

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

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**A-** the utilization and instructions for the use of this gigantic bronze Mikveh .

**B-** its supply with Purifying Living Spring Waters, intended specifically for the Purification of the Priests so that they could officiate inside the Temple or at the sacrificial Altar.

The utilization of this great bronze Laver supported by twelve huge bulls, which would have measured more than 5 metres in diameter, 20 metres in circumference and 5 metres high, with a depth of waters being 2,5 metres, posed different problems of accessibility and use :

As this Basin had served for the Purification by immersion of the body of the Priests, according to *Exodus 30:20* and to *2 Chronicles 4:6*, and in the absence of all precise documents on this subject, different arrangements could be envisaged or imagined that would have facilitated the use of this colossal Mikveh :

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- A series of steps allowing the Priests to climb to the edge of the Basin.
- To hide the Priests as they undressed at the edge of the Basin before immersing in the waters implied the presence of curtains to hide their nudity from those present.
- The naked Priests, especially small men, could not be completely immersed without the risk of drowning in two and a half metres of waters, unless steps were arranged inside the Basin.
- Etc.

20/ An indirect echo confirming this type of embarrassing problems that occurred in the utilization of this bronze Purification Laver can be found in the *Qumran Texts*, which propose suitable solutions for a practical arrangement of this Priests Purification area, situated between the Altar and the Temple.

The small community of Qumran, that dwelt on the shores of the Dead Sea, were probably an extremely purist branch of the Essene sect.

Originally, it appears that this Community led by a dissident High Priest was formed, most probably, following bitter antagonism between this High Priest and the sacerdotal Authority and the Royal Court of Jerusalem at the time of the Hasmonean Kings of the Macchabees Dynasty.

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Either this High Priest, the first leader of the Qumran community, refused the principle that the royal power and the sacerdotal authority were combined in a single person, which was the case for the Hasmonean Dynasty, as for example at the time of King Alexander Jannee, or the leader of the Qumran community was in conflict with Queen Salome at the time when she favoured the power of Rabbis and Pharisees to the detriment of the hereditary Priests and the Sadducees party.

Afterwards this same type of antagonism was perpetuated between the Qumran community and the sacerdotal class in power in Jerusalem.

In any case the Qumran community was created with the objective of being exemplary and most specifically in regard to Purity and Purification as laid down in the *Torah*.

Archaeological vestiges bear witness to this mystical demand, as demonstrated by a stream of living waters from a spring in the cliffs overlooking the Dead Sea that twisted through the small town of the Qumran community, pouring in gentle cascades from one Purification basin to another.

One of these basins, the largest, was destined to the Purification of the main meeting room, the floor of which was slightly sloped (for the flow of purifying waters), and where the community ate meals together, in place of the sacrificial ceremonies that took place in Jerusalem.

And if the community could not sacrifice animals, the Purification obligations with Living Spring Waters were nevertheless transposed with the greatest fidelity for the strict Worship that was practiced within the Qumran community.

Amongst the writings of Qumran that have come down to us, one, called the *Temple Scroll*, establishes the Rules that should be applied when the concepts of the Qumran community would at last prevail, when the new age arrives, and when the community would, at last, be able to take charge of the Temple and its Rituals.

Indeed this awaited renewal of Worship would finally allow them to conform, more precisely, to the prescribed Rules of the *Torah* :

Different prescriptions that paraphrase or adapt those of the *Torah* are set forth in this perspective.

The *Temple Scroll* describes a Temple with a new architecture, completely idealized, in the manner of the visionary Temple described by Ezekiel.

Amongst these different descriptions and prophetic Prescriptions figured extremely pragmatic directives concerning the Basin for the Purification immersion of the Priests.

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It seemed that this specific part of the text of the *Temple Scroll* had been established, taking into account the real difficulties caused by the position and relatively empirical use of the Purification bronze Laver in the second Temple of Jerusalem.

The solutions proposed by the *Temple Scroll* were, according to all evidence, aimed at rationalizing and sanctifying the use of the collective Basin-Mikveh for the supreme Purification of the Priesthood while protecting its dignity when undressing and magnifying its exemplarity. With this in mind, a special Edifice would have to be built around the Purification Basin. This Edifice would have also served as a vestry for the Priests, where they could undress away from the regards of others, proceed to their Purification by total immersion in the Living Spring Waters of the Basin, and then dress themselves with the ritual vestments for Worship in the Temple :

*Qumran Texts: Dead Sea Scrolls : Scroll of the Temple :*

*11Q 19-20 : Columns 31-32 :*

You will construct to the south-east of the Temple a square building around the basin (for Purification) 21 cubits by 21 cubits (10 metres).

This building will be 50 cubits (25 metres) from the Altar (sacrificial).

The wall of this building will measure 3 cubits (1.5 metres) thick and 20 cubits (10 metres) high. You will make Doors to the east, north and west, 4 cubits (2 metres) wide and 7 cubits (3.5 metres) high...

Inside the wall of this building you will make boxes 1 cubit (50 centimetres) wide. These boxes will be positioned 4 cubits (2 metres) above the floor and covered with gold.

The Priests will put their clothes they wear in them (in order to immerse their body in the waters of the Basin)...(and will dress in their ceremonial vestments) when they go officiate in the Sanctuary.

You will build a channel around the basin inside of this building.

This channel will discharge from the basin and leave the building towards a hole dug in the ground, so that the (running and waste) waters could be evacuated into this opening and disappear into the ground.

No person should touch these (impure) waters, because blood from the sacrifices could be mixed with it (when a Priest would have come to be purified in the basin, between two sacrifices).

21/ The different Prescriptions of the *Torah*, concerning the Purification of the High Priest in the Sanctuary, as well as the descriptions in Rabbinic Literature, in particular

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that of the *Tractate Middoth* and the *Tractate Yoma*, pose with unavoidable acuteness the problems of the supply of Living Spring Waters to the upper stories of the Parvah Chamber and the Water Gate, in addition to that of the monumental bronze Laver-Mikveh :

This Laver Basin contained about **100.000 litres of waters** and was supplied by a continuous flow of Living Spring Waters in compliance with the strict Rules derived from the Instructions given by YHWH in the *Torah* and especially those concerning the Purification of the Priests.

Besides the different successive reconstitutions, there exist some clues that show Solomon and his Hydraulic specialists were particularly preoccupied by the problem of supplying the Temple with Purifying Spring Waters preceding the installation of the monumental bronze Laver.

Certain of these clues figure in the *Septuagint*, the ancient translation of *Old Testament* :  
The ancient Greeks had in a general manner a more rational preoccupation relative to practical or logical questions, which retained a lesser attention from the Israelite Scribes of Jerusalem more inclined to theological and mystical speculations.

It was this difference that have allowed to preserve and transmit certain extremely important details which have come down to us through different passages in ancient Greek Literature amongst which is the translation in Greek of the Bible, the *Septuagint*.

Here are the indications given in the *Septuagint* concerning the Hydraulic Installations laid on by Solomon for the Temple :

*Septuagint : III Kings III /36 :*

And Solomon had 70.000 bearers of burdens, and 80.000 hewers of stone in the mountain :

And Solomon made the "**Sea**", and **the bases with their great lavers** (*10 carts supporting 10 purification bronze basins*), and the pillars (of the Porch), and the **Fountain of the Court**, and the "**Brazen Sea**".

**And Solomon built the Citadel above the Temple so as to protect it.**

These indications, given in the *Septuagint*, inform us that besides the monumental Basin, called 'the **brazen Sea**' that is fully described in the Hebraic Bible, Solomon had also installed a '**Fountain**' in the Court of the Temple and had also constructed the '**Sea**'.

Now, the '**Sea**' is the name given to one of the giant underground cistern-reservoirs that had been cut into the bedrock beneath the present Haram.

