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CELIBACY OR CONSUMMATION IN THE GARDEN?  
REFLECTIONS ON EARLY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN  
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN

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The interpretation of Adam and Eve's sexual life was a matter of some concern for early Jewish and Christian exegetes. As Louis Ginzberg observed, several Jewish pseudepigraphical works as well as the writings of many of the early Church Fathers "presuppose that not only the birth of the children of Adam and Eve took place after the expulsion from paradise (Gen 4:1ff), but that the first 'human pair' lived in paradise without sexual intercourse."<sup>1</sup> The reasons for such an exegesis are not difficult to discern. The Garden of Eden was not simply a story about the primeval world; it could also function as a metaphor for the world-to-come.<sup>2</sup> Hence the Garden was a paradigm for the ideal world of the eschaton, a world one should attempt to actualize or bring into existence now. Because Christians believed that the next world was devoid of marriage (Luke 20:27–40), it followed that the Garden was as well. In addition to this reason, Christians were also exhorted to abstain from marriage as a concession to the apocalyptic ferment of the present world (1 Corinthians 7).

<sup>1</sup>Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1908–38) 5. 134 n 4. Among those he cites are 2 Bar. 56.6, *The Life of Adam and Eve* 18, and *Jub.* 4.1. For a variant understanding of *Jubilees* see the discussion below. *The Life of Adam and Eve* is also problematic for Ginzberg. The text Ginzberg cites (chap. 18) declares that Eve was three months pregnant at some unspecified time after the expulsion. But, if one adds up the time taken by the events which took place after the expulsion in the first seventeen chapters, Adam and Eve are said to have been out of the Garden for only sixty-three days. **If the chronology within the book can be taken seriously, then sexual relations had to take place in the Garden.** One might also note that **after their expulsion, Adam and Eve began to mourn.** The ritual state of mourning entails sexual abstinence making it more unlikely that the pregnancy described in chap. 18 could have resulted from a post-expulsion coital act.

<sup>2</sup>This was especially true in early Syriac Christianity which did not include Revelation in its canon.

Rabbinic Judaism, on the other hand, did not have a high regard for the celibate condition. One midrashic text compares the celibate individual to one who impairs God's image and, even worse, to a murderer.<sup>3</sup> The act of human procreation was not simply an acceptable act, it was a commanded act. It is the subject of the very first command God gives men and women: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). It should come as no surprise, then, that **in rabbinic exegesis the Garden was the location of humankind's first sexual encounter.**

The disagreement between Jews and Christians over the theological value of the celibate state was not limited to intellectuals. As Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* show, the issue was an important one among common Jews and Christians as well. Aphrahat describes the ridicule Christians often received from Jews in regard to this issue. As he describes it, the Jews argue that divine blessing and procreation are inseparable themes in the Bible (*Dem.* 18.1).<sup>4</sup> **To abstain from procreation is to live in isolation from divine blessing. God blessed Adam (Gen 1:28), Noah (9:7), and Abraham (15:5) and in each case the blessing resulted in progeny.** Moreover, one of the prominent features of the promised land is its fertility. As the Torah promises, there shall be no barren women in Israel (Exod 23:26; Deut 7:14). The association of the themes land, blessing, and fertility in this text of Aphrahat sounds like an authentic Jewish position. In the discussion below we will see these themes all come together in the *b. Ketub.* 8a. In another section of his polemic against the Jews (18.12), Aphrahat declares that one Jew has asserted that Christians are unclean because they do not take wives. He writes:

I have written to you, my beloved, concerning virginity and holiness (*qaddiṣūtā*) because I heard about a Jewish man who has reviled one of our brethren, the members of the church (*bnay 'i(d)tā*). He said to him, "You are impure (*tamm'in*) for you don't take wives. But we are holy (*qaddiṣ'in*) and more virtuous for we bear children and multiply seed in the world."<sup>5</sup>

Aphrahat's understanding of **holiness (*qaddiṣ'in*)** is significant. He correctly distinguishes the Jewish understanding of the term, as reflected in rabbinic documentation, from the Christian. **Jews understood the term to refer to the state of marriage.**<sup>6</sup> **Syriac Christians understood the term to refer to sexual continence.** Aphrahat's identification of sexual abstinence with uncleanness might seem unusual. The Rabbis never placed the sexually abstinent individual in the legal

<sup>3</sup>*Gen. Rab.* 34:14. The edition cited is that of J. Theodor and H. Albeck, *Genesis Rabbah* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1965).

<sup>4</sup>For the text, see *Patrologia Syriaca* (ed. J. Parisot; 3 vols.; Paris: Firmin-Didot et Socii, 1894) 1. 817.1–820.18.

<sup>5</sup>*Patrologia Syriaca*, 1. 841.3–9.

<sup>6</sup>The term is also the title of the Mishnaic tractate concerning marriage law.

category of unclean.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the usage of uncleanness here reflects an extended metaphorical definition rather than a technical legal designation. In summary, the issues Aphrahat raises in regard to the Jewish position appear authentic and anticipate the issues to be discussed below.

As one would expect, both the Rabbis and the early Christians attempted to establish their views about the role of sexual experiences in the Garden on the basis of a close reading of the biblical narrative. The questions with which we are concerned are these: on what exegetical bases were these decisions made? are the exegetical processes at all related? and can one date one particular exegetical result as earlier than another? The last concern was treated by Ginzberg. He argued that in the earliest evidence of Jewish exegetical reflection, Adam and Eve lived in paradise without sexual experience. Indeed, this view can be found in some pre-rabbinic Jewish works. For example in 2 Bar. 56.5–6, it is said that the conception of children and the passion of parents came about as a result of the transgression of Adam. According to Ginzberg, this position, originally of Jewish origin, was adopted by Christians. Christians took this position because it understands sexual knowledge to be a result of human sin. Once this position became an identifiably Christian one, rabbinic thinkers reacted and opposed this position by creating a tradition of marriage in the Garden.<sup>8</sup> For Ginzberg, the central concern in the history of the exegesis is the sin of Adam and Eve and their consequent expulsion, a sequence of events Christians identify as the “fall.” My intention is to determine if Ginzberg is right as to the relatively late date of the rabbinic concept of sexual relations in the Garden and to ascertain whether the sin of Adam is the dominant exegetical concern regarding sexual relations in the Garden.

#### JEWISH MATERIALS

##### *Sexual Consummation in the Garden*

Rabbinic materials presume that Adam and Eve were married and consummated their marriage in the Garden of Eden. But the rabbinic materials do not make this exegetical claim in a general manner. As Joseph Heinemann has shown, exegetical themes like this one usually develop around a particular text or pair of texts which for some reason or another appear problematic to the reader of the Bible.<sup>9</sup> The solution to this problem or problems is usually accomplished by the creation of an aggadic narrative which fills in some “implied”

<sup>7</sup>The only exception to this would be the mourner who was abstinent for seven days. But the mourner’s uncleanness was not caused by the absence of sexual activity alone.

<sup>8</sup>This position is argued in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5. 134 n. 4 and in idem, *Die Haggada bei den Kirchenvätern und in der apokryphischen Literatur* (Berlin: Calvary, 1900) 57–58.

<sup>9</sup>Joseph Heinemann, *’Aggādōt wē-Tōlēdōtēhen* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974). See also James Kugel, “Two Introductions to Midrash,” *Prooftexts* 3 (1981) 131–55.

background information within the text. Though aggada often begins with this type of close reading, the textual origin of a particular aggada can be forgotten and “erroneously” reattached to new texts or be assumed in the exegesis of other texts. In tracing the tradition history of a piece of aggada, one must not only collect all the examples of it, but one must also attempt to locate the particular verse or set of verses in which it originates.<sup>10</sup>

In order to clarify the point of origin of this motif, it will be helpful to mention several exegetical texts which presume the sexual union of Adam and Eve in the Garden.

“And the woman said unto the serpent . . . ” (Gen 3:2). Now where was Adam during this conversation? Abba Halfon b. Qorih said: “He had engaged in sex and then fell asleep.” (*Gen. Rab.* 19:3)

“And they were both naked (*arummim*) . . . Now the serpent was the most subtle (*arim*) . . . ” (Gen 2:24–3:1). [Why is the snake episode interpolated here and why are the Hebrew words naked and subtle the subject of a word play?] They indicate for what sinful purpose the snake was anxious to do this thing. He had seen them engaging in sex and developed a passion for her. (*Gen. Rab.* 18:6)

The verse “he built the rib . . . into a woman and led her to him” (Gen 2:22) is understood as a description of the first marriage ceremony. The act of “building” is understood as God’s adornment of the bride (*Gen. Rab.* 18:1),<sup>11</sup> and the act of leading is understood as God’s acting as Adam’s groomsman or *šôšbîn* (*Gen. Rab.* 18:3). The precious stones of Eden (Ezek 28:13) are described as the extraordinary *huppâ* under which Adam and Eve were married. There is a definite logical progression implied in these midrashim. In Gen 2:22 God adorns Eve, prepares the *huppâ* and presents the bride to Adam. By the time the snake arrives, just a couple of verses later, Adam and Eve have made love and Adam has gone to sleep (Gen 3:1–2). On the basis of what lies before us, we can see that this union must have occurred before the encounter with the snake and (obviously) after the presentation of Eve to Adam.

