PHYSICS FOR PROPHETS

AN ANCIENT ISRAELITE DELIVERS A TED TALK

*What you are about to read is the transcript of a scientific lecture that, due to its excessive length, erratic tone, pervasive belligerence toward the Greeks, and chaotic conclusion, was never broadcast on the Internet. It may be of interest, however, to both physicists and devotees of the Old Testament; scholars of Kabbalah, too, will find food for thought. As a biblical scholar, I have undertaken to annotate the text with a few terminological glosses and citations from Scripture [*in brackets, referring to both the Hebrew and the English chapter-and-verse enumeration*] and other ancient literature. The speaker's topic is the familiar matter of Israelite attitudes toward holiness and ritual pollution, on which three standard reference works are Jonathan Klawans,* Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism *(Oxford University Press, 2000); David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean(OT),"* The Anchor Bible Dictionary *(Doubleday,1992), VI.729-741; and the Book of Leviticus.*

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As you will see, ancient Israelite purity concepts constituted a proto- or pseudoscientific system with analogies to modern theoretical physics. This is not to attribute to the biblical authors special insight or prescience, let alone to subscribe to their view of things. My motivation in publicizing this unknown TED talk is to demonstrate that, while biblical holiness regulations are generally considered the least relevant and most skippable parts of Scripture, we can still at least respect and perhaps even identify emotionally with the Israelite purity system—providing we consider it as much science as religion.

I have been assisted in interpreting the speaker's lecture by biblical scholars Ronald S. Hendel of the University of California, Berkeley, and David P. Wright of Brandeis University. For help with the scientific end of things, I have gratefully drawn upon the expertise of Professor Kim Griest of the University of California,

San Diego, Department of Physics, who assures me there's no science whatsoever in it! Any remaining errors are, of course, the responsibility of the speaker, not his editor.

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Good evening. I would like to thank the Sapling Foundation, first for my bodily resurrection--these dry bones really did get to walk around, and, believe me, they're a little stiff today!--and second for inviting me to address you here in this distinguished forum. <*warm applause*>

Since returning from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I have been studying not only your language but also your cosmology, and I must say I find it all quite absurd. Quarks, neutrinos, bosons, superstrings--clearly, it's time to shift some paradigms into reverse! Quantum probability? Black holes? Don't make me laugh! Which is it? Does God play dice or shoot pool?

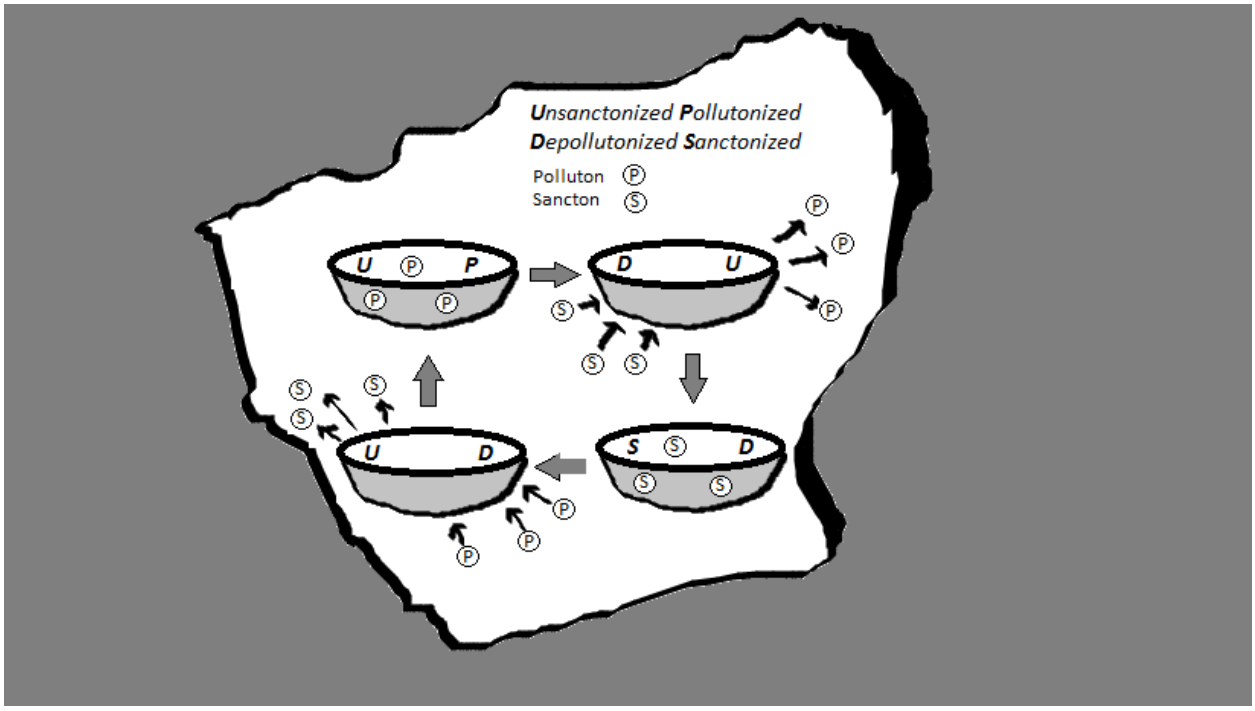
I'm here to present to you a better theory, better *because* it's over 2,500 years old, not based on the "latest discoveries," not the fruits of a "scientific" method originated by an academy of swine-eating esthetes from the Aegean and perfected by an Englishman named *Bacon*. Tonight I'll try to put our findings into language that that even a theoretical physicist might understand. <*mutterings in the audience*>

Long ago we Israelites discovered four states of matter and two subatomic particles not producible in accelerators such as the Large Hadron Collider at CERN or the abandoned Superconducting Super Collider in Texas. First, please meet the *sancton*--here, Dr. Higgs, is the *true* God Particle. Depending upon the presence or absence of these tiny charged bodies, matter may be either *sanctonized*, what we call in Hebrew *qadosh* [*ed.: holy, consecrated*], or *unsanctonized*, Hebrew *hol* [*ed.: profane, secular*].

A second particle, the *polluton*, is charged oppositely to the sancton, an antisancton if you wish. An object filled with pollutons is said to be pollutonized, Hebrew *tame'* [*ed: impure, unclean, defiled*]. The absence or departure of pollutons from matter makes it *depollutonized*, Hebrew *tahor* [*ed.: pure, clean*].

Please note that, although I have used the term "charged," I am not speaking of electrostatic polarity. To be sure, there are similarities to an electron current: a sanctonization or pollutonization charge is conducted by certain substances and blocked by others; and under special conditions the charge may leap across a gap. But there is a critical difference from electricity. Unlike your proton and electron, which I'm told unite to form a neutron, pollutons and sanctons *cannot coexist in the same body*, at least not in our universe, except under extraordinary circumstances. Rather, they normally *repel* one another. Depending on the force of the charge, either the sanctons will depollutonize [*ed.: purify*] and sanctonize [*ed.: consecrate*] a pollutonized [*ed.: unclean*] body by expelling its pollutons, or the opposite may occur: pollutons will pollutonize [*ed.: defile*] and unsanctonize [*ed.: profane*] a previously depollutonized, sanctonized object. When the particles are forced into extreme proximity, however, the normal result is a violent explosion. The mutual repulsion of sanctons and pollutons we call the Exclusion Principle or the *Second Law of Theodynamics*. (Because the phenomenon is highly dangerous to produce and hence impossible to study except anecdotally, we haven't discovered yet whether this explosion is simply an extra-violent repulsion or rather a case of total mutual annihilation.)

As a consequence of these properties, the presence of pollutons means that an object is *ipso facto* unsanctonized [*ed.: profane*], while the presence of sanctons means that an object is *ipso facto* depollutonized [*ed.: clean*]. Note, too, that an object may be simultaneously depollutonized [*ed.: clean*] and unsanctonized [*profane*], i.e., void of both pollutons and sanctons. This can be an unstable, transitory phase. The body may attract sanctons, in which case the unsanctonized state is neutralized by definition; conversely, if pollutons are attracted, the state of depollutonization is negated.



Am I going too fast for you? Perhaps a concrete example will help. (May I have the first potsherd, please?) Consider the bowl pictured above. In stage 1 (upper left), it exists in simultaneous states of unsanctonization and pollutonization [*ed.: profane and unclean*] due to the presence of pollutons. If these particles are expelled by bringing near a highly sanctonized object, then the bowl passes into the combined states of unsanctonization plus depollutonization [*ed.: profane and clean*], since there are neither pollutons nor sanctons. Next, should the bowl absorb sanctons, we will have depollutonization plus sanctonization [*ed.: clean and holy*]. Finally, bringing near a sufficiently strong polluton charge would restore the bowl to its original unsanctonized, pollutonized state [*ed.: profane and unclean*].

Only three combinations of states cannot be found, two excluded by logic and one by the laws of Nature. By logic, sanctonization [*ed.: holiness*] and unsanctonization [*ed.: profanity*] cannot coexist, and neither can pollutonization [*ed.: defilement*] and depollutonization [*ed.: purity*]. Also impossible, but for a different reason, would be concurrent states of sanctonization [*ed.: holiness*] and pollutonization [*ed.: defilement*], for, as we have seen, sanctons and pollutons will not occupy the same body simultaneously—except under extraordinary circumstances we shall consider below.

Much of Israelite science and technology was devoted to understanding and controlling these phenomena. If the theory is over your heads, it was also hard for the average Israelite to grasp, which is why a hereditary caste of professional Sancton Mechanics (Hebrew *kohanim*) [*ed.: priests*] was trained to meticulously distinguish among the four states of matter and the two types of particles, and tasked with preventing dangerous collisions [*Leviticus 10:10; 11:47; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23*]. In my previous life, I myself belonged to this guild [*Ezekiel 1:3*].

Admittedly, the origin and nature of sanctons and pollutons remain somewhat obscure. Do they simply pop into existence from the fabric of space-time, given certain conditions? Can they then pop out of existence? Or has there always been a fixed quota of each, a conservation principle, with the particles flowing from place to place by attraction and repulsion? Are all sanctons and all pollutons the same, or are some more massive or more charged than others? Are there forms of matter made only of sanctons and only of pollutons? Though it verges on blasphemy to suggest it, might God himself be made of pure sanctonium? And, if so, might there be a corresponding being of pure pollutonium? My talk will answer some of these questions; others will remain open for future researchers.

First, the origin of sanctons and pollutons. Our theoreticians conjectured that, before time, the two antiparticles were originally united (a juxtaposition normally forbidden in our universe), suspended in a matrix of dihydrogen monoxide along with all proto-matter [*Genesis 1:2*]. This primordial soup, containing the elements of what would become the Universe, bubbled in a state of stochastic turbulence. But suddenly…

Here's my first shocker for many of you. As much as it pains me to admit it, Aristotle [*Metaphysics* XII] was right: in order to explain the world that we observe, it is necessary to postulate a First Mover (from another dimension, presumably) to impart energy, in this case photons, into the chaotic pre-Cosmos. No joke, Richard Feynman, and I am so sorry to disappoint Roger Penrose, Stephen Weinberg, Neil deGrasse Tyson and the rest of your ungodly crew, but there really *is* an Old Man with a White Beard [*Daniel chap. 7*]. I've met him and we're almost on a first-name basis; I call him Yahweh, and he calls me Son of Man. For your convenience, however, I shall refer to him as God. And frankly,

ladies and gentlemen, as Niels Bohr once griped, you physicists should stop telling God what to do, and listen to what he actually did.

With the first Big Burst of electromagnetic radiation, time began [*Genesis 1:5*]. Ever since, the pulsating tick-tock of darkness and light has marked our unidirectional passage through the temporal dimension. I want to emphasize that light was not originally created by the fusion of hydrogen atoms or any other thermonuclear process; it was a direct emanation from God.