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As will be seen further this cistern called in fact the '**Great Sea**' is the biggest and the most ancient of all the rocky underground giant Cisterns of the Haram.

This '**Great Sea**' bears the number **8**, according to the codification established by Warren, who in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had been able to measure the principal Cisterns, which are disposed in cascade in the bedrock of the Haram.

This giant **Cistern n°8 (Great Sea)** could store **12 millions litres** of waters principally from the Etam spring via the Aqueduct, called the **Etam Aqueduct** (or Solomon Aqueduct). This '**Great Sea**' had been cut and dug into the bedrock, **12 metres deep below the surface level** to the south side of the Jewish Citadel (nowadays Haram).

Therefore this '**Great Sea**' could be able to hydraulically supply ritual Purifying ever-Running Waters **only in a downstream direction**, that is to say, by means of a gravitation system, **to a Site forcibly situated downstream and below** the antique Jewish Citadel (nowadays Haram).

Because in reality this '**Great Sea**' indicated in the *Septuagint*, served as a permanent Reservoir for the "**Brazen Sea**", which is to say the great bronze Laver, described in a luxury detail in the Hebraic text of *1Kings 7 : 23-26*.

The '**Great Sea**' was continuously supplied with waters from the **Etam Spring**, and, in turn, by the use of the different hydraulic levels in the bedrock the '**Great Sea**' supplied a continuous flow of waters via different conduits to the **Bronze Sea situated forcibly downstream** under the effect of gravity flow.

And orifices situated at the base of the monumental bronze Laver assured the simultaneous evacuation of the waters thus used.

In fact this essential continuous flow of Waters may have been extremely minimized but a continuous flow was however absolutely essential to preserve the Waters to remain Living, as it was the sole guaranty to achieving the supreme Purification required by the Temple's rituals and devotions.

As to the **Fountain of the Court**, also indicated in the *Septuagint*, it could be possibly conjectured that it supplied, probably, for instance, the Solomonian equivalent of the future Heerodian Mikvehs of the Lepers Chamber and Rinsing Chamber (for the ritual washing of the parts of the sacrificed animals).

It could also be conjectured that this **Fountain of the Court** supplied numerous Solomonian

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Mikvehs in the Sanctuary, which have not been recorded in the *Tractate Middoth*, (describing the third Temple) as it has come down to us.

On this point it is useful to remind again that, during the great annual religious Feasts, approximately one thousand Priests officiated at the same time in the Temple for rituals and devotions, and that all these Priests had to be purified by immersion in Living Spring Waters, and to wash again and again their hands and feet in the continuous flow of these Living Waters, which alone could guarantee the necessary Purification and Purity of the Worship.

22/ Another Biblical indication concerning the underground Hydraulic Installation for the supply of Living Spring Waters to the Temple figures in the *Ben Sira (Ecclesiastics)* regarding the works that were carried out during the time of the Second Temple under the reign of the Maccabee High Priest and Ruler, Simon, (143-135 BEC) :

The integral version of *Ben Sira* in Greek (*Septuagint*), who came to us, was established from a Hebraic version by the grandson of the Author:

However, it appears rather probable that a laudatory passage was added by the translator to the list of the outstanding characters of the Jewish History which had been established by his grandfather, that is to say, actually, a laudatory interpolation concerning the Maccabee High Priest and Ruler, Simon Ben Yohanan:

Indeed, Yohanan is the name of the Founder of this Dynasty of the Maccabees (who became at the same time High Priests and Leaders - then Kings - Hasmoneans).

In any event, in this Greek version of the *Septuagint*, the details concerning the Hydraulic installation of the Temple refer explicitly to the **giant Cistern** of the Haram, which bears the number 7 (according to the codification established by Warren) and which was called the "Sea " ( **Cistern n°8** being called the " **Great Sea** "). (cf. Chart)

*Septuagint : Sirach : 50 :*

Simon the High Priest, ben Yohanan,  
who in his life repaired the Temple,  
and in his days fortified the Palace.

And by him were repaired the ramparts of the Temple.

During his reign a cistern was dug,

**A cistern-reservoir similar to the "Sea" by its immensity.**

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And in order to protect his people,  
He fortified the City against besieging.

- **The underground giant Cistern-reservoir, designated n°8** .by Warren, could contain more than **12 millions litres of waters** and was dug into the bedrock (beneath the Haram) during the reign of Solomon for the construction of the Temple.

This first underground reservoir was called the '**Great Sea**' from its creation, as attested in the *Septuagint*.

- **The underground giant Cistern-reservoir, designated n°7** by Warren, could contain approximately **9 millions litres of waters**, and was also dug into the bedrock (beneath the Haram) most probably during the Priesthood and leadership of Simon, according to *Sirach*.

This underground **Cistern-reservoir n°7, the "Sea"**, which was connected to the "**Great Sea**" **-Cistern-reservoir n°8-**, and, consequently, to the **Etam Aqueduct**, was called the "**Sea**", from its beginning, in the same way as the "**Great Sea**" had been called so from the times of Solomon.

**23/** The most circumstantial evidence concerning the underground Hydraulic Installation of the Temple of Jerusalem before its ultimate destruction is that transmitted by Aristeas (or pseudo-Aristeas) **as will be described further infra**.

In addition, Aristeas transmitted a number of indications on the functioning of the Rituals in the Temple including the number of officiating Priests.

Aristeas also described the functions of the Priests as well as the ceremonial and devotions carried out by these Priests :

Aristeas, who wrote, in all probability, in the 2d century BCE, described the functioning of Rituals of the Hasmonean second Temple.

Whichever the case, Aristeas had, at least, more than likely, witnessed the Ceremonies in the Temple during a Pilgrimage on the occasion of one the great annual religious Feasts, and he indicates a minimal figure of 700 Priests officiating at the same time in the Temple of Jerusalem. This great number of officiating Priests implied a great number of permanent Hydraulic Installations for Purification, for complete bodily immersion, or for washing hands and feet in Living Spring Waters within the Sanctuary.

*Aristeas : Letter to Philocrates : VII : 92-95 :*

The ceremonial of the Worship of the Priests is in every way unsurpassed both

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for its physical endurance and for its orderly and silent service. For they all work spontaneously, though it entails much painful exertion, and each one has a special task allotted to him. The service is carried on without interruption : some provide the wood, others the oil, others the fine wheat flour, others the spices; others again bring the pieces of flesh for the burnt offering, exhibiting a wonderful degree of strength : for they take up with both hands the limbs of an ox, each of them weighing more than two talents (80 kilos), and uplift them with each hand in a wonderful way on to the high place of the altar and never miss placing them on the proper spot. In the same way the pieces of the sheep and also of the goats are very heavy both for their weight and their fatness because the Priests, whose role it is, always select the beasts which are without blemish and specially fat. And thus the sacrifice which I have described, is carried out. There is a special place set apart for the Priests to rest in, where those who are relieved from duty sit. When this takes place, those who have already rested and are ready to assume their duties rise up spontaneously since there is no need to give orders with regard to the arrangement of the sacrifices. The most complete silence reigns so that one might imagine that there is not a single person present, though there are actually seven hundred Priests engaged in the work, besides the vast number of those who are bringing up the animals to be offered for sacrifices.

Everything is carried out with reverence and in a way worthy of the Great God.

24/ Flavius Josephus, who was himself from a family of Priests, also described the functioning of Rituals that took place in the Temple of Herod, and confirmed indirectly that more than one thousand Priests officiated in the Temple. The number of Priests advanced by Flavius Josephus is in fact greater than one thousand, since at the moment of construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple, one thousand Priests were chosen and trained for different works designated to them by Herod and to supervise the work of construction. It was indeed one of the conditions that Herod cleverly conceded to the Jewish people so that he could demolish the second Temple of the Hasmoneans, in order to be able to build, in its place, the third and more architecturally ambitious Temple of Jerusalem.