<sup>10</sup>Indeed, as Heinemann has demonstrated, it can be helpful to begin a tradition-historical investigation of an exegetical theme with the rabbinic materials and then work back through earlier pseudographical works. This is because the rabbinic materials will often single out the particular textual problem(s) that led to the creation of a supplementary tradition. For a good example of this, see James L. Kugel’s treatment of the tradition of Joseph’s handsome appearance in the work *Joseph and Asenath* in idem and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 96–102. The exegetical foundations of the full-blown narrative tradition that is found in this work cannot be appreciated apart from Targumic and rabbinic sources.

<sup>11</sup>This motif is also present in Targum Neophyti and the Fragmentary Targum.

This leads to the text in question. In Gen 2:23–24 we read the following response of Adam to his new wife Eve:

<sup>23</sup>Then God brought her to Adam and he said: “*zōt happa’am*, bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman because she was taken out of a man.” <sup>24</sup>Therefore a man leaves his father . . .”

Modern translations of the phrase *zōt happa’am* are very similar. The *RSV* and *JB* read, “this, at last,” the *NEB* “now this, at last,” and the *JPS*, “this one, at last.” But these similar translations mask several interpretive problems. Just how are *zōt* and *happa’am* related, what antecedent act do they refer to, and how are they related to the following etiology of marriage (vs 24)? Modern translators and commentators have understood *happa’am* as a reference to something which has happened after a long period of expectation, so the emphasis on the “at-lastness” of the event. Such a usage can be paralleled in Gen 29:34, 35; 30:20; and 46:30. In fact, the first three texts involve acts of successful procreation. In these cases the expression is simply *happa’am* with the article *ha-* having the force of the demonstrative pronoun “this”; Gen 2:23 is a more emphatic rendering of this idea because it also appends the demonstrative pronoun (somewhat redundantly?) to the phrase.

The Targum translated *zōt* as though it were used attributively, *hādā zimnā*, “this time.”<sup>12</sup> Targum Neophyti and Ps.-Jonathan clarify what is so emphatically important and novel about this occasion.

This time *and never again will a woman be created from a man as this one was created from me* (italics = midrashic explanation)

This understanding is also found in the *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* (B) (hereafter, *ARNB*):

When Adam saw Eve he said: “This is my mate.” As scripture says, “And Adam said: ‘This at last is bone of my bones’” (Gen 2:23). [Meaning] this one time, woman was created from man; from now on a man takes the daughter of his fellow and is commanded to be fruitful and multiply. [Another interpretation:] This one time God acted as groomsman for Adam; from now on he must get one for himself.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>The word order is unusual. Generally, when the demonstrative pronoun is used attributively, it follows the noun it modifies. This is true in Hebrew as in Targumic Aramaic; it is not quite as regular in Syriac. In this case, if the demonstrative pronoun is used attributively, its placement before the noun is clearly unusual and emphatic. The emphatic quality of the phrase asks for some sort of interpretation. What is so dramatic about “this (very) time?”

<sup>13</sup>The selection is taken from chap. 8. For the best edition, see Solomon Schechter, ed., *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* (1887; reprinted New York: Feldheim, 1967). One should also note the translation

Both the Targumim and *ANRB* understand *happa'am* as an act of singular importance, an act which occurred just once and will not be repeated. This interpretation is not without biblical parallels. The term *happa'am* can have exactly this force in Gen 18:32; Exod 10:17; Judg 6:39; 16:28. The midrash is clarifying just what was so singular about this presentation of Eve to Adam in the Garden. (This text also solves the problem of *when* God commanded Adam to be fruitful and multiply.)<sup>14</sup>

One other exegetical tradition does focus on the “at-lastness” of the phrase. This tradition, attributed to R. Eleazar, is found in *b. Yeb.* 63a and was adopted by Rashi as the most sensible reading of the text.

*zōt' happa'am.* This teaches that Adam attempted to have sex with all the beasts and animals but his sexual desire (“knowledge”) was not cooled off by them.

Behind this midrash is a juxtaposition of Gen 2:18–20 and Gen 2:23–24. The latter verses describe Adam’s reaction to his mate while the former describe the rather peculiar circumstances that brought about her creation. These circumstances need to be cited.

<sup>18</sup>And the Lord God said: “It is not good for Adam to be alone, I will make a helper like him. <sup>19</sup>Thereupon the Lord God formed from the ground every beast of the field and bird of the skies and brought them to Adam to see what he would name them. Every name Adam gave a living thing, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>And Adam named all the cattle, the birds of the skies and the beasts of the field. But in respect to Adam himself, he did not find a helper like him.

and commentary of Anthony J. Saldarini, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Natan* (SJLA 11; Leiden: Brill, 1975).

<sup>14</sup>*Gen. Rab.* 18:4 moves in other directions:

And Adam said: “*zōt' happa'am* . . .” R. Judah b. Rabbi said: “At first he created her for him and he saw her full of discharge and blood; thereupon he removed her from him and created her a second time. Hence he said “*this time* she is bone of my bones,” [meaning] this woman is [the creation] of this [second] time.

[Another interpretation:] This is she who is destined to strike the bell and to speak against me, as you read, “A golden bell” (Exod 28:34, bell = *pa'amôn*).

[Another interpretation:] It is she who troubled me (*mēpa' amānī*) all night . . .

Resh Laqish was asked: “Why do not all other dreams exhaust a man, yet this [dream about a woman] does exhaust a man?” He replied: “Because from the very beginning of her creation she was but in a dream.”

Each of these interpretations takes a different perspective on the phrase *zōt' happa'am*. Only the last is overtly sexual but it does not presume in any way an actual sexual union. It should be noted that the last two interpretations are farther removed from the grammatical problem of the phrase. Rather than focusing on the “at-lastness” or “singularity” of the event, they fancifully interpret *happa'am* as though it were a common noun (“bell”) or verb (“to trouble”).

The important sequence is that of vss 18–19a and 20b. In vs 18 God makes the observation that Adam is alone and needs a helper. Then, as if in response to this mental intention, God creates the animals! In the end, Adam is still alone. The subject of the verb “to find” in 20b is somewhat ambiguous. Most modern translators have understood it as an impersonal 3 m.s.: “and a helper was not found for Adam.” But an equally probable subject, especially in light of God’s stated intention in 18a, is God: “and God did not find a helper for him.” One theological problem with this translation is that it makes God look less than perfect in the work of creation. Another problem is that it does not help illuminate Adam’s cry in 2:23, “this one, at last.” This cry presumes that *Adam* is the one in search of a mate, *not God*. In order for that cry to make sense, Adam must come to learn of his need for a mate in 2:20 and so Adam must be made the subject of the verb “to find.” Once Adam is understood as the subject, then the presentation of the animals in vss 19–20a can be understood in a fashion that does justice to the Godhead. No longer is God creating the animals in an attempt to find a mate for Adam, rather by way of this creation Adam will learn on his own of this need. This “education of Adam” is brought out in the following midrashim:

“And Adam named all the cattle . . .” [This verse teaches that] while he was calling each one by its proper name, he noticed them copulating each with its mate and he couldn’t figure out what they were doing because the feeling of erotic attraction had as yet no power over him for scripture says: “But Adam himself did not find a mate like himself.”<sup>15</sup>

Then he paraded [the animals] again [after the naming] before him in pairs. Adam said: “Everyone has a mate except me!” (*Gen. Rab.* 17:4).<sup>16</sup>

The understanding of *zōt happa’am* as a reference to Adam’s finally finding a sexual partner and “knowing” her explains the chronology of marriage in the Garden as it develops in the other midrashic sources about Eden. If this exegesis of *zōt happa’am* was ancient, then the rest of the aggadic developments we traced above would all follow quite logically as an elaboration of this sexual scene. The verses which precede would describe the preparations for marriage (adornment of Eve, God as groomsman, description of *huppâh*) and the verses which follow would describe its consequences (Adam’s absence in 3:2, Satan’s

<sup>15</sup>This is taken from *Midrash ha-Gadol*. See the edition of Eliyahu Rabinowitz (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1932). Also note that Josephus *Ant.* 34–35 understands this scene in a very similar fashion.

<sup>16</sup>Ps.-Jonathan probably reflects a similar understanding. It translates vs 20 as “He had not found up to this point a mate like himself.” This Targum follows the Hebrew rather literally except for the addition “up to this point.” The most obvious explanation of this addition is the clarity it provides for Adam’s subsequent cry in 2:23, “this time, at last!”

jealousy). One problem with this reconstruction is that *Genesis Rabbah* does not include this exegetical tradition even though it presumes sexual relations in the Garden. But this is not an insoluble problem. Heinemann has provided many examples of how a specific exegetical source for an aggadic narrative can be forgotten in the subsequent elaboration of a particular narrative theme.<sup>17</sup>

In order to prove decisively the antiquity of this tradition we must turn to the book of *Jubilees*.

And Adam named all of [the animals], each one according to its name, and whatever he called them became their names. *And during these five days Adam was observing all of these, male and female according to every kind which was on the earth, but he was alone and there was none whom he found for himself, who was like himself, who would help him. And the Lord said to us, "It is not good that man should be alone. Let us make a helper who is like him."* And the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon him, and he slept . . .

