

UDC 291.37

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30970/PPS.2024.52.37>

WATER AND PURIFICATION CULTS IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

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Sacred purity and impurity are key concepts in the rituals of many religions around the world. In all religions that refer to sacred impurity, it is associated with contact with death. Death is the source of sacred impurity. Religions have not only a theoretical aspect (they state the state of sacred impurity), but also a practical one (they offer ways of purification). To get rid of sacred impurity, certain religious rites are required. By analogy with everyday body cleansing, which mostly uses water, sacred purification rites are usually associated with water. This article analyses the purification cults of several religions of the world, their mitologies and their role in the lives of believers. The first of the analysed religions is Japanese Shinto, in which sacred purity plays a special role. The doctrine of sacred impurity in Japanese Shinto is based on the story of Izanagi and Izanami, which tells that Izanagi became impure when he entered the realm of the dead to save his wife Izanami from there. To purify himself, he underwent a ritual of washing in water. This mark shows the connection of sacred impurity with contact with death and cults of purification with water.

The article also analyses the doctrines of sacred impurity and purification cults of Taoism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism. Particular attention is paid to Christianity, the rite of entry into which is baptism. The consequence of the sin of the ancestors Adam and Eve is human mortality. Death has penetrated human nature, and therefore every person is bound to come into contact with it. Growth in grace involves the Christian's participation in liturgical rites, and the prerequisite for this is sacred purification. That is why baptism, which is the first step in the Christian life, is also a rite of purification and is performed with the use of water. The article contains texts of prayers and documents of the Church that explain the meaning of baptism. The article also analyses the significance of sacred impurity in Judaism and Mayday, as well as the rites of purification of these religions. For Judaism, such a rite is washing in the mikvah, which became the prototype of Christian baptism. The Mandeans also developed a rich ritualism related to sacred impurity and purification in water from Jewish purification rites.

Key words: religion, water, purification, blood, cult.

Most of the world's ancient religions pay much attention to the issue of sacred purification. A person cannot approach an altar or pray without first being cleansed of everything that makes him or her unworthy to stand before God. The most popular are those purification rites that are associated with water. Water purification rites are present in almost all religions of the world, but in each of them these rites have developed differently. In the analysis of the symbolism of water in the context of ritual purification, both the mythology that substantiates the sacred water ablution and the rites that follow from it seem important. Since the use of water in purification rites is ubiquitous, it is impossible and unnecessary to analyze these rites in all religions. Therefore, we have chosen only a few of them, including the religions of the Far East, India and Persia, and Abrahamic religions.

In Japanese Shinto, there is a myth about the ancestors of the human race Izanagi and Izanaki. The myth says that the Kami council decided that Izanagi and Izanaki should descend from heaven to earth. When Izanagi touched the ground with his spear through the clouds, he noticed that the ground had not yet hardened. When he raised his spear, a drop of viscous liquid fell from it, which immediately solidified. Thus was formed the first island, Onogoroshima (the one that solidified). Izanagi and Izanaki settled on this island and began the wedding ceremony. At first, they gave birth to ugly children, whose parents were forced to get rid of. Kami reported that ugly children were born because Izanaki had been the first to speak during the wedding ceremony. Then Izanagi and Izanaki repeated the rite, but Izanagi was the first to speak. As a result, they had beautiful children who became the kami of islands, lakes, mountains, and so on. However, when Izanagi gave birth to Kagutsuchi (Spirit of Shining Fire), he burned Izanaki's womb so badly that she died. Izanagi could not accept the death of his wife, and came for her to the Land of Yellow Springs, but there Izanaki informed him that he was late, and she had already eaten the food of the realm of the dead. Despite this, Izanagi asked his wife to return, and she decided to ask the rulers of the realm of the dead for a chance to come to life. Until Izanaki agreed with the rulers of the realm of the dead, Izanagi had to wait for her and not try to look at her. However, Izanagi did not hold back and looked at his wife. He saw a terrible picture: worms were eating Izanaki. Frightened, Izanagi fled the Land of Yellow Springs, and Izanaki, enraged, sent a witch after him and promised to kill people in his kingdom. Izanagi managed to get out of the Land of Yellow Springs alive. After escaping from Izanaki, Izanagi went into the water to wash away the defilement from the Land of Yellow Springs. Many kami were born during this ablution, of whom three were the main ones: the goddess of the sun Amaterasu-Ōmikami was born from the washing of the left eye, the moon god Tsukuyomi was born from the washing of the right eye, the wind god Susanoo was born from the washing of the nose [1, p. 474].