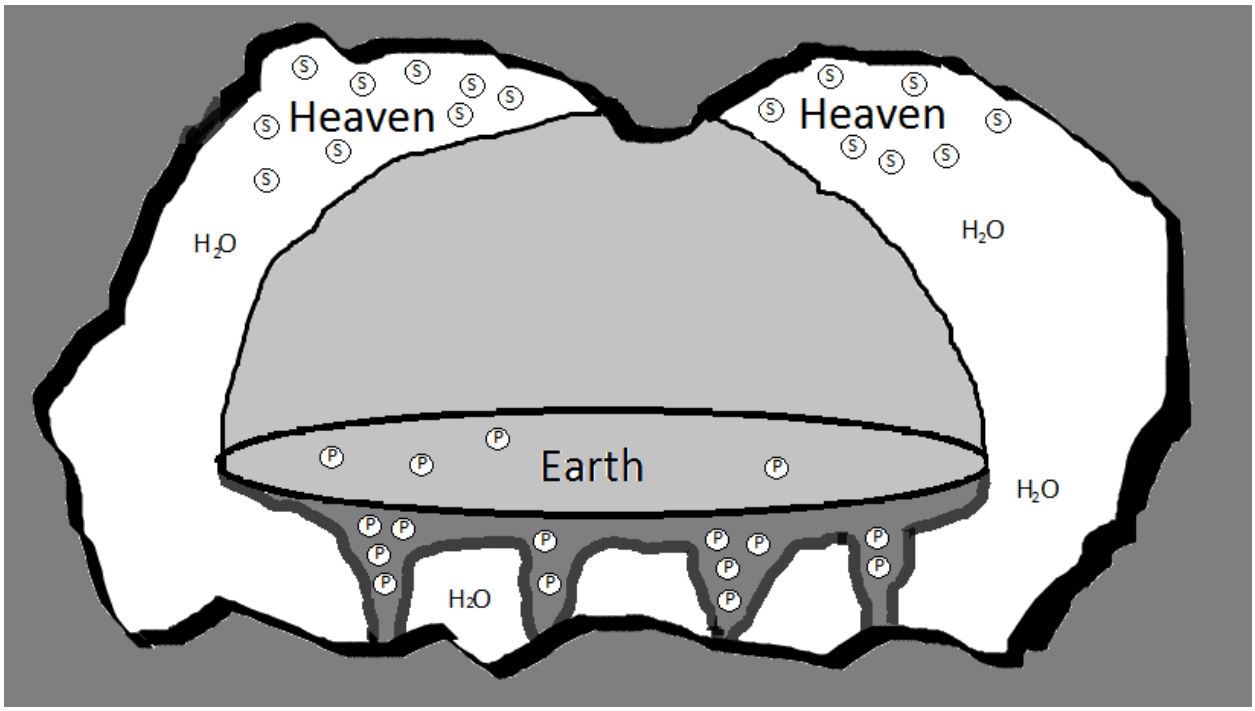
Now, I hear you muttering, "emanation" is a weasel-word conveying nothing. I grant that emanation is an occult property—but then so is gravity. When I say that God emanated light, I actually mean that God spoke the word "light," and light suddenly shone [*Genesis 1:3*]. How exactly did this happen?

By what some of us used to call the Adamic Principle, we could say that light came into existence as a pronounceable, namable concept, because six days later God would create a speaking, sentient being able to perceive and think abstractly about light. If you consider this argument sophistic—and it sounds suspiciously Athenian to me—then here's another way of looking at it more palatable to the scientific mind.

Our Hebrew language does not distinguish among your English terms "spirit," "wind" and "breath"; to us they're all *ruah*, i.e., a perturbation in the ether of space-time that invisibly causes action at a distance. In fact, it is *ruah* that animates all animal life, ourselves included. (There is, however, an alternative hypothesis, which I'll discuss a little later.) Thus, when we say that God created everything through speech, we mean that his *ruah* organized and directed chaotic kinetic energy for two purposes: (a) to create different forms of energy and matter; and (b) to manipulate in space the solid components of the physical world.

Creation proceeded smoothly over the course of the First Seven Days. (Sorry, Weinberg; you got that wrong, too.) After creating time-light, over the next two days God used the force of *ruah* to make first a vertical and then a horizontal differentiation within the protomatter-plus-H_2O solution [*Genesis 1:2,6,9*], engendering, in addition to the three spatial dimensions, all the components of our universe, including sanctons and pollutons. By the Second Law of Theodynamics, over time the distribution of sanctons and pollutons was de-randomized; they

naturally segregated themselves into two different regions. Specifically, the unsanctonized [*ed.: profane*] earth attracted pollutons, and the depollutonized [*ed.: pure*] sky attracted sanctons [*cf., however, Job 15:15*]. By what we determined to be the *First Law of Theodynamics*, God found the presence of sanctons pleasing and the presence of pollutons abhorrent.



Here I must correct a few more misperceptions of your modern cosmologists. (The next potsherd, please.) As you know, matter consists of far more than pollutons and sanctons. The creative infusion of photon energy also separated out solid and gaseous molecules from the primordial soup. God then used the power of *ruah* to create a hemispherical bubble of breathable atmosphere, bounded above by a dome of what appears to be blue stone or ice [*ed.: the firmament; Genesis 1:7; Ezekiel 1:22; 10:1*] and below by a flat plate of complex mineral composition, the earth [*Genesis 1:9-10*]. Spherical earth? That's those Greeks again; don't make me laugh! Just step outside and look for yourselves! *<the audience grows more restless, some begin to leave and do not come back>*

To proceed: today, everything outside the enclosed biohemisphere remains in its primordial, aqueous state. We know this empirically because, when we dig down, water seeps up; when we travel far in a single direction, again we find

water; and water even leaks from apertures in the sky, which moreover is translucent like water [*Genesis 6:11; 8:2; Isaiah 24:18; Malachi 3:10*].

I must admit that we Israelites never succeeded in inventing flying machines to explore the sky--although I've envisioned some intriguing prototypes [*Ezekiel chaps. 1, 10*]--and Mankind's sole attempt to build a high-elevation observation platform ended in mutual recriminations; by the time the grant money ran out, nobody was talking to anybody [*Genesis chap. 11*]. Actually, we did once send a single Israelite on a manned mission to heaven aboard an alien UFO, but I'm told my colleague Elijah, even after almost 3,000 years, still hasn't reported back [*2 Kings 2:11; cf. Malachi 3:23 (English 4:5)*]. Despite the lack of empirical evidence, however, we have a good idea of what goes on in the extraterrestrial realm. After all, one of our physicists' seminal insights was that physical laws are the same everywhere: "as in heaven, so in earth," as a later compatriot would put it [*Luke 11:2; cf. Matthew 6:10*].