And [God] brought her to him *and he knew her* and said to her, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called my wife because she was taken from her husband. (*Jub. 3.2–5a, 6, italics indicate significant additions to the biblical text*)<sup>18</sup>

This text is remarkable in several ways. It places the act of sexual consummation exactly where R. Eleazar (*b. Yeb. 63a*) put it, and like R. Eleazar, it also understands Gen 2:19c–20 to be a narrative wherein Adam learns of his need for a sexual partner. God's creation of the animals is not a mistaken attempt at finding a partner for Adam; rather it is an instructive event which informs Adam of his incompleteness and need for a mate. The instructive quality of the event is made quite clear by the lengthy interpolation put into this sequence. For five days Adam observes the animals in pairs; only then does he (not God!) see his need for a mate. Thereupon God steps forward to provide this mate. As a result of this interpretation, 2:18 is moved down and placed before 2:21. This solves the problem of God setting the animals before Adam as though they were to be his helper. Adam's recognition of his need and then the provision of this need leads to his own sexual union ("and he knew her") and the logical explanation of the cry, "this time, at long last!" Thus the text of *Jubilees*, which is generally dated to the second century BCE, shows the antiquity of this exegetical motif.

<sup>17</sup>Heinemann (*ʿAggādôt wē-Tôlêdôtêhen*) has shown time and again how an early cause for a particular aggadic narrative can be forgotten in the subsequent elaboration of the interpretive theme.

<sup>18</sup>The text is *Jub. 3.2–5a, 6*. The translation is that of O. Wintermute in *OTP* 2. 58–59.

The concept of sexual relations before the expulsion from the Garden is a very ancient theme which originated as an exegetical solution to Adam's problematic exclamation. But the movement from *Jubilees* to rabbinic midrash is not as simple as it may appear. For the Rabbis took this piece of exegesis concerning Adam's exclamation and made it the basis for a larger narrative concerning the marriage rite within the Garden. *Jubilees* does something much different. The book of *Jubilees* has Adam and Eve meeting one another before their entry into the Garden. Thus, their initial sexual encounter occurs outside the Garden. Only after forty days can Adam enter the Garden and Eve must wait eighty days. These numbers reflect the days of purification which Leviticus 12 requires for those who have just given birth to children. The situation in *Jubilees* does not quite fit the model of Leviticus 12, for Adam and Eve have had no children yet and will not have any until they are expelled from the Garden. But their own creation has become a model for the rite of purification enjoined on all subsequent parents.

#### *Garden and Temple*

The point of the *Jubilees* narrative is this: Eden is conceived of as a holy site—indeed, it is more holy than any other spot—and those who enter its environs must be pure. Though Eden is not said to be a Temple in this particular narrative, its Temple attributes are clear from the description of Eden in *Jubilees* 4.23–26. In this section, Eden is the location to which Enoch is taken so that he might survive the flood. Eden is conceived of as a cosmic mountain which the flood waters were not able to overcome. *Jubilees* ascribes the reason for this as due to the purity of Enoch. He was unique among his generation in not consorting with the Watchers, thus his pure condition made him worthy of re-entry into Eden. While in Eden, Enoch offered incense and so provides ample evidence that Eden was thought of in terms of Temple images. With respect to Adam's knowing Eve, it should now be clear why it had to occur outside of Eden. Sexual emissions rendered the person unclean (Lev 15:18) and unfit to eat the sacred food of the Temple (Lev 22:4–7). In rabbinic literature, the danger of sexual impurity necessitated the sequestering of the High Priest from his spouse for the week prior to Yom-Kippur (*m. Yoma* 1.1). For the author of *Jubilees*, it was not an esteem for the celibate state, nor an extreme form of ascetical piety which required that sex not take place in the Garden. Rather, the author is simply building on the biblical motif of purity within the Temple.

The book of *Jubilees* also outlaws sexual activity on the Sabbath as well (50.8). This is certainly no accident. The creation of Sabbath, in the description of the P writer (Gen 2:1–3), was comparable to the creation of the Tent-shrine/Temple.<sup>19</sup> The similarities between the Sabbath and Temple were further

<sup>19</sup>See Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper &

developed in postbiblical literature. Like the Temple, the Sabbath day was characterized by rest; only the work required for Temple sacrifices was allowable on it. *Jubilees* emphasizes these dimensions as well. By concluding the work with a lengthy peroration on the meaning of the Sabbath and its legal requirements, the writer not only emphasizes its importance, he highlights its eschatological significance. The Sabbath is said to be “a day of the holy kingdom for all Israel” (50:9). This particular phrase calls to mind the image of a restored political Israel; the term “holy kingdom” in sectarian Jewish literature was not a spiritual concept.<sup>20</sup> This phrase portrays the Sabbath as a foretaste of the eschatological era when Israel would return to her status as a world empire. *Jubilees* also raises the Sabbath to the rank of a (Temple-) festival, and like those festivals, all Israel is commanded to eat and drink on that day (50.9–10). Fasting is strictly forbidden, just as it was on feast days of the Temple (50.12–13). And sexual relations, because they are forbidden within the Temple, are also forbidden on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a means of actualizing, in a non-Temple environment, the requirements of Temple existence.<sup>21</sup>

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Row, 1985) 142–45. He argues that just as the Temple serves to mark out sacred space and is a place of rest (*mēnûhâh*), so the Sabbath serves to mark out sacred time and serves as a period of rest. The correspondences between the creation of the world and the erection of a holy shrine can be seen in these texts, all from the hand of P: Gen 2:1–2 and Exod 39:32; 40:33b–34; Gen 1:31 and Exod 39:43; Gen 2:3 and Exod 39:43, 40:9. Other biblical scholars have noted these similarities. See M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” in A. Caquot and M. Delcor, eds., *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (AOAT 212; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 501–12; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) 59–69. On post-biblical developments see Arthur Green, “Sabbath as Temple: Some Thoughts on Space and Time in Judaism,” in Raphael Jospe and Samuel Z. Fishman, eds., *Go and Study: Essays and Studies in Honor of Alfred Jospe* (Washington, DC: B’nai B’rith, 1980) 287–305.

<sup>20</sup>A similar understanding of the kingdom (*malkûtâ* in Aramaic) was present among Syriac writers. As Robert Murray observes (*Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* [London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975] 239, 241): “The early Syriac Fathers remained too close to their Judaeo-Christian roots to move far from the primitive totally eschatological sense of *malkûtâ* . . . [*M*]*malkûtâ* is sovereignty in this world under God’s governance; he gave it once to Israel and now he has given it to the Romans. It may be a title of supremacy, but it is not the Church.”

<sup>21</sup>Safrai (S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976] 2. 205) has asserted that an even stricter position was advocated by the early *ḥasidim*. He claims that they not only “forbade marital relations on the Sabbath, [but] even remained continent from the preceding Wednesday, so that the woman need not be ritually impure on the Sabbath eve by reason of some residue from intercourse.” One should note, though, that this assertion is dependent on the assumption that the Babylonian Amoraim have misunderstood an early extra-Mishnaic saying from the tannaic period (*baraita*). The particular *baraita* is cited in *b. Nid.* 38a and declares that sexual relations were forbidden after Wednesday by the early *ḥasidim*. The Amoraic discussion of the *baraita* presumes that the reason is based on the calculation of the gestation period of a woman. If one had sex after Wednesday the birth might fall on the Sabbath day. L. Finkelstein (*MGWJ* 76

Rabbinic literature diverges from the strict legal prescriptions found in *Jubilees* just as it diverges from *Jubilees*' treatment of Eden. In contrast to the law of sexual continence in *Jubilees*, rabbinic law enthusiastically enjoined marital relations on the Sabbath.<sup>22</sup> What is curious is that the Rabbis, like the author of *Jubilees*, articulated the rules for Sabbath purity in terms of a model which pertains to the (Temple-) feast day.<sup>23</sup> But the Rabbis diverge strikingly from the model found in *Jubilees* by not generalizing the strict norms for existence within the sacred space of the Temple itself (where a recent sexual emission would render one impure) to the Sabbath.<sup>24</sup>

How can we account for this unexpected decision? Why do the Rabbis ignore the laws of purity in constructing their picture of Eden? There are at least two reasons for this exegetical choice and both are rooted in the concept of restoration.

#### *Eden and the Age of Eschatological Joy*

In the restoration literature of the postexilic and post-70 periods, the awaited New Age was described as one of joy while the present age was described as one of mourning. These images of joy in the *Endzeit* soon became images of the primordial *Urzeit*. As will become clear in the discussion below, this movement from mourning to joy was not simply, or even primarily, an emotional transformation; rather it was a behavioral or even ritual transformation. Just as the state

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[1932] 529–30) argued that the *baraita* reflected an earlier, more ascetic branch of Judaism that abstained from sexual relations for three days prior to the Sabbath so as not to enter that holy day in an unclean state. The figure of three days presumably stems from Exod 19:10, 15. This perspective fell out of favor in the rabbinic period, and so the *halakha* found in this *baraita* was subject to reinterpretation.

<sup>22</sup>So *b. Ketub.* 62b, *b. B. Qama* 82a, and *p. Ketub.* 5.6.

<sup>23</sup>E.g., see *m. M. Qatan* 3.6.