This myth is known to every follower of the Japanese Shinto religion. Izanagi descended into the realm of the dead to save his wife Izanaki, but he failed. Due to his own lack of restraint, he condemned Izanaki to remain in the realm of the dead forever and hastily left this cursed place. Despite the fact that Izanagi came out of the realm of the dead, he visited the land of death. The meeting with death left its mark. Death does not release those who fell into its clutches. Izanaki could not leave the place because she had already eaten the food of the dead. Izanagi was able to get out, but the mark of the death curse remained on him: he was haunted by the messengers of death, who were sent by Izanaki. He was doomed, but he had the only chance to escape – to be cleansed of mortal filth. To do this, Izanagi washed himself in water. Ritual purification in water is present in almost all religions, and rituals aimed at purification occupy a key place in the ritual practices of all peoples of the world. The myth of Izanagi formed the basis of the Shinto cult, at the center of which are the categories of *gare* (purity) and *kegare* (impurity). A pious Shintoist pays much attention to maintaining ritual purity and avoiding impurity. If defilement cannot be avoided, the Shintoist must undergo ritual cleansing. *Misogi*, i.e. purification rites, are the most common and central Shinto rites. Shintoists follow the rules of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation so carefully due to religious reasons. Before entering the temple, a Shintoist must wash his hands because he will touch sacred objects and his mouth because he will say prayers. The evening shower is conditioned by the desire to cleanse oneself of household defilement. The Japanese try to do wet cleaning of homes, offices and streets as often as possible. Frequent rebuilding of buildings is due to the desire to get rid of the old and dirty. Along with water, the Japanese use salt, which they understand as dry water. Scattered salt can be found, for example, in front of the house. It should protect the entrance from evil spirits and evil people. Thus, based on the myth of Izanagi, Shinto followers declare unclean everything that is directly or indirectly related to death.

Buddhism and Taoism have introduced into Japanese culture important elements associated with ritual purity – chōzu-bichi and tsukubai, i.e. pools for ritual purification, which are built in rooms for tea ceremonies and in gardens. This tradition of the Japanese branches of Buddhism and Taoism went beyond these religions, and today is used by the Japanese of various religions. Sadler describes chōzu-bichi and tsukubai as follows: “The Water basin or Chōzu-bichi is the symbol for purity both in the physical and also the spiritual sphere, for here in the inner Roji in wic hit is placed all the ‘dust of the world’ is finally washed away and the devotee of Cha-no-yu enters another atmosphere. Hence it is the central point of this part of the garden. Moreover the Water Basin of a Tearoom is of a different kind from that used in ordinary gardens, in that it is placed low on the ground instead of on a pedestal. Hence its name ‘Tsukubai’ or ‘Crouching Basin’” [13, p. 32].

In Taoism, ritual purity is essential. The main task set by the Taoists is to attain immortality. All religious practices of Taoism are aimed at overcoming death and everything connected with it – illness, aging, etc. For this purpose, the Taoists have developed a vast and complex set of religious practices known as Taoist alchemy. However, it should be noted that alchemy, i.e. a set of practices aimed at overcoming death and attaining immortality, is closely connected with purity. No wonder that one of the most popular schools of Taoism is called “Supreme Clarity”. In the ritual practices of Taoism, ritual purity is incredibly important [8, p. 40]. Chinese Taoists paid the most attention to purification after the encounter with death. Thus, participation in funeral rites required participants to carefully perform cleansing rituals.

In Zoroastrianism, the question of ritual purity is connected with the basic dogma of this religion. Zoroastrians believe that everything good in the world was created by Ahura Mazda (Ohrmazd). However, the evil demon Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), being envious of Ohrmazd, tried to create something himself. The product of his work were unclean living beings (snakes, lizards, scorpions, etc.). To destroy the beauty and perfection of Ohrmazd’s creations, Ahriman defiled the world. Everything connected with death, which is the work of Ahriman, defiles. Ohrmazd is the creator of the four sacred elements of the world: fire, water, earth and air. Fearing to defile them with the touch of death, the Zoroastrians did not burn their dead in fire, did not bury them in the ground, did not drown them in water, did not leave them to decompose in the open air. They built the Tower of Silence, a roofless stone structure on which the dead were placed to be eaten by wild birds. Thus, the corpse did not fall into any of the elements created by Ohrmazd. To prevent the birds from carrying a big piece of corpse meat and throwing it somewhere outside the Tower of Silence, the Zoroastrians tied the corpse to a special lattice. Today, this form of burial has been preserved only in places of compact settlement of Zoroastrians. In Muslim-dominated areas, the use of Towers of Silence is prohibited for sanitary reasons. In places where there is a prohibition on the use of Towers of Silence, Zoroastrians bury the dead in the ground, but first the walls and bottom of the grave are filled with concrete so that a deceased person does not touch the ground. In the Avesta, the following dialogue between Zarathustra and Ohrmazd is devoted to the subject of the desecration of the earth by the corpse: „O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If a man shall throw on the ground a bone of a dead dog, or of a dead man, as large as the top joint of the little finger, and if grease or marrow flow from it on to the ground, what penalty shall he pay?” Ahura Mazda answered: „Thirty stripes with the Aspahe-astra, thirty stripes with the Srao-sho-charana“ [Avesta, Vendidad, 6.10-11].

Even such careful burial rules are not able to protect a Zoroastrian from the defilement that happens to him when the Zoroastrian participates in the burial of the deceased. Because of this defilement, the Zoroastrian cannot proceed to the sacred without prior purification. The tradition of this religion has formed several forms of purification, which are used in different situations.