Flavius Josephus : *Antiquities of the Jews* : XV : 14 :

And this was the speech Herod made to them announcing that he would build a more grandiose Sanctuary : but still this speech affrighted many of the people, as being unexpected by them, and the vastness of the undertaking to be such as

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could hardly be accomplished as it seemed quite unachievable.

And would it be achievable the Jews were afraid Herod would pull down the ancient Temple (second Temple), and not replace it in its integrity.

But while they were in this disposition, the King encouraged them, and told them he would not pull down their (2d) Temple till all things were gotten ready for building the new (3<sup>rd</sup>) Temple. And he promised them this beforehand and he did not break his word with them :

Herod got ready a thousand wagons, that were to bring all the necessary building materials and chose out ten thousand of the most skilful workmen who were put under the orders of **1.000 Priests** (who only are entitled to conduct such a sacred work).

Herod bought a **thousand** sacerdotal garments for these Priests, **who had been selected** for their expertise in constructions...

25/            **The problem of the Supply of Living Spring Waters to the upper stories of the Parvah Chamber and of the Water Gate** had been completely and opportunely disregarded by Rabbinic commentaries.

On the contrary, the Purification bronze Laver for the Priests, initially installed by Solomon in front of the Temple, had given rise to laborious comments and explanations by the Rabbis of the *Talmud of Babylon*, whilst the *Rabbis of the Talmud of Jerusalem* were content, at the outset, to transmit as it stood, a tradition that was very close to the reality preserved by Rabbinic memory.

But this original tradition, **faithfully preserved** by the *Talmud (of Jerusalem)* of the Palestinian Rabbis, was so categorically belied by the topography of the Haram (presumed site of the disappeared Temple) and by the disposition of its underground Hydraulic System, that the Rabbis of the *Talmud of Babylon* were forced to resort to legendary inventions, or fairy transposition tales, that would be able to dissolve this Palestinian tradition of the Reality of the past of the Jewish Temple, in the presence of the incontrovertible material evidence engraved in the rock and, de visu, evident in the real topography of the Muslim Haram.

This Babylonian Rabbinical fairy-invention took place as the result of a Palestinian tradition, faithful to Reality, described in the *Mishnah*, concerning a mechanical Hydraulic Machine, which had been invented by Rabbi ben Qattin, for the functioning of the Laver in the Temple of Herod.

This tradition figures in the *Tractate Yoma* which examines, among others, all the conditions

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necessary in order to achieve the highest degree of Purification for the High Priest and Priests on the Day of Atonement :

*Mishnah ; Order Moed : Tractate Yoma : III/10 :*

Ben Qattin made twelve taps for the Laver, which previously was equipped with only two taps.

**Ben Qattin devised a system whereby the waters would not become impure by remaining stagnant during the whole night.**

Thus, the *Mishnah* describes three essential elements :

- **-A-** The Laver, before the invention of Ben Qattin, had two taps for the simple washing and Purification of the hands and feet of the Priests who were to officiate at the sacrificial Altar.
- **-B-** The waters in the basin became impure for Purification purposes if they remained stagnant for one single night, that is to say static, not flowing, not living. This sacerdotal and Rabbinic fundamental Principle is confirmed, for instance, in *Tractates Zebaim and Menahoth*.
- **-C-** Ben Qattin had imagined a System that ensured that the Waters would **always** be flowing (living) that is to say to ensure that they were supplied upstream by a constant flow from the Etam Spring, and, downstream, that they would be able to continue permanently to flow without too many wasteful losses, when there were no devotions in the Sanctuary.

It is probable that this Machine invented by Rabbi Ben Qattin acted as a kind of automatic Regulator, permitting the exact necessary quantity of Waters to enter permanently from upstream, during or outside of Devotions, and to evacuate the corresponding quantity of waters downstream so as to maintain a continuous Flow, under all circumstances, without the unnecessary loss of waters or untimely overflow from the Laver.

And as will be seen below-infra, it is this same **Fundamental Principle** that governed the Functioning of the **whole underground Hydraulic System of the Temple**, from its foundation by Solomon.

According to this **Fundamental Principle**, Living Waters flowing from the main Spring, the Etam Spring, were carried by the Etam Aqueduct to Jerusalem, and stored in the underground giant Cisterns cut into the bedrock of the Haram and arranged in cascades,

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bringing forth, in this way, a **continuous Flow** right down to the Mikvehs and Basins of the Sanctuary, in order to beget their work of Purification and Redemption, without which the Worship of G\*d of Israel could not have taken place.

Indeed, the rain waters, that were also stored in the giant Cistern-Reservoirs beneath the Haram, could not be considered as well waters which would have been supplied by ground waters or underground springs as described in details in the *Targums* that commented *Leviticus 11 : 35-36*.

**Therefore, only by the permanent insemination of the Living Perennial Waters from the Etam Spring could these stored rain waters become Living Waters for Purification.**

26/ Concerning the Machine of Ben Qattin, the *Gemara of the Talmud of Jerusalem* faithfully transmitted, at the outset, the faithful memories of the Palestinian Rabbis, in conformity with the forgotten real site of the Temple. But in doing so, the Palestinian Gemara did not concern itself with the possible inadaptability of this very distant tradition with the topographical Reality as it could have been observed on the contemporary Muslim Haram.

*Talmud of Jerusalem : Order Moed : Tractate Yuma III/10 :*

*Mishnah :*

Ben Qattin made twelve taps for the basin, which previously was equipped with only two taps.

Ben Qattin devised a system whereby the waters would not become impure by remaining stagnant during the whole night.

*Gemara :*

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi declared :

**A channel coming from the Spring of Etam carried hydraulically the Living Waters to the Laver**, the base of which was perforated like pomegranates at certain points by orifices (to let the waters flow through).

Rabbi Simon ben Karsena told us in the name of Rabbi Aha :

The great Laver built by Solomon was used by the Priests for Purification baths by immersion as it was decreed (*2 Chronicles Chapter 4:6*) :

*"the waters of the brazen sea was for the Purification of the Priests"*

And this basin was not considered as an impure recipient for Purification (whose waters are manipulated by man or are cut off from their original flow)

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**because the Laver was DIRECTLY supplied by the Spring of Etam, and its base, turned towards the south, was perforated** (drainage holes ensured thus the perennial Flow of the Living Spring Waters).

27/ It seems to appear that the Rabbis of the Talmud of Babylon had soon been able to recognize that it was **impossible** that Living Spring Waters and notably those of Etam could overcome hydro-geological and gravitational laws, by rising up through any rock channel to the very surface level of the Haram of Jerusalem.

It was however a fact that the Jews were forbidden access to the Muslim Haram and in consequence could not have been able to visit the underground Cisterns in order to proceed to some necessary verifications.

Nevertheless, previously, during the pilgrimages on the 9 Ab (anniversary of the destruction of the Temple) during few brief moments in the late history of the Roman Empire or during the Byzantine Empire, or when the Jews had been for a very short time admitted onto the future Haram, it could be supposed that the Babylonian Rabbis had been able to obtain relatively factual knowledge of the real topographical situation of these underground Cisterns, and the undeniable knowledge that these cisterns were at such a depth that it was **impossibly** to conceive that Living Spring Waters could have ever flowed twelve metres vertically upwards, to the very surface of the Haram, by their own force.

It is on the basis of this rational and irrefutable realization, that the Living Spring Waters from the Cisterns could not have possibly risen to the surface of the Haram, that an Aggadic legend was born, whereby a system of mechanical winch would have allowed to raise the bronze Laver, filled with waters and **weighing about one hundred tons**, every morning and then would have lowered it again every night...