<sup>24</sup>The discussion of what constitutes purity on the festival day or Sabbath is framed in different terms altogether: the laws which pertain to the mourner. The mourner is a suitable model for comparison because the discrete ritual activities which define the mourner are also actions which render one unclean. Thus priests, who must be available for service within the Temple, are restricted as to whom they can mourn (Lev 21:1–6). Moreover, the high priest was not allowed to mourn for anyone, presumably so that he would always be available for cultic service (Lev 21:10–12). The impure state of the mourner is not simply a biblical idea. As Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf illustrate (*Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979] 64–65), the mourning period is a time of impurity in many cultures. The ritual movement from mourning to joy in the Bible or in rabbinic materials was also a movement from an impure state to a pure one. The Talmud, in fact, explicitly compares the state of the impure leper to that of the mourner (*b. M. Qatan* 15b). There is one peculiarity about the movement from impurity to purity in the case of the mourner. The movement from mourning to joy allows for the *resumption* of sexual relations as part of the ritual process. The resumption of sexual relations as a symbolic action denoting the end of mourning can be seen in numerous Semitic materials.

of mourning is characterized by specific behaviors which are assumed by the mourner, so the state of joy.

Six benedictions spoken over the bride and groom in the rabbinic wedding rite are found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Ketubot*. The literary context in which they are found is a *baraita* which states that a set of blessings must be said before ten people during seven days of the marriage celebration. Rab Judah then recites his own formulation of these blessings. As Heinemann has shown, the form of these blessings could vary from one recital to another and some variant formulations have survived.<sup>25</sup> But the variants are variants in detail, not in gross structure. Because of the conservative tendencies in the oral transmission of these forms of prayer, it is safe to assume that the six blessings Rab Judah, a third-century Amora, cites had a long prehistory.

1. Blessed are you O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has created everything for his glory.
2. [Blessed are you O Lord Our God, King of the Universe,] creator of humankind.
3. [Blessed are you O Lord Our God, King of the Universe,] who created humankind in his image, in the image of the likeness of his form. And has prepared for him from his very own person an eternal "building" (*binyān*), blessed are you O Lord creator of man.
4. May you be glad and exultant O barren one when her children are gathered to her with joy. Blessed are you Lord who makes Zion joyful with her children.
5. May you make joyful these beloved companions just as you made your creatures in the Garden of Eden in primordial times (*miqqedem*, see Gen 2:8). Blessed are you O Lord, who makes bridegroom and bride rejoice.
6. Blessed are you O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who created mirth and joy, bridegroom and bride, gladness, jubilation, dancing and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship. Quickly, O Lord Our God, may the sound of mirth and joy be heard in the streets of Judah and Jerusalem, the voice of bridegroom and bride, jubilant voices of bridegrooms from their canopies and youths from the feasts of song. Blessed are you O Lord who makes the bridegroom rejoice with the bride.

Rashi attempts to discern what is the difference between the two formulations of joy in the fifth and sixth benedictions. He believes the phrase "who makes the bridegroom *and* bride rejoice" (fifth benediction) refers to general rejoicing apart from the wedding itself (*šimḥat bērākāh hā-rišōnāh lō' bē-šimḥat ḥātunnāh*), while the phrase "who makes the bridegroom rejoice *with* the

<sup>25</sup>Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (New York: De Gruyter, 1977). His work includes a table of variants for the fourth and fifth blessings, see pp. 74, 290.

bride" (sixth benediction) refers to the specific pleasures of the wedding event, one of which would include the moment of "marital coupling" (*ḥātunnat dībbūq*). The commentator R. Isaiah de Trani (early thirteenth century) paraphrases the sixth benediction as "he who created the joy of coupling." Both of these commentators are drawing on a meaning of the term "joy" that is found throughout the rabbinic literature as well as in other Semitic languages of the ancient Near East (Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, and Akkadian).<sup>26</sup> In these languages, the term "joy" is not so much a general term of emotional pleasure, but rather a term which connotes particular pleasures associated with the observation of specific rituals. In particular, the pleasures that are most characteristic of the experience of joy are those which stand in typological contrast to those of mourning. Thus, just as mourning consists of fasting, rending the garments, putting dust on the head, and sexual continence, so the experience of joy included eating and drinking, putting on festal attire, anointing oneself with oil and bathing, and sexual union. Many restoration texts speak of the inbreaking of joy in the New Age and so convey the idea that this joy will mark the end of the present period of grief and mourning.<sup>27</sup> One particularly prominent display of joy was the marriage ceremony because of the presence of great feasting and dancing as well as the sexual union of the couple.

Many Semitic texts presume this understanding of the term. For example, when Gilgamesh is exhorted by the Alewife to stop his mourning over Enkidu she commands him "to rejoice in the lap/groin of his wife."<sup>28</sup> A close structural parallel to this can be found in *Jubilees*. In one text, after Adam and Eve have completed their mourning over Abel, it is said that "they rejoiced and then Adam knew Eve" (*Jub.* 4.7). One should note that both these texts understand the experience of sexual joy to be a ritual marker of the end of mourning. This may illuminate why the Rabbis chose the concerns of the mourner as the means

<sup>26</sup>The use of joy in these various languages is developed in considerable detail in my forthcoming book on the terms for joy in the Semitic languages.

<sup>27</sup>E.g., note Isa 25:9; 62:5; 66:10; Joel 2:21, 23; Zeph 3:14; and Zech 2:4. The close association of this eschatological joy with the cultic feast has been observed by Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch* (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 115–16. The same point has been made about the use of the term "joy" in the kingdom preaching of Jesus. See Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM, 1958) 63 n. 4.

<sup>28</sup>This line has been found only in the Old Babylonian recension (B. Meissner, *Ein altbabylonisches Fragment des Gilgamešepos* (MVAG 7(1); Berlin: Peiser, 1902) iii:13). The Assyrian recension is broken at this point. I include the rather crude reference to "groin" simply to drive home the point that the reference is explicitly sexual in the Akkadian. The understanding of this passage has been hindered by Speiser's more euphemistic rendering (in James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* [3d ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969] 90) of "bosom." Note also the Akkadian idiom: *uṣam epēšu*, literally "to do a joy," idiomatically "to make love." The same root of *uṣam* (ʿ-l-š) is employed in the Samaritan Targum with this force. Gen 2:24, "he shall cleave to his wife," is rendered "he shall rejoice with his wife."

by which they would articulate the requirement for purity on the feast day and Sabbath. The mourner's movement from impurity to purity included the unexpected movement from sexual abstinence to sexual joy.<sup>29</sup>

The halakhic function of the term "rejoice" is well illustrated in Targum Ps.-Jonathan's treatment of the exemptions from holy war found in Deut 20:5–7. The last exemption is rendered "Whoever has betrothed a wife but has not formally taken her [in marriage], let him return to his house lest he bring about his own sin of not rejoicing with his wife." The law of 20:7 has been combined with the similar law found in Deut 24:5. The important thing to observe is that rejoicing with one's wife was understood as consummation of marriage.

Another important legal usage of marital joy is found in *b. B. Bat.* 144b–145a. The text deals with obligations involved in receiving betrothal gifts. The specific problem under discussion pertains to a woman who receives gifts from her prospective husband, but he dies before the marriage can be consummated. She is not obligated to return the gifts to the husband's family. Her obligation was only to him and in regard to that obligation, it was no fault of her own that consummation did not take place. The text reads:

A. And is it not also taught [about returning betrothal gifts in the event of a death before the marriage ceremony: Where it is the custom to return the betrothal gift (*qiddūšîn*), it must be returned; where the custom is not to return, it need not be returned.

B. R. Joseph b. Abba said in the name of Mar Uqba in the name of Samuel: "This applies only to the case where she died, but if he died, it need not be returned."

<sup>29</sup>The sexual nuance of the term joy is important for interpreting rabbinic discussions of how the mourner was to act on the feast day (*b. M. Qatan* 23b). The ritual requirements of the "joy of the feast" took pride of place. This meant that the mourner had to bathe, put on fresh clothes and scented oil, eat and drink and even (according to some) resume sexual relations. These were the discrete behaviors which constituted the ritual state of joy. The Talmud explicitly states: "A mourner does not deport himself as one in mourning during a festival as scripture says: 'You shall rejoice in the feast' (Deut 16:14)" (*b. M. Qatan* 14b). Because the Sabbath and the feast day were so similar in legal thought, the same type of logic applied to the Sabbath. After the Talmud has cited this proof text from Deuteronomy the text then describes the exact behaviors which are forbidden to the mourner, one of which is sexual relations. As could be expected, some rabbinic authorities made the logical inference that the commandment to rejoice on the festival took such precedence that even the mourner was to resume sexual relations during this period. This is a remarkable assertion because the punishment for the mourner who would have sexual relations during this period was terribly severe (*b. M. Qatan* 24a). Some rabbinic authorities even allowed sexual relations for the mourner on the Sabbath, though others disagreed (*p. M. Qatan* 3.5; *b. M. Qatan* 23b–24a). The important point to observe in these discussions is the legal framework in which these issues are discussed. These rabbinic texts outline those discrete behaviors which constitute the state of mourning and those which constitute the state of joy and then attempt to reconcile the conflict which arises when the two states might coincide.

C. Why? (That is, why is she not obligated? Though the husband is dead, she could return the gift to his estate. In other words, is her obligation to be understood only to him or to his family which provided the funds for the betrothal gift?)

Because she can say: "Give me my husband and I will rejoice with him."

As Rashi indicates, her invitation to rejoice with her potential husband refers to the act of consummating the marriage. Her legal obligation at betrothal is to consummate a marriage with him;<sup>30</sup> she is not obligated to the family. Since her failure to rejoice with him—to consummate the marriage—was not her fault, she can keep the gift.

One should keep in mind the technical sense of the term "joy" when reading the blessings in *Ketub*. 8a. As can be seen from *b. B. Bathra*, the joy which is present at the wedding includes both the eating and drinking by the wedding guests, but also the sexual consummation of the marriage. Both types of marital joy are associated with the Garden of Eden. The fifth blessing compares the marital joy of the present age with that of Eden. The second half of the blessing employs vocabulary from the biblical narratives about Eden. The Hebrew word for creatures, *yēšîr*, recalls the role of God as creator (Gen 2:7), and the mention of the Garden existing in primordial times (*miqqedem*) is also an allusion to the diction of the Eden narrative (Gen 2:8). The third benediction uses imagery from Genesis 1 to describe the creation of man, but it also alludes to the creation of woman in Genesis 2. The benediction says that God prepared for Adam "an eternal building" (*binyān 'ādē 'ad*). The obvious referent here is the creation of Eve. This prayer builds upon a midrashic interpretation of Gen 2:22: "And the Lord God *built* (*bānâh*) the rib . . . into a woman." This midrash understands the verb to connote not simply the divine act of creation but also the nature of that creation. Eve is to become more than a partner to Adam; she is to be a pro-

<sup>30</sup>In rabbinic law, the seclusion of the bride and groom in the *huppâ* is not simply the moment of marital intercourse, it is the point of legal acquisition. Note Maimonides' summary: "He who has intercourse with his spouse after betrothal and for the purpose of marriage, acquires her and makes her wedded to him from the moment he initiates intercourse with her, and thereafter she is his wife in every respect." The text is from Isaac Klein, trans., *The Code of Maimonides, Book 4, The Book of Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972) 61. This moment of intercourse under the *huppâ* may be presumed in an early Syriac hymn which describes the love of the Bridegroom (Christ?) over the Bride (the Church?). Note the *Odes of Solomon* 42.9: "As the bridechamber (Syriac *gnônâ*) that is spread in the marriage-house, so is my love over those that believe in me." Murray (*Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 132 n. 3) argues that the *gnônâ* is an enclosed tent (like the *huppâ*) set up in the house of the bridal pair. If Murray is correct, this tent is most likely the place of sexual consummation as well. The sexual resonances of the *gnônâ* (an important technical term in Syriac theology) has not been explored by Syriac scholars.

pagator, a provider of children.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis of the blessing rests on the procreative act. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the prayers for joy in *Ketubot* necessarily entail sexual consummation, but the semantic horizon of this term as well as the general concern of these blessings with the themes of procreation and fertility, makes this understanding a possible, if not probable one.

The benedictions also portray marriage as having an eschatological significance. In the sixth blessing, the imagery of Jeremiah is used. He had characterized the era of mourning, or divine curse which was to follow the destruction of the Temple and land, as a time when the sounds of mirth and joy, bridegroom and bride would cease from the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem (Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:6). By contrast the era of restoration would be characterized by the return of these joyful sounds (Jer 33:10–11). So also the sixth benediction characterizes the end times as one of great marital joy. The theme of marriage was also used by early Christian writers, but there was one major difference: they did not share this enthusiasm for real human marriage in the New Age.<sup>32</sup> The image was spiritualized and thought to convey only the mystical marriage of the redeemed to their Savior. The Jewish interest in real human marriage in the New Age is consonant with their perspective that the eschaton would entail a return to a real land and a real Temple.<sup>33</sup> Also prominent in the eschatology of this sixth benediction is the movement from barrenness (curse) to fertility or ingathering (blessing) in the New Age. This is reflected in the fourth benediction. The concept of ingathering is very prominent in restoration texts of the Bible (Isa 54:7; 56:8; Jer 31:10; Ezek 37:21; Zech 10:8).

#### *Eden and the Theological Image of Divine Blessing*

The depiction of Eden as a place of marital bliss derives, in part, from the movement of the joy of the *Endzeit* to the *Urzeit*. But there is more here than a simple transference. The very motif of the Garden of Eden, on its own terms, conjures up the imagery of sexuality and procreation. As the recent discovery of the Tel Fekharyeh material shows, the verbal root  $\text{c-d-n}$  has a very prominent association in Northwest Semitic religion with the storm god Baal/Hadad.<sup>34</sup> The verbal root refers to the provisionment of fertility and blessing by this god. Late biblical texts make the very same association. In Isa 51:3 and Joel 2:3 the

<sup>31</sup>See Gen 16:2; 30:3 for a similar usage of *bānāh*.

<sup>32</sup>See the discussion of Murray, *Symbols and Church and Kingdom*, 137–42.

<sup>33</sup>Note that Jerome often mentioned the Jewish expectation of marital joy in the New Age. In his commentary on Isaiah (CCSL 73A; Turnholt: Brepols, 1968), note his comments on Isa 35:3–10 (p. 427), 58:14 (p. 676), and 60:1–3 (p. 693).

<sup>34</sup>See the discussion in J. Greenfield's article, "A Touch of Eden," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emirito oblata* (Acta Iranica 23; Leiden: Brill, 1984) 219–24.

phrase “Garden of Eden” refers to the marvelous fertility of the land which divine blessing brings about. Ezekiel also characterizes the repopulated fertile landscape of a restored Israel as an Edenic garden (36:35).

The association of blessing and fertility is not unique to the root  $\text{‘}d\text{-}n$ . The linkage between these two themes exists everywhere in Northwest Semitic religion. It is the very backbone of two of the largest Ugaritic epics (*Aqhat* and *Kirta*) as well as the patriarchal materials in the Bible. Moreover curse and blessing lists in the Bible and extrabiblical sources always highlight the imagery of sexual fertility.<sup>35</sup>

The root  $\text{‘}d\text{-}n$  can also be used to specify the act of sexual union. The term is used in this fashion in the antediluvian section of the *Genesis Apocryphon*. The text describes the birth of Noah as a rather fantastic event (2.1–3). Evidently the child has an awesome appearance and his father Lamech worries as to whether he is the true father of this child, or if his wife Bitenosh has had an adulterous encounter with the Watchers who descended from heaven. He goes to his wife and implores her to speak truthfully about the matter (2.4–18). Bitenosh begins to address her husband quite vehemently and assures him that he is the true father. Noah’s remarkable appearance is due to divine intervention, not to an adulterous relationship with the angelic Watchers. She implores her husband to “recall my pleasure [ . . . ] my panting within my body” (2.9–10; cf. 2:13–14). The last phrase could be literally rendered “my breath within its sheath.” As Fitzmyer noted, “the body is described as a sheath and the panting breath is like a sword moving back and forth within it.”<sup>36</sup> This image is quite appropriate for a description of sexual intercourse. More important for our purposes is the phrase, “recall my pleasure.” The Aramaic term for “my pleasure” is  $\text{‘}dynty$ , assuming the root to be  $\text{‘}d\text{-}n$ .<sup>37</sup> Some have translated this phrase, “recall my pregnancy,” as though the root of  $\text{‘}dynty$  were  $\text{‘}dy$ . But this cannot be correct. As Fitzmyer observes, though philologically possible, this translation would be logically absurd. Bitenosh is trying to assure Lamech that he is the father. He requires no assurance that there was a pregnancy! Her response only makes sense if it asserts the plausibility of his involvement in the procreative act. Moreover, the translation “sexual pleasure” is consonant with the following image of her panting during the coital act.

As Fitzmyer notes, this translation of  $\text{‘}dynth$  as sexual pleasure ought to be compared to the usage of  $\text{‘}ednâh$  in Gen 18:12. In this text, Sarah hears the promise made regarding future offspring and laughs. She says, “Now that I am withered up ( $\text{b}êlô\text{’}tî$ ) can I have  $\text{‘}ednâh$ , and my lord also is old.” Fitzmyer

<sup>35</sup>E.g., Lev 26:9, 21–22 and Deut 28:4, 18.

<sup>36</sup>Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1* (2d ed.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971) 87.

<sup>37</sup>The form  $\text{‘}dynty$  would probably be vocalized  $\text{‘}adîntî$ .

would render the term *ʿednâh* as sexual pleasure and compare it with the Aramaic *ʿdynty* found in the *Genesis Apocryphon*. This sense is followed in the RSV, NAB, and JPS translations.<sup>38</sup>

It is not our point to say that the Rabbis knew this particular text in their exegesis of the Eden narrative. Rather, we have rehearsed this material to show the general associations of the root *ʿ-d-n* with the themes of blessing and fertility from the very earliest Northwest Semitic sources down to those of the postbiblical period. Because late biblical texts had associated the end-time with the return of an era of blessing and fertility, it is altogether natural that the Rabbis would characterize the first-time as the origin of this blessing and fertility.