There are in fact several types of heavenly extraterrestrials which I may describe verbally, although I'm forbidden to show them in a Power Point presentation [*Exodus 20:4, etc*.]. First and foremost is the Creator himself, as I said, an Old Man with a White Beard whose throne is set upon the firmament [*Exodus 24:10; Ezekiel 1:26-28*]. Various E.T.s (you still know their Hebrew names, cherubim and seraphim) fly with wings [*Psalms 148:4*] wait upon God and transport his throne [*Isaiah chap. 6; 66:1; Ezekiel chaps. 1, 10; Psalms 11:4*]. And cherubim, FYI, are not fat little naked boys—what *is* it with those Greeks?—but winged sphinxes; seraphim are flying snakes, what your paleontologists have misidentified as "pterodactyls" [*Numbers 21:6; Deuteronomy 8:15; Isaiah 14:29; 30:6; cf. Herodotus* Histories *2.75; 3.107*]. Other creatures constitute God's heavenly host, which the naked eye perceives as the sun and moon, the fixed stars and the wandering stars, which you call planets [*e.g., Deuteronomy 4:19; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 5:20; Psalms 148:1-4; Job 38:7*]. Just where and how these E.T.s occupy space is slightly unclear, however. Unless God and his angels are some sort of celestial fish, they must not literally reside in the watery sky, but rather inhabit a dimension contiguous to it—imagine, perhaps, a fourth-dimensional firmament projecting a few cubits outward from my illustration.

Be that as it may, in considering the heavens we encounter a crucial paradox. Although we observe that the sky is subject to the alternation of light and dark, i.e., time, everything in it lasts essentially forever, till the end of days [*cf. Deuteronomy 11:21; Isaiah 51:6; Psalms 72:5,17; 89:30 (English 89:29); 119:89; 148:1-6; Job 14:12*]. This anomaly must be the effect of an otherwise unknown physical property—an insight which led to the discovery of the sancton in the first place. Like the Theories of General Relativity and Special Relativity, the Torah of Spiritual Relativity predicts that the flow of time is not uniform everywhere, that localized temporal retardations or cessations may occur—specifically, wherever sanctons aggregate. Because in this context time is meaningless, so is causality; thus, we can never know whether the timelessness of heaven causes or is caused by its high sancton concentration.

Note that, as a special corollary of the Torah of Spiritual Relativity, *the flow of time is also not uniform at all times*. Time as well as matter can be sanctonized [*ed.: consecrated*]. Sanctonized time is no-time, a temporal singularity, and in such a unique environment all theodynamic work ceases. For reasons we may never know, the universe is so constituted that a Black Hole in Time arises every seven days [*Genesis 2:1-3*]; moreover, the interaction of the lunar and solar cycles creates additional days of suspended temporal flow [*ed.: the festival calendar*].

Let us leave time alone, for the moment, and return to space. Somewhat confusingly to you, I imagine, the Hebrew language uses the same terms, *shamayim* [*ed.: heaven, sky*] and *raqia'* [*ed.: firmament, sky*], for both the solid celestial partition and the watery heavens above it. Equally confusingly, we call both the upper surface of the lower mineral plate and the whole plate itself *'erets*, meaning both "earth" and "underworld." Thus, just as the firmament is the floor of heaven, the realm of immortality, so the inhabitable earth is the roof of Sheol, the realm of death.

Since its creation, the terrestrial disk had a sufficiently low specific gravity to float on the primordial waters. Its tendency to wobble [*e.g., Isaiah 24:18-19; 54:10; Psalms 46:3; 82:5; cf. Psalms 93:1; 96:10; 104:5; Job 9:6*] was mitigated by "pillars" protruding downward into the deep to provide ballast [*1 Samuel 2:8; Psalms 75:3; 104:5; Job 9:6*]. Naturally, the earth had to be not only buoyant but water-tight. We think that, when the solid earth was first precipitated out of the

primal solution, God drained some surface water through holes in the ground, which he subsequently plugged [*Genesis 6:11; 8:2; Psalms 104:7 (?)*]. God could potentially pull out the stoppers to drown the surface, but, having tried this once, he has promised never to do it again [*Genesis 9:8-17*].

Your scientists have yet to satisfactorily answer the question, What happens when we die?, and I can see that many of you want to know. I am happy to tell you, as the answer is highly relevant to my talk, and I happen to have recent, firsthand experience.

After life, all animals revert into the elements from which they were fashioned: minerals, water and *ruah* or moving air, also called *nephesh* and *neshamah* [*ed.: soul, spirit, breath; e.g., Genesis 1:24; 2:7; 3:19; Psalms 146:4; Job 14:10-12*]. Over time, the physical corpse is first desiccated then pulverized; as for the "wind" that animates our bodies and gives us self-consciousness, it too returns to the ground, inhabiting Sheol, a shadowy realm without sound, light or moisture [*Psalms 6:6 (English 6:5); 30:10 (English 30:9); 115:17; Job 10:21-22*]. In the netherworld, the land of pollutons, one is cut off from God [*Psalms 6:6 (English 6:5); 88:3-12*]—although some of the more enterprising dead, such as myself, still carry on careers as consultants [*Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:11*], in which case our spirits, for business purposes, can appear as humans [*1 Samuel 28:14*].

Ever since the Big Burst and the great creative rift, as we have seen, the depollutonized [*ed.: pure*] sky is attractive to sanctons, and where there is high sancton concentration, time ceases. Conversely, the unsanctonized [*ed.: profane*] earth attracts and is filled with pollutons. Everything under the sky's dome sickens, ages, dies and decays. Genes may replicate their DNA, but they cannot perpetuate their individual organisms--Richard Dawkins got that right, anyway. But pollutonization is non-uniform. Due to particle flow, at least in the short term, some places and things are more pollutonized than others.

We have discovered that pollutons are most prevalent on earth where there are states or substances involved in death or birth. Thus, for instance, pollutons are present when we slaughter animals for meat [*Leviticus, chap. 17; cf. Genesis 9:2-6*], and any human corpse is especially polluton-rich [*e.g., Numbers chap. 19*].