A few later Rabbinic commentaries, even more imaginative, told of this miraculous machine of Ben Qattin, whereby a single Priest, of Herculean strength, could raise or lower the one hundred tons of this monumental basin through a vertical shaft, alternatively up from or down to, a depth of twelve meters beneath the ground.

Thus, this extraordinary unexplained **quite magical performance** (combined with the adequate **invention** of an ad hoc new ruling of waters remaining pure in a recipient during one night) which was more mystical and of **Aggadic fairy legend** than relating to mechanical and religious inescapable Reality, nevertheless allowed the Rabbis to demonstrate that, from the point of view of Babylonian spirituality, Living Waters of the Etam Spring could have succeeded to rise daily over the surface of the Haram (leaving

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deliberately aside the forbidden manual intervention of a man, and the fact that waters remaining one night stagnant in a closed recipient were unfit for Purifications, and forgetting completely the supply of the Mikweh, amongst others, of the High Priest) :

Talmud of Babylon : Order Moed: Tractate Yoma : III :17 a :

Mishnah :

Ben Qattin made twelve taps for the basin, which previously was equipped with only two taps.

Ben Qattin devised a system whereby the waters would not become impure by remaining stagnant during the whole night.

Gemara

What kind of a machine was this?

It was a wheel (a winch) that could lower the basin down (into the shaft)...

This mighty titanic wheel and this incongruous virtual shaft that made its sudden appearance for the first time in the Holy Court of the Priests, in the topography of the Sanctuary, was conceived by the Babylonian Rabbis with such concision and circumspection that the Rabbis could maintain a convenient vagueness as to the description of the mythical wheel and shaft, and their method of functioning.

It therefore remained definitely unexplained, apart from usual components of fairy legends, how the **one hundred tons bronze Laver** was daily maneuvered, in the ancient times, laterally first, and then vertically downwards, and then upwards back, etc. ....

It can also be remarked incidentally that this legendary invented shaft is not mentioned in the detailed description of the Court of Priests transmitted by the *Tractate Middoth*.

Now this *Tractate* is for the most part at the origin of all discussions and speculations relative to the structure of the Temple in Rabbinic Literature.

Furthermore if such a well shaft had existed at the level of the platform of the Dome of the Rock, it would not have been supplied with Living Waters from an underground Water Source but from an opening in a closed Cistern containing stagnant rain waters.

And, worse, the waters contained in the Laver, once used for Purification immersions would have, in their turn, contaminated furthermore the stagnant and impure waters of the Cistern, etc...

And moreover if the first Temple of Solomon is referred to, where the bronze Laver weighing one hundred tons was standing on twelve bronze bulls, each one probable weighing several tons, this daily levitation imagined by the Babylonian Rabbis was an

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unbelievably and unrealistic exploit for devotions , that is if daily miracles and mystical interpretations are put to one side.

In spite of all these logical remarks, the *Babylonian Gemara* gave thus the appearance of providing a solution, in a deliberate and extremely laconic fashion, to a very troubling problem, which in view of the site was a hallucinatory reverie since it was structurally impossible.

This totally unrealistic solution proposed by the *Babylonian Gemara* had nevertheless a great success, not only because the winch of Ben Qattin had legendary offshoots, but in addition this explanation allowed some compulsory interpolations in the *Mishnah*, as, for example, in the *Tractate Tamid*. In this interpolation in *Tractate Tamid* of the *Mishnah*, the Rabbis recounted that the sound of this miraculous winch could be heard as far as Jericho, etc....

By such legendary and Aggadic fairy developments, a mystical dimension was conferred on the machine of Ben Qattin, which provided in a manner of speaking a solution to an insoluble problem, by avoiding all rational examination, both as to its functioning and that of the legitimacy of the purifying power of such an installation with a recipient containing stagnant waters deprived from their source origins, and therefore inappropriate "dead waters".

25/ In reality the Living Fecundating Waters collected from the Etam Springs arrived over the surface level of the Sanctuary by simple gravitation, in a Hydraulic System meticulously built like all ancient irrigation systems and by two principal streams that flowed in the Sanctuary for the purposes of Purification.

- (a) The first stream served the north part of the Sanctuary, supplying Living Spring Waters to the mikvehs of the High Priest on the upper storey of the Parvah Chamber and the Rinsing Chamber that adjoined it, as well as the mikveh in the Court of the Lepers.

- (b) The second stream served the south part of the Sanctuary, by a channel, of an extreme mystical nature, **that flowed along the entire length of the inner side of the south façade of the Temple.**

The Living Spring Waters of this sacred stream, exited at the south-east edge of the Temple itself, supplying the sacred Purification bronze Laver of the Priests, positioned at the southwest of the Priests Court.

It is this very second stream that had rightly been poetically and mystically magnified by

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Ezekiel when he spoke of the Waters gushing from the south-east corner of the Temple (Ezekiel 47:1-5).

- (c) And we can, most probably, add a third stream or diversion canal which supplied the Mikveh of the High Priest, situated on the upper storey of the Water Gate, at the south-east of the Court of the Priests.

This to say that Living Waters fecundated by Springs supplied all the sacred parts of the Sanctuary by different channels in the same way as blood flows continuously from the heart to all the organs of the body.

And the considerable pressure of the fifty million litres of waters stored in the bedrock of the antique Jewish Citadel (nowadays Haram) overlooking and protecting the Temple, continuously inseminated by the Waters of the Etam Springs, enabled this heart to irrigate the Sanctuary, without ever pausing in its vital and fundamental pulsing mission.

This underground huge Waters reserve had been, meticulously, constructed upstream of the Sanctuary to enable the Eternal to unremittingly purify and vitalize the Jewish people who untiringly, ceremony after ceremony, honoured his Engagement.

In other more practical terms, as will be seen in detail infra, the Temple of the Jews stood downstream below the Muslim Haram, which had once been the site of the Jewish Citadel that overlooked and protected the Sanctuary. Thus the bedrock of this Citadel (since transformed into the Haram) had enclosed the indispensable Waters Reservoir (Water Tower) that allowed the Temple to fulfill its earthly Mission.

And to this day, by an extraordinary archaeological miracle, considering the tumultuous History of Jerusalem across centuries and millenniums, this unique and sophisticated ancient Hydraulic System, dug into the mass of the bedrock, has remained, always, almost totally intact beneath the Haram, preserved by the Muslim faith.

But the visible inescapable evidence of this Hydraulic and Topographical Reality of the Temple seemed to have disintegrated when the platform of the Sanctuary was razed to the very rock on which it had stood, so as to destroy once and for all, and remove all evidence of this recalcitrant Site, -the Heart of Jewish Ideology-, from the surface of the earth and from the memory of men, in compliance with the Decision of Hadrian, the God-Emperor, whose will and ambition was to be as eternal as the Eternal.

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On its Water Tower*

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But by a kind of second miracle, the intrepid and conscientious 19<sup>th</sup> century Archaeologists, without being aware of their own extraordinary Discovery, had been able to investigate and undertake the most meticulous measurements of this entire Hydraulic System, that still lies in careful cascades engraved in the bedrock beneath the Haram, and which had been conceived and built in the antiquity by the skilful and inventive Jewish Hydraulics Engineers, Priests and craftsmen, in order to faithfully comply with the perennial exacting Prescriptions for permanent Purification of All Israel, as decreed by the Eternal.

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-7-

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

**THE RITES  
OF ANIMALS SACRIFICES**

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

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*The Temple of Solomon Could not Stand  
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1/ The Concept of a Moral Contract between the Eternal and the Jewish people requiring unremitting religious worship to perpetuate this Covenant, generation after generation, established, for the first time in Antiquity, a new ideological model that violently challenged the Pagan multi-Gods world as a scandalous revolution.