This expectation becomes a reality in rabbinic materials. In accordance with this, we find many midrashic texts that not only presume a sexual union of Adam and Eve in the Garden but also emphasize the fertile results. Numerous midrashim declare that Adam and Eve “ascended to bed as two and descended from bed as four (or, as some traditions relate, seven).”<sup>39</sup> The sexual encounter in Eden was a particularly fruitful one. As is the case in most aggadic expansions of the biblical text, there is an exegetical basis for the tradition. In this case the text is Gen 4:1–2:

And the man had sexual relations with (“knew”) Eve his wife and she conceived and bore Cain, saying: “I have created a man [by means of] the Lord.” She continued to give birth to his brother Abel.

This text has several difficulties, but the two which concern us are the phrases “the man had sexual relations with Eve,” and “she continued to give birth.” The phrase “the man had sexual relations with (literally, “knew”) Eve” has some ambiguity because the Hebrew verb can be translated as both a simple narrative past (“knew”) and as a pluperfect (“had known”). Those midrashim which presume fruitful sexual relations in the Garden parse the verb as a pluperfect. Rashi also adopts this opinion and tries to establish it on grammatical grounds. He asserts that the emphatic word order is a marker of the pluperfect

<sup>38</sup>Greenfield argues in “A Touch of Eden” that the term ought to be understood differently. He notes the Talmudic text which contrasts the skin of youth (*niʿaddên*), which is smooth, moist, and fresh, with the skin of old age, which is wrinkled and dry (*niʿballâh*) (*b. B. Mesia* 87a). Greenfield also compares this text to the tradition of Jochabed’s miraculous rejuvenation which resulted in the birth of Moses when she was 130-years-old. The text states, “the signs of youth were reborn in her, the flesh was refreshed [*niʿaddên habbâsâr*], the wrinkles were straightened and beauty returned to its place” (*b. B. Bathra* 120a). The same semantic contrast is found in this text from Genesis. Sarah is old and worn out (*bâlâh*), wonders whether she can become like the young (*ʿdn*). Greenfield believes that Sarah is questioning whether she can achieve the youthful appearance again which is appropriate to child-bearing.

<sup>39</sup>See, e.g., *b. Sanh.* 38b and *Gen. Rab.* 22:2).

tense.<sup>40</sup> He is followed by the modern scholar Jeffrey Tigay.<sup>41</sup> It is unlikely that the word order necessitates such a translation; one is on safer ground saying that it is simply a possibility.

The phrase “and she continued to give birth” in Gen 4:2 is also ambiguous. It appears that Gen 4:2 has telescoped the three-fold verbal action of 4:1 (had sex, conceived, gave birth) to the simple statement “she gave birth again.” But how is one to interpret this abbreviated sequence? Is it simply an ellipsis that presumes the actions of sex and conception, or does it indicate a second birthing experience which follows directly from the first? Modern readers have preferred the former as a simpler reading of the text, but the rabbinic reader—sensitive to the fertile nature of Eden—plays on this narrative ambiguity and describes Eve’s first conception as a miraculous one. Not only did she conceive in Eden, but she bore twins (or two brothers and three sisters according to some sources). A late midrashic source even declares that the birth was without pain because of the conception in Eden prior to the transgression and curse.<sup>42</sup>

The eviction of Adam and Eve from Eden can also be understood in relation to the fertility of Eden. Some rabbinic sources say that Adam goes into mourning upon his expulsion. Thus, as a result of Adam’s ritual state, Eve remains barren for the next 130 years (*Gen. Rab.* 23:4). When the mourning ends, Adam again knows his wife (“rejoices” in *Jub.* 4.7) and Seth is born. This sequence indicates that the movement from Eden to the outside world was a movement from fertility and sexual joy to barrenness, mourning, and sexual continence.

I began this study by showing the antiquity of the sexual consummation motif before the fall. The rabbinic position cannot be a reaction to a Christian position. Not only is the rabbinic idea of sexual relations before the fall found in *Jubilees*, but both establish their position on the very same verse. This can hardly be a coincidence. The rabbinic materials preserve an ancient piece of exegesis. But beyond this point, *Jubilees* and the Rabbis show serious disagreement. For the writer of *Jubilees*, Eden is the prototype of a Temple, a place of quintessential purity. Thus, the sexual relations of Adam and Eve take place before their entry into the Garden. Rabbinic thought is a bit more complex. On the one hand, Eden represents a concentrated locus of divine blessing—a blessing which actualizes itself in sexual fertility. On the other hand, the anticipated (marital) joy of the eschaton is foreshadowed in Eden. Just as marital bliss shall characterize the *Endzeit*, so marital bliss characterized the *Urzeit*.

<sup>40</sup>The expected word order would be verb and then noun. This verse begins with the sequence noun, verb.

<sup>41</sup>J. Tigay, “Paradise,” *EncJud*, 13. 79.

<sup>42</sup>See the comments of Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5. 134–35 n. 5 in regard to *Midrash Aggada* to Gen 4:1. This text was unavailable to me.

## ESCHATOLOGICAL PURITY AND SYRIAC CHRISTIANITY

*Eschatological Purity as Purity for Battle*

The concept of purity is also important for understanding the role of sexual experience in certain forms of Syriac Christianity.<sup>43</sup> As Murray has indicated, Syriac asceticism is not as far removed from Jewish experience as has often been thought.<sup>44</sup> For example, if one can assume that celibate individuals existed at Qumran, then one can posit a basic similarity between the asceticism of early Syriac Christianity and that of the covenanters of Qumran.<sup>45</sup> It is often stated that the celibate state was by no means uniform in the Qumran community. It seems to be an ideal espoused by the select few who resided at the actual Qumran site. The celibate state which was experienced there followed from the apocalyptic consciousness of the sect. Because these covenanters saw themselves as preparing for the final eschatological battle, a battle which would be fought by ritually pure warriors (*War Scroll*, 7.5–6), they assumed the state of ritual purity appropriate to such an event, namely, a sexually continent one. This holy war imagery is also picked up in early Syriac Christian tradition. As Murray has argued, one text found in Aphrahat probably represents an independent, early homily which was incorporated into his own work.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup>For asceticism in Syriac Christianity, see A. Adam, "Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in sprachlicher Sicht," *ZKG* 65 (1953–54) 209–39; E. Beck, "Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums," in *Antonius Magnus Eremita* (StAns 38; Rome, 1956); G. Kretschmar, "Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Ursprung frühchristlicher Askese," *ZThK* 61 (1964) 27–67; and Peter Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (TU 95; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966).

<sup>44</sup>Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 1–38. Also see the discussions in A. Guillaumont, "Monachisme et éthique judéo-chrétienne," in *Judéo-Christianisme: Recherches historiques et théologiques offertes en hommage au Cardinal Jean Danielou* (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse, 1972) 199–218, and Steven D. Fraade, "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," in Arthur Green, ed., *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible through the Middle Ages* (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 283–84 n. 60.

<sup>45</sup>One should note the important criticisms of Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code* (BJS 33; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983) 13, 19, 214–15. He has argued that the Qumran community was not celibate on the basis that the *Rule of the Congregation* and the *Zadokite Document* both assume marriage as a normal institution in the sect. One should note, though, that Schiffman also questions the assumption that the Qumran covenanters should be identified with the Essenes (*ibid.*, 1). This allows him to take less seriously the collaborative evidence of Josephus and Philo that the sect did have celibate members. For other treatments of the problem of celibacy at Qumran see A. Marx, "Les racines du célibat essénien," *RQ* 7 (1970) 323–42; A. Guillaumont, "À propos du célibat des Esséniens," in *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1971) 395–404; H. Hübner, "Zölibat in Qumran?" *NTS* 17 (1971) 153–67; and J. Coppens, "Le célibat essénien," in M. Delcor, ed., *Qumrân, sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (Paris: Duculot, Gembloux, 1978).

<sup>46</sup>See the discussion of this text in Robert Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church," *NTS* 21 (1974–75) 60–70. Murray and others

O you who are summoned to the contest (*ʿagônâ*),  
 hear the sound of the trumpet and take heart.  
 To you too I speak, you trumpet-bearers,  
 priests and “scribes” and wise men;  
 Call out and say to the whole people:  
 Whoever is afraid, let him turn back from the contest,  
 lest he break the spirit of his brethren with his own.  
 And whoever has planted a vineyard, let him return to his husbandry,  
 lest thinking of it he yield in battle.  
 And whoever is engaged to a woman and wants to marry her,  
 let him turn back and “rejoice” (*nehdê*) with his wife.  
 And whoever is building a house, let him turn back to it,  
 lest he remember his house and not fight whole-heartedly.  
 It is for single ones (*ʿihîdāyê*) that the contest calls,  
 because they have turned their faces to what lies ahead,  
 and do not remember what lies behind.<sup>47</sup> (*Dem.* 7.18)

The important point to be made is that the exhortation to join the Christian “covenant” (*qyāmâ*) is understood in the imagery of preparing for holy war. The war-camp of the Pentateuch has become the model for daily living. Just as Israel consecrated themselves (*qdš*) at Mt. Sinai in preparation for the revelation and march to battle (Exod 19:10–15), so must the Christian. Just as Israel’s wars required that the warrior be ritually pure, so does the final war. These Christian warriors must prepare themselves for this context (*ʿagônâ*) and become “consecrated” or holy (*qaddîšûtâ*)<sup>48</sup> as well as single-minded. The concept of “singleness” (*ʿihîdāyûtâ*) was a rich term in early Syriac Christianity. It had at least three distinct technical uses: (1) singleness from a spouse, (2)

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have suggested that the context of this early homily was an ancient Christian baptismal rite. If this is correct, then it is possible that this homily represents a stage in the early Syriac church in which celibacy was required for baptism into the “covenant.” One should note, though, that this is very speculative and does not evolve out of a simple reading of the text. Some scholars of Syriac Christianity doubt whether celibacy ever was a criterion for baptism (so Sidney Griffith, oral communication). On the question of celibacy and baptism see Arthur Vööbus, *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church* (Stockholm: Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 1951); R. H. Connolly, “Aphraates and Monasticism,” *JTS* 6 (1905) 529; J. Gribomont, “Le monachisme au sein de l’Église en Syrie et en Cappadoce,” *Studia Monastica* 7 (1965) 2–24; and Guillaumont, “Monachisme et éthique judéo-chrétienne.”

