantly attributing to them the most extreme of the diverse prescribed conditions.

An example amongst others enables us to evaluate this constant evolution of the Sacerdotal Rules towards the prescriptions formulated in their strictest form.

This example is offered by the Bronze Laver situated between the Meeting Tent (afterwards the Temple) and the Altar.

In the case of this Living Spring Waters' bronze Basin situated between the Meeting Tent and the Altar, the just mentioned Prescriptions of the *Torah* expressed in different verses (*Exodus* : 30 : 17-21 and 40 : 30-32 - *Exodus* : 29 :1 and 4 ; and 40 : 12 : - *Leviticus* : 16 : 4 - *Leviticus* : 16 : 22-24) establish clearly two distinct series of Purification by Living Spring Waters for the High Priest and Priests inside of the Sanctuary :

- **-A-** The Purification by bathing hands and feet in the Living Spring Waters of the bronze Laver, for the High Priest, his sons and hereditary successors.

- **-B-** The Purification by complete immersion of the body in the Living Spring Waters, for the High Priest, his sons and hereditary successors, in the Sanctuary, in the same bronze Laver near the altar, and in a sacred place of the Sanctuary non-specified.

For the construction of the Temple of Solomon, related in *1 Kings 6 and 7*, no mention is made of a bath, mikveh, for the High Priest or for the Priests.

However, the description of the Bronze Laver is mentioned in a wealth of details.

But *2 Chronicles* : 4 : 6, which is a later sacerdotal Text, states precisely that this Bronze Laver served as a **Bath** for the immersion of the body of the Priests :

This evolution thus seems to indicate that the sacerdotal class had considered over time that if the High Priest and his sons and his hereditary successors should take a bath of Purification inside that Sanctuary itself, this Rule should apply equally to all the Priests :

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2 Chronicles : chapter 4: verse 6 :

The "Sea" [name given to the bronze Laver] was for the Purification of the Priests by immersion of their body in the Living Spring Waters.

Progressively, the sacerdotal class, the Sadducees, and then the Pharisees and the Scribes, relayed by the Rabbis, had therefore extended to all the Priests of the Temple, this obligation of supreme Purification in the Sanctuary, since it was implicitly normative in the Prescriptions of the *Torah*.

**-4-** The sacerdotal class and consequently the Sadducees judged, originally, that the Purification of the High Priest and of the Priests, officiating within the Sanctuary, had an immediate and final effect for all the duration of the Worship in progress.

The Pharisees Rabbis, in their permanent escalation on ruling in order to conquer ideological power, bitterly fought this interpretation of the *Scriptures*, and, on various occasions, which were proudly transmitted by Rabbinical Literature, they succeeded to impose their extreme views, which obliged the High Priest and hereditary Priests to subject themselves to their extreme requirements relating to the Rules of Purification which should apply in the Temple:

One can, inter alia, quote two examples in this field of the necessary Purification by Living Source Waters imposed by the Pharisees-Rabbis:

**- A :** The first example is the Ceremonial of the Sacrifice of the Red Cow :

The sacrifice and the combustion of the Red Cow, whose ashes were necessary for certain Rites of Purification were to be done outside the enclosure of the Temple.

The Pharisees Rabbis took advantage of this situation to challenge the Principle of the immediate, integral and final Purification of the High Priest and of the Priests, and to impose in substitution, the Principle of a Purification to be renewed for each stage of this Ceremony. Echoes of this controversy are found for example, in *Tractate Parah* of *Tohorot Order*, as well as in the *Tosefta* (complements of the *Mishnah*) of this same *Tractate* (the main subject of *Tractate Parah* being the ritual of the sacrifice and combustion of the Red Cow)

**- B :** The second example is the Celebration of the Day of Kippur (cf. infra **-5 -**) for which the Pharisees Rabbis prided themselves to have succeeded to impose, gradually, that the

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High Priest was compelled to undergo, not one or two immersions in Living Source Waters, but **five** successive baths of Purification during the same Ceremony, in order to ensure that no breach could be carried out in the complex system of Rules of necessary absolute Purification, particularly, on the unique and irreplaceable occasion of the Day of Atonement for All Israel. (cf -5 and followings- infra)

5/ Specifically, concerning the supply of Living Spring Waters to the Temple for this necessary Supreme Purification, the *Tractate Yoma* transmitted a great quantity of valuable information relating to the Hydraulic System of the Temple.

The *Tractate Yoma* is the 5th *Tractate of the Order of Moed* and it is consecrated to the celebration of the Day of Atonement by the High Priest, the greatest Day in the year for Israel (Yom Kippur).

It was therefore the Day when the High Priest asked, once a year, pardon from the Eternal for all the faults committed by the Jews : Which is to say, the Day the High Priest asked for the Purification for all Israel.

And it was the only Day in the year when the High Priest, alone, could enter the Holy of Holies. Therefore it was the moment when the High Priest, himself, had to be in a state of irreproachable Purity, absolute and supreme, in order to be able to meet and solicit the favour of the Eternal for All Israel.

It is also to say to which point this capital ceremony that aspired to the quintessence of Purification had to be executed, respecting the Laws, down to the least detail, and in strict compliance with the spirit of the *Torah*, as the Purification of All Israel depended on the strict and exact observation of this unique ritual.

6/ It happens that in the context of these absolute needs, *Tractate Yoma* of the *Mishnah*, written by the Tannaites Rabbis, faithfully transmitted important details concerning the supply of Living Spring Waters to the Temple.

But at the time of elaboration and codification of the *Mishnah*, the Tannaite Rabbis were living in Palestine, but not in Jerusalem, where from all the Jews had been expelled by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, after the Roman armies had crushed the new revolt of the Jews, led in 135 by Bar Kokhba and Rabbi Akiba.

The Roman Emperors, successors of Hadrian, established then a kind of *modus vivendi* with the Jews of Palestine by which the Jews were able to enjoy a kind of independence under the governance of the Gamaliel Dynasty of Patriarchs.

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One of the implicit components of this *modus vivendi*, which was to last until the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine, was that the Jews would never try again to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem.

This is one of the numerous reasons why the Tannaite Rabbis undertook the *Mishnah* in order to replace the physical lost Temple by a spiritualized Temple.

The Patriarchs and the Tannaite Rabbis had established themselves out of Jerusalem, mainly in Galilee, and they never faced the necessity of questioning the veritable topographic site of the Temple, on its hydrographical point of view.

So, at the time when the *Mishnah* was written by the Tannaite Rabbis, the verification of the exact site of the Temple in Jerusalem, as in the case for all details of the sacred topography of Jerusalem, was not questioned by the Patriarch or by the Rabbis, or rather, was of no interest to them, because they were exclusively occupied by the spiritualization of the Temple Worship.

And moreover access to Jerusalem had been strictly forbidden to the Jews, over a period that lasted for at least one and a half century, and most probably two centuries.

Concerning the Amoraim Rabbis of Palestine who wrote the *Gemara (Commentaries of the Mishnah)* resulting in the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, they transmitted faithfully the local traditions and religious information they had collected concerning the supply of the Temple with Living Spring Waters, though without realizing that in doing so they were establishing an insoluble problematic relative to the supposed site of the Temple, and, such, at the price of a totally intellectual abstraction.

As to the Amoraim Rabbis of Babylon, and in particular those of the Academy of Pumbedita, who wrote most of the *Gemara (Commentaries)* of the *Tractate Yoma* of the *Talmud of Babylon*, they were very far, both in time and distance, from the Temple of Jerusalem and its presumed site.

Therefore those Rabbis developed a number of exaggerated, paradoxical and contradictory interpretations, which often forced them to amalgamate extremely faithful and precise traditions with legendary concepts that were at the very limit of probability and fantasy.

With the consequence that their work of trying to reconcile the irreconcilable, resulted in some later interpolations in the body of the *Mishnah*, or of the *Talmuds*, as can be noticed for example in the *Tractate Tamid*.

But the two *Gemara*, Palestinian and Babylonian, of the *Tractate Yuma*, proceeded from the same exacting finality concerning the necessity of supplying Living Spring Waters to the Temple, necessity which is at the heart of the demonstration of the present book.

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In addition this finality led certain Talmudists to adapt the Holy Texts and Rabbinic traditions to the topographic facts of the presumed site of the Temple, though at the price of incoherence and incongruity in their exegesis, which they were thus led to conduct in order to be able to bring together the Religious and Hydraulic speculations, irredeemably irreconcilable with the topographical facts, as could have been seriously observed on the very spot of the supposed site of the Temple, if they had been allowed to visit it.

7/ In the *Torah (Pentateuch)* the Purification of the High Priest (Aaron) and the Priests (sons of Aaron) takes place in the Sanctuary itself, as we have seen supra.  
- This is the case for the enthronement of the High Priest who had to be totally purified before being consecrated to the service of the Eternal.  
- It is also the case for the Day of Atonement, the procedures for which are examined in their least details in the *Tractate Yuma* :

Once a year, the Day of Atonement, a complex Ritual is imposed on the High Priest, who is dressed in special robes of pure linen, to offer an exceptional sacrifice to the Eternal and to cast all the sins of Israel onto a ram that is, then, sent into the desert to an entity of evil named Azazel.

**Reminder completed :**

In the following extracts, the description of this complex Ritual for Yom Kippur, instituted in *Leviticus*, emphasize is made on this Ritual in the verses given below, that specifically prescribe the Purification of the High Priest in the Sanctuary by immersion of the body in a bath of Living Spring Waters.