The most common and simplest rite of purification in Zoroastrianism is the washing of the face, hands and feet. This rite is performed by every Zoroastrian before and after prayer. It does not require any special things or the help of a priest. In addition to this daily rite of purification, Zoroastrians also practice a complex rite, which consists of ablution of the body, drinking a special drink with lemon zest and bay leaves, and prayers recited by priests. This is followed by rubbing the body with sand and cow urine. This complex rite is performed before important events in life: before the rite of sacred thread, which Zoroastrians perform on eight-year-old boys and which makes a boy a full member of a religious community, before marriage, and ten days before the New Year to enter the New Year being purified. Zoroastrians also use the third type of purification rites – the most complex and rare one. This rite lasts 13 days. At first, the Zoroastrian is washed with a special liquid six times, wiped with sand eighteen times, and washed with water five times. Afterwards, prayers are said over him and he remains in the temple for nine days. This rite is performed on the Zoroastrian who is preparing to become a priest. Because he, as a priest, will have to perform the sacraments, he must be absolutely pure. Also, such a complex purification rite is performed on the nusessalars when they want to leave their craft. Zoroastrians are terribly afraid of being defiled by touching a corpse. Therefore, in Zoroastrian society, there is a group of people who are engaged in funerals. These people are called nusessalars. They are people of the lowest social status; no Zoroastrian sits at the table with the nusessalar, invites him over or visits him. This profession is passed from generation to generation. If the nusessalar wants to leave his occupation, he must undergo a complex purification rite. After each funeral, the nusessalar should also be cleansed, but not by such a complicated rite. The instructions for purification of the nusessalar after the funeral are defined by the Avesta: “Afterwards the corpse-bearers shall sit down, three paces from the dead, and the holy Ratu shall proclaim to the worshippers of Mazda thus: Worshippers of Mazda, let the urine be brought here wherewith the corpse-bearers there shall wash their hair and their bodies” [Avesta, Vendidad, 8:11].

In all types of Zoroastrian purification, water is present, because water, according to Zoroastrians, is able to cleanse from mortal defilement. It is said in the Avesta: “Come, come on, O clouds, from up above, down on the earth, by thousands of drops, by myriads of drops thus say, O holy Zarathushtra! to destroy sickness, to destroy death, to destroy the sickness that kills, to destroy death that kills, to destroy Gadha and Apagadha” [Avesta, Vendidad, 21:2].

Ritual purity in Zoroastrianism is incredibly important. Every Zoroastrian is careful not to defile himself. Priests must follow the rules of ritual purity especially carefully. The slightest defilement can be an obstacle to participation in worship. In order to protect themselves from defilement, Zoroastrian priests care about their food, refusing to eat food if they are not sure about the quality of cooking. Due to it, they often refuse to eat food prepared by the laity. In this regard, the recognized researcher of Zoroastrianism Mary Boyce noted: “The orthodox laity, going about their daily work, keep the rules of purity as fully as they can; but they look to their priests to observe these with even greater rigour, to be cleanest of the clean, in order that their prayers may be the more effective. This must have been the case down the centuries; and it is probably partly to preserve their stricter rule of life that Zoroastrian priests have tended to live somewhat apart from the laity. The priest’s purity is built up, on the basis of physical cleanliness, through the many holy rituals in which he takes part; and it is so much greater than a layman’s that until recently a priest would not eat food prepared by a Zoroastrian layman, still less by a juddin; nor would he eat while having paiwand, a physical link, with would bring the danger that, while performing this nearly sacramental act, hi might be brought unwittingly into contact with some uncleanness” [2, p. 311].

A researcher of ritual purity in early Zoroastrianism, Albert F. de Jong, wrote in this regard: “The purity laws are absolutely crucial; they are the most important ritual translation of

the worldview sketched earlier, and they are an indispensable part of the battle going on between the forces of good and evil” [9, p. 187]. Zoroastrianism is the traditional religion of the Persians, i.e. the descendants of the Aryan peoples who settled in the territory of modern Iran. The peoples of India are ethnically related to the Persians. In their religion – Hinduism – cults of water purification also developed. For a Hindu, any sacred or more or less important event begins with ablution in water. The Hindu should wash in the morning when he wakes up, before prayer, and so on. The Hindus did not develop a special rite of ablution, but sacralized any ablution. Each body wash is sacred for Hindus: “One of the most obvious and intriguing features of the Indus cities is the evidence that points to an intense concern with cleanliness. Private homes were furnished with sophisticated indoor bathing and toilet facilities that were plumbed and lined with ceramic tiles in a relatively modern way. The plumbing and sewer systems were superior to those found in other cultures of the time and even to facilities found in many Indian and Pakistani homes today. Not only did individual homes feature advanced lavatories, but municipalities did as well... Almost certainly, this concern was more than a matter of bodily hygiene. Like many premodern cultures, and like Hindus today, the Indus dwellers were probably anxious about ritual purity” [11, p. 18].

In Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language in which the sacred texts of Hinduism, the Vedas, are written, there are three terms for purity. Each of them has its own specific meaning. The first term is “*suddha*”. “The meaning of this term in its Hindu usage is best conveyed by invoking image of fullness or completeness in the specific sense of perfection” [3, p. 10]. This word is used to describe the purity of the body or purity in the everyday sense. However, it should always be remembered that even body hygiene or cleanliness of the home is perceived by Hindus not only as a household necessity, but as a sacred category. The second Sanskrit term for purity is “*śauca*”. This word means purity of the body, but unlike “*suddha*”, which refers to purity from external defilement, “*śauca*” is related to internal defilement. For example, a person who has fallen into a swamp loses “*suddha*” because the swamp is external to man; instead, a woman who is menstruating loses “*śauca*”. It can also be lost when eating illicit foods that cause reactions in the body that defile the body from the inside. “*Sattva*” is the third Sanskrit term for purity. “*Sattva* is metaphysically conceived as the pure quality or strand in material nature and is the ideal towards which all purifying practices are directed” [3, p. 10]. Each of these types of purity is achieved in different ways. To achieve purity in the sense of “*suddha*”, it is necessary to carry out traditional hygienic procedures. Morning shower and other routine procedures are sufficient to achieve external bodily purity. Internal bodily purity (“*śauca*”) is not so easy to achieve. To do this, among other things, a certain diet should be followed. That is why there are so many vegetarians among Hindus. It is also needed to take care of the health of one’s body. And even with all this, a person may temporarily lose internal bodily purity, as in the case of female menstruation. If such cases occur, then the Hindu cult, like the cults of many other religions in the world, provides rites of purification. Achieving purity in the sense of “*sattva*”, i.e. spiritual purity, is the main and most difficult task of a man. Water is a necessary means of purification in restoration of the external purity of the body. In the other two cases, it can be used as a symbol of purification in religious rites. Thus, any external purification of the body, internal purification of the body and purification of the soul has a religious significance for the Hindu. What defiles the Hindu? Death and contact with it make the Hindu the most unclean: “In India the rituals around the death and funeral normally take place within twenty-four hours, and the subsequent ritual during the next 13 days... The first ten days of this time are a period of extreme impurity” [6, p. 54].

The Jesuit Mariasusai Dhavamony, describing the peculiarities of Hindu spirituality, pointed out that after the cremation of the deceased (cremation is the most popular form of burial in India), the burnt bones and ashes remain untouched for ten days. This is necessary so that the

bones and ashes are cooled so that they can be collected. Precisely because the burnt remains of the deceased remain uncleaned for ten days, this period is considered a time of special ritual impurity. Dhavamony stressed that after removing the bones of the burnt corpse, the participants in this action should bathe in water as soon as possible: “The gathering of bones is performed after the tenth day from the death. The performer of the ceremony walks three times round the spot with his left side turned towards it and sprinkles on it with a *śamī* branch milk mixed with the urn, and place water. He puts the bones in the urn and places the urn in a pit. Having covered the urn with a lid, all should leave the place without looking back, bathe in water, and perform the *śraddha* for the deceased” [5, p. 228].

Sacral purity is closely connected with the Vedas and Vedic rites. It is the Vedas that determine and detail the circumstances under which a person is defiled, what he is forbidden to do in order not to be defiled, how he should be purified, and in which rites he cannot participate in the period of impurity: “The period of impurity is marked by a significant absence of the Veda and Vedic rituals for the one performing the sacrifice, as purity (*śuddhi*) is given by the presence of the Veda” [10, p. 137].

Ritual purification rites are actively practiced in the Abrahamic religions, where they retain the same meaning as in the religions of the Far East [8, p. 51]. In Christianity, the rite of water purification took two forms: the sacrament of baptism and rites connected with the use of consecrated water. Everyone who aspires to become a Christian must be baptized. Christians adopted the rite of baptism from the Jews, but gave it a new meaning. Unlike the sacred ablution of Jews or Mandeans, Christians perform this rite only once in a lifetime and perceive it as a sacrament of initiation, i. e. baptism is a rite that allows one to call oneself a Christian. In Christianity, from ancient times, two forms of the baptismal rite have developed: immersion in water and pouring water on oneself. In both cases, this rite is connected with water. The use of water and the Jewish roots of the rite of baptism are a clear symbol of purification. It is obvious and unquestionable that any rite during which its participant washes in water is a symbol of purification. This was vividly expressed by the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann, who wrote: “Water is the principle of purification, of cleanliness, and therefore of regeneration and renewal. It washes away stains, it re-creates the pristine purity of the earth. It is this fundamental religious symbolism of water – symbolism rooted in the self-evident and natural attributes of water – that permeates the Bible and the whole biblical story of creation, fall and salvation” [14, p. 39].

Thus, baptism is a rite of purification. But purification from what is it? In order to clarify these questions, it is necessary to turn to important canonical and liturgical texts. The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the main collection of canons that governs the Eastern Catholic Churches, states: “In baptism a person through washing with natural water with the invocation of the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is freed from sin, reborn to new life, puts on Christ and is incorporated in the Church which is His Body. Only by the actual reception of baptism is a person made capable for the other sacraments” [Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, can. 675].