But the sacrifice of animals constituted a Rite common to the majority of the Ancient World. And in a general manner all civilizations, religions and ideologies practiced the bloody rite of sacrifice from their very origin, both as a mark of lofty submission to the violent, cruel and devouring order of the biosphere, and as a sign of recognition of man to nature, which enabled him to survive by eating its diverse creatures and/or creations.

2/ In resuming and by simplifying the Ritual with its extremely complex Rules, the Judaic Sacrifice of animals in the Temple of Jerusalem was divided into two principal categories :

- \*Complete Sacrifices\* whereby animals sacrificed were integrally offered to the Eternal and therefore entirely burnt on the Altar.

- Other extremely varied \*Communion Sacrifices\* in which certain parts of the animals sacrificed were burnt in offering to the Eternal, whilst the other parts of the animals were destined as food for the Priests, for the families, or groups or individuals who had offered the sacrificed animal, either directly or by the intermediary of their Leader or their King.

The sacrificial Ritual is described, for instance, in *Leviticus Chapters 1 to 7*, commencing with Complete Sacrifices :

-A- Complete Sacrifices :

*Leviticus : Chapter 1: verses 1 - 9 :*

Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying : Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them :

'When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock.

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If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord.

He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.

He shall slay the young bull before the Lord; and Aaron's sons, the Priests, shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting.

He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. The sons of Aaron, the Priests, shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire.

Then Aaron's sons, the Priests, shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar.

Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with waters.

And the Priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

**-B- Communion Sacrifices :**

Concerning Communion Sacrifices the procedure is almost the same as for Complete Sacrifices, except that only parts of the sacrificed animal are entirely burnt in offering to the Eternal, the other parts were destined, as food, to the Priests, Levites and those who offered the Sacrifice.

Leviticus : Chapter 3: verses 1 : 5 :

Now if his offering is a sacrifice of communion offerings, he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the Lord.

He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron's sons, the Priests, shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar.

From the sacrifice of the communion offerings he shall present as offering by fire to the Lord, the fat that covers the entrails, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys.

Then Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar as the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire : it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

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Thus the animals sacrificed were slaughtered in the Temple Court, and the sacrificial Altar was in reality an Altar for burning the animal or parts of the animal sacrificed.

The different operations of slaughtering, flaying, cutting up the fatty parts and offal, the washing of the viscera and feet, implied a great quantity of blood and animal dejections of all kinds.

In addition not only were the animals slaughtered ritually by cutting their throats but they were also entirely emptied of their blood.

This Mosaic particularity came from a certain primitive fascination for blood, seen as an essential flux in all Life, as being Life itself.

This specific theme of blood appears in the Bible starting in Genesis, after the flood in which only Noah and his family were spared together with a pair of every kind of animal from the creation :

Genesis : Chapter 9: verses 1- 5 :

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them :

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.

Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you :

I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

Surely I will require your lifeblood from every beast that would have killed a man I will require it. And in the same way from every man, from every man's brother I will require the lifeblood of the one who has killed.

Leviticus Chapter 17 verses 10 to 14:

And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood.

And I have given the blood of the sacrificed animals to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls : for it is the blood by reason of bearing life that makes atonement.

Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.

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So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life.

Therefore I say to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood...'

4/ The number of animals sacrificed in the Temple could be extremely high on certain occasions, in particular during the important annual Jewish Feasts that brought together a great number of people and pilgrims from all of Israel and the Diaspora. In fact all Jewish family heads considered it essential to be present at the Temple in Jerusalem to offer up a communion sacrifice, which sanctified their meat. Those parts not burnt on the altar as offerings to the Eternal and not reserved for the High Priest, the Priests and the Levites, to be eaten at once or preserved, could then be taken away.

As to the Kings, dignitaries, and tribal or community Chiefs, their glory was amplified when they were able to offer the greatest number of animals possible for sacrifice in the Temple. On this subject the figures transmitted by the *Bible* are rather impressive. For example, at the inauguration and consecration of the Temple, King Solomon and all the Israelites offered a very great number of animals for sacrifice. The *Book of Kings* tells of the numbers offered by King Solomon alone. These Royal Sacrifices resulted in fact, in great banquets that continued for seven days with sufficient food for all, without taking into account meat salted for preservation, normally prepared by the Priests and the Levites to constitute food reserves.

*1 Kings : Chapter 8 : verses 62 - 65*

Now the King and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord.

Solomon offered for the sacrifice of communion offerings, which he offered to the Lord, **22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep** :

So the King and all the Sons of Israel dedicated the House of the Lord.

On the same day the King consecrated the middle of the Court that was before the House of the Lord, because, there, he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings ; for the bronze altar that was before the Lord was too small to hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings.

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So Solomon observed the Feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Lebo-Hamath in the north, to the brook of Egypt in the south : they all gather before the Lord, for seven days and seven more days...

A passage in *Chronicles* also provides some documentary details on the procedures during these grand Celebrations in the Sanctuary and gives an idea of their atmosphere.

It concerns the Ceremony of the Purification of the Temple by King Ezekias, son and successor of King Ahaz, who during his reign, by political opportunism, had given support to the Syrian cult of idols.

The Worship in the Temple having therefore been interrupted, King Ezechias decided to restore the Sanctuary Worship in its original integrity :

2 Chronicles : Chapter 29: verses 31 - 35 :

Then Hezekiah said :

"Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the House of the Lord."

And the assembly brought sacrifices and offerings of thanks, and all those who were willing brought burnt offerings (complete sacrifices).

The number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the Lord. The other offerings were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep and goats.

But the Priests were too few, so that they were unable to skin all the burnt offerings.

Therefore their brothers the Levites helped them while waiting for the other Priests to be purified (by immersion in the Living SpringWaters).

And the Levites were even more conscientious to consecrate themselves than the Priests. There were also many burnt offerings with the fat of the peace offerings and with the libations for the burnt offerings.

Thus the service of the House of the Lord was established again.

As to Flavius Josephus he calculated the number of Jews that had been trapped by the Roman armies of Titus during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 :

In his calculation Josephus referred to figures, based on the animal sacrifices, given by the Governor of Syria to the Emperor Nero :

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Flavius Josephus : Wars of the Jews : Book VI : Chapter IX :

And that this City (Jerusalem) could contain so many people it is manifest by the census which was taken by the Governor Cestius :

This Governor being desirous of informing Nero of the power of the City, who otherwise was disposed to condemn that nation, entreated the Priests, if the thing were possible, to take the number of their whole multitude :

So these Priests, upon the coming of their Feast which is called the Passover when they slay their sacrifices in the Temple, from the ninth hour to the eleventh, took the census of the population in Jerusalem in the following way :

As every company or family of not less than ten, and often twenty persons, profited from each sacrifice, by sharing the meat of the sacrificed animal, so the Priests found the number of sacrifices was **255.600** :

which upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to the figure of **2.556.000 Jews**.

(And this figure can easily be rounded up to an estimation of 2.700.00)

Thus, according to these figures given by Josephus **255.600 animals** were sacrificed in the Court of the Altar in the Temple for the Passover.

5/ This Court of the Priests was thus transformed into a huge slaughter house and butchery together with specialized functional areas near to the Altar of Burning, for the following specific tasks :

- Areas for slaughtering the animals, cutting their throats and bleeding them ;
- Tables for flaying and removing the skins of the animals ;
- Tables for butchering the carcasses according to the Mosaic ritual for distribution of the parts ;
- An area for eviscerating and rinsing the entrails as well as for washing the animals' hooves.

The *Tractate Middoth* indicates most of these areas :

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Mishnah : Order Kodashim : Tractate Middoth :

3/5 :

- A- To the north of the Altar were 6 rows of 4 rings .
- B- Some said 4 rows of 6 rings.
- C- It was there they slaughtered the animals.
- D- The butchery was to the north of the Altar :
- E- There were eight columns with square boards in cedar wood at the top to which were fixed iron hooks.
- F- These hooks were arranged in three rows,
- G- on which the animals were hung after slaughter (and bled).
- H- The Priests flayed them on marble tables.

The *Tractate Middoth* neither mentions the area for the preparation of the offal, liver and kidneys, nor the areas for removing and cleaning the viscera.

However, by cross checking the whole of the Rabbinic Literature it can be supposed that the rinsing chamber next to this abattoir-butchery in the Court of the Priests was used for certain of these tasks.

6/           The slaughtering, complete bleeding, flaying, butchering, removal and washing of the viscera of thousands of animals, even hundreds of thousands of animals, accumulated immense quantities of waste in the Court of the Priests, not only the blood of the sacrificial victims, but also their urine and dejections of all kinds.

This means that the Court of the Priests was transformed into a vast, slimy, bloody cloaca that could have quickly become an evil smelling lake if it had not been washed and cleaned immediately and regularly.

These problems are echoed in Rabbinic Literature concerning the tasks of cleaning and washing the floor of the Court during the Easter Celebrations in case this Celebration day fell on the Day of the Sabbath (a Saturday) when a very great number of animals were sacrificed.

In effect, certain very rigid Pharisees recalled that all work was totally forbidden on the Sabbath. Now if the slaughter, bleeding, flaying, butchering together with the removal and cleaning of the viscera was part of the Rituals explicitly prescribed in the *Torah* and did not therefore constitute forbidden 'work', the Pharisees however estimated that the evacuation of blood and detritus as well as the washing and cleaning of the floor of the Court constituted extra-ritual labour.

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Thus according to the Pharisees these tasks were strictly forbidden when the sacrifices of the Passover fell on the Day of the Sabbath :

Talmud of Jerusalem : Order Moed : Tractate Pesahim : IV :

Mishnah 5 :

The sacrifices of the Pascal Lamb took place in three steps as indicated in *Exodus Chapter 12 verse 6 : Together the Community of Israel shall offer the sacrificial Pascal lamb.*

This represents 3 terms that are Together/Community/ Israel.

To slaughter the animals brought by the first series of Israelites (who came to offer lambs for sacrifice) they were brought into the Court (of the Priests) all together, and the doors were closed as soon as the Court was full.

The Priests sounded the trumpet, a short note, then again another.

The Priests stood in distinct lines :

The Priests in one line bore silver basins, the Priests in the other bore golden basins. These lines did not mix together.

The basins were spherical with no flat bottoms so that they could not be placed on the ground : for it was necessary to prevent the blood from coagulating because it would have prevented the ritual sprinkling of the Altar (with blood drops).

Mishnah 6:

The Ceremonial observed for the sacrifice of the Pascal Lamb will be the same if it falls on the Sabbath, except for the question of washing and cleaning the Court (inundated with blood and dejections) because this work is forbidden on that day.

However, the Priests would still proceed to this cleansing, in spite of the definite opinion of the Sages (the Pharisees) on this question.

Gemara :

Rabbi Jonathan explains why the Sages disapproved of this washing and cleaning of the floor of the Court (on the Sabbath and why they opposed it) : According to the Sages it was to avoid transgressing the Rules of Rest on the Day of the Sabbath in the Temple more than elsewhere, because only the Rules of the Rituals were authorized in the Temple.

That is why on that Day, **in order to avoid the Priests being up to their knees in blood (and waste)**, trestles were installed upon which the Priests could stand.

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Paradoxically, these same Pharisees, who opposed the cleaning of the Court on the Sabbath, on the contrary constantly "overbid" by vehemently and obstinately insisting that all the devotional objects used in the Temple be constantly purified by complete immersion in Living Spring Waters.

In the *Tractate Haghiga* is found an example of this Purifying zealousness of the Pharisees, that in fact constituted means of pressure in order to affirm or increase their authority over the hereditary Priests and over the Sadducees :

*Talmud of Jerusalem : Order Moed ; Tractate Haghiga ; III :*

*Mishnah 8 :*

How was the Court of the Temple purified ?

**All the utensils in the Temple were passed into the legal Mikveh** (supplied with Living Spring Waters).

But the Priests were warned to above all avoid touching the Sacred Table, or the Menorah (Chandelier), so as to avoid rendering them impure.

Of all the other utensils in the Temple, there were two or three of each so that once those used became impure they could be immediately replaced.

All the utensils in the Temple (besides the seven branched Menorah and the sacred Table) had to be washed **by totally immersing them in the Mikveh** (supplied with Living Spring Waters) with the exception of the Golden Altar (inside the Holy Place) and the Copper Altar which were considered as belonging to the sacred ground itself, inside the Temple.

According to Rabbi Eliezer, other Sages declared this exception was due to the fact that the Altars were covered with metal (which would have protected them against impurity).

After a Rabbinic discussion on the possible need to even submit the Sacred Table to a purifying Bath by immersion, the Gemara recounts an ancient anecdote concerning the Purification that had been made by the Pharisees of the sacred Menorah, the seven branched Chandelier :

One day as the Menorah was forced into having a purifying bath by immersion (in Living Spring Waters) the Sadducees mocked the Pharisees by saying :

'Look at the Pharisees ! **Soon they will force the Sun itself into having a Purifying Bath by immersion in the Mikveh of the Temple !**

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

**EXTRA-RABBINICAL EVIDENCE  
ON THE SUPPLY  
OF LIVING PURIFYING  
SPRING WATERS  
AND OF WATERS UNDER PRESSURE  
FOR WASHING AND CLEANSING  
THE TEMPLE**

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On its Water Tower*

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*The Temple of Solomon Could not Stand  
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1/ The Hydraulic System for the supply by gravitational force of Living Spring Waters for Purification and of waters under pressure for cleansing the Temple of Jerusalem seems to have been considered, in a manner of speaking, as a kind of 'national Defence Secret' both by the ancient Jewish Leaders and the Sacerdotal and Rabbinic Authorities.

Moreover, in a general manner it can be remarked that throughout the History of Civilizations, religious and cultural communities have not shown any great interest over the centuries in the study, knowledge and transmission of their ancient Hydraulic Systems for supplying waters, or for the evacuation of waste waters.

In any case in the Bible as in the Rabbinic Literature, there are just a few brief allusions to the huge innovative Hydraulic System that lay beneath the Haram underground rock.

For instance it is symptomatic that an Author, as prolific and proud of Jewish achievements as Flavius Josephus, had not mentioned a word concerning this monumental Hydraulic Network carefully dug into the bedrock upstream of the Temple, and designed to supply continuously and under all circumstances the volume of Living Spring Waters with in addition, a sufficient head of pressure necessary for the all the Rituals of the Temple and its cleansing.

Therefore Flavius Josephus could be possibly attributed, like the first Tannaite Rabbis, as having had the prudence of wanting to keep the Secret of a System which, if not destroyed, could in the future allow the hopes for Restoration of the Temple and Worship therein.

2/ It is probably for these different reasons that a **sole and unique Description** exists, with a few very rational details concerning the Temple's huge Hydraulic System : this Description appears in the singular work by a Hellenistic Jew of Alexandria, Aristeas, or pseudo-Aristeas, who wrote most probably in the second century BEC, the exact date of the text being difficult to ascertain with exactitude.

This work is commonly called *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates*, and according to Eusebius of Caesarea its title seemed to have been : *On the Translation of the Jewish Law*.

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The object of this work was to describe in an epistolary style, the genesis of the *Septuagint*, that is to say the manner in which the Hebraic Bible had been translated into Greek, by 72 (or 70) bilingual Jewish Scholars at the time of the first two Lagides (Ptolemaic) Kings of Egypt, Ptolemy Soter (360-282 BC) and his son Ptolemy Philadelpia (308-246 BC), successors to Alexander the Great in that region of the world.

Ptolemy Soter had founded the Great Library of Alexandria, where this Hellenistic King had wanted to gather all existing written works.

In this way the Library continued to build its collections under the different Ptolemys, accumulating up to 500,000 volumes (rolls or compendiums), which were written or translated into Greek, and the Annex of the Library in the Serapeum accumulated 50,000 volumes.

According to Aristeas (or pseudo-Aristeas), Demetrius of Phalera, the founder of this Library, had informed Ptolemy Philadelpia that the collection of the Great Library of Alexandria lacked the Law of the Jews.

Ptolemy Philadelpia therefore decided to send an Ambassador to the High Priest in Jerusalem, Eleazar, to obtain copies of these works, together with bilingual specialists of the Law, capable of translating the Hebraic Bible into Greek.

According to Aristeas story, probably fictional, Aristeas himself would have been part of this Egyptian Delegation and would have had the privilege of visiting Jerusalem as a distinguished guest, thus giving him the possibility to prepare a particularly well documented description of the Temple site.

The mission returned to Alexandria with the Texts of the *Torah* (*Pentateuch*) and 72 specialized translators of the Law : They were received by Ptolemy with the greatest of honours, and, in 72 days, completed in Greek a very precise, faithful and particularly inspired translation of the Sacred Jewish Scriptures in Alexandria.

This translation was called the *Septuagint* after rounding off the number of translators.

It was to have an important future as it served as the key reference for the basic "Old Testament" during the first centuries of Christianity, when Christian literates or ecclesiastics could read and write Greek but did not know Hebrew, as Greek was, in their time, the dominant cultural language in the Mediterranean regions :

And all the more so, as, added to the *Pentateuch* were the translations of the Hebraic *Prophetic Writings* and *Other Writings*.

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It is due to its utility for Christianity development that this story of Aristeas, endowing such sacred significance to the *Septuagint*, has been fortunately preserved and transmitted down to us.

3/ It is difficult to evaluate with precision between the authentic history and fiction in the *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates*. Certain anachronisms on occasions arise doubts as to its full authenticity and it even seems most possible that the person called Aristeas had been invented to serve as living witness to the sacred origin of the *Septuagint*.

However, this account seems also to contain very authentic historic elements :  
For example concerning the description of Jerusalem, of its Temple and Citadel, it appears to be quite clear that the person called Aristeas had visited Jerusalem at the time of a great Jewish religious feast, or, at the least, that Aristeas had recorded a particularly well documented account of a Jew from Alexandria who had been part of this pilgrimage to the Temple of Jerusalem.  
On this point it is worth noting that, during moments of peace, a great number of Jews from the Mediterranean Diaspora who belonged to the well off classes, held dear the idea of making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem Temple each time it was possible during one of its great annual religious Feasts.

4/ The passage of the Book of Aristeas, which specifically describes the supply of living waters to the Temple of Jerusalem, has come down to the present in two principal forms :

- Manuscripts of the book itself ;
- and Manuscripts of extracts that Eusebius of Caesarea had recopied, integrating it into his work titled *The Evangelical Preparation of the Gospel*, which presented Jewish History as the Christological annunciation.

Below is a brief synthesis of the different Manuscripts of these two series, so that the different details put together describe in the best possible manner, the functionalities of the Hydraulic System depicted by Aristeas, and which had been built in order to provide a continuous supply of Living Purifying Spring Waters and cleansing waters under pressure to the Temple of Jerusalem.

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Hereafter is, first, the description of the site of the Temple of Jerusalem given by Aristeas, which seems very probably to be the second Hasmonean Temple -during or after the reign of Simon Maccabee, who proceeded, for the Hydraulic System of the Temple, with significant and important works-, as testified by *Ben Sira : 50* (cf. supra)

Aristeas : Letter from Aristeas to Philocrates :

100 :

But in order that we might gain complete information, we ascended to the summit of the neighbouring Citadel and looked around us.

The Citadel is situated in a very lofty spot, and is fortified with many towers, which have been built up to the very top of immense stones, with the object, as we were informed, of guarding the Temple precincts, so that if there were an attack, or an insurrection or an onslaught of the enemy, no one would be able to force an entrance within the walls that surround the Temple.

On the towers of the Citadel engines of war are placed and different kinds of machines, and the position is much higher than the courts of the Temple. The towers are guarded by most trusty men who had given the utmost proof of their loyalty to their country. These men were never allowed to leave the Citadel, except on feast days and then only in detachments, nor did they permit any stranger to enter it. They were also very careful when any command came from the High Priest to admit any visitors to inspect the place, as our own experience taught us : They were very reluctant to admit us - though we were but two unarmed men -to view the offering of the sacrifices. And they asserted that they were bound by an oath when the trust was committed to them, for they had all sworn and were bound to carry out the oath sacredly to the letter, that though they were five hundreds in number they would not permit more than five men to enter at one time. **For the Citadel is the special protection of the Temple and its founders had fortified it so strongly that it might efficiently and completely protect the Temple.**

Letter from Aristeas : 88 forward: (combined with)

Eusebius of Caesarea :The Evangelical Preparation of the Gospel : 38 forward :

The Temple faces the east and its back is toward the west.

The whole of the floor is paved with stones and slopes down to the appointed places, in such a way that waters may be gushed from openings outlets in the side walls to wash away the blood from the sacrifices, for many thousand beasts are sacrificed there on the feast days.

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**And there is an inexhaustible supply of waters, because an abundant natural Spring gushes forth from within the Temple area.**

There are moreover wonderful and indescribable Cisterns underground, as they pointed out to me, at a distance of five furlongs (about 1 kilometre) all round the site of the Temple :

And each of these Cisterns has countless pipes so that the different running streams converge together. And all these pipes are fastened with lead at the bottom and at the sidewalls, and over them a great quantity of plaster has been spread, and every part of the work has been most carefully carried out.

**There are many channels which lead to openings for the running waters at the base of the Court of the Priests, and which are invisible to all except to those who are engaged in the ministration.**

**This setting of channels fastened with lead and cemented in a remarkable way has been conceived so that jets of waters spurt out on the pavement and even onto the basis of the walls (of the Court of the Priests) :**

**In this way, all the blood of the sacrifices which accumulates in great quantities is washed away in the twinkling of an eye.**

As I was very interested in this installation of the reservoirs, I will now tell you (Philocrates) how it was confirmed :

They led me more than four furlongs (about 800 metres) outside the City and bade me peer down towards a certain spot and listen to the noise that was made by the meeting of the waters, so that the considerable size of the reservoirs became manifest to me, as I have already pointed out.

This reference text entails several interesting points relative to the present Study :

- **A-** The cleaning and evacuation of the large quantities of blood accumulated on the floor in the Court of the Priests was operated by a pressurized waters distribution system (kind of mechanical karcher).
- **B-** The supply of waters was abundant and extremely efficient.
- **C-** The Temple's Waters Supply System remained a well kept secret, even with regard to an Alexandrian Jew, and perhaps official visitor.

Actually :

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a/ Aristeas (or Pseudo-Aristeas) was led to believe that there was an abundant Source of Waters in the underground of the Sanctuary itself, which probably explains, according to him, the possibility of accomplishing the diverse Rituals of Purification with Living Spring Waters, as well as the availability of an endless quantity of waters under pressure for cleansing purposes.

b/ Aristeas (or Pseudo-Aristeas) was brought 800 metres from the City ostensibly so that, by the sound alone, he could realize the extent of the Reservoirs, which were in reality situated under his feet, beneath the Citadel that he was visiting and could be directly accessed by those responsible for their maintenance.

These Reservoirs were in fact protected by the Citadel, as was the Temple.

5/ If Aristeas transmitted a faithful and realistic description of the Hydraulic System with its limitless flow of waters under pressure for washing the Court of the Temple, the most complete description of the running Spring Waters System that supplied the Purification Mikveh of the High Priest with Living Spring Waters is, paradoxically, that of the Hellenistic Jewish poet, Philo the Ancient, probably also in the second century BEC at the time when the Hasmoneans were altogether High Priest and Rulers : :

The few verses in hexameter, which have been preserved and transmitted by Eusebius of Caesarea, altogether convey a carnal sensation of the antique Purification Baths and render a vision that is topographically precise of the Hydrological Network used for the vivifying flows destined to the Worship in the Temple, the whole of these poetic perceptions merging into a kind of mystical exaltation :

Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Evangelical Preparation for the Gospel* : Book IX :  
*From Philo (the ancient) about the waters of Jerusalem ; cited by Polyhistor :*  
*Chapter 37 ;*

1/

According to Philo in his *Poem on Jerusalem*, there is a Spring that dried up in winter but flowed abundantly in summer.

In the first book Philo writes :

*'Swimming in the upper reservoir I saw another curiosity, even more surprising:*

*The connecting basins fill with their waters, for the Bath of the Ruler, the bed of the spring that spread... and further...*

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2/

On the filling (of the Reservoirs and of the Basin of the 'Spring') and on the rise of the waters, Philo wrote a little further :

*'The brilliant and joyous streams that flow out mixing rain and snow,  
Swirl under the mountainous towers (of Jerusalem),  
And further, the plain dry and dusty,  
Highlight before astonished eyes  
The prodigious force acquired by the Spring...'* and further...

3/

Then again on the Spring of the High Priest and the Aqueduct and Canalization System, Philo gives this description :

*'In a steep slope, the canals propel the waters under the ground to the (distribution) pipes...'*

The restitution of the whole poem of Philo, which Eusebius of Caesarea had read in Polyhistor work, is quite difficult to understand logically with these very few fragments, brief presentations and transitions given by Eusebius.

It seems, however, possible to reconstitute rationally some of the structural data of the Hydraulic System, such as seen and described by the poet swimmer, and of which only a few fragments have been transmitted to us by Eusebius :

-A- It seems that Philo had first followed the stream of waters from the Aqueduct that supplied the Sanctuary, and that the poet had, then, successively bathed in the cascading reservoirs that supplied the Mikveh of the High Priest.

-B- The waters, quick flowing and abundant, coming from the Etam Sources, also collected rain waters and waters from melted snows that were carried altogether to the Sanctuary by the Aqueduct that crossed an arid landscape.

-C- This Aqueduct was suitably steeply inclined after reaching Jerusalem, so that well laid out underground channels delivered the waters to the Sanctuary where they were able to gush out with considerable pressure.

-D- The Basin-Mikveh of the High Priest was, as it appears also with Aristeas, reputed as the **Basin of a Real Spring**, which constituted, from the religious point of view, the supreme degree required for Ritual Purification Waters.

- E/- References to the Basin of Purification of the "Ruler" and "High Priest", incite to determine quite possibly that this is a description of the Hydraulic System Installation laid down for the Temple by Simon Maccabee, the Hasmonean, Ruler and High Priest :

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The following remarks can be also added :

a/- On the one hand, the bathing Poet was obviously filled with wonder by the extreme sophistication of the Hydraulic Network which he was exploring, so to speak, from the interior.

b/- On the other hand, the force and the violence of the stream gives to think that Simon Maccabee could have been also, most probably, the instigator of the first state of the Upper Aqueduct, intended to fill more effectively and more constantly the new giant **Cistern n°7**, ("the Sea") -cf. infra-

6/ This essential and recurrent notion of an **abundant Spring** situated in the heart of the Sanctuary itself (guarantee of supreme Purification) must have been well anchored with a widespread reputation, since the historian Tacitus (57-117 EC) expressly made reference to it when he described the Temple of Jerusalem, as it appeared before its destruction by Titus in 70 EC :

Tacitus : *Histories* : Book V : Chapter 12 :

The Temple was like a Citadel and had its own ramparts, which had been even more laboriously and skillfully constructed than the other ramparts of the City.

The porticoes around it constituted in themselves an excellent defensive position (by heightening the rampart).

To these advantages must be added a **Spring of never-failing waters, underground chambers cut into the living rock, and tanks and cisterns for the storage of rain waters.**

The builders of the Temple had foreseen only too well that the strange practices of the Jews would lead to continual fighting. Hence everything was available for a siege, however long.

7/ It can even be suggested that the association of the Temple with its Purifying Source was one of the major motivations of ancient Jewish thought, of which there are several illustrations in the *Bible*, such as for example that of Ezekiel, exiled in Babylon, and who dreamed of the glorious and eschatological Resurrection of the Temple which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BEC.

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In this evocation, where “the Man” in his vision brings Ezekiel to visit the future Temple, it was natural that Waters gushed from the overabundant “*Spring of the Temple*”, situated at the south-east mouth of the **channel**, which, according to *Tractate Middoth*, had run along the south wall, **inside the Temple**, carrying the Purifying Spring Waters to the Court of the Priests :

*Ezekiel : Chapter 47: verses 1- 5*

Afterwards the Man brought me again unto the Door of the House;  
And behold :  
Waters issued out from under the threshold of the House eastward:  
For the forefront of the House [stood toward] the east ;  
And the Waters came from under the right side of the House,  
And then flowed at the south [side] of the Altar.  
Then the Man brought me out of the gate northward,  
And led me around the surrounding wall  
On to the eastern gate.  
And, behold, there ran out Waters on the right side.  
The Man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward,  
He measured a thousand cubits (500 metres) in this direction :  
Then the Man made me cross the Waters :  
The waters were to my ankles.  
Again the Man measured a thousand cubits :  
The Waters were now to my knees.  
Again the Man measured a thousand,  
And brought me through the Waters again :  
The Waters were to my loins.  
Afterwards the Man measured for the last time :  
And it was now a deep torrent stream  
A river that could be passed over only by swimming.

This Primordial Spring on the threshold of the Temple was thus transformed from a simple ritual principle to a Principle of Life for the entire Territory of the New Israel to come.

And before Ezekiel, the Prophet Jeremiah, who had the misfortune of being locked in a Cistern by his enemies, had already preached the Absolute and Divine pre-eminence of Living Spring Waters over the still waters stored stagnant in Cisterns, and had also glorified the Divine Incarnation of the Founding Fundamental Spring in the Temple of Jerusalem :

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Jeremiah :

Chapter 2 : verse 13 :

(Before the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar)

The Lord declared :

For My people have committed two evils :

They have forsaken Me,

**The Fountain of Living Waters,**

To hew for themselves Cisterns,

Cisterns which fissure

and that can retain no waters.

Chapter 17 : verses 12 -13 :

A glorious and noble Throne

High on the World from the beginning

Is the place of our Sanctuary.

O Lord, Hope of Israel,

All who forsake You will be put to shame.

Those who turn away on earth

Will be written down in the dust,

Because they have forsaken You, The Eternal

**The Very Source of Living Waters.**

In other words, and as will be seen below, the **Channel inside the Temple** (which most probably had been installed since the beginning in the first Temple) as described in the *Tractate Middoth 4/7* and *3/6*, and as strongly **assimilated to the very original Spring of the Temple**, supplied, amongst others, the bronze Purification Bath of the Priests.

And not only did this Channel ensure, in a certain manner of speaking, the uninterrupted Flow of the original pulsation of Living Waters from their origins at the Etam Springs, but, in addition, these Purifying Waters were again sanctified and blessed by their perennial passage **inside the House of the Eternal**.

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