*Leviticus : Chapter 16: Extracts : (with some necessary repeats):*

3- Aaron shall enter the holy place with this : with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

4- He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban : these are the holy garments of the Sanctuary. **Before putting them he shall immerse his body in the Living Purifying Spring Waters.**

5- He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for the sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

6/ Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin, offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household.

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7/ He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting.

8/ Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel (the symbolic Deity of all the sins of Israel).

9/ Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell, and make it a sin offering.

10/ But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.

11/ Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall sacrifice the bull of the sin offering which is for himself.

12/ He shall take a fire pan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil (separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place).

13/ He shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, so that the cloud of incense may cover (and hide) the Mercy Seat that is on the Ark of the Covenant: otherwise he will die.

Aaron then purifies the Holy of Holies by sprinkling blood from the bull sacrificed on the Altar. Aaron then proceeds in the same way with the goat which is sacrificed for the sins of all Israel :

15/ Then Aaron shall sacrifice the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat and in front of the Mercy Seat.

16/ He shall make atonement for the Sanctuary, because of the impurities of the Sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins ; and thus he shall do for the Tent of Meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities.

17/ When he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, no one shall be in the Tent of Meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the Assembly of Israel.

18/ Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides.

19/ With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and purify it from the impurities of the sons of Israel and consecrates it.

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20/ When he finishes atoning for the Sanctuary, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat.

21/ Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness.

22/ The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a relentless land. Aaron shall release the goat in the wilderness.

23/ Then Aaron shall come back to the Tent of Meeting : He takes off the holy linen garments he had put on when he previously entered the Sanctuary, and shall leave them there.

24/ **Aaron shall then immerse his body** (again) **in the Living Purifying Spring Waters in the Sacred Place (Sanctuary)**, and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.

25/ Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

26/ The one who released the scapegoat to Azazel shall wash his clothes and immerge his body in the living purifying spring waters; then afterward he shall come back into the camp (of the Israelites).

8/ In order to avoid running the slightest risk of not fully respecting the whole of the Leviticus Prescriptions during the annual Purification of All Israel on the Day of Atonement, the Priests and particularly the Rabbis came progressively to demand that the High Priest underwent on that day, inside the Sanctuary, not two Purification baths as apparently indicated in the *Torah*, but five baths with complete immersion of the body, in order to fulfil all the commands and decreed obligations.

These rules were the result of an extremely detailed work of research and interpretation, in which the Rabbinic influence seems to have played a determining role to the detriment of the Sadducee thought more attached to a simple and direct reading of the *Torah*.

In any case the conditions concerning the absolute necessity of the High Priest undergoing **five purifying baths with complete immersion in Living Spring Waters, in the Temple of Jerusalem**, were examined with the greatest attention by the Rabbis of the *Mishnah* and of the two *Talmuds*.

Concerning this specific subject, the Rabbis were agreed on two Principles :

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-a- The first was that the Purifying Springs of the Waters of the Temple were situated at Etam, twenty kilometres from Jerusalem, from which the Waters flowed by simple gravitation, continuously and uninterrupted to the Temple in Jerusalem, carried by an Aqueduct cut into the rock, the only material that prevented the loss of waters issued from the Etam Spring.

-b- The second was that the High Priest underwent these baths of complete immersion, **inside** the Sanctuary, in one of the two mikvehs that are specifically indicated as being situated, not at the ground level of Sanctuary, but on the **upper storey** of two buildings in the sacred area of the Temple, the Parvah Chamber and the building called the Water Gate.

In validating these two principles the Rabbis did not take into account the fact that the disposition of the bedrock beneath the Haram and the topographical levels that enabled the Living Spring Waters to flow from the Etam Spring to the Temple, not only prevented these waters from ever flowing onto the surface of the Haram, but resulted in their flowing and gathering, to a far lower downstream level, towards the giant Cisterns built into the bedrock, more than ten metres below the surface level of the Haram...

And when the Rabbis finally remarked the impossibility of harmonizing these different tangible facts concerning the bedrock of the Haram and the traditions faithfully transmitted by the Ancients, they were obliged to either put deliberately this insurmountable and irreconcilable problem to one side, or seek absurd and legendary explanations of an extremely Aggadik (Jewish legendary stories) nature.

9/ Hereafter are the essential details from the Rabbinic factual traditions, which cannot be ignored, concerning the supply of Living Purifying Spring Waters to the Jewish Sanctuary :

*Talmud of Babylon : Order Moed : Tractate Yoma : III : 30a-31a : Extracts :*

*Mishnah :*

No person shall enter into the Temple, even pure (already purified), without bathing and full ritual immersion (in the Living Waters issuing from a Spring).

**The High Priest had to take five legal immersion bathing, and ten times to sanctify his hands and feet from the Laver.**

**Both the immersions and the sanctifications he performed in the Chamber Parvah, inside the Sanctuary.**

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Only the first Purification in the Living Spring Waters he made at the usual Mikveh of the High Priest (which was situated at the upper floor of the building called the Gate of Waters).

When he would go (after having taken off his garments henceforth impure) to immerge his nude body in the purifying waters a linen cloth was stretched between the High Priest and the people (accompanying him).

***Gemara*** : (*Explanations of the Mishnah with Commentaries and Discussions*) :

"5 baths and 10 sanctifications" Our Rabbis have taught us :

**The High Priest took 5 legal baths by full immersion of his body in the Living Purifying Spring Waters, and 10 sanctifications (by washing his hands and feet), all that in the Holy Place in the Parvah Chamber ;**

However the first bath with immersion took place in the (semi-) profane area at the limit of the Holy Court, **on the upper floor of the Water Gate**, this Gate being next to the Chamber of the High Priest.

Rabbi Abaye said : From that it can be deduced that the level of the Etam Spring (supplying this bath by gravitational flow) was situated at least 23 cubits (12 metres) above the floor level of the Temple Court (the height of the building called the Water Gate). Because we are taught that all the Gates of the Temple Court measured 20 cubits (10 metres) high and 10 cubits wide (5 metres), with the exception of the Entry Hall (figures given in the *Tractate Midoth*).

(parenthetical :)

And we are taught: "*he shall then wash his clothes and immerge his body in Living Source Waters and will become pure.*" (reference to *Leviticus Chapter 15 verse 13*), this is to say the waters of a Mikveh in which the whole body could be immersed (in the Living Waters).

What volume of water was necessary for that ?

- A square of 1 cubit (50 centimetres) with a depth of 3 cubits (1.5 metres). (These figures seem rather unrealistic for the complete immersion of the body, and are probably due to errors of transcription by copyists.)

And the Sages (Rabbis) set the measure of the waters for a mikveh at 40 seahs (about 300 litres).

But it is necessary to add the height of the Water Gate (the top of which should be at least at the level of the waters from the Etam Spring) 1 cubit for its roof and 1 cubit for its floor. (21 +1 +1 = 23 cubits = 12 metres)

This is why, according to the Rabbis, the Etam Spring should be situated, at least (in a very optimistic and spiritual view, but not realistic when considering the distance between Etam and Jerusalem) 23 cubits (12 metres) above the level of the Court of the Temple, in order that

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the Spring Waters could flow by simple gravitational effect to supply the two mikvehs of the High Priest.

**Thus was established by Rabbinic memory that Living Purifying Waters issued from a natural Spring in Etam flowed by the force of gravity alone to the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber situated in the Sanctuary, as well as to the upper storey of the Water Gate (12 metres high) also situated on the same platform of the Sanctuary.**

10/ If the Rabbis of Babylon, in particular the interlocutor-transmitter Rabbi Abaye of the *Tractate Yoma*, had visited the Haram in Jerusalem, they would have been able to see, with their own eyes, that it was impossible that waters from the Etam spring could rise by gravitation from the bedrock below to the surface of the Haram ten metres above.

It is necessary to mention that certain Palestinian Rabbis Amoraim of the *Talmud of Jerusalem* shared these same unrealistic attitudes as to the circulation of Living Spring Waters in the Sanctuary, completely ignoring the topographical evidence that they could, if necessary and if allowed, have observed with their own eyes.

It could also be added that the Rabbis of Babylon, certain of whom had probably traveled to Jerusalem and who would have been able to remark, by contemplating the supposed site of the Temple, the insoluble problem of the circulation of Spring Waters up to the level of the surface of the Sanctuary, and nonetheless ignoring deliberately that true topographic evidence, had in fact hurried, out of any authentic space-time, to spiritualize the hydro geological reality, complying thus with one of the driving principles of Rabbinic free spiritual speculation, based on any verse chosen ad-hoc in the *Bible*, whenever confronted with a contradictory and implacable material and realistic evidence.

An example of this particular process is given in a passage of the *Talmud of Babylon*, in which an Aggadic and mystical speculation is made on the relation between the topographical levels of the Etam Spring and the topography of the Temple of Jerusalem, where the Living Spring Waters should supply the Purification mikvehs of the High Priests.

This rather complex Aggadic speculation is given in an extract directly related to our present subject:

*Talmud of Babylon : Order Kodashim : Tractate Zebahim : III : 54b :*

The Rabbis said it is written :

"You shall arise and **go up** to the place which the Lord your God will choose."  
(Deuteronomy : chapter 17: verse 8).

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This implied that the Temple was the highest place in all of Israel, and that the territory of Israel was higher than all other countries. ...