In this canon, which begins the first chapter of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, devoted to baptism, the essence of baptism is perfectly explained. The neophyte is baptized in order, firstly, to be freed from sin, secondly, to be reborn to a new life and, thirdly, to become a member of the Church. Thus, baptism washes away the sins of the neophyte and makes him able to receive new life. In other words, a Christian is baptized to receive a new life, which is possible only after cleansing from sins as bringers of death. A similar explanation of the nature of baptism is contained in the Code of the Canon law of the Catholic Church, i.e. in the only official collection of canons that governs the Roman Catholic Church: “Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments

and necessary for salvation by actual reception or at least by desire, is validly conferred only by a washing of true water with the proper form of words. Through baptism men and women are freed from sin, are reborn as children of God, and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church" [Code of the Canon law of the Catholic Church, can. 849].

The same is repeated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published with the blessing of Pope John Paul II in 1992: "Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word" [The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213]. In the Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church "Christ – Our Pascha" baptism is explained as "birth to new life": "The Father reveals and grants us eternal life through his Son in the Holy Spirit. This life of the new creation becomes accessible to us not only after death, but even now. Through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation, along with the Eucharist, we are united to Christ. In him we become heirs of divine life, bearers of the Holy Spirit, who reveals to us the full truth of Christ. The Spirit leads us along the paths of Christ's commandments and prays within us: *Abba! Father!*" [Rom 8,15]. Through these Holy Mysteries we become members of the Body of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit [Christ Our Pascha – Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, 409].

In the prayer said by the priest of the Byzantine rite before baptism, it is said: "O Master, Lord our God, call Your servant to Your holy Illumination, and deem him (or her) worthy of this great grace of Your holy baptism. Wash away his (or her) old self and renew him (or her) to everlasting life. Fill him (or her) with the power of Your Holy Spirit to be united to Christ and no longer to be a child of the natural descent but rather a child of Your kingdom". During each liturgy, Eastern Christians pray for those who have declared their desire to be baptized and prepare for baptism through an appropriate catechetical course. In the Prayer over a Catechumen, contained in the text of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, it is stated as follows: "Lord our God, Who dwells on high and watches over the humble, You sent forth Your only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race. Look down upon Your servants, the catechumens, who have inclined their necks to You, and grant them at a proper time the baptism of rebirth, the remission of sins, and the garment of incorruption. Unite them to Your holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and number them among Your chosen flock". Similar thoughts are contained in the Prayer over a Catechumen, which is read at the St. Basil's Liturgy: "O Lord our God, Who dwellest in the heavens and regardest all Thy world: Look down on Thy servants, the catechumens, who have bowed their necks before Thee. Grant them a light like; make them honorable members of Thy holy Church; make them worthy of the laver of regeneration, the remission of sins, and the robe of incorruption for the knowledge of Thee, our true God".

The content of the explanations of the nature of baptism in all the quoted texts can be summed up in three points: purification from sin, comprehension of new life and entry into the Church. Accordingly, the task of baptism is, among other things, to cleanse from sin in order to give new life. In other words, baptism cleanses from what hinders a full life in God's grace. Water in Christianity is used not only during baptism; it is the most commonly used attribute of rituals, and is present in all rites of consecration and blessing. Consecrated water, that is, pure, natural water over which special prayers have been recited, is used both for baptism and for all other rites. Traditionally, water is consecrated on the day when the Church commemorates the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River. However, in addition to this traditional consecration of water, it can be consecrated on any other day when there is a need. In some countries or regions, there are local traditional

water consecration days. For example, in Ukraine, water is consecrated every year on August 14, as it is believed that on this day in 988, Grand Duke Volodymyr baptized Ukraine. Christians see water that is a symbol of purification as a means of special blessing. The prayer, which is recited during the Jordanian consecration of the water, says: “And give her the grace of deliverance, the blessing of Jordan, create an incorruptible source, a gift of sanctification, permission of sins, healing of ailments, demons’ destruction, an unapproachable fortress that resists forces, an angelic fortress full, so that all who draw and receive communion have the power to purify souls and bodies, to heal passions, to the consecration of houses, and to every benefit”.

Consecrated in this way, water becomes a means of sanctification and blessing. Every consecration and blessing is accompanied by appropriate prayers and sprinkling with holy water. The priests sprinkle it on the people they bless, the temple they consecrate, things and food. Christians drink consecrated water and wash with it in the hope of receiving God’s special blessing. In all cases, such consecrations and blessings contain, above all, purifying aspects: consecrated water is meant to purify things that are being blessed from defilement, and therefore to protect them from the evil influences of the devil. The world is defiled by sin, and therefore everything in it is defiled by the devil, who is the father of lies and death, because it was he who had deceived the first people, as a result of which they had sinned and lost eternal life. In order for these things to serve good purposes, they must be cleansed of devilish influences. The means of such purification is water.

In general, ritual purifications through water are intended to prepare a person for a meeting with the sacred. For a Christian, baptism is the washing away mortality and sinfulness before a new life in God’s grace. The blessing with consecrated water also aims to cleanse people and things from all impurity. In addition to these established rites, the usual preparation for the celebration has a religious meaning. Every Christian cleans his home before important events, takes care of clean clothes, personal hygiene, cleans courtyards, streets, and especially temples. Such actions in Christianity are not regulated by any rules, but are perceived as self-evident. Since the cleaning of temples and homes and personal hygiene in Christianity are not governed by rules, these actions are usually not interpreted as religious, but refer to household. Theologians do not write treatises on this topic, and therefore cleaning before important religious holidays has fallen out of the theological or religious analysis. However, every practicing Christian prepares himself for a meeting with the sacred not only purification of his soul and spiritual attitude, but also purification of the body, home, living space.

