

BOOK REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

Between Belonging and Identity in Ancient Judaism: The Role of Emotion in the Production of Identity

Ari Mermelstein 

Associate Professor of Bible and Second Temple Literature; Chair, Department of Bible, Hebrew, and Near Eastern Studies, Yeshiva University

doi:[10.1017/jlr.2022.4](https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2022.4)

Abstract

Reviewed: *Kinship, Law and Politics: An Anatomy of Belonging*. By Joseph E. David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 156. \$110.00 (cloth); \$88.00 (digital). ISBN: 9781108499682.

This essay considers the vexed relationship between belonging and identity. Belonging is not an objective or unreflective association but rather an emotional assertion of attachment. That emotional connection is an indispensable component of identity, which, as Joseph David argues in *Kinship, Law and Politics: An Anatomy of Belonging*, is a relationship charged with meaning. Accordingly, the distinction between *belonging* as a privately held sentiment and the *politics of belonging* overlooks the fact that the emotions associated with belonging define group membership. Belonging is not a private matter but an emotional relationship that shapes social life, reinforces a group's identity politics, and finds expression in a group's practices. Analysis of two case studies from ancient Judaism—the writings of Philo of Alexandria and the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls—demonstrates the emotional, social, and discursive dimensions of belonging and the role it plays in producing identity. Belonging is not a stable concept but is rather one that assumes different forms depending on the emotional orientation of the group and the particulars of identity politics. For Philo, belonging reflects a universalistic love for all humanity that helps shape an identity embracing Jewish practice and Greek virtue. By contrast, the Dead Sea sect's antipathy toward all other Jews requires that a sense of belonging express not only love for fellow sectarians but also hate for all outsiders.

Keywords: belonging; identity; emotion; Philo of Alexandria; Dead Sea Scrolls

Belonging and Identity

With *Kinship, Law and Politics: An Anatomy of Belonging*, Joseph David has produced an important study devoted to the subject of belonging, a concept that has received substantial scholarly treatment but frequently suffers from a lack of clarity. That concept, David argues, can be understood only in local and historical contexts. His control of numerous historical and theoretical fields is dazzling and produces insights that will be of immense value for numerous disciplines in the humanities.

David is careful to distinguish two terms, *belonging* and *identity*, that are often conflated and treated as synonyms. According to David, “[t]he concept of belonging may designate

© The Author(s), 2022. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University.



relations that are not meaningful or even known to anyone ... while the concept of identity is informative with regard to the meaning that is connoted by or associated with these relations” (13). These definitions suggest that belonging does not play a meaningful role in social life or in the construction of the self; belonging is “excluded from social situation and social interaction” (14). Relations of belonging, such as blood type or skin color (13–14), are “consciousness-independent” (14) and “objective” (13). Identity, by contrast, results when a relationship of belonging is endowed with meaning (13) and becomes the object of “personal perception and social recognition” (14). Belonging is a private matter, while identity “is an inherently social phenomenon” (15).

Belonging may refer to an “objective relation,” but, David argues, that does not exclude the role of society in defining the contours of those relations (14). “Kinship” may be an objective form of belonging, but, David shows, what constitutes kinship is subject to historical change (chapters 1–2). Similarly, a society may regard certain relations as constituting objective belongings, but closer scrutiny reveals that the appearance of objectivity is itself a social construction; David’s discussions about “belonging” to the law (chapters 3–4) and about modeling forms of “political belonging” on “kin belonging” (chapters 5–7) are excellent examples of this phenomenon. David’s definition of “belonging” is thus especially helpful for understanding the role that culture plays in constructing the forms and contours of objective relations, as well as for understanding the dynamic shift that occurs when objective relations become a source of explicit reflection and debate.

Nevertheless, I offer an alternative definition of *belonging* that entails a different relationship with *identity*, the latter of which, following David, I define as “relations that are charged with meaning” (13). The concept of belonging has an important emotional dimension to it, conveyed by the word itself, which communicates a sense of longing (4).¹ Thus, researchers have shown that emotional commitment is associated with group attachment so that, for example, when previously unacquainted boys are randomly assigned to newly created groups, strong feelings of loyalty take shape.² Similarly, the members of two previously hostile groups develop emotional attachments to a newly formed group created in order to accomplish a shared goal that is unachievable by each in isolation.³ A sense of belonging in the contexts of newly created bonds as diverse as new employment, childbirth, fraternity or sorority pledging, and religious conversion, when one feels “accepted, included or welcomed,” is characterized by positive emotions.⁴ Conversely, being deