

Once the Mosaic Law was codified, purity became a religious ideal

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Observance of purity customs existed before the time of Moses, but this was done more for hygienic purposes than anything else. Once the Mosaic Law was codified, purity became a religious ideal, and the purity customs took on a religious significance. Purity became understood by the Israelites as a matter of national life and death. Losing purity, for instance worshipping other gods, would cause Yahweh, a jealous God, to turn away His face: "*According to their uncleanness and their transgressions, I dealt with them.*" (Ezek. 39:24) This attitude stemmed from Israel's response to the holiness of Yahweh: "*Be holy, for the Lord, your God, am holy.*" (Lev. 11:44)

From this it is easily understood that purity implies holiness; it is not holiness itself, but a prerequisite for holiness. The ways purification could be done in order to insure holiness are elaborated in Lev.

11-17 and in Numbers 19. According to the Encyclopedia Judaica, repentance and good deeds were also conducive to purity and holiness. Other rabbinic literature points out that the Torah itself becomes a purifying factor. Just as water purifies from ritual impurity, so does the Torah purify the impure from his impurity. In other words, purification was understood as the prerequisite to come to God, or to be able to meet God, to receive God. Also, it should be understood that upon concluding all the different forms of purity rituals, the person had to bathe himself.

At the time of John the Baptist, water was also the medium of purification and the symbolic restoration of new life. John's baptism, however, was very simple and immediate. It did not emphasize an elaborate ritual purification, as in the Old Testament, but rather it represented a spiritual purification of sin. The purpose of his baptism being offered to all people was to bring them together as a community that expected the Messiah. Once again, purification was for the purpose of preparing to receive God, this time through His Son.

As the Son of God, Jesus could see clearly that the excessive zeal of the Pharisees for ritual purity was false, that the performance of such external purification rituals could never impart holiness or bring them closer to God. So Jesus minced no words in condemning these pious hypocrites, who in fact went out of their way to prevent people from entering the kingdom of God by proselytizing them into becoming "*twice as much a child of hell as themselves.*" (Mt. 23:15) Jesus himself came as the embodiment of purity and holiness, of perfect godliness, through even the last moment of his life on the cross.

After the resurrection, how were people meant to purify themselves so that they could come to God? I think the answer to this question is given in I John 3:3: "*And everyone who thus hopes in him (Christ) purifies himself as he (Christ) is pure.*"

Here we understand that one is purified in, and comes to God through, Christ. Perhaps one classic passage of scripture to sum up the qualitative difference between Old Testament and New Testament purification is Heb. 9:14: "*For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*"

In Divine Principle, the source of man's impurity separating him from God is the event of the Fall. Impurity originates in the Fall. But man fell in two dimensions, first spiritually and then physically. What God's whole providence of salvation has been about is trying to restore these two dimensions, first on a symbolic level, so that then they may become a substantial reality through God sending the person of the Messiah. By this I mean that God has been trying to communicate to man how he can fulfill his responsibility to purify the impurities on a symbolic level first.

This translated even further means that man's portion of responsibility in the providence of restoration (salvation) has been to set up the foundation to receive the Messiah, which is equivalent to first establishing the Foundation of Faith, and, upon that, the Foundation of Substance. To symbolically purify the spiritual fall, that is, to restore the love that was defiled on the spiritual level, is to set up the Foundation of Faith. To symbolically purify the physical fall of man, or, to restore the love that was defiled on the physical level, is to accomplish the Foundation of Substance.

Simply speaking, the Foundation of Faith is the restoration of vertical love between God and man, and the Foundation of Substance is the restoration of horizontal love between brothers and sisters. And once this symbolical purification has taken place, then the condition has been fulfilled for the Messiah to be able to

be born. The coming of the Messiah, then, is the substantiation of all the symbolically fulfilled conditions. With the arrival of the Messiah comes true purification, not just symbolical.

The two initial foundations are laid through the payment of indemnity. This process of indemnification, or the re-doing of history centered upon God rather than Satan, is actually the process of purification.