Childbirth, too, attracts or creates pollutons [*Leviticus chap. 12*], as do genital emissions of the male or female body [*e.g., Leviticus chap. 15*].

Because pollutons are so small, we have only indirect methods for measuring their concentration. One approach is to look at how long the effect takes to dissipate, as a body sheds its pollutons. Alternatively, we can examine to what extent pollutons are conducted from body to body. In terms of half-life, the most potent source of pollutons is a woman after bearing a daughter; she carries a charge for a full 80 days [*Leviticus chap. 12*]. As for conductivity, the most pollutonizing object is a human corpse: in the process of its disposal and the neutralization of its pollutonization, as many as four people may be temporarily pollutonized, the effect diminishing with distance from the death [*Numbers chap. 19; cf. Haggai 2:13*]. We have determined anecdotally that the shedding of pollutons can be accelerated by rinsing in water, which apparently binds the particles [*e.g., Exodus 19:10,14; 29:4; 30:17-21; Leviticus chap. 15*].

What's wrong with pollutonization? It doesn't appear to harm us, although there is inconclusive evidence that certain skin diseases may be the result of polluton poisoning [*Leviticus chaps. 13-14; 2 Chronicles 26:16-19*]. Still, overall, pollutonization would seem to be a benign condition--except, and this is our next crucial insight, we have discovered that certain *moral derelictions*—theft, fraud, false oaths, various unconscious violations--also *attract pollutons*. These pollutons do not *cause* evil or harm, they are *consequences* of evil and harm. Still, either way, the ideal society will have a low pollutonization quotient.

At this point, let us return to cosmology: Creation, which separated the timeless realm of sanctons from the time-bound realm of pollutons, affected God himself. Purging the sky achieved one aim, creating a timeless, depollutonized dwelling, but there was a loss as well: the dross of pollutonization accrued in the earth, which thus became repellent to God. In other words, God alienated part of creation from himself; henceforth, he would visit earth only fleetingly, appearing (if visible at all) to humans in the form of a man [*ed.: an angel; e.g., Genesis 18:2*], often surrounded by a protective fiery garment or vehicle [*ed.: the Glory; e.g., Exodus 3:2; 19:18; Deuteronomy chaps. 4-5*]. If I may be permitted to anthropomorphize, this is the tragedy of creation, and it is a double tragedy: the

pollutonized, unsanctonized earth yearns for the depollutonized, sanctonized heaven and vice versa, but the twain may never meet.

Or so it might seem. In fact, there have been several efforts to bring them together. We already mentioned one: a high-elevation observation platform that was abandoned under suspicious circumstances—some suspect bureaucratic sabotage [*Genesis chap. 11*]. Even before that, there was an attempt to bridge the gap between heaven and earth—by, of all things, the power of charm! The incident achieved a certain notoriety in its own day but has since been suppressed by hundreds of generations of Sunday school teachers. Seeing as there are no children present…once upon a time, some E.T.s [ed.*: the sons of God; Genesis 6:1-4*] descended to earth to mate with mortal women. These unions proved fertile, but with a qualification. The resulting demigods were huge and mighty like their sires, yet mortal like their mothers. These hybrid giants are now all extinct; from their remains your paleontologists have hallucinated a phantasmagoria of so-called "dinosaurs." <*the remaining audience grows more unsettled*>

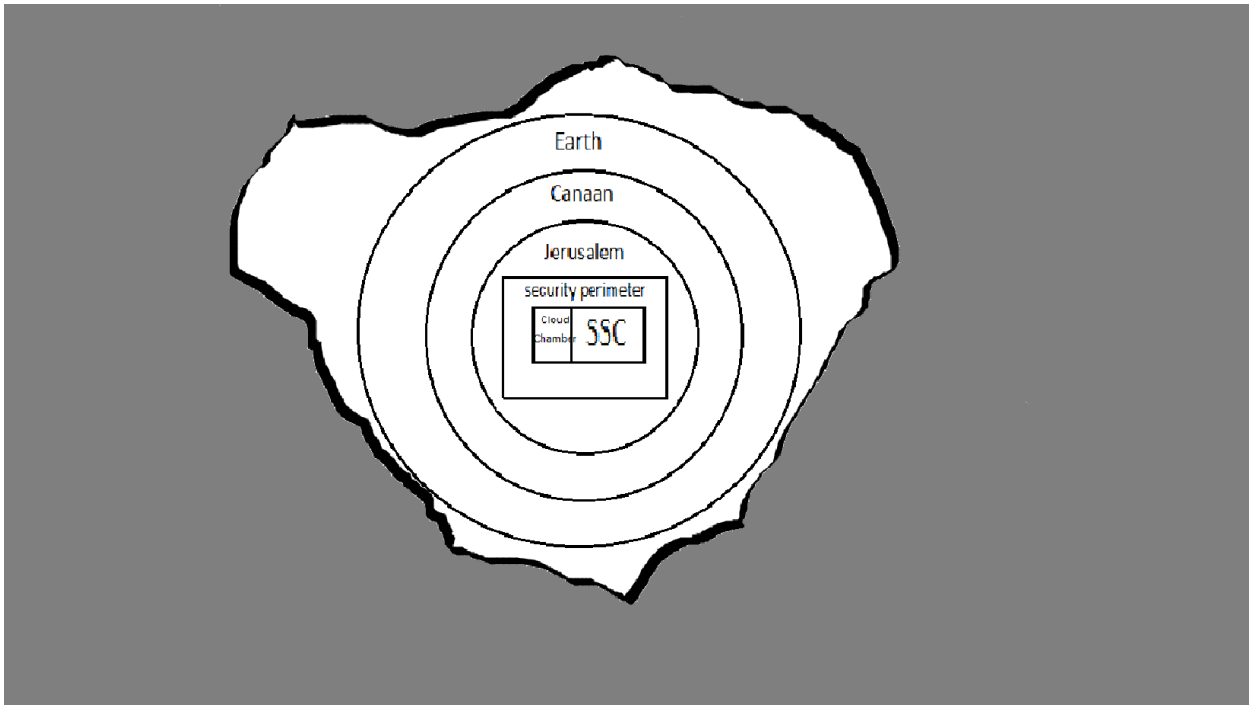
Folks, I know my cup runneth over-time, but please bear with me. Quite apart from these sorry episodes, normal humans innately possess certain divine attributes, both physical and intellectual [*Psalms 8:5-6 (English 8:4-5)*]. Male and female, we are all made in God's physical image, albeit from perishable materials [*Genesis 1:26-27*]. Distinguishing ourselves from all other terrestrial creatures, moreover, we have achieved civilization, what your English translations misleadingly call the Knowledge of Good and Evil [*Genesis 2:9*]. What we lack, alas, is eternal life.