They (our Fathers) had therefore the intention to build the Temple at the Etam Spring (which is necessarily higher so that its Waters can flow downwards to the Temple), then they thought and declared :

'Build the Temple a little lower (so that the waters of the spring will be able to flow) as it is written': '(And of Benjamin, Moses said : 'The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; (and the Lord) shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders...' {shoulders (= the Temple) which are lower than The Head (The Eternal = the Spring of Etam)} (Deuteronomy: chapter 33 verse 12).

11/ Besides the information given in *Tractate Yoma* concerning the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber and the upper storey of the Water Gate, where the mikvehs were reserved for the Purification of the High Priest, Rabbinic Literature speaks of the mikvehs at the disposition of the Priests who guarded the Sanctuary, in the case they became impure or when their bodily needs rendered them impure.

In such cases the Priests were obliged to leave the sacred area of the Sanctuary for re-Purification. This is, at least, what is indicated in the descriptions given in the *Tractates Middoth* and *Tamid*.

In a general manner the *Tractate Middoth* does not concern itself, in a structured manner, on the means by which the Temple was supplied with Living Spring Waters for Purification or running waters under pressure for cleansing.

In fact the *Tractate Middoth* is concentrated almost uniquely with the architectural aspects of the Sanctuary and its exact measurements.

The *Tractate Middoth* has received no additional information, neither in the *Gemara* form in the *Talmuds* nor in the *Tosefta* form.

And it is quite probable that this very particular characteristic represented a certain embarrassment for the Rabbis who, on one hand, did not know how to explain certain topographical impossibilities stated or reported, and who, on the other hand did not want to infringe the implicit political modus vivendi with (or submission to) the Roman Authorities first, and next, the Muslim Authorities.

It appears that it is mostly from the brief Mishnic notations in the *Tractate Middoth*, concerning the Waters of the Temple that derived the most various speculations and very Aggadic interpretations in the Rabbinic Literature as to the whole of the Sanctuary's Hydraulic System.

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Some of these annotations of the *Tractate Middoth* seem to be late insertions destined to render certain Rabbinic data more coherent with the topographical realities of the site of the Temple.

Whatever the case, hereafter is a summary of the various notations (in bold characters or underlined) which make reference to the use and conditioning of Waters in the Temple, such as they appear in the *Tractate Middoth of the Mishnah* :

12/

Mishnah : Order Kodashim : Tractate Middoth : Extracts :

1/9 :

H / If one of them (Priestly guards sleeping in the Entry Chamber) had an ejaculation of semen during the night (and became impure), he left (the Sanctuary) taking the passage that went down beneath the building,

I / and the light trembled from one side an on the other

J / until he arrived in the waters immersion chamber (Mikveh, where the toilets were also according to the *Tractate Yoma*).

K / Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said : 'He leaves the Sanctuary taking the passage that goes down beneath the rampart (of the Esplanade of the Temple) and arrives at the place of the Tadi Gate (the north gate of the Esplanade of the Temple).'

2/6 :

L / The south gates of the Temple Court, (are) from west (to east) :

The Upper Gate, The Fuel Gate, the Firstling Gate, the Water Gate :

M / And why was it called the Water Gate ?

N / Because it was by this gate that the Vase of Waters was carried for the Feast (water brought to the Temple for the Feast of Sukkot : this water was drawn from the only Spring in Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring, situated at the bottom of the Kedron Valley, which later flowed through an underground aqueduct into the Siloam Pool. It was most probably part of an ancient Ritual during the construction of the First Temple).

O / Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob declares : *'And behold, the Waters are trickling through the Porch (of the Temple) (Ezekiel Chapter 47 verse 2) 'And the Waters are flowing down from under the Porch' (Ezekiel Chapter 47 verse 1)*

3/6 :

A / **The Purification Bath** (for the Priests) was between the Porch (of the Temple) and the Altar (Sacrificial) to the south.

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4/7 :

C / The width of the Temple was 70 cubits (35 metres) composed of (from north to south) :

- the wall (external) of the corridor, 5 cubits (wide : 2,5 metres)
- the corridor, 3 cubits (wide : 1,5 metre)
- the wall of the adjoining chamber, 5 cubits (wide : 2,5 metres)
- the adjoining chamber, 6 cubits (wide : 3 metres))
- the wall of the Temple itself, 6 cubits (wide : 3 metres)
- the Temple itself, 20 cubits (wide :10 metres)
- the wall of the Temple itself, 6 cubits (wide : 3 metres)
- the adjoining chamber, 6 cubits (wide : 3 metres)
- the wall of the adjoining chamber, 5 cubits (wide : 2,5 metres)
- **the internal water canal, 3 cubits (wide : 1.5 metre)**
- the (external) wall, 5 cubits (wide : 2,5 metres)

5/3 :

A / There were six chambers in the Priests Court :  
3 to the north and 3 to the south.

B / The chambers situated to the north were the Salt Chamber, **the Parvah Chamber** and **the Rinsing Chamber**.

C / The Salt Chamber, where offerings were salted (pieces of animals sacrificed and butchered).

D / **The Parvah Chamber**, where consecrated meat (of the sacrifices) was salted (for the High Priest).

E / **And on the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber was the Chamber with the immersion Bath (Mikveh) of the High Priest.**

F / The Rinsing Chamber, where the innards of the animals sacrificed were washed (with running waters).

G / From this Chamber was a passage to the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber.

(Probably the living waters supplying the bath for the immersion of the High Priest, or one of their derivations, were flowing directly down from the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber to the Rinsing Chamber through this passage-conduct.)

5/4 :

A / The three Chambers to the south were the Wood Chamber, the Diaspora Chamber and the Hewn Stone Chamber.

B / The Wood Chamber

C / Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob declared : 'I have forgotten what it was used for.'

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D / Rabbi Abba Saul declared :

'It was the Chamber of the High Priest and this chamber was behind the other two chambers, but the roofs of these three chambers were at the same level.'

E / The Diaspora Chamber : There was a permanent cistern on which was placed a wheel and wherefrom waters could be drawn for the whole of the court. (exaggerated interpolation more than probable).

F / The Hewn Stone Chamber : Where the Grand Sanhedrin formally gathered in meeting.

G / And the Sanhedrin judged the Priests : The Priest who was judged unworthy immediately had to dress in black, to cover himself with a black cape and immediately left the Sanctuary.

H / And the Priest who was judged worthy dressed in white, covered himself with a white cape and went directly into the Sanctuary to join his fellow Priests to exercise his ministry with them. (after having taken a legal bath of Purification by immersion).

13/ To complete these main Rabbinic references given, directly or indirectly, in *Tractate Yoma* and *Tractate Middoth* concerning the supply of Living Spring Waters to the ritual baths of the Sanctuary for Purification by complete immersion of the body, the *Babylon Talmud* in the *Tractate Yoma* mentions another location inside the Sanctuary where these Purification baths were taken. These mikvehs were found in the Chamber of the Lepers.

This Chamber of the Lepers was one of four chambers found at each of the four corners of the Court of the Women :

The Court of the Women was thus called because it was where the women gathered, separated from the men, on a balcony that surrounded and overlooked this Court.

As to this Chamber of the Lepers, in reality it did not receive lepers, who were not permitted to enter into the Sanctuary whilst they remained unhealed, but by persons who after having been affected by a skin disease had been healed, and who were already purified according to the prescribed Rules before being admitted again to the Sanctuary.

Nevertheless, and probably by precaution and as an additional ritual obligation as regards those particular persons, they had, in all likelihood, to proceed to a new Purification by immersion in the Sanctuary itself in the Mikveh of the chamber of Lepers.

In addition a complex and sometimes confused discussion figures in 30a-30b of the *Gemara of the Tractate Yoma in the Talmud of Babylon*, which seems to indicate that all those who entered the Court of the Israelites, had also to purify themselves again by immersion in the mikvehs

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of this Chamber of Lepers. This Babylonian discussion in fact sought to clarify and define a formal and insurmountable declaration of the *Mishnah* :

*Talmud of Babylon, Order Moed, Tractate Yoma, III 30 a : Extract :*

*Mishnah : (repeat)*

No person shall enter into the Temple, even pure (already purified), without purifying (again) with full ritual immersion of his body (in the Living Spring Waters).

Thus, according to this interpretation by the Rabbis in the *Gemara of the Talmud of Babylon*, the Jews, including in all likelihood amongst others the Levites who officiated in the Temple and the family heads who brought offerings, had to be purified again by complete immersion in the mikvehs of this Chamber of Lepers adjoining the Court of the Women before proceeding to the Court of the Israelites.

A detail in the organisation of the Sanctuary pleads in favour of this possible interpretation because the Chamber called the Chamber of Vestments was at the top of the stairs leading to the Nicanor Gate, which connected the Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites.

So it can be thought that the Levites, for instance, after having purified themselves, left their clothes in this Court before putting on their ceremonial vestments.

14/ Whatever the case, and to resume this subject concerning the supply of Living Spring Waters to the Sanctuary for the obligatory Rituals of Purification by immersion of the body, or by ablutions, the Rabbinic tradition and in particular that of the *Tractate Middoth and the Tractate Yoma*, **clearly** indicates two essential points :

**-A-/ The High Priest accomplished the most demanding of all the Jewish Rituals, that is on the Day of Atonement, on the UPPER storey of the Parvah Chamber situated on the north side of the Court of the Temple, and also on the UPPER storey of the Water Gate, that measured at least 12 metres high above the surface of the Esplanade, and was situated on the south side of the Court of the Temple.**

Indeed, when the High Priest was given the responsibility of asking, once a year, in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, for the Pardon for all the sins of Israel as well as the Purification of the whole of the Jewish people, he was obliged beforehand to have acquired the Supreme Degree of Purification.