Water purification has the same meaning in Judaism. The first mention of the need for purification before meeting the saint is found in the biblical Book of Exodus, which tells of the Exodus of the Jews from Egyptian captivity and the 40-year crossing of the Sinai Peninsula to the Promised Land. On the 50th day after the Exodus from Egypt, God appeared to the people on Mount Sinai and gave His Law. However, before this event, the Jews had to prepare themselves; and this preparation was to be not only spiritual but also bodily preparation. In the Book of Exodus this is described as follows: “And the Lord said to Moses, go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, be careful that you do not approach the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death. They are to be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on them. No person or animal shall be permitted to live. Only when the ram’s horn sounds a long blast may they approach the mountain. After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes” [Bible, Exodus, 19,10-14]. The Apostle Paul had no doubt that Moses baptized the Jews at Mount

Sinai: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” [Bible, 1 Corinthians, 10,1-2].

After the settlement of the Jews in the Promised Land, the rite of purification with water became especially important. Mikvah (pools for ritual purification) were built near the Temple in Jerusalem, where Jews had to wash before important religious events. At different times and in different places, the list of events that required washing in mikvah changed. However, most Jews perform this rite after any bloodletting (circumcision, menstruation, injury, etc.), before marriage or important religious rites, before Saturdays and religious holidays. Washing in mikvah allows the Jew to ritually purify himself and prepare for a meeting with the sacred. Since only Jews take part in Jewish religious rites, washing in mikvah is mandatory only for Jews. Those who do not belong to Judaism cannot participate in Jewish religious rites and therefore do not need preparations, although washing in mikvah is permitted for all: “From a Talmudic position, the mikvah is for those are ritually unclean, such as a person who has come into contact with a dead body, or a woman who is in her unclean state. Since the Gentile is not viewed as ritually unclean, he does not need to enter the mikvah. However, if he wishes to do so there is no Torah or Talmudic prohibition; for him or her it is simply not necessary” [4, p. 106].

With the development of synagogues, which arose among the Jews during the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity, the rite of washing in mikvah found its place in the new religious reality. The Jews began to build mikvah at synagogues, and maintain this custom to this day. The peculiarity of mikvah is that it is filled with pure natural running water, which has not undergone technical treatment and has not stagnated in the pool [8, p. 37]. Today, for the Jews, mikvah is a necessity to perform the purification rite in accordance with all the ritual prescriptions. However, it should be noted that mikvah is only a substitute for a natural water body. The water of the natural body is ideal for Jewish purification. This water is natural, clean and flowing. However, the use of natural water bodies is problematic for Jews wherever they live. In Israel, which is constantly suffering from a shortage of natural water, it is not easy to find a natural body for ritual purification. In Europe and America, where there are enough natural bodies, natural conditions do not always allow to use them for ritual cleansing, especially in the cold season. Therefore, mikvahs have become a convenient substitute for natural bodies. But even in such circumstances, the Jews carefully monitor that the mikvahs correspond to their natural prototype as closely as possible.

Since the largest natural water body in Judea was the Jordan, it acquired a special religious meaning. When John the Baptist called the Jews to repentance, he did so near the Jordan River. Those who converted and repented of their sins bathed in the waters of the Jordan. Immersion in natural running water as an expression of repentance and spiritual purification was well-known to the Jews, as they regularly practiced this custom in mikvah. The rite of ablution in the mikvah received a special development in Mandaeism, a religion founded by the disciples of John the Baptist, which absorbed significant elements of Gnosticism. Today, the Mandaeans practice ritual ablution in water on any religious occasion. In fact, the Mandaean ablution in water is performed on every occasion when the Jews perform ablutions in mikvah. Like the Jews, the Mandaeans emphasize that “this baptism must be performed only in ‘living’ or flowing waters, that is, in the rivers or channels” [12, p. 8]. However, unlike the Jews, the Mandaeans use only natural water bodies, and do not build mikvahs. Emphasizing the common origin of ritual water washing in Judaism, Mandaeism and Christianity, they are usually called by one word – baptism. The most obvious difference between them is the frequency of their execution: “The difference is that they utilized mikvah on many occasions while we only use immersion for a one-time event” [15, p. 7].

In Islam, the symbolism of purification with water has developed into a complex system of ablutions. There is not a single day in the life of an orthodox Muslim without sacred ablution. A Muslim is convinced that before engaging in any sacred action (prayer, reading the Quran, forgiveness), it is necessary to purify oneself. The Muslim tradition has formed a complex system of water ablutions. The rite of ablution is called “*ṭahārah*” in Arabic, which means “purification”, “ablution”. Muslims distinguish two types of *ṭahārah*: internal and external. Internal *ṭahārah* is the purification of the soul after committing sin, and it is achieved through repentance and penance. External *ṭahārah* is used when a person has experienced external defilement. In this situation, a person is not a sinner, but in this state he is not allowed to come into contact with sacred things, that is, read the Quran, or even just touch it, read prayers, go to the mosque, and so on. Sacred impurity does not contain a moral component, that is, ritual defilement is not a sin; however, if one neglects the necessary purification or comes into contact with sacred things in a state of impurity, then in these cases a moral component appears. In other words, to be defiled is not a sin, but to do what is forbidden while being defiled is a sin.