<sup>47</sup>The translation is that of Robert Murray and was taken from his “Exhortation to Candidates,” 61. The text can be found in *Patrologia Syriaca* 1. 341:11–26.

<sup>48</sup>The Syriac fathers have understood this term along the lines of its usage in Exod 9:10, 15, that is, as a term which entails sexual continence. The opposite connotation exists in Talmudic Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew. There the term refers to the state of marriage.

single in heart, and (3) united to the only-begotten.<sup>49</sup> These three distinct meanings demonstrate the close connection between the celibate state and Christian existence.

The central core of this text is a homiletical retelling of the rules for holy war found in Deut 20:5–7. This text, which is picked up in the Gospels as a metaphor for the preparation for the Messianic banquet at the end of time (Matt 22:1–14; Luke 14:16–24), provides several guidelines as to who was not allowed to participate in the war. One person who was restricted was the individual who had betrothed a woman (ʿāšer ʿēras ʾiššāh), but not yet taken her in marriage (lōʾ lēqāhāh).<sup>50</sup> This particular law is repeated in Deut 24:5. This text specifies what it is about the “taking in marriage” that necessitates exemption. The newly married man must “make his wife rejoice,” and so becomes unfit for holy war.<sup>51</sup> This Syriac exhortation has read the idiom of “rejoicing” found in Deut 24:5 back into Deut 20:7. Targum Ps.-Jonathan does the very same thing as was noted above. This combination of images gives emphasis to the fact that it is sexual experience which is dangerous to the Christian, not simply the state of marriage. As Murray and others have argued, the overall tenor of this section in Aphrahat appears quite ancient; it seems to be a homily exhorting Christians to assume a sexually continent existence.<sup>52</sup> If the context is specifically that of a baptismal oration,<sup>53</sup> then this meant that individuals who were already married would vow to abstain from sex upon baptism. Other individuals would simply put off baptism until old age.<sup>54</sup>

### *Purity in the Garden*

Like the book of *Jubilees*, Ephrem conceives of Eden as a mountain sanctuary.<sup>55</sup> This imagery is implicit in the description of Eden found in Genesis 2–3.

<sup>49</sup>On these three technical uses see Murray, “Exhortation to Candidates,” 13 n. 3.

<sup>50</sup>As Douglas has observed (*Purity and Danger*, 51–52), the law entails that one is not fit for holy war if one has commenced an important activity but not finished it. This position of being betwixt and between is the very essence of the ritual experience of liminality and the liminal state is almost always an impure one. In the present context, the state of being betwixt and between would be most incongruent with the call to become “single” (ʾihīdāyūtāʾ) in Christ.

<sup>51</sup>So the MT, LXX, and T. Onkelos. The Vg, Peshittaʾ Ps.-Jonathan, and the Samaritan Targum read: “he shall rejoice with his wife.” The text from Aphrahat presumes the reading of the Peshitta, Palestinian Targumic tradition, and Jerome.

<sup>52</sup>Though Aphrahat, and later Ephrem, would still see celibacy as the highest state of the Christian, they would not say that sexually active married individuals could not be baptized.

<sup>53</sup>This point is subject to debate: see n. 46.

<sup>54</sup>Murray, “Exhortation to Candidates,” 15.

<sup>55</sup>From this point on, our discussion of Ephrem will center on his *Hymns on Paradise*. See the edition of Edmund Beck, *Hymnen de Paradiso und Contrary Julianum* (CSCO 174; Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1957). A good study of the sanctuary motif is that of N. Séd, “Les hymnes sur le Paradis de Saint Ephrem et les traditions juives,” *Le Muséon* 81 (1968) 454–501. Two recent studies of Ephrem’s treatment of the material in Genesis are Sten Hidal, *Interpretatio*

The only explicit description of Eden as a mountain is to be found in Ezekiel. As Jon Levenson has shown, some of the imagery of the restoration of Jerusalem in Ezekiel employs Edenic imagery.<sup>56</sup> The image of the mountain is also central to the description of Eden in Ezekiel 28. This narrative is very similar to the Eden narrative in Genesis, though it is clearly a variant tradition. It describes an individual residing in the Garden of Eden who through his great wisdom and wealth arrogated to himself the very title of God (28:1–3). As a result of his great pride, God denied his divine status, and evicted him from the Garden (28:6–10). He was to become as those who are dead. In the lament over this individual which follows, Eden is described as the mountain of God (28:14) and as a spot of many precious stones. The mountain image was important for Ephrem as were the stones (*Hymns* 7.4). The stones recall in part the stones mentioned in Gen 2:11–12. A better parallel can be found in Exod 28:17–20. This text describes the stones which were on the priestly vestments. The agreement as to stone type and the order of presentation is too close to be accidental. The imagery of the Temple and Eden could be interchanged. What is not often noticed in Ezekiel 28 is that the specific result of human pride within the Garden is the profanation of the sanctuary (Ezek 28:18).<sup>57</sup> This detail did not go unnoticed in Ephrem's characterization of Adam's sin in the Garden.

It is the image of Eden as a Temple, a spot of purity, that informs Ephrem's description of Eden. Not only is Eden modeled on the Temple—a common topos in Jewish and Christian literature—but the very sin of Adam is understood as a violation of the laws of Temple-purity. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is understood as a veil which separates, the outer court from the holy of holies wherein resided the tree of life (*Hymns* 3.3, 5). The commandment given to Adam not to eat that fruit is understood as ritual legislation reflecting the still (relatively) impure state of Adam. As a warrior in battle, Adam was still awaiting the final victory when God gave him his instructions regarding the tree in Eden (*Hymns* 3.10, lines 4–6). If Adam had persevered in his initial state outside the holy of holies, he would have been granted access to the inner realm.

For God did not give permission  
for Adam to enter  
the inner realm of the Tabernacle,  
for this was kept under guard,  
that he might do well in his service

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*Syriaca* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), and Trygve Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1–11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1978). The former work uses the commentaries while the latter work uses the hymns.

<sup>56</sup>Jon D. Levenson, *The Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (HSM 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 25–36.

<sup>57</sup>The word “sanctuary” is singular in the Syriac Peshitta, plural in the MT.

within the outer realm of the Tabernacle.  
 And like the priest  
     who offers up incense,  
 if Adam had guarded the commandment,  
     then the censer would have been his.  
 He would have entered before the concealed spot  
     before the concealed realm of the Tabernacle.  
 The mystery of Paradise  
     was depicted by Moses  
 when he made two holies  
     the holy and the holy of holies.  
 To the outer realm  
     he had allowed [continual] entry,  
 but to the inner realm  
     only once [a year].<sup>58</sup>  
 So also in regard to Paradise  
     he sealed the inner realm,  
 but opened the outer  
     for Adam to be content therein.  
 (*Hymns* 3.16 – 17)

Adam's initial status is like that of a priest whose access to the inner sanctum of the shrine is restricted. In the outer realm he can still perform cultic service, but he must await a special appointed time when he can enter the holy of holies. Adam's transgression was understood to be a wanton act of disregard for this restriction. Adam's sin was the desecration of the holy shrine of Eden.

Adam, in his state of pollution,  
     had desired to enter  
 the very holy of holies,  
     which desires only those similar to it.  
 But he who brashly enters  
     the inner sanctum of the Tabernacle,  
 even to the outer court,  
     he cannot permit him [to enter again].  
 [Just as] the sea of life  
     when it sees a corpse within,  
 it cannot permit it to remain  
     but casts it out. (*Hymns* 4.2)

This text describes Adam's sin as a profanation of the sanctuary. The only

<sup>58</sup>The model is that of the Day of Atonement wherein the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once every year with his shovel of coals and incense. See Lev 16:1 – 3; Heb 9:1 – 7, and the description of the rites of the High Priest in *m. Yoma*.

