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Understanding *Imitatio Dei* in the Holiness Source

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Abstract

This essay concerns the vexed question of *imitatio Dei* in the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26) and, to a minor degree, other Holiness (H) traditions in the Pentateuch. I argue that H possesses a robust theology of *imitatio Dei*, but that the specific form that this imitation takes requires further clarification. Conceptually, I distinguish between the *imitandum* (i.e., that which is to be imitated) and the *imitatio* (i.e., the act of imitating). I argue that the *imitandum* is holiness understood as a quality proper to the deity that is irreducible to a code of conduct, but that this does not vitiate the applicability of the concept of *imitatio Dei*. On the level of the *imitatio*, I emphasize the irreducibly social nature of the *imitatio*, as well as its theocentric logic of justification. Within a typology of imitational structures, H represents an interesting case where both the *imitandum* and *imitatio* are heteronomously determined by the external demand of the deity and where the impulse of private, subjective moral growth plays a negligible role.

Keywords

Holiness Code – holiness – *imitatio Dei* – Leviticus

The notion of imitating God has been, in some form or another, a significant element of many religious traditions.[1] A theology of imitation is one of the most natural means to encourage moral conduct and development. And yet, scholars have long puzzled over the place of *imitatio Dei* in the ethics of the Hebrew Bible. Martin Buber (1926) was apparently the first to take this

1 All translations provided are my own. I strive for literalness over literariness.

concept, explicitly derived from the Christian notion of *imitatio Christi*, and apply it to the ethical vision of the Hebrew Bible and indeed Judaism at large.[2] While it took several decades before this idea was truly received, it has since become a major and highly controversial topic of discussion. Vigorous arguments have been advanced both in favor and in opposition to the idea that this concept is operative in the various biblical texts. At the present moment, the dust stirred up by these debates seems to be settling. John Barton, revisiting his earlier defense of *imitatio Dei* in light of criticisms by Cyril Rodd,[3] wrote in 2007 that the case for it needed to be stated more cautiously and that it was not "a universal key" to Old Testament ethics, while still insisting that the concept was "serviceable."[4] In the same year, Walter Houston published an article on this same topic that struck a similar note of compromise.[5] Houston has in turn been followed by James Robson, who agrees that dissimilarities do not negate the applicability of the concept "at least in some attenuated sense."[6] There is in principle nothing wrong with acknowledging that a concept does not entirely correspond to those implicit in texts of interest. But this is productive only when we can formulate in an exact manner the way in which the concept is or is not applicable. The present study will be limited to the so-called Holiness Source (henceforth H), the supplement to the Priestly History whose core consists of Lev 17–26—the Holiness Code proper—but which has layers also elsewhere in the Pentateuch.[7] This limitation of scope is not arbitrary, for H has been deemed to provide one of the clearest instances of *imitatio Dei* in the Hebrew Bible.[8] The aim of this essay is not only to render more precise

2 Buber, "Nachahmung Gottes."

3 Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land*.

4 Barton, "Imitation of God," 46. See earlier idem, "Old Testament Ethics," 60–61, with reference to Eichrodt, *Theologie*, as well as Barton, "Basis of Ethics." Cf. also later idem, *Ethics in Ancient Israel*, 267–272 for a restatement of the 2007 essay.

5 Houston, "Is *Imitatio Dei* Appropriate?"

6 Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 129. To be sure, there are those who continue to apply more confidently the language of *imitatio Dei* to H. See, e.g., Hieke, *Levitikus*, 710–712.

7 For a recent and concise summary of the composition of H, see Stackert, "Holiness Code and Writings." Stackert follows the now majority position, initially championed by Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, that H was conceived from the beginning as a supplement to P, as opposed to being an originally self-standing composition. We presuppose the truth of this position. He furthermore supports a late monarchic/early exilic dating of H (ibid., 394). But a number of prominent voices, including Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 572–575 and Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, esp. 59–64, prefer to extend the dating even through the Persian Period. In the final analysis, the conclusions of this essay are compatible with any of these options.

8 Thus, e.g., Davies, "Ethics of the Hebrew Bible," 112: "The clearest expression of this principle [of *imitatio Dei*] is found in Lev. 19:2."

our appreciation for the specific mode of imitation in this text, but also to develop categories and distinctions that may be useful for the study of imitation more broadly.

While *imitatio Dei* can focus on different aspects of God—for instance, one can imitate God's love, God's generosity, etc.—in H, *imitatio Dei* has been seen to center on one specific characteristic of the deity, namely holiness.[9] This will surprise no reader familiar with the contents and themes of H. For H as a whole derives its modern name from its relentless concern with the holiness of the deity and its outpouring onto the priests and the wider community. It is the special quality and primacy of this notion, and particularly how it interfaces with H's broader understanding of the community, that *inter alia* marks out the stratum as compositionally and ideologically distinct from the Priestly History.[10] For reasons of space, I cannot offer a full account of the similarities and differences between H and P. In the ideology of H, the community stands in an immediate relationship with Yahweh, whom they must respect at all costs. Transgressions cannot but be viewed in terms of how they relate to Yahweh's holiness, a principle applying to all breaches of the commandments. And we should note in this context that H does not know a rigid distinction between ritual and what we may consider more broadly speaking "ethical" commands.[11] Within the community, the priests have a particular status as holy (Lev 21–22), but crucially and differently from P, H exhorts the entire people to strive for holiness. H envisions both priests and laypeople as participating in a shared mission of sanctification to keep Yahweh dwelling among them, each serving a distinct but vital function in service of a common end.[12] The priests are already endowed with holiness by merit of their role and must be concerned not to lose it rather than to actively strive for it (cf. esp. Lev 21:6–7), and they possess numerous ritual prerogatives not held by the lay people. These privileges, however, are inseparable from the corresponding responsibilities and duties that they possess as mediators of the laypeople's offerings to the deity (the consequences for failing in this task are mentioned in Lev 22:3, 9) and as necessary although in themselves insufficient enablers of Yahweh to maintain his presence within the wider community. As for the sanctification of the community

9 Of the many scholars cited in this essay, cf., e.g., Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 122–131.

10 See, e.g., Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus."

11 Cf. Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, 176; and Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 344.