Specialists in Muslim law distinguish several types of external *ṭahārah*. The first of these is *ghusl*, i.e. complete washing of the body in water, which is performed after severe forms of defilement. The second form of purification, *wudu*, is the washing of certain parts of the body by a Muslim before praying or reciting the Quran. If *ghusl* is used after an event that defiles a person, then *wudu* is not related to unclean situations. It is believed that being in the world full of impurities, worldly affairs and daily life is incompatible with standing in prayer before Allah. To begin praying or reciting the Quran, one must purify oneself. But if nothing has happened to a Muslim that would defile him, then he does not need *ghusl*. In this case, *wudu* is enough, which will cleanse him from profanum and allow him to touch the sacrum. Because the Arabs had to live in arid regions, they sometimes did not have enough water to practice the *ṭahārah*. In these cases, the rite of *tayammum* was used – “washing” with sand or stone, which is allowed in special cases of lack of sufficient water. *Tayammum* is based on the precepts of Quran: “O you who believe! Do not approach the prayer while you are drunk, so that you know what you say; nor after sexual orgasm – unless you are travelling – until you have bathed. If you are sick, or traveling, or one of you comes from the toilet, or you have had intercourse with women, and cannot find water, find clean sand and wipe your faces and your hands with it. God is Pardoning and Forgiving” [Quran 4,43].

Purification is so important for Muslims because detailed instructions for its implementation are present in in Quran: “O you who believe! When you rise to pray, wash your faces, and your hands and arms to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles. If you had intercourse, then purify yourselves. If you are ill, or travelling, or one of you returns from the toilet, or you had contact with women, and could not find water, then use some clean sand and wipe your faces and hands with it. God does not intend to burden you, but He intends to purify you, and to complete His blessing upon you, that you may be thankful” [Quran 5,6].

In addition to *ghusl*, *wudu* and *tayammum*, *ṭahārah* includes all other forms of cleansing the body and even material things used by a Muslim, such as brushing teeth, washing clothes and cleaning shoes, cleaning the house, and so on. Experts in Muslim law have elaborated the rules of toilet etiquette. A Muslim who knows and follows the traditions of his religion well has step-by-step instructions for cleansing after visiting the toilet. For *ṭahārah* it is necessary to use pure natural water, i.e. water taken from the seas, rivers, rains, melted snow, underwater springs. Water, artificially purified or obtained unnaturally, can be used for physical purification, but not for religious rites. If the water is dirty or a contaminant has gotten into it, then such water becomes defiled and cannot be used for the *ṭahārah*.

Why are Muslims so wary that their law contains such strict prescriptions for ritual purification, that is, what should a Muslim be purified from? Sharia separates two types of impurity.

Light impurity is, for example, the urine of edible animals that and the feces of inedible birds. Severe impurity is any (both normal and symptomatic) discharge from the human body (feces, urine, saliva, genital discharge, menstrual blood, any bleeding, semen, pus, vomiting, nasal mucus, lymph, carcass), feces of edible animals, any organic waste of inedible animals, pig and everything related to it, meat of any animals killed inconsistent with Sharia regulations. After contact with these substances it is necessary to pass ghusl. Most of the prescriptions of the Muslim tradition comply with universal rules of etiquette. Every educated person washes their hands after going to the toilet and after coming in contact with something that could carry an infection. According to Muslims, all that defiles a person and from which it is necessary to be ritually and hygienically cleansed is connected with death. Waste of human or animal life is often a carrier of infection; blood is associated with death at the level of archetypes. Thus, death is ritually unclean in Islam, as in other religions, and it defiles everything that can be its carrier or symbol.

Thus, the rites of purification with the use of water developed in all religions of the Abrahamic tradition: Judaism, Christianity, Mandaeism and Islam. Although in each of these religions, water purification has developed in different directions, it has the same meaning everywhere – cleansing from the defilement caused by sinfulness and mortality. This idea is especially evident in the religious traditions of ancient Egypt. As already mentioned, the first mention of purification before meeting a saint is mentioned in the Bible when it tells of the preparation of the Jews for a meeting with God on Mount Sinai. This meeting took place 50 days after leaving Egypt. That is, the Jews at that time were well acquainted with Egyptian religious culture, and were very likely to be under some influence of the Egyptians. Egyptian mythology conveys to us the motives related to water ablation. The Egyptians believed that every night, Ra descended into the underworld, to the land of the dead to give the dead at least some of his light. In the morning, the sun-god Ra rose into the sky to illuminate the living. However, as in Shinto mythology, where Izanagi could not free himself from the curses of death after leaving the realm of the dead until he had washed himself in the waters, so Ra must wash before leaving the realm of the dead. He does it every morning in the waters of the Nile. The washing of Ra reasoned the ritual washing practiced in Egypt. The second important motive that gave rise to the ritual of water purification of the ancient Egyptians was the myth of Osiris. The Egyptians believed that Set killed Osiris, dismembered his body and scattered him on Earth. Isis collected the remains of Osiris, made him the first mummy in history and got pregnant by him. When their son Horus was born, he helped his father Osiris rise again. This story, which is closely related to the topic of life and death, and most importantly – to the resurrection, contains one very important plot. For the resurrection of Osiris to be possible, he had to be cleansed of the filthiness of death. This was made possible by baptism: “New life was brought to Osiris’ limbs and body by washing, clearly linking washing with magic water to rebirth... So important was the ritual of baptism to the Egyptians that some form of it, purification or offering of a libation, became an essential rite in all important religious and state rituals. It even appeared in the funerary liturgy where the daily ritual was repeated in the washing of the dead” [7, 184].