And this supreme degree of Purity had the absolutely need of the purest Waters, that is to say the Living Spring Waters (from the Etam Spring).

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And, of course, in addition the perpetual flow of these Waters should have never stopped (and should never stop) and should not have, under no pretext, been manipulated by the hand of man or by a recipient of any kind whatsoever.

The detailed affirmation of this Rabbinic memory, as transmitted, implies that the Purifying Spring Waters were carried by an Aqueduct in a stream of continuous Living Waters, at least to the upper levels of the Esplanade of the Temple, **by only simple gravitational means**.

Now, as will be seen below, the Spring Waters from Etam could in no circumstances discharge onto the surface of the Haram, because these Waters carried by the Aqueduct, flowed into the bedrock situated, at least, ten metres below its surface.

**-B-/ An internal channel** (not outside the walls of the Temple), going from south-west to south-east of the Temple, carried the Living purifying Waters from the Etam Spring, and very likely supplied the Purification Basin of the Priests (the brazen Sea), which was situated to the south-east of the Temple between its Porch and the sacrificial Altar.

It is from this memorized image that the Prophet Ezekiel, who was brought to captivity in Babylon, drew his mystical and ecstatic vision of Waters pouring forth at the south-east threshold of the Temple, to purify Sion and Israel (*Ezekiel: 47 : 1-5*).

15/ Paradoxically, on the subject of the supply of Living Purifying Spring Waters to the Temple, it was finally the Rabbis of the Talmud of Babylon, who in general were most coherent in their reflections, even if it was the Palestinian Rabbis who transmitted most accurately the original and authentic memorized traditions that described the real Supply of Living Spring Waters to the Temple.

But these original traditions seemed in such contradiction with the real topography of the Haram that this discordance provoked a necessary and important rectification, **apparently** coherent and intelligent, by the Rabbis of the Talmud of Babylon.

Indeed, this rectification alone made it possible to fully identify the forgotten site of the Temple of the Jews with the site of the Haram of the Moslems.

And, progressively, in the whole of the Rabbinic literature, it was this Babylonian rectification that prevailed and to which the Palestinian Rabbis rallied through various successive and later insertions and interpolations.

The best example of this paradoxical evolution is given by the story of the mechanical machine invented by Rabbi Ben Quattin for the water bronze Laver of the Temple.

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Before examining this story of a Hydraulic Engine, revelatory of certain transformations and interpolations made necessary in the Rabbinic memorized traditions, it is necessary to examine the origin and nature of this Basin-Laver of Living Spring Waters that stood at the front of the Temple and was specifically intended for the ritual Purification of the Priests.

16/ When the Eternal gave Moses the plan for the Sanctuary, He instructed Moses to put a Laver for Living Spring Waters before the Temple.

In fact, as we have seen supra, the High Priest and his sons and hereditary successors had to:

- Purify their bodies by complete immersion before penetrating inside the Meeting Tent
- Purify their hands and feet, to approach the sacrificial Altar to carry out immolations and make Offerings.

*Exodus : Chapter 30: verses 17 – 21 : (repeat)*

17- Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying :

18- You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for bathing (by complete immersion of the body in the living purifying spring waters);  
And you shall put it between the Tent of Meeting and the Altar.

**There you shall make the waters flow in it.**

19/ Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in it.

20/ **When they come in the Tent of Meeting, they shall immerse their body in these waters, so that they will not die.**

Or, when they approach the Altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a burning sacrifice to the Lord,

21/ they shall bathe their hands and their feet, so that they will not die.

And it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations.

These verses could have posed a certain number of problems of interpretation because the *verses 18* and *20* seemed to indicate that the bronze basin, the "Sea of Bronze", was intended for the High Priest's Purification bath, whilst *verse 21* seemed to indicate that the Sea of Bronze was intended for the Purification of the hands and feet of the High Priest and his sons and hereditary successors.

But *2 Chronicles: 4:6* indicated precisely the final sacerdotal interpretation of these two different explanations before the destruction of the Temple, by specifying that the bronze basin was intended for the **Priests' Purification by immersion of their bodies** and

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consequently also for the washing of the Priests' hands and feet during the different phases of the ceremony.

Thus, the immersion purifying vocation of the bronze Laver was firmly established and, therefore, the highest degree of importance will always be attached to its continuous supply of Living Spring Waters, as will be examined infra.