12 I adopt an intermediate position between that of Kugler, "Holiness," 25, who detects a democratization of the notion of holiness at the expense of priestly power, and that of Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 346–350, who sees the exhortation to lay holiness to be an attempt "to underscore their *lower* place in the sociocultic hierarchy" (349) aiming at subjugating the people even more systematically to the central priestly authorities.

at large, the text uses a number of rhetorical strategies to make this case. Most relevant for the purposes of this essay are those instances where the need for collective holiness is directly linked with the fact that Yahweh is holy. It is to these passages that I will now turn. In the process of my analysis, we will have the opportunity to discuss many further issues concerning the operating categories of the text.

There are three explicit injunctions in H to be holy because Yahweh is holy. Within Lev 17–26 proper, it appears first in 19:2 (קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני יהוה אלהיכם, "Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"). Here Yahweh tells Moses to utter these words as an introduction to the giving of concrete laws, many of which are accompanied by the refrain אני יהוה or אני יהוה אלהיכם. David Stewart is right to emphasize not only how these reiterated formulae serve as a kind of glue reinforcing the thematic or literary integrity of the command list but also how the additional reference to Yahweh's holiness in v. 2 productively expands the self-identification of the deity in a way that highlights this specific quality as being the cornerstone of the ideology of this chapter and H more broadly.[13] The next occurrence is found in 20:26, where we find והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יהוה ("And be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy") after prohibitions against unclean foods. This is followed in the same verse by ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי "and I separated you from the peoples to be mine," which elegantly mirrors the unclean animals that Yahweh has set apart from them (20:25: אשר הבדלתי לכם לטמא, "that I have set apart from you as unclean"). Holiness as a way of life goes hand in hand with ritual separation from other peoples' practice and the impurity associated therewith. Additionally, in an H supplement to Lev 11, we find the same exhortation (והייתם קדשים כי קדוש אני, "And be holy, for I am holy") in 11:44 and 11:45, interestingly also after a discussion of unclean foods.[14]

It is not surprising that these passages have been taken as the strongest indications of the idea of imitating God in the Hebrew Bible. It may be *prima facie*

13 Stewart, "Leviticus 19," 310–315. The broader question of the literary unity of Lev 19 is a difficult question. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1596, did not find any consistent overarching theme but considered it a heterogenous miscellany of laws. This contrasts with Ruwe, *„Heiligkeitsgesetz" und „Priesterschrift,"* 187–220. Formally, he subdivides the chapter into an initial paraenesis and introductory laws followed by an alternation between sections of casuistic law (vv. 5–10, 20–25) and apodictic law (vv. 11–18, 26–32) that frame a medial paraenesis (v. 19), and thematically, he argues that the chapter is concerned with establishing forms of family- and more broadly social-solidarity, as well as loyalty to Yahweh. On the formal matter, only Lev 19:20 conforms to a stricter understanding of casuistic law. Most of what he terms casuistic laws are categorical commands with temporal qualifications. The thematic analysis is not wrong *per se*, but it is perhaps too broadly construed to bring as much coherence to the text as Ruwe would like to think.

14 For a redaction-compositional discussion of Lev 11, see Milgrom, "Leviticus, Chapter 11."

apparent to many that there is something like imitation implied here. And yet, there have been diverse attempts at explaining the underlying logic behind these verses that are by no means all mutually consistent. These differences—which manifest themselves even when scholars share the same nominal conclusion concerning the (non)applicability of *imitatio Dei*—can ultimately be reduced into two types. The first of these consists in different understandings of holiness in H; the second in differing understandings of the meaning and phenomenology of imitation. In what follows, I will attend to each of these issues. I will develop differentiations concerning the nature of holiness and imitation and try to contextualize previous interpretations. In the process, I will advance my own interpretation. To the specific question of whether there is *imitatio Dei* in H, I will argue that there is, but that the question is insufficiently precise. We should rather ask what form of *imitatio Dei* is to be found in the text. I propose that this has been the most missed opportunity in discussions of *imitatio Dei* in the Hebrew Bible, namely, to develop, if only in rough sketch, a typology of different structures of imitation.[15]

First let us introduce some basic conceptual clarifications. *Imitatio Dei* is a particular manifestation of a more general relational structure that consists of both an *imitandum* and an *imitatio*, i.e., both an entity/person external to the self that is to be imitated and the intentional striving to replicate characteristics/actions of the *imitandum* in oneself. It is through the lenses of the *imitandum* and *imitatio* that I wish to explore the notion of *imitatio Dei* in H. The presence of the *imitandum* implies almost necessarily an element of heteronomy insofar as the subject's standard of perfection is not determined through their own reason or will[16] but is given as an externally posited other. This apparent restriction of freedom explains why moral imitation was strongly criticized by

15 In this context, comparative reflections will be brought into the discussion. It may be considered strange that I focus on the Greek philosophical and Christian traditions and not, say, those of the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. While this partly reflects my own personal competencies, there is a less subjective reason for this choice. As will be seen, categories befitting the Greek philosophical and Christian traditions have been influential—indirectly or with explicit acknowledgement (cf. Najman, "*Imitatio Dei*," 323, who places her study "in dialogue with Greek thinking on the subject")—in scholarly analyses of imitation in H, and an extensive part of my thesis is that these categories do not apply well to H. Claiming that these traditions are less natural comparanda does not constitute a challenge to my argument but on the contrary reinforces what I am trying to say.

16 I do not mean to suggest that there are not significantly different philosophical ramifications depending on whether one conceives of autonomy in rationalistic or voluntaristic terms. But this distinction does not appear highly relevant for the purposes of the present essay, which is why I do not dwell on it. H does not privilege either form of autonomy.

Kant.[17] The task in the first part of this essay's argument will be to clarify what exactly the intended *imitandum* in H is. What are the people called to imitate? After this, I will turn to the *imitatio* and its motivational logic. The stage of the *imitatio* is more complex than that of the *imitandum* to the degree that it allows a greater range between heteronomy and autonomy. That is to say, the *imitatio* may itself be externally demanded and required for external ends, or it may be the result of a completely autonomous act of the subject, with degrees of intermediate possibilities. Scholars have on the whole devoted less attention to the different structures of *imitatio*, but it is critical to do so if we are to come to a proper understanding of *imitatio Dei* in H. We can now proceed to the main analysis.

1 *Imitandum*

We may begin with the question of holiness. As stated above, if there is one feature of the deity that is an object of imitation, it is his holiness. But this statement requires qualification if it is not to lead to misunderstanding. Several scholarly debates concerning the question of *imitatio Dei* can be shown to stem from unsatisfactory understandings of holiness. Thus, in arguing for the centrality of *imitatio Dei*, Eryl Davies committed himself to the view that the imitation of Yahweh's holiness found in H consists in having ritual and, more importantly, ethical rules that are patterned on the divine character.[18] To imitate Yahweh is to imitate the norms that govern his conduct, the norms that are essentially constitutive of his divine holiness. This view is untenable, however, and Rodd has very rightly pointed out that H does not derive its concrete rules on the basis of divine patterns of behavior.[19] Indeed, on the one hand, there are many commandments pertaining to matters which have no analogy in the divine realm, and, on the other hand, there are presumably various characteristics of the deity that the people would be wise not to imitate for themselves.[20] As a result of these justified criticisms, Rodd concluded that

17 See esp. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, zweiter Abschnitt: "Mann könnte auch der Sittlichkeit nicht übler raten, als wenn man sie von Beispielen entlehnen wollte." On Kant's views on moral imitation, see further Whistler, "Kant's *imitatio Christi*."

18 See Davies, "Walking in God's Ways"; and idem, "Ethics of the Hebrew Bible," 112: "This refrain, which implies that God is not only the source of ethical commands but the pattern of ethical behaviour, is repeated often in Leviticus (cf. 11:44; 20:7, 26; 21:8)."

19 Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land*, 69. Cf. also Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 127–128.

20 See Meyer, "Dark Side" who makes much of the fact that Yahweh is a land-owner in H, even if this does not mean people should try to acquire as much land as possible. Cf. also the relevant discussion in Najman, "*Imitatio Dei*," 315–317.

imitatio Dei has no real place in the text. This conclusion is made too hastily. For the entire debate between Davies and Rodd rests on the assumption that imitating Yahweh's holiness refers to imitating his behavior, which would in turn seem to presuppose, if only covertly, that holiness and regulated behavior are (within the confines of H) mutually interchangeable. The difference between Davies and Rodd is that the former has a positive answer to the question of whether there is imitation of divine behavior, while the latter has a negative one. The whole assumption is dubious, however, and as I will now demonstrate, it is perfectly consistent to have a notion of imitation of holiness that does not imply any imitation of behavior.

That holiness is irreducible to any particular regimen of conduct can be seen by a brief consideration of the semantics of קדשׁ. David Clines has recently surveyed the various proposals for the basis meaning of the root, finding the philological basis for each suggestion (the most prominent of which is that קדשׁ originally means "separate") to be slim.[21] With comparative philology unable to provide any decisive meaning of the root, Clines opts for a purely inductive approach based on its uses in the biblical text. It is on this basis that he concludes, "When God is said to be קָדוֹשׁ, no other characteristic or quality is in view than his deity, i.e., his being God. When a person or thing is קָדוֹשׁ, it means it belongs to the deity, no more than that."[22] This position is not entirely unattractive, but it requires qualification. As formulated, it implies that any claim that God is holy amounts to a tautological statement of the deity possessing his own nature. If we are to preserve the word's intimate connection to the divine nature without reducing it to tautology, the only plausible solution in my eyes is to take it as "a category *sui generis*, on a par with such categories as 'the good' or 'the beautiful' [where t]he holy is the divine in its 'numinous', nonrational aspect."[23] In this way, holiness is a quality most proper to divinity, even if it is not identical with divinity *simpliciter*. This would appear to concur also with the position of Holger Gzella, who does not offer a reductionistic meaning

21 Clines, "Basic Meanings." On קדשׁ as "separate"/"cut off," see his remark (483): "Now, although there is an Arabic verb *qadda* 'cut,' it does not seem to be a general word for 'cut,' but is typically used with specific senses such as 'cut the edges,' 'cut into strips.' And there is no such root attested in Semitic generally." Clines stands in agreement with Kornfeld and Ringgren, "*qdš*," 1181, who similarly note that this proposal (advanced by Baudissin) cannot be verified.

22 Clines, "Basic Meanings," 496.

23 Joosten, *People and Land*, 123, using the categories of Rudolf Otto's 1917 classic *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*. For the sake of complete transparency concerning my intellectual debts, I refer to the work of Jan Joosten, even if this involves citing a scholar convicted of grievous criminal behavior.

of the word but grants it the autonomy to refer to "the transcendent perfection of God," in which people and objects can participate to varying degrees.[24]

These nuances notwithstanding, we can clearly see that Yahweh's holiness is not a quality that he merits *qua* any course of conduct but is rather one that is constitutive of his divine nature. Hence, when Yahweh tells the people to be holy, the sense is that they should strive to possess this very quality proper to their deity. To achieve this, it is firstly necessary that they follow the prescribed ordinances. In a second stage, the deity himself will sanctify the people: אני יהוה מקדשכם (cf., e.g., Exod 31:13b; Lev 20:8; 21:8; 22:32).[25] This latter element confirms that merely following the commandments is not equivalent to holiness, for otherwise the additional claims that Yahweh sanctifies the people would be superfluous. But what does this imply for the question of imitation? Once we have sharply distinguished holiness and conduct, we can see that the dispute between Davies and Rodd is one that is founded on the false premise of what the *imitandum* is or must be. The whole debate therefore fails to touch the crux of the matter. For although the people are not exhorted to imitate Yahweh's behavior, it is much more dubious to claim that they are not exhorted to imitate his holiness, to become like Yahweh through acquiring this unique quality that belongs to him.

To touch on the *imitatio* for the moment, that this quality cannot be *directly* imitated in the sense of replicated by people purely on their own accord but requires a mediated process does not vitiate the idea of imitation. As to the element of mediation, exhortations to render oneself holy (e.g., Lev 20:7: והתקדשתם)[26] demonstrate that the text is not interested in removing agency from the human subjects just because the ultimate source of their holiness is

24 Gzella, "*qdš*," 648.

25 Cf., e.g., Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus," 353, and Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 495. Tangentially, I would say that I am not so taken by the suggestion of Müller, "Sanctifying Divine Voice," that the divine voice, given live expression in the oral proclamation of the text, should be understood as possessing, according to the intentions of the composers/compilers, a direct sanctifying efficacy. If the oral proclamation of the text is to exhort the audience to proper conduct, which will only subsequently lead to God sanctifying the people (as per the just cited passages), Müller's claim seems to place the cart before the horse. That being said, Müller has other valuable observations on the אני יהוה formula in H.

26 This translation is equivalent to the standard rendering "Consecrate yourselves." According to *HALOT*, the *hithpael* of this verb means rather "to keep oneself holy," which is not so consequential here but may have implications for the issue of whether the lay people are presumed to start out with a form of holiness. This would not be the same as them possessing a stable state of holiness, as the imperative would still encourage constant effort to preserve it. But I follow Gesenius, §54, 3a and Kornfeld and Ringgren, "*qdš*," 1186, where the *hithpael* of קדשׁ is understood, *qua* reflexive of the *piel*, as meaning "to sanctify

still the deity. The reason for this is not hard to explain. While Yahweh sanctifies the people, this is done by merit of his very presence among them. The people must act according to his commands so that they do not drive him out, but if they succeed in maintaining his sanctifying presence, the holiness will result almost naturally. The important role that human agency plays is therefore not denied by any means. Additionally, while there is a subtle distinction to be made between "copying actions of *x*" and the broader notion of "becoming like *x*,"[27] it seems excessively narrow to limit a notion of *imitatio Dei* only to the former, not least when one considers the parallel Greek concept of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, which expresses the latter. In Plato's *Republic* and *Theaetetus*, this likeness is achieved by righteous action,[28] but it cannot be said that the person who becomes like god is replicating concrete deeds that the god has performed. Socrates is notably reticent about the specific nature of the deity, which suggests that it is more of an abstraction. While ὁμοίωσις θεῷ might therefore be a stricter designation of what we find in H, it seems acceptable to use the more conventional term *imitatio Dei*, as long as we keep in mind this wider sense. In sum, it is perfectly coherent to have a notion of imitating the intrinsic holiness of the deity, and I see no reason to resist this meaning of the exhortation to be holy for Yahweh is holy.

We have still to address one further, often alleged argument against the idea that we have a true form of imitation, namely, that Yahweh's holiness is of a different order from that which can be attained by the people.[29] While it is correct that no human will achieve the same level of holiness as Yahweh, it is not clear how or that this should affect the question of imitation. Anders Petersen's characterization of "Israelite religion," made in the process of rejecting the applicability of *imitatio Dei*, that "the rules here are meant to enforce

oneself"/"sich heiligen." And cf. *HALOT* on the *piel*: "to transfer someone/something to the state of holiness."

27 Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land*, 69: "Imitating involves copying an action, imitating it, reproducing it." The objection has often been repeated: consult, e.g., Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 341.

28 Cf. *Republic* X.613a–b and *Theaetetus* 177a: ὁμοιούμενοι διὰ τὰς ἀδίκους πράξεις, referring to becoming like the negative exemplar of godless wretchedness, which implies—in reverse—that likeness to god is achieved by just actions. See also *Theaetetus* 176b: ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι.

29 Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1397: "Israel is enjoined to be holy because YHWH is holy (19:2). This does not mean that Israel can achieve or even imitate YHWH's holiness," although in the very next page Milgrom speaks positively of *imitatio Dei* in the text. But this he understands as follows: "the *imitatio Dei* … is that just as God differs from human beings, so Israel should differ from the nations" (1604). See also Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land*, 69 and Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 128.

the ontological difference between God and humans and, thereby, to consolidate a contractual relationship, whereby the Israelites through the acceptance of the contractual regulations acknowledge their status as contractual servants and God as their contractual lord,"[30] captures an important truth. H is very concerned with regulating the sacred space and determining who can or cannot approach the sacred precinct and in what condition. And yet the whole emphasis on holiness is precisely because *it* is what permits the people to live, as much as possible, in proximity and harmony with the deity (as envisioned in Lev 26:11–12). Jacob Milgrom's comment, "There is an unbridgeable gap between them [i.e. Yahweh and the people]. Holiness implies separation, distinction,"[31] should not mean that holiness induces distinction from other holy beings. For this does not find firm textual basis; rather, as in Lev 20:26, Yahweh separates the people *from* the nations *to* himself (להיות לי, "to be mine") to be holy unto him (לי). Holiness is indeed thematically associated with separation, but from others who do not participate in holiness, not from Yahweh. In H, it is not holiness *qua* holiness that underlines this "ontological difference" but rather the degrees of impurity that persist despite the extensive human efforts to eradicate them. Thus, in the priestly regulations of Lev 21–22, a priest with a bodily blemish (מום) is removed from the ability to approach the veil and the altar even if he is still permitted to eat "of the most holy and the holy bread of his God" (Lev 21:22: לחם אלהיו מקדשי הקדשים ומן הקדשים), and next, priests are even prohibited from consuming holy offerings due to various forms of impurity (Lev 22:3–9).

We can assume that the laypeople cannot possess the degree of holiness of the priests, which is itself not absolute. But the introduction of a hierarchy of possessing divine qualities not only does not annul the applicability of a notion of *imitatio Dei* but in fact is a standard feature of other religious understandings of this and related processes.[32] And in any case, H is anything but interested in downplaying the nature of their striving for holiness or in suggesting that their holiness is unworthy of being associated with the quality's instantiation in the deity. A pair of verses like Lev 20:7–8, framing the enjoinder to follow the commands with, on the one hand, an exhortation to make oneself holy and, on the other, an affirmation of Yahweh's sanctifying power,

30 Pedersen, "Attaining Divine Perfection," 26.

31 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1397.

32 Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 2.3, referring to priests as ὅσοι τῶν πολλῶν εἰσιν ἀνωτέρω κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν οἰκείωσιν. The passage is cited and discussed with further contextualization in Maslov, "Οἰκείωσις πρὸς θεόν," 328. The use of the comparative ἀνωτέρω implies that also the οἱ πολλοί are engaged in some form of οἰκείωσις πρὸς θεόν.

aims to link the two notions in a way suggesting that the people's holiness is a close participation in the divine holiness:

והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני יהוה אלהיכם
ושמרתם את חקתי ועשיתם אתם אני יהוה מקדשכם

> And render yourselves holy and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.
> And you shall guard my statutes and perform them. I am the Lord who makes you holy.

Here if the people fail to achieve holiness, it will be due to their not having followed the commandments. Hence, the issue that most concerns H lies not in the nature of holiness but rather in how successful the act of *imitatio* will be. It is to the *imitatio* that we can now turn with closer attention.

2 *Imitatio*

As defined above, *imitatio* implies an active effort on the part of a subject to model oneself on the *imitandum*. The very presence of such a notion in H has been disputed. Walther Zimmerli denies that there is any idea of imitation in H for the simple reason that the people are already holy by nature of being Yahweh's chosen people, and that hence the idea of striving to achieve holiness does not make sense within this system of thought. According to him, Yahweh's words קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני יהוה אלהיכם (Lev 19:2) mean nothing else than "Sei, was du bist!"[33] Zimmerli's notion of static holiness in H goes strongly against the now mainstream interpretation, which contrasts notions of static holiness such as in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 14:2) with the dynamic notions present in H's granting of the possibility of lay holiness.[34] Since holiness is acquired through carrying out the commandments, the attainment of holiness should be understood as a continuous process that must be worked

33 Zimmerli "'Heiligkeit'," 503. Zimmerli's position is quoted with approval in Otto, *Theologische Ethik*, 239.

34 See Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1397–1398, which he contrasts with the static holiness of P; and Regev, "Dynamic and Static Holiness," esp. 252–253, who, however, assimilates P and H on this issue. More recently, to the degree that scholars assimilate the notions of holiness in these sources, they do so by noting that even Deuteronomy's conception is not without its dynamic elements insofar as the people must continue to follow the commandments to preserve their intrinsic holiness (cf. Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah*, 196 n. 78).

at. Zimmerli's argument is based on passages like Lev 20:24 (אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הבדלתי אתכם מן העמים "I am the Lord your God who separated you from the peoples") and 20:26 (cited above), which refer to Yahweh having separated the people to be his own. We have already noted that while separation is a precondition for holiness and while holiness is a quality that distinguishes the people from the other nations, the fact that Yahweh has separated the people from the nation cannot be equated with Yahweh having made them permanently holy. The premise of Zimmerli's argument is a fallacious one. In turn, the claim that H espouses a static notion of holiness is a weak basis on which to reject the applicability of *imitatio Dei* to H. Having granted that *imitatio* is indeed actively present in the theology of the text, we can now discuss the specific form that it takes.

"The presence in the Old Testament of the concept of *imitatio Dei* … may serve as a salutatory reminder that the moral requirements demanded of God's people are not always couched in the language of law, and that there is far more to Old Testament ethics than the mere observance of prescribed rules … the concept of *imitatio Dei* is a reminder that morality is concerned with the capacity of individuals to grow and develop in their ethical perception." Thus Davies, writing in a manner that makes evident certain theological preferences.[35] And very recently, Hindy Najman claims that "Imitation of the divine is an internal aspiration that is always incomplete but nevertheless the essence of every self."[36] Without assimilating the two scholars' perspectives, what unites them is their understanding of *imitatio Dei* as a flowering of subjective ethical growth. In these accounts, which both make reference to H to support their arguments, we see the act of *imitatio* as a profound embodiment of personal autonomy. One also frequently finds comparisons made by other scholars between Lev 19:2 and Matt 5:48 (Ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τέλειός ἐστιν, "Be you therefore perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect").[37] Milgrom for his part compares Lev 19:2 with b. Šabb. 133a, where Abba Shaul says: הוי דומה לו, מה הוא חנון ורחום—אף אתה היה חנון ורחום "Be like him [i.e., the Lord]—as he is gracious and compassionate, so you should be gracious and compassionate."[38] These comparisons imply less extreme positions than those of Davies and Najman, but we must still ask to what degree they are felicitous in terms of capturing the inner logic of the exhortations to

35 Davies, "Walking in God's Ways," 114.

36 Najman, "*Imitatio Dei*," 314.

37 E.g., Zimmerli, "'Heiligkeit'," 511; Deiana, *Levitico*, 205; and Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 124.

38 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1604.

holiness in H. I would like to suggest that they elide the most defining aspects of *imitatio* in H.

First, we must reflect on how precisely we should conceive of the agent-subject of the *imitatio*. The answer appears sufficiently straightforward: בני ישראל "The children of Israel." But it is not indifferent whether we conceive of the addressees as a unified collective or as a sum of individuals with their own desires for growth. The aforementioned claims and adduced parallels notably all privilege the individual scale. While Jesus' words are addressed in the second person plural, he is presumably explicating a general moral principle that all of his listeners should individually follow. The plural address can thus be explained as being "methodologically individualistic." I would argue that the case is importantly different with respect to H. It has been demonstrated that the language of H is more attentive to situational nuance in its alternation between second person singular and plural forms than Deuteronomy. Thus, for instance, we find the use of plural forms in references to the exodus from Egypt or in commands concerning feasts, while the singular is fittingly used for the sexual prohibitions that have a more intimate scope. More generally, it can be said, although the principle is not exceptionless, that the plural is used to address the people viewed as a unit sharing a common responsibility, while the singular evokes more private, individual responsibilities.[39] (To be sure, even in this latter case, the more intimate focalization is linked back to the wider social framing.[40]) In this light, it is worth noting that H's three exhortations to be holy for Yahweh is holy are addressed in the second person plural. There is nothing to suggest that these are outliers to the pattern just adduced, and in their respective contexts, it is clear that the intended addressees are the people considered as a collective (cf. Lev 19:2, where the addressee is in fact specified as כל עדת בני ישראל "All the assembly of the children of Israel," and 11:45 and 20:26, which frame the exhortations with reference to Yahweh's deliverance of the people from Egypt and his separation of them from the other nations, respectively). To the degree that these provide the context of justification for the remaining prescripts and prohibitions, they show that H understands the

39 Thus Joosten, "'Tu' et 'vous'," 5: "Le pluriel est employé pour interpeller le peuple en tant qu'entité collective partageant une même histoire, un même destin et une même vocation, tandis que l'usage du singulier est réservé pour les cas où il s'agit de s'adresser à chaque homme—ou à chaque famille—séparément afin de lui dicter sa responsabilité individuelle."

40 Thus cf. Lev 18:29, which states that offenders against H's prescribed family laws are to be cut off from the community. As Bigger, "Family Laws," 203, writes, "The family laws of Leviticus 18 thus demand order and purity in society which must begin from the local family group."

following of the commandments as, in the first place, a national project aimed at collective sanctification.[41]

This is confirmed on the negative level, as well: where individuals violate the commandments, this is consistently thematized in terms of a collective problem that requires the transgressor to be purged from their midst. A verse like Lev 17:10, which possesses some of the key markers that scholars have pointed out as individualizing (איש איש and נפש),[42] still makes sense only through the primary lenses of the social collective:

> ואיש איש מבית ישראל ומן הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יאכל כל דם ונתתי פני בנפש האכלת את הדם והכרתי אתה מקרב עמה
>
> And anyone from the house of Israel and from the sojourner that sojourns in their midst, [any] who eats any blood, I will set my face against the person who eats the blood and I will cut him off from the midst of his people.

The offender is singled out as being from the people, מבית ישראל, and his punishment is framed vis-à-vis the people as the whole (והכרתי אתה מקרב עמה). An additional example of this communal-individual dynamic is played out in Lev 20:1–7. Those individuals (cf. 20:2: איש איש מבני ישראל ומן הגר הגר בישראל) who sacrifice their children to Molech (למלך)[43] defile Yahweh's name and sanctuary and thus must be put to death by their people. Yahweh will take the matter into his own hands should they fail in their duty. After one additional verse against those particular persons who turn to mediums and conjurers

41 Cf. Joosten, *People and Land*, 86–97; and Deiana, *Levitico*, 205: "la chiamata alla santità, specialmente in Lv 19, è rivolta a un popolo, quindi è un ideale proposto alla comunità e al singolo, in quanto membro della comunità … Non ci si salva da soli ma in comunità." Even more articulate is the analysis of Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, esp. 342 and 386.

42 Cf. Joosten, "'Tu' et 'vous'," 7 n. 33, and Najman, "*Imitatio Dei*," 314: "I am thinking perhaps first and foremost of נפש or נפשי—as the closest formulation for selfhood. נפשי expresses the reflexivity of the self." The word "reflexivity" is used rather too generously.

43 How to understand this and its related passages (Lev 18:21; 2 Kgs 23:10; and Jer 32:35) is a much debated matter. For the sake of this argument I follow the more standard view that this refers to child sacrifice to an obscure deity. Dewrell, "»Whoring after the mōlek« in Leviticus 20,5," has recently revived Otto Eissfeldt's proposal that מלך refers to some type of offering, based on a text-critical examination of Lev 20:5. Hieke, "No Child Sacrifice in Leviticus 18 and 20," imaginatively suggests that this is a secret code referring to the "handing over of children from the Jewish community of Yehud to the Persian authorities for various services, such as sons for military service and daughters for concubines" (195). This of course implies a later dating of the text, but more serious is the tendentious nature of his supportive evidence.

(Lev 20:6: והנפש אשר תפנה אל האבת ואל הידענים),[44] the flow of this immediate section is concluded with a second person plural address in Lev 20:7–8, cited again for convenience:

והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני יהוה אלהיכם
ושמרתם את חקתי ועשיתם אתם אני יהוה מקדשכם

> And render yourselves holy and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.
> And you shall guard my statutes and perform them. I am the Lord who makes you holy.[45]

This rhetorically serves to present the sanctification as a "group effort" while thematizing transgression as the deviant act of rogue individuals.[46] The list could easily be extended. Lev 23:27–31 provides the same sort of rhetoric concerning those who fail to comply with the regulations surrounding the day of atonement (יום הכפרים). Compare, for example, Lev 23:30:

וכל הנפש אשר תעשה כל מלאכה בעצם היום הזה והאבדתי את הנפש ההוא מקרב עמה

> And as for every person that does any work on this very day, I will destroy that person from the midst of his people.[47]

The singular *nefeš* here contrasts with the exhortation that on this day "you shall afflict your persons" (ועניתם את נפשתיכם) in 23:32, which employs the plural נפשתיכם. And these basic principles are given dramatic expression in the narrative episodes concerning the collective stoning to death of the

44 Cf. Lev 19:31 and, on the mediums and conjurers directly, 20:27.

45 It might be tempting to take Lev 20:7–8 not so much as concluding vv. 1–6 as instead preparing Lev 20:9 (כי איש איש אשר יקלל את אביו ואת אמו מות יומת אביו ואמו קלל דמיו בו "For anyone who curses his father and his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father and his mother. His blood is upon him"). I follow the analysis of Chavel, "Case of כי in Lev 20:9," who argues suggestively and with good evidence that the כי, which suggests a logical connection to the preceding, is probably a secondary scribal insertion, and that v. 9 begins a distinct section.

46 Of course, this rhetorical point is consistent with H's view of the possibility that the whole community can become corrupt, cf. Lev 18:28; 20:22, and 26:14–39.

47 The language and content reminds one of the H text Exod 31:14.

half-Israelite-half-Egyptian who offends Yahweh's name in Lev 24:10–23 and of the sabbath-breaker in Num 15:32–36, a parallel H text.[48]

Individual transgression is viewed first and foremost as a threat to the communal order.[49] Hence, the social scale of reference must be considered an irreducible feature of the *imitatio* that sets it apart from the more familiar individualistic examples. This aspect is typified when one contrasts H's designation of the *failed* imitator as social outcast with Plato's presentation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as an individual flight (φυγή) from the earthly world and society (*Theaetetus* 176a–b). For whatever reason, the extension of the call to holiness toward the broader lay community did not occur in tandem with a particularizing concern for each member's individuality.

Besides the fundamentally collective orientation of the *imitatio*, there is a further aspect to consider that further distinguishes H from the characterizations cited above. What is the thematized *telos* of the *imitatio*, and who is its initiator? In the Matthean and rabbinic passages referred to above, the implied *telos* of the act of imitation is (arguably) the virtuous life of the subject. If the subject is to find their "model life," they are to look no further than the divine model. This is even more apparent in the Platonic case; cf. *Republic* X.613a–b:

> οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὑπό γε θεῶν ποτε ἀμελεῖται ὅς ἂν *προθυμεῖσθαι ἐθέλῃ δίκαιος γίγνεσθαι καὶ ἐπιτηδεύων ἀρετὴν εἰς ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ*
>
> For surely *whoever wishes to strive zealously to become just and, practicing virtue, to become like god as much as is possible for a human* is not ever neglected by the gods.

This, however, does not apply so straightforwardly to H. The justification of the people's proper conduct, and hence of the *imitatio*, is framed negatively as the way not to profane the divine name (cf. esp. Lev 20:3; 21:6). Since Yahweh is by nature holy, he requires holiness from those who are to approach him and live

48 Cf. Chavel, *Oracular Law*, 23–92, 165–195. The exact nature of the former offense is a matter of scholarly dispute, especially as concerns the precise nuance of the verb נקב. Cf. Lev 24:11: ויקב בן האשה הישראלית את השם ויקלל.

49 A more unique case of how an offender threatens the community can be seen in Lev 21:9, where the priest's daughter who prostitutes herself is said to defile her father. Rothstein, "Who is 'Profaned?'" discusses the reception of this verse, and how certain rabbinic and Samaritan interpreters, troubled by this, attempted to read the text in such a way as to make the daughter profane only herself.

in his presence, lest his nature be compromised.[50] The consequences of failing to achieve holiness through following the commandments will be severe, as expressed in the starkest terms in Lev 26:14–45, describing the desolation of the land brought about by plague and famine and its ransacking at the hand of enemies.

It has been claimed than we find a more positive formulation justifying the following of the commandments, namely, that carrying out the commandments actually sanctifies the deity. As Christophe Nihan writes in reference to Lev 22:32,[51] "If Yahweh is desecrated when Israel disobeys his laws, then he is logically sanctified (קדש Niphal!) every time the people obey the latter and behave according to his will … [this] demonstrates another aspect of the dynamic conception of holiness *by now including Yahweh himself in the ongoing process of sanctification of Israel*."[52] Nihan explicitly opposes his reading to the traditional understanding of the *niphal* of this verb as meaning either "to be treated as holy" or "to show oneself holy" (cf. BDB and *HALOT*).[53] His arguments, however, are not decisive. The usage in Lev 22:32 finds a close parallel in Ezek 20:41 (ונקדשתי בכם לעיני הגוים), where the context strongly supports a rendering "And I will show myself holy among you in the eyes of the nations"; the passage is, relevantly, preceded by the analogous ואת שם קדשי לא תחללו עוד, "And no longer still shall you profane my holy name" (Ezek 20:39).[54] Furthermore, while this notion of self-revelation, when applied to Lev 22:32, can readily be connected to H's theocentric ideology, the idea that Yahweh is sanctified by the people in a quasi-symbiotic relationship of endowing holiness

50 This is the staple of P and H's worldview, cf. Milgrom, "Israel's Sanctuary," 397: "True, man falls short of being a demon, but he is capable of the demonic. He alone is the cause of the world's ills. He alone can contaminate the sanctuary and force God out." For forcing Yahweh out of the sanctuary in H in particular, see Lev 26:31.

51 Lev 22:32: ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל.

52 Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 495 (his emphasis). Nihan, to be clear, was not the first to endorse this position. Predecessors include Kugler, "Holiness," 16.

53 Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 495 n. 381. The sense of the *niphal* as showing oneself holy is the only meaning provided in Kornfeld and Ringgren, "*qdš*," 1185, where a number of textual instances are cited.

54 Cf., e.g., how this completes the theme of Ezek 20:9, 14, 22 and flows well into the opening of the next verse, v. 42: וידעתם כי אני יהוה בהביאי אתכם אל אדמת ישראל. A reciprocal sanctification of Yahweh and the Israelites makes even less sense for Ezekiel's deity than it does for H's. It is well-known that H and Ezekiel share many locutions and theological ideas, which makes the present parallelism better than most. On the long-discussed literary relationship between these two texts, see, for a taste of an early treatment, Baentsch, *Heiligkeits-Gesetz*, 81–91, and then Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, which both argue for H's priority, but note the qualifications to this position as well as further methodological reflections raised in idem, "How Have We Changed?"

upon the other not only lacks clear parallels, as Nihan himself concedes,[55] but stands in tension with the thoroughly asymmetrical scheme of obedience and awe for Yahweh's majesty that is manifest strongly even within the immediate context of Lev 22:31–33. An isolated ambiguity is not a sufficient basis to propose a reorganization of this framework.

The sanctions against those who do not follow the commandments should not be interpreted merely as H's way to emphasize the importance of *imitatio Dei*, although naturally it does that too. More significantly, this framing makes it so that the *imitatio* is in its structure thoroughly heteronomous. This is not simply due to the fact that the *imitatio* is required by an external authority, but because its deeper justification is theocentric in nature, based on the need not to desecrate Yahweh's name. The theocentric nature of the worldview of H, and P more broadly, is of course a familiar cliché,[56] but this only makes it all the more surprising that it has not affected in a deeper and more organic way the attempts to understand the structure of *imitatio Dei* in the text. In an important recent study with which I have much to agree, Julia Rhyder accurately writes that within the text of H "there is little to suggest that the Israelites will exercise individual discretion and *choose* as virtuous persons to engage in

55 Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 495. Lev 10:3, which he adduces as a comparandum, is also debatable.

56 Cf., e.g., Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy," 257. For Weinfeld, as for many others of his time, the theocentric designation is used pejoratively in contrast to the more "humanistic" and "rational" worldview of Deuteronomy. We need not share the normative evaluations to accept that the descriptive analysis captures an important if partial truth (the partiality, however, applying rather more to Deuteronomy). Barton, *Ethics in Ancient Israel*, 127–128, tries to strike a note of compromise when he writes, "ethics in ancient Israel was certainly not humanistic nor necessarily eudaimonistic … but that does not mean it was all based on a divine command theory." And yet H is cited as the clearest evidence of the latter position: "[in H] morality is underpinned by the expressed will of God" (128). To anticipate objections on this point, one may certainly cite instances of "humanistically" concerned laws in H—Lev 25:8–55 on the Jubilee Year comes most quickly to mind—but this must be sharply distinguished from their higher-order justification, which is based on notions such as Yahweh possessing the people as slaves (cf. Lev 25:42, 55). For a detailed study of the motive clauses in Lev 25:8–55, consult Lefebvre, *Jubilé biblique*, 349–389, and, specifically on the issue of the people at Yahweh's personal slaves, see Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 375–378, esp. 375: "If the Israelites are god's slaves, living on its property, it is axiomatic that they must live in accordance with the god's wishes and so defer to the central law in all aspects of their daily life." And despite what Stackert, "Sabbath of the Land in the Holiness Legislation," 249–250, argues, I am not persuaded that Lev 25:6–7 should be interpreted as providing a humanitarian rationale for the Sabbath Year law, as opposed to simply papering over the glaring question of how the people and animals will be fed during that year.

ethical behavior."[57] If there remains a point where I would propose a minor qualification to Rhyder's subtle and careful exegesis, it is that I would question the dichotomy that she sets up between imitation and obedience (preferring the latter as the hallmark of H's rhetoric).[58] The two can be mutually compatible according to the categories developed here. The result, on our proposed reading, is that we have a theory of imitation that does not put the focal point on the subject. Rather, the initial motor of the *imitatio* is the deity to be imitated. Although we do have a strong, working concept of *imitatio Dei* in the text (*pace* Rodd, *pro* Davies), it is completely misleading to see it in opposition to or transcending a more traditional legal framework of divinely-instituted commands and prohibitions (*pace* Davies, *pro* Rodd).

3 Conclusion

Can H be said to possess a theology of *imitatio Dei*? In this article, I have tried to provide a positive answer to this question. My method has not consisted in offering a radically revisionary picture of the basic outlines of H's theological framework, but rather in refining our understanding of the inner structure of imitation. With respect to the distinction between *imitandum* and *imitatio*, it is telling that most of the contentious debates have centered on the former. Despite this, the issue of the *imitandum* has not been analyzed in its full context. I have contended that the absence of an action-directed imitation does not vitiate the applicability of the concept of *imitatio Dei* (although ὁμοίωσις θεῷ may be preferable). The debates on the level of the *imitandum* have arguably detracted attention from what is at least as interesting, namely, the specific nature of the *imitatio*. This has been more covertly misrepresented in sections of the scholarship, which has allowed more individualistic notions to be read into the text, often without explicit scrutiny and serious consideration of alternatives. The theocentric and communal logic of H, a standard staple of any general discussion of its worldview, has been pushed to the side if not contradicted by many (although by no means all) statements concerning the nature of *imitatio Dei* in the text.

My response would not be to back down from the claim that we have a full-fledged form of *imitatio Dei* operating in H. It is certainly true that the picture

57 Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 342.

58 Rhyder, *Centralizing the Cult*, 344: "This does not require imitation or moral piety per se. It is predicated instead on *obedience* to the law, and an ability to *interpret* it for both everyday and ritual activities" (her emphases).

of imitating Yahweh's holiness in H that we have described could not be further removed from, say, the medieval version of a private, devotional *imitatio Christi*. And yet this does not imply that H provides a defective or "attenuated" form of the concept of imitation of the divine. One must appreciate that a theory of imitation can naturally be expected to arise within any ethical system that has not decisively broken with heteronomy, but that there are many such ethical systems which in turn condition different variations of imitational structures. And of these, none can straightforwardly claim to be the normative exemplar by which the rest are measured.

This does not mean that we cannot see a plausible trend according to which autonomization begins first on the level of the *imitatio*, after which it extends to the *imitandum*,[59] consequently imploding the very essence of imitation, but a study of this full development exceeds the scope of this limited investigation. One may wish to attribute this to a natural inner logic of development. Yet, even this cannot be equated with a simplistic schema of unambiguous "linear progress," and I commit myself to no evaluative judgements in this essay. Moreover, this framework does not excuse one from considering the contingent historical factors that contribute to later developments. The concern with individual self-perfection achieves its height in ancient Judaism when the people become habituated to protracted political dependence, still more geographically dispersed from one another, and—eventually and in certain cases—receptive to Hellenistic influence.[60]

To conclude, it is important that we possess clarity about which of the adduced forms of imitation any historical example represents, and that we do not, without qualification, mix kinds in our comparisons. Within such a typology, the case of H stands out as a prime example of a non-autonomous form of imitation, and one that is not, at least in any direct sense, concerned with the formation and growth of the individual subject as such or on its own terms. On this account, it deserves our careful attention as a fascinating window into an alternative model of *imitatio Dei*.

59 As expressed with greatest clarity by Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, Zweites Stück, Erster Abschnitt (b): "Es bedarf also keines Beispiels der Erfahrung, um die Idee eines Gott moralisch wohlgefälligen Menschen für uns zum Vorbilde zu machen; sie liegt als ein solches schon in unserer Vernunft."

60 Thus, Philo plays an important role in the discussions of imitation offered by Najman, "Recherche de la Perfection" and the aforementioned idem, "*Imitatio Dei*."

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