Our daily life of faith is the ongoing preparation to receive the Messiah through purifying ourselves. To set up the Foundation of Faith requires a central figure, you, and an offering over a time period -- your mind, body, and things -- which are everything? So, the life of faith is the continual challenge to consecrate your mind, body, and all things to fulfilling God's purpose. For instance, to give your body to Heavenly Father means that your routine physical life belongs to God. As Mr. Sudo says:

"This leg, this hand, this chest, this head, is not mine anymore but is God's. We must keep them clean and pure. Don't defile your own body because it is a temple of God, a residence of God. God wants to live in you."

A more whole statement of what it really means to give your life to God through Christ might be expressed in this way: "How can we offer the mind? My feeling, my way of thinking, my imagination, all must belong to God. I must deny my way of thinking, my way of feeling, my way of talking, everything. My desire, my hope, my joy, my will must be placed on the altar and be given to God. I have no desire for myself because God's desire is my desire. I have no joy just for myself because God's joy is my joy. I have no will for myself because God's will is my will."

Because you have to deny your old ways of dealing with people, coping with problems, seeing the world from a fallen point of view, it means that you will have to pay the indemnity to discard those things that cling to you so tenaciously. Indemnity is paid by being willing to repudiate complaining and fallen attitudes, by being able to understand situations with God's heart. If when you pray, you can pray with tears of repentance for having denied God in favor of selfish things, if you can pray with tears of consolation for God who has been crying out for His children for so long, if you can pray with tears of gratitude for the new life and new hope God has given to you (for you to give to the rest of the world), then these all go into establishing a true Foundation of Faith. It is all a purification of attitude and of heart, through the pure offering of your mind, body and possessions to God.

Upon cultivating a God-centered attitude through your vertical connection to God, it is then important that you substantialize the love of God in your relationships with your brothers and sisters by serving them. This is basically the Foundation of Substance. However, the Foundation of Substance can only be established by restoring the fallen Cain-Abel relationship with Cain this time being able to love Abel, rather than kill him. Only when Cain is both willing and able to go to God through Abel, will restoration of faith and trust take place. Only when Cain and Abel are united in love will either be able to reach God. Cain is in the position of having to learn to overcome his resentment toward Abel, so that he can love and obey Abel. And Abel is in the position of having to learn how to overcome his arrogance toward Cain, since Abel is always somehow in a position of greater authority, and this means that Abel has to learn how to honestly and humbly serve Cain.

This process of overcoming is a very intense purification of fallen feelings like jealousy, resentment, and arrogance, and it represents the restoration of God-oriented love in all basic human relationships.

In the Unification Family, everyone is somehow hierarchically organized into such Cain-Abel, object-subject relationships. There are many brothers and sisters in leadership positions and many who are in the position of followers. In everything we do, there must be some restoration of the Cain-Abel relationship if we are to have trust and cooperation centered upon God's purpose.

One last thing I want to speak of in reference to purification is the whole experience of fund-raising in our Unification Family, clearly a very powerful means of purifying attitude. The whole focus in fund-raising is not on the money, but rather on loving God and loving the people you meet because you realize from the heart that they are all God's children. Some days, through the initial unison prayer, you can feel strongly connected to God and there is no problem at all making money on those days. It is effortless and you clearly realize that, in fact, you are not doing the selling, but God is. Many times, though, it is not possible to feel so connected with God's purpose, and it can really be a struggle to push yourself beyond a lot of negative feelings and lack of motivation. It is very much a test of your faith to keep on going.

Purification takes place on one level through overcoming negative thoughts and feelings. It is a purification of your faith because, after you have struggled for a while to stay centered upon God, often you will be able to break through and really become an instrument for God to love His children through. On another level, fund-raising is a challenge in being unconditionally positive towards all people, no matter how they may treat you. Often your natural tendency is to give way to anger, resentment or frustration, but if you can somehow see the situation from God's point of view, you can grow very much spiritually through the experience of refusing to have give-and-take with negative or accusing remarks.

I have tried to present a few thoughts on the meaning and purpose of purification, because the concern with purification has been so important throughout history in fostering the orientation of holiness needed to receive God. It is and has always been as Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Mt. 5:8)