17/ That King David and King Solomon were fully aware and conscious of this imperative and perpetual *YHWH* Prescription of the necessary supreme Purification by immersion of the body in Living Spring Waters is, in fact, **clearly** indicated in *the Bible (Torah)*, when carefully read :

Indeed, in order to establish, in an indisputable way, his son, Solomon, whom he had chosen as his legitimate heir to the Jewish Throne (to the detriment of another of his sons, Adoniyah who had also claimed his succession) David enjoined the High Priest Sadoc and Natan the Prophet **to go down to the Gihon Spring to crown there, solemnly, Solomon, King.** This Gihon Spring was the only Source of Waters in Jerusalem, and it was located in the Cedron Valley, at the basis of the western ramparts of the City. But a rocky underpass made it possible to go down there directly without having to leave by one of the doors of the City.

Therefore, there is every indication that the Ark of the Covenant, that David had triumphantly brought into Jerusalem, and that Solomon will later install in the Temple built during his reign, had been placed originally in a provisional Mosaic Tent, located, in Jerusalem, close to the entry of this rocky underpass giving access directly to the Gihon spring :

In this way, all the prescribed Rites of Purification, by immersion of the body in Spring Waters, could be accomplished for any important ceremony of the Jewish Worship, which were, of course, held in front of this Davidic Tent of the Ark of the Covenant:

Hereafter are the principal extracts which appear in *1 Kings 1* and which describe the capital enthronement, in Jewish History, of the new King, Solomon, **at the Gihon Spring** :

1 Kings 1 :

32-35 : King David said, "Call in Zadok the High Priest, Natan the Prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada (*Head of the Royal Guard*) "

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When they came before the King, he said to them :

“Take your Lord’s soldiers with you and have Solomon my son mount my own royal mule **and take him down to Gihon Spring.**

**There**, have Zadok the High Priest and Natan the Prophet anoint him King over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout : ‘Long live King Solomon !’

Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my Throne and reign in my place :

I have appointed him Ruler over Israel and Judah.”...

38-40- : So, Zadok the Priest, Natan the Prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites (*Royal Guards*) **went down** and had Solomon mount King David’s mule, and they **escorted him down to Gihon Spring.**

Zadok the High Priest took the horn of oil from the sacred Meeting Tent and he anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted :

“Long live King Solomon !”

And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with their sound.

41-45- : (*Account given to the deposed pretender, Adoniya*) :

“ Our lord King David has made Solomon King :

King David has sent with Solomon Zadok the High Priest, Natan the Prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the King’s royal mule, and **Zadok the High Priest and Natan the Prophet have anointed him King at Gihon Spring.** “

18/ When King Solomon constructed the first Temple in Jerusalem, the Sacerdotal Hierarchy oversaw, no doubt with great care, that this Hydraulic Purification System, which was originally foreseen for the Meeting Tent, was faithfully transposed and much improved into the architecture and functioning of the new Sanctuary.

Concerning specifically the Purification brazen Laver for the Priests, Solomon improved it considerably by asking Hiram, a specialist in bronze works, to place a monumental Mikveh on twelve bronze bulls, symbolizing altogether the twelve Tribes of Israel and the long period of nomadic wandering in the desert :

1 Kings : Chapter 7 : verses 23- 26 :

Now Hiram made the “**Sea**” of bronze, circular in form :

It measured 10 cubits (5 metres) from brim to brim, and its height was five cubits (2,5 metres), and thirty cubits (15 metres) in circumference.

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Under its brim gourds went around encircling it ten to a cubit, completely surrounding the Sea : the gourds were in two rows, cast with the rest.

The Sea stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east; and the Sea was set on top of them, and all their rear parts turned inward.

The rim of the Sea was a handbreadth thick, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, as a lily blossom : it could hold two thousand baths (**80.000 litres**).

2 Chronicles : Chapter 4 : verses 5 and 6 :

5 : The Bronze Sea contained around 3,000 bats (**120.000 litres**)...

6 : **The waters in the Bronze Sea were used for the Purifying Immersion of the bodies of the Priests.**

It follows from these precise descriptions of the installations in the Temple of Solomon that when the bronze Laver was filled with waters it would have weighed, at least, **one hundred tons**.

A detailed description of this Laver is neither available for the one that was made for the second Temple, nor for the Laver made by Herod for the third Temple.

It can simply be remarked that Herod, on the one hand, always had the tendency to increase the original figures and measurements of the Temple of Solomon, and, on the other hand, from the evidence of various archaeological vestiges, Herod had always accorded a great importance to the architecture of the hydraulic installations of water reservoirs and cisterns.

Thus, it can be deduced that the Laver in the Temple of Herod was, both in weight and dimensions, at least, as big as the bronze Laver of the Temple of Solomon, and that, once it was filled, it would have also weighed at least around **one hundred tons**.

**19/** These imposing dimensions of the bronze Laver described in *Kings 7:23* and *Chronicles 4 : 5 and 6* pose certain problems even if only an approximate size is considered.

Amongst these different problems two appear relatively complex and rather important for our Study: