

YHWH, my deity, will come, all the holy ones (*kol-qədōšîm*) with him.”⁵³ YHWH is clearly represented as greater than all the “holy ones,” as in the rhetoric of incomparability used in Ps 89:7–8: “who among the deities is like YHWH, / a deity dreaded among the council of holy ones (*bəsôd-qədōšîm*), / great and awesome above all who surround him?” The designation of the other deities as *qədōšîm* here may include the notion of awe and fear, particularly in light of the rhetorical emphasis of YHWH's inspiration of far greater dread and awe.

The biblical texts also identify a close conceptual relationship between this awe/terror and the radiance of some of those entities understood to be “holy.” While that terror in the Akkadian literature stems from what the radiance signaled about divine power, the biblical literature develops the notion that the radiance itself is deadly to humanity. Thus, in the chapter before the episode with Moses' shining face, YHWH explains to Moses, “you cannot see my face, because a human cannot see me and live” (Exod 33:20). The communicability of that radiance may be reflected in the episode of Moses' shining face in Exod 34:29–35 (provided one interprets *qāran* to refer to the shining of Moses' face; cf. Philpot 2013). The fact that the people feared coming near him suggests the terror associated with it was communicable as well.

Holiness, then, was likely a conceptual extension from more “profane” contexts, but was considered prototypical of the generic concept of deity in the Hebrew Bible, even as it was communicable to humanity and to architecture and cultic objects. The Hebrew Bible's use of “holiness” in reference to some sense of separation or consecration may derive from the expectation that humanity somehow participate in the holiness of deity and the observation that humans rarely radiate their own inherent luminosity. The cultic prescriptions associated with Israel's achieving holiness indicate cleanliness and purity were also included in the conceptualization of “holy,” and perhaps even constitute a primary means of facilitating it.

IMMORTALITY. Deities were prototypically immortal, or at least a lot less mortal than humans. A clear reflection of the IMMORTALITY domain is found in Ps 82:6–7, where the deity status of the members of the divine council is contrasted with their condemnation to mortality: “I have declared, ‘You are deities, / and children of the Highest, each of you.’ Nevertheless, like a human you will die [*təmûtûn*], / and as one of the princes, you will fall [*tippōlû*].” These late verses evoke the prototypical understanding of the immortality of deity, even as they make

⁵³ These vague references to “holy ones” may have been reinterpreted in later years as references to humans in light of both the concern for YHWH's exclusivity and the post-exilic emphasis on Israel becoming holy.