Exciting news: according to our botanical pharmacists, there in fact exists a medicinal fruit that might in theory infinitely prolong longevity, but cultivation efforts have failed, and the plant has not been cleared for human consumption [*Genesis 3:22-24*]. Absent that miracle drug, our only recourse is to accrue sanctons and discharge pollutons, attaining, to the extent possible on earth, maximal states of depollutonization [*ed.: purity*] and sanctonization [*ed.: holiness*]. We will not gain immortality or stop time completely, but, to the extent that we can attract God's presence, we will reap the consequent benefits of health, longevity, prosperity and victory [*ed.: blessing*]. Conversely, the more we are unsanctonized [*ed.: profane*] and pollutonized [*ed.: defiled*], God's absence will bring disease,

impoverishment, defeat and exile [*ed.: curse; e.g. Leviticus chap. 26; Deuteronomy chaps. 27-28*].

I now want to share with you two exciting discoveries of Israelite science, the combined achievement of our physicists, medical researchers and organic chemists. First: the vital force of life is to be found, not only in intangible breath [*ed.: spirit*], but also in visible, material form as the *blood* coursing through our bodies [*Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 12:23*]. Blood it further turns out, when it is outside a body (as in death, menstruation and childbirth), is also a *superconductor for sanctons and pollutons*. Therefore, by manipulating blood, our Israelite Sancton Mechanics were able to direct particle currents to control the states of sanctonization, depollutonization, unsanctonization and pollutonization. Moreover, they could achieve and even maintain a *fifth state of matter not normally present on earth*, and this is the second great discovery: the *supersanctonization field*, either an infinitely high sancton quotient or the presence of a special high-energy particle, the supersancton [*ed.: most holy, holy of holies*]. In a supersancton field, the ordinary laws of physics are suspended: specifically, supersanctons do not necessarily repel but may rather *absorb* pollutons, thus recreating conditions before the First Seven Days. We shall return to this paradox below.

With these theoretical discoveries came crucial technological advances as well: techniques of (a) more effective shielding and (b) space-time manipulation to permit quasi-contact between heaven and earth. (The next two ostraca, please.) As regards insulation, first God chose a land, Canaan, in which the sancton/polluton ratio might be adjusted toward the former [*e.g., Leviticus 18:24-30; Numbers 35:33-34; Joshua 22:19*]. Within Canaan there was an especially depollutonized, sanctonized [*ed.: pure, holy*] city: Jerusalem or Zion [*Isaiah 52:1*]. Inside Jerusalem stood a facility itself composed of concentric zones of mounting depollutonziation and sanctonization; we called it the *Supercondensing Sancton Collector* (SSC) [*ed.: the Temple*]. The most depollutonized, supersanctonized spot on earth was the inner Cloud Chamber of the SSC [*ed.: the Holy of Holies; Exodus 26:33-34; 1 Kings 6:16; 7:50; 8:6-11; Ezekiel 41:4*].



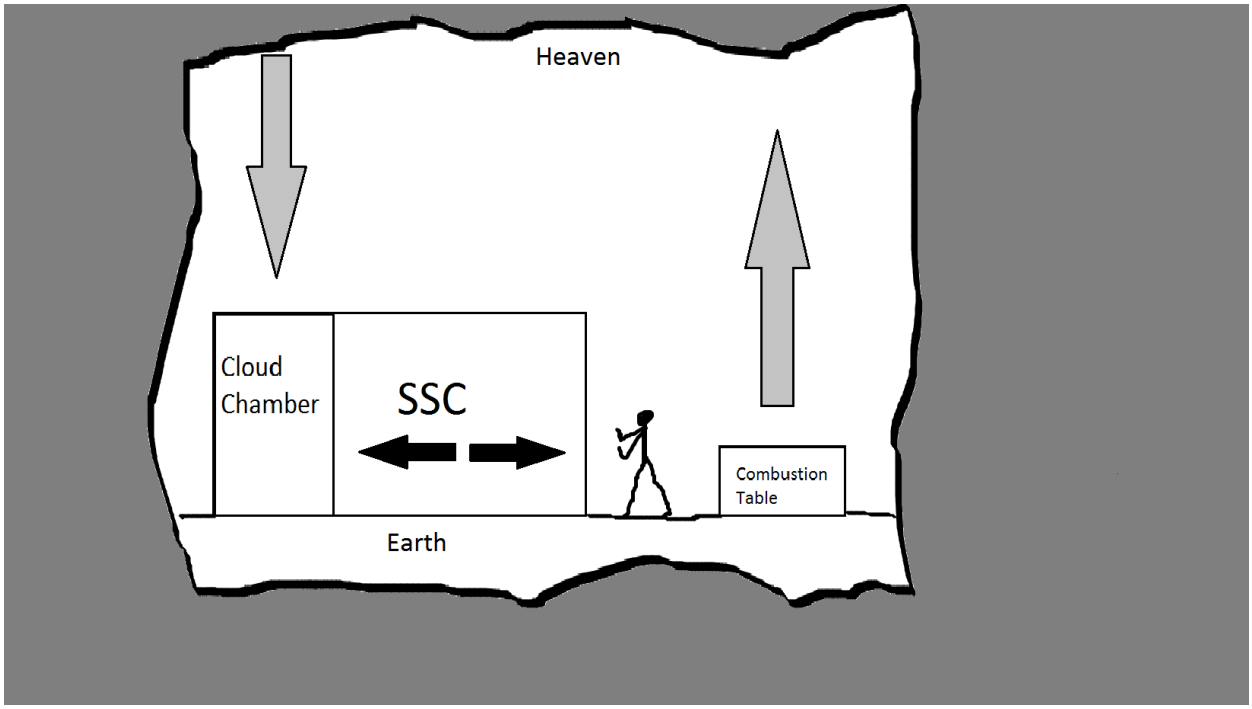


God also designated a special people to maintain this favorable balance: the Children of Israel, appointed Sancton Mechanics to the nations [*Exodus 19:6; cf. Isaiah 42:6; 49:6*] and therefore obliged to guard and vigilantly maximize their own depollutonization [*ed.: purity*] state and sanctonization [*ed.: holiness*] level. Within the people of Israel was the tribe of Levi, a caste of maintenance workers

entrusted with the lesser upkeep responsibilities of the SSC [*e.g., Numbers chaps. 3-4, 8; 18:2-6*]. And among the Levites, only the house of Aaron was qualified to handle the most sanctonized objects [*Exodus chap. 29; Numbers 18:8-19; 25:12-13, etc*.]. Moreover, of the four original clans of Aaron—Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar—only Eleazar's heirs could hold the position of Chief Mechanic [*ed.: High Priest; Numbers 25:11-13*], as they were rigorously bred and trained and given specially approved, multi-layered insulation suits [*ed.: priestly vestments; Exodus chap. 28*].

Before constructing the SSC, we Israelites experimented with various beta versions of a sancton collector—in the Wilderness [*ed.: the desert Tabernacle; Exodus chaps. 25-31; 35-40*], at Shiloh [*Joshua 18:1; Judges 18:31; 1 Samuel chaps. 1-4*], at Gibeon [*1 Kings 3:4; 1 Chronicles 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chronicles 1:3,13*] at Kiriath Jearim [*1 Samuel 7:1-2*], and even a temporary facility in Zion [*ed.: David's tent; 2 Samuel chap. 6)*]. And after the SSC's abrupt decommissioning at the hands of the Babylonians [*2 Kings chap. 25*], I myself published a proposal for a superior new design, which would double as a desalination plant *cum* pharmaceutical factory—we were really going to develop the Dead Sea region [*Ezekiel chaps. 40-46*]!--but, alas, we couldn't procure sufficient funding. The goal was always the same: to create a space on earth in which God's presence could be safely contained.

The theory was simple: we would attract God in two ways: (a) by simulating the conditions of heaven on earth in the supersanctonized Cloud Chamber at the center of the vapor-filled SSC [*ed.: the incense-filled Sanctuary; Exodus 26:33-34; 30:6; 1 Kings 6:16; 7:50; 8:6-11; Ezekiel 41:4*]; and (b) by simulating earth in heaven by sending up to God a whiff of pyrolized meat, burnt on a supersanctonized device made of either bronze or stone and hence called the Chalcolithic Converter [*ed.: the Altar; Exodus 29:37; cf. 20:25*]. Thereby, it was hoped, Heaven and earth would warp and essentially touch, and Man could have a face-to-face relationship with God. (The last potsherd, please.) At least that was the theory, assuming protocols were meticulously followed. (An amusing side note: before they discovered fire, our ancestors tried to send meat to heaven by simply throwing it into the air. This was the origin of the so-called "heave offering" [*Exodus 29:27-28, etc*.].)



Despite (or because of?) our extensive law codes, we were a less litigious society than yours. Our Sancton Mechanics were not insured and did not sign waivers either, but their responsibilities were fraught with risk [*e.g., Numbers 18:1-7*]. Although most of the bugs were worked out in the testing phase, cautionary tales of our martyrs and near-martyrs to science were passed from generation to generation. After the Sancton Collector Mark I [*ed.: the Tabernacle*] went on line, ramping up for seven days until the Cloud Chamber and the Chalcolithic Converter reached maximal levels of supersanctonization, an intense spark leapt from the former to the latter, igniting the meat laid on the Converter. Anyone standing in the way would have been burnt to a crisp [*Leviticus chaps. 8-9*]! Another time, two highly trained Sancton Mechanics who should have known better brought imprecisely formulated vapor matrix [*ed.: incense*] into the Collector; the result was a deadly explosion [*Leviticus 10:1-2; cf. Exod 30:9, 34-38*]. On yet another occasion, when some unqualified maintenance Levites used correctly formulated matrix, again the Collector went critical [*Numbers 16:6-11, 16-22, 35*]. Once, when an early prototype sancton collector was disassembled for transport, a well-intentioned attendant unwisely touched a supersanctonized component [*ed.: the Ark of the Covenant*] with his bare hands--again, an explosion resulted [*2 Samuel 6:6-7*]. Merely looking upon sanctonized objects could be lethal for laymen [*1 Samuel 6:19-20*].

In general, it was potentially deadly for anyone to enter sanctonized [*ed.: holy*] space unless previously depollutonized [*ed.: purified; Leviticus 15:31; 22:3*]. Accordingly, it was safest to maximize everyone's state of depollutonization [*ed.: purity; Numbers 19:20*] and sanctonization [*ed.: holiness; Leviticus chaps. 17-26*], even if that meant temporarily excluding certain persons from the city until their pollutonization numbers declined to acceptable levels [*Numbers 5:1-4*]. The Sancton Mechanics in particular had to maintain extreme states of depollutonization and sanctonization [*Leviticus chap. 21*], which is why, when on site, they had to undergo random sobriety tests [*cf. Leviticus 10:8*].

In order for God to be present on earth in the SSC, then, we needed to minimize the number of pollutons and replace them with sanctons, starting with the whole land of Canaan and proceeding, at ever mounting sancton quotients, through the walls of Jerusalem, the SSC's outer containment wall, the inner containment wall, and into the supersanctonized Cloud Chamber.

What made the whole project feasible was the aforementioned superconductivity of blood and the unique properties of supersancton particles. Several basic rules were first enacted. Blood was classified as unsafe for human consumption *[Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:10, 13-14; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:23-24; 1 Samuel 14:32-35*], and even meat became a controlled substance [*Leviticus chap. 17; Deuteronomy chap. 12*]. Only fully qualified Sancton Mechanics could safely handle blood, whose superconductivity of both sanctons and pollutons rendered it highly volatile. The "people of the land"—Hebrew for *hoi polloi*--were made to understand that, before they could eat their meat, we Sancton Mechanics had to "feed" God with the Chalcolithic Converter, taking our own cut too, in well-earned payment for incurring the risks of running the plant [*Leviticus chaps. 1-7, 17*].

To keep the SSC stable, the most important operation was the regular Decontamination Procedure [*ed.: Sin Offering*], whereby Sancton Mechanics used blood from an animal belonging to a pollutonized [*ed.: unclean*] person to *depollutonize* [*ed.: purify*] both various components of the SSC and, it seems, the owner him/herself [*Leviticus chaps. 4-5, 12-15*]. Here, polluton-rich blood was used to *expel* not attract pollutons.

How was this possible? Our scientists inferred that, in the supersanctonized environment of the SSC, the laws of physics operated somewhat differently than in the outside world. We didn't understand how it worked; we just knew that it did. The biggest mystery was the "spooky" behavior of the pollutons, i.e., how they got into the SSC in the first place. One theory held that, in the local supersanctonized environment, the flow of time and hence causality could be temporarily suspended or flipped: the transfer of blood would then *retroactively* pollutonize the SSC, and, when normal time was restored, the pollutons would just disappear. Other theoreticians, however, conjectured that, when a person became pollutonized outside the facility, new pollutons would spontaneously appear in the SSC—or rather, the same pollutons would now exist in two places at once. When polluton-rich blood was brought into the SSC, the virtual pollutons would be reunited and absorbed into the supersanctons--which, according to the most advanced versions of sancton dynamics, are sanctons appearing simultaneously *in two places in the same place*. (You heard me right. Don't tell me quantum electrodynamics makes any more sense. Never try to out-weird the prophet Ezekiel!) These combination hyperparticles, composed of sanctons and pollutons, may in fact be the same as those that existed before the First Seven Days. However that may be, after the Decontamination Procedure, the polluton-rich animal carcass was disposed of outside the camp in an off-site storage facility, a "sancton bottle" whose repulsive charge contained the pollutons it enveloped without actually touching them [*Leviticus 4:12,21; 16:26-28*].

To return from the theoretical to the practical, one might object: what about pollutonization [*ed.: defilement*] states caused by more serious derelictions not purged by the Decontamination Procedure? Could the SSC really absorb an infinite number of pollutons? Would not the pollutons sooner or later drive God away? Would not the technicians themselves be contaminated, inasmuch as they, too, ate from the Decontamination animals [*Leviticus 5:13; 6:10-11; 7:6-10; Ezekiel 42:13; 44:29; Hosea 4:8*]?

We called the facility a "collector" precisely because it served as a polluton filter, or rather a polluton battery for storing spent pollutons. Once a year [*ed.: Yom Kippur*] the Chief Mechanic would don a special suit and enter the Cloud Chamber. Working from the inside out, he would depollutonize [*ed.: purify*] the

entire Collector with goat's blood. Eventually, all remaining pollutons, particularly those caused by deliberate sins, were transferred to a second goat, which was then expelled to Azazel, Hebrew for Not in Our Back Yard [*Leviticus chap. 16*]. (Our aforementioned theoreticians here claimed that there was really just one goat appearing in two places and existing on reciprocally reversed temporal axes!) The facility and its personnel were ready to absorb another year's quota of pollutons.

Now, the SSC would not accept all pollutons, for some were apparently more charged than others and behaved quite differently; and so here we meet another hypothetical particle. *Superpollutons* are supposedly created/attracted by three extreme offenses: murder, sex crime (incest or adultery) and worshiping other gods than Yahweh [*e.g., Leviticus chap. 18; Numbers chap. 35; Deuteronomy 21:1-9; Jeremiah 2:7,23; 3:1; Ezekiel 20:7-31; 36:17-18*]. We never did agree on how these superparticles behaved. While some found evidence they could pass from person to person [*e.g., 1 Kings 2:31*], they were more typically "grounded," attracted by the earth's greater polluton charge and absorbed locally [*e.g., Genesis 4:10; Numbers 35:33-34; 2 Kings 24:4; Ezekiel 9:9; 24:6-9; Hosea 6:8*].

We also could never figure how to handle this type of environmental contamination, which threatened our relationship with the divine realm. We had an effective technique for annually depollutonizing the SSC, but not the whole land of Canaan, let alone the earth itself. Our Union of Concerned Prophets (I was a card-carrying member) continually warned that, should we pollutonize our land beyond a certain triggering threshold, it would "vomit" us forth [*Leviticus 18:24-30; Ezekiel 36:17-19; Psalms 106:34-41*]. The people of Israel would be exiled from Canaan, and God would be exiled from Jerusalem. Do you think they ever listened? Of course not, and yet I myself lived to see this catastrophic meltdown [*ed.: the Babylonian exile; cf. Ezekiel chaps. 1-11*]. And just as we were on the brink of achieving a Great Unified Torah, that would have joined and reconciled all our knowledge and discoveries! [*ed.: The speaker appears here to be referring to the redaction of the Pentateuch, which in fact was achieved only some 100-200 years after the prophet's death.*]

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But now, you stiff-necked and rebellious generation, O Children of America, hear the word of the Lord! Together we can get it right! I still have blueprints for my new-and-improved *Super* Supercondensing Sancton Collector [*Ezekiel chaps. 40-46*]. My visionary design was never tested; they said it wouldn't work, the cubits didn't add up, and today even your so-called "critical biblical scholars" dismiss my plans as an "idealization." Can you believe it? Many have called me, me the prophet Ezekiel the son of Buzi, mad! Mad? I'll show them who's mad! I've already found the perfect site for an American **S^3C**--in Utah. It will cost only 12 billion dollars, and, when we build it, they shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. Waste disposal? Not a problem--Nevada looks a lot like Azazel to me!

And it shall come to pass, on that day, a river shall issue forth from Zion National Park, and on its banks shall grow all manner of tree, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. And it shall flow into the Great Salt Lake, and the waters thereof shall be healed, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish…. Hear, O America, we can't afford *not* to do this!

<A vast wind fills the hall, and a fiery chariot drawn by winged beasts descends from the ceiling. The speaker steps on board and disappears in a clap of thunder.>