Because the pharaohs considered themselves descendants of Osiris, they reflected events related to Osiris in the court ritual. The dead pharaohs were mummified, as was their distant ancestor Osiris. The pharaohs also practiced the rite of baptism. Among the wall paintings found by Egyptologists are those depicting a pharaoh whose baptism is Osiris and Horus. A detailed study of this rite still requires a lot of research work. However, the fact that the Egyptians practiced the rite of baptism before important events in life can be considered reliable.

The religions mentioned in this section do not cover all shades of religious life in the world. Carefully analyze and study the purification rites is not our task. The task of this study is only to illustrate the popularity of purification rites in the world’s religions and to show their

ubiquity. We can say with confidence that the ritual purification rites with the use of water are present in almost all religions of the world. They are used by Australian aborigines, and African pygmies, American Indians and Chinese Taoists, Christians and Muslims, Jews and Mandeans... In each of these religious cultures, these rites have acquired a special meaning. The significance of Christian baptism, which is the first sacrament in a Christian's life, performed only once in a lifetime, and for which the neophyte prepares carefully, cannot be equated with the Shinto ablution, which is repeated daily. However, we focus on common aspects as we try to find common features of these rites. Such common features can be identified. The purification rites in all their variety of forms face the same task – to cleanse the believer from defilement, and thus prepare him for the encounter with the sacred. If the task of these rites is purification, then the question arises – purification from what? An analysis of the texts of worship and the scriptures makes it possible to state that in the purification rites, the purification from the filth of death is conducted. A person, realizing that death has become his inevitable fate after the Fall, tries to free himself from it, to wash himself from the dirt of mortality.

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ВОДА І КУЛЬТИ ОЧИЩЕННЯ В РЕЛІГІЯХ СВІТУ**Олег Шепетяк***Ruhr-Universität Bochum,**Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät, Lehrstuhl für Philosophisch-Theologische Grenzfragen**Universitätsstraße, 150, 44780, Bochum, Deutschland**Український католицький університет,**філософсько-богословський факультет, кафедра філософії**вул. Іларіона Свенціцького, 17, 79000, м. Львів, Україна**<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5463-6475>*

Сакральна чистота та нечистота належать до ключових понять обрядовості багатьох релігій світу. В усіх релігіях, в яких йдеться про сакральну нечистоту, вона пов'язана з контактом зі смертю. Смерть є джерелом сакральної нечистоти. Релігії мають не тільки теоретичний аспект (констатують стан сакральної нечистоти), а й практичний (пропонують шляхи очищення). Щоби звільнитися від сакральної нечистоти, потрібні певні релігійні обряди. За аналогією до побутового очищення тіла, в якому здебільшого використовується вода, обряди сакрального очищення зазвичай пов'язані з водою. В цій статті проаналізовані культу очищення декількох релігій світу їхні мітології та їхня роль в житті віруючих. Першою з проаналізованих релігій є японський синто, в якому сакральна чистота відіграє особливу роль. В основі вчення про сакральну нечистоту японського синто стоїть міт про Ідзанагі та Ідзанаі, який розповідає, що Ідзанагі став нечистим тоді, коли потрапив до царства мертвих, щоби врятувати звідти свою дружину Ідзанаі. Щоби очиститися, він проходив обряд омивання у воді. Цей міт показує зв'язок сакральної нечистоти з контактом зі смертю та культів очищення з водою.

У статті також проаналізовані вчення про сакральну нечистоту та культу очищення даосизму, індуїзму, зороастризму. Особливе значення присвячене християнству, обрядом входження в яке є хрещення. Наслідком гріха прародичів Адама і Єви є людська смертність. Смерть проникла людську в людську природу і тому кожна людина обов'язково контактує з нею. Зростання в благодаті передбачає участь християнина в літургійних обрядах, а передумовою цього є сакральне очищення. Саме тому хрещення, яке є першим кроком християнського життя, є водночас обрядом очищення і здійснюється зі застосування води. У статті наведені тексти молитов та документів Церкви, які роз'яснюють значення хрещення. Також у статті проаналізовані значення сакральної нечистоти в юдаїзмі та майдейства, а також обряди очищення цих релігій. Для юдаїзму таким обрядом є омивання в мікві, яке й стало прототипом християнського хрещення. Мандеї також розвинули багату обрядовість, пов'язану зі сакральною нечистотою та очищеннями у воді, з юдейських обрядів очищення.

Ключові слова: релігія, вода, очищення, кров, культ.