Edenic tradition in the Bible which does so is found in Ezekiel 28. Yet Ephrem does not quote this text in Ezekiel; instead he turns to the example of Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26. Uzziah was a king who by nature of his great military exploits received an international reputation as well as acquired great wealth (26:8). As a result his heart grew proud (*gābāh libbô*) even to the point of destruction (*‘ad lē-hašhîl*), so that he ended up committing a sacrilege in the Temple (26:16). The sacrilege is that of assuming the office of priesthood and deigning to enter the inner sanctum of the sanctuary to burn incense. It is difficult to understand why Ephrem would have chosen this text in Chronicles to illustrate Adam’s sin. There is nothing in the text which recalls the imagery of Genesis 2–3. But, if we assume that Ephrem had the Ezekielian description of Eden in mind as well, the text in Chronicles is very appropriate. The description of Uzziah is strikingly similar to the more general description of the fall of the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28. In Ezekiel the king who resides in Eden also becomes proud to the point of destruction (*gābāh libbēkā / šihattā ḥokmātēkā*) and ends up profaning the sanctuary (28:17–18; cf. 2 Chron 28:16). Perhaps it is worth noting that rabbinic texts compare the forehead of Uzziah which was smitten with leprosy to the forehead of Adam, though the rabbinic texts do not develop the character of Uzziah as a parallel to Adam.<sup>59</sup> In any event, we would suggest that it is the similarities of the Uzziah story to the description of the fall from favor in Ezekiel 28 which made Uzziah a suitable model or type for the Genesis narrative. Without this Ezekielian intermediary, it would be difficult to understand the reason for Ephrem choosing such an analogy.

Uzziah is excluded from the sanctuary forever because he was an unclean leper. Ephrem makes the following comparison:

In the middle, God planted  
 the tree of knowledge  
 so as to divide what is above from what is below,  
 the holy from the holy of holies.  
 Adam brashly drew near,  
 he was “smitten” like Uzziah.  
 The king was a leper,  
 Adam was stripped.  
 He who was “stricken” like Uzziah,  
 hurriedly went forth.  
 The kings fled and hid,  
 for they were ashamed of their bodies. (*Hymns* 3.13)

The description of Adam being “smitten” and “stricken” like Uzziah involves a literary play on words. The normal idiom for being smitten with leprosy

<sup>59</sup>See *b. Sotah* 10a and parallels.

involves the verb *mḥâ*, “to (physically) smite, inflict a blow.” The two verbs Ephrem uses (*ʿetgannaḥ*, *blaʿ*) refer to the terror, grief, or sorrow of the heart. Both individuals were “smitten” for their sins, but the effects were different. Adam lost the glory in which he was clothed, while Uzziah was inflicted with leprosy. The description of Adam’s sins is in every way paralleled by Uzziah. Both desecrate a shrine through brazen action, both of their bodies are transformed and both are banished from their former homes. Adam is treated as though he were a leper (Leviticus 13–14), so only the rites of purification can lead to his return to Eden (*Hymns* 4.3).

Syriac tradition, as it is reflected in Ephrem’s *Hymns on Paradise*, shows some startling consistencies with the Jewish traditions of Paradise found in *Jubilees*. Like *Jubilees*, Ephrem’s entire picture of the Garden and interpretation of the transgression of Adam depends on a model of purity which is appropriate to the Temple. Unlike *Jubilees*, Ephrem takes a considerable interest in the actual transgression of Adam. The book of *Jubilees* shows little interest in this event and simply repeats the biblical story with few modifications. The transgression is hardly a “fall.” For Ephrem, Adam’s sin has considerable consequences, but even for him the concept of the fall is not adequate to the material. The Sethite generation continues to live at the very edge of paradise in a state of existence that is not much different from Eden itself. Adam’s sin results in his expulsion, but there seems to be no major ontological changes in his character. The true “fall” does not occur until the flood, when the Sethites mingle with the Cainites and as a result are driven from the entire area which surrounds Eden. To be sure, sex does occur for the first time after the transgression. But it is not simply the fact of this transgression which determines the beginning of sexual relations. Just as important is the movement from a sacred to a profane location. In this regard, Ephrem’s thinking is very similar to that of *Jubilees* or even the sect that resided at Qumran.

### *Marriage in the Garden in the Cave of Treasures*

Before ending we should mention the treatment of the Garden in the Syriac document, the *Cave of Treasures*.<sup>60</sup> This text is a retelling of biblical history

<sup>60</sup>This document is attributed to Ephrem, but does not derive from him. A critical Syriac and Arabic text were published by Carl Bezold in 1888. See the recent reprint, *Die Schatzhöhle* (Amsterdam: Philo, 1981). The work was translated into English by E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1927). According to A. Götze it probably dates to a time not long after Aphrahat (*Die Schatzhöhle: Überlieferung und Quellen* [Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1922]). This late fourth century (perhaps early fifth century) dating is accepted by Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 19. It is a very important work for it provides an example of what a popular homiletic reading of the Bible might have looked like. Moreover it is an important witness to the Christian roots of Islamic traditions about the biblical prophets. On this topic see W. M. Thackston, *Tales of the Prophets of al Kisaʿi* (Boston: Twayne, 1978) xiii–xiv, xxii–xxiv.

from the time of Adam up to and including the life of Christ. Its description of Eden is similar to Ephrem's in several ways. Eden is thought to be a cosmic mountain upon which Adam serves as priest. The sin of Adam, though, is not represented as an act of cultic impropriety, nor is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thought to represent the veil before the holy of holies. The section which relates the story of Eve's creation is patterned very closely on the biblical text.

And God cast sleep on Adam and he slept. He took one of his ribs from his left side and made Eve from it. When Adam awoke, he saw Eve and rejoiced greatly at her.<sup>61</sup>

As this essay has shown, the term "rejoice" in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian can refer to the act of sexual intercourse. One must reckon with the possibility that this Syriac text could also refer to this form of marital joy. What is more, this idiom of joy occurs in the exact location where early Jewish sources had located Adam and Eve's first sexual tryst. But could this Syriac text intend the same thing? There is a strong probability that this was the case, as can be seen in the rather expansive Arabic "translation" of this work.<sup>62</sup>

When Adam awoke from his sleep he saw Eve and "rejoiced greatly"<sup>63</sup> at her and developed a liking for her. God made them dwell together in the beautiful Eden of paradise. He clothed them in his splendor and the two of them radiated that splendor which the two of them were adorned (*lbs?*) in.<sup>64</sup> God crowned them with marriage crowns and all the angels took delight in them. There was a wedding feast there (literally, a "joy," *farahun*), the likes of which has not existed either before or after and will not exist until

<sup>61</sup>Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 18–20.

<sup>62</sup>The Arabic translation of the Syriac original is quite free and expansive. Indeed, it is often a type of midrash on the Syriac. This text has received almost no attention by scholars. A thorough treatment of the MSS can be found in Götze, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 23–38. He dates the work to around 750 CE.

<sup>63</sup>In Arabic also, the term for rejoice, *faraha*, is not used freely. It is particularly associated with the joy of festive occasions like weddings. My colleague D. Crow has informed me that this term is used in colloquial Egyptian Arabic to this day in a blessing recited over a newly married couple. One often wishes that the couple experience a thousand joys. The sense of such a blessing is not a general desire for a happy marriage; rather it is the hope that the couple will experience a thousand sexual unions that result in children. The invoking of this blessing can often embarrass the newly married couple, especially in an age of birth control. The meaning of the term joy in this Arabic marriage blessing is very similar to the meaning of joy in the Jewish blessing discussed at the beginning of this article.

<sup>64</sup>The grammar of this Arabic text is colloquial Christian Arabic and not classical Arabic. As a result some of the verbal forms are unusual. I have parsed this verb as a third form, perfect, in the dual. As a result I have ignored the final *hamza*.

the day on which the savior of the world comes. That is the day of resurrection.

The marriage celebration of Adam and Eve is the primary concern of this text. Nowhere else in mainstream Syriac tradition could one find a tradition of Adam and Eve being married in the Garden. Behind Adam's great rejoicing at the presentation of Eve is an ancient Jewish reading of *zō't happa'am*. Though this Jewish ideal of the sexual relationship of Adam and Eve did not accord with Christian ideas, other aspects of the Jewish midrashic elaboration of Eden did. For Syriac Christian writers, the theme of marriage in the Garden was important for the metaphors it provided. The church was understood as the bride of Christ and, since Eden was also a symbol for the church, Eden acquired marital images.<sup>65</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined the treatment of marriage in the Garden in three different groups of material: the rabbinic corpus, the book of *Jubilees*, and early Syriac sources. We have shown, contrary to Ginzberg, that the motif of sexual consummation prior to the "fall" was an early, pre-Christian idea. More importantly, though, we have clarified how the material regarding Adam and Eve's sexuality should be approached. Ginzberg, like many other scholars, was influenced by the Christian category of the fall and believed that the presence of sex after the expulsion was simply another way of saying that sexual relations were the result of a "fall" from grace. The book of *Jubilees* provides firm proof that the category of the "fall" does not account for the presence or absence of sex in the Garden. Rather than focus on the concept of the fall, this article has argued that the concept of purity is a better means of understanding the role of sex in the Garden. *Jubilees*, which in no way advocates a position of celibacy, restricts sexual relations to the area outside of Eden because Eden is understood as a Temple. Ephrem, in his *Hymns on Paradise*, follows this reasoning. Rabbinic tradition, on the other hand, does not understand the concept of Eden in terms of priestly purity within the Temple. Its concerns are quite different. For the Rabbis, Eden is a spot of divine blessing and joy. For those familiar with the vigorous attention the Rabbis generally give to the standards of levitical purity and the gross disdain early Christians often showed toward these very same rules, it is more than mildly ironical that in this instance it is the Christians who follow the levitical model while the Rabbis ignore it.

<sup>65</sup>As Murray observes (*Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 255), one can detect in Syriac Christianity the concept that "life in the Church is an anticipation of paradise" and so the state of virginity anticipates "the 'angelic' state in the heavenly wedding-feast and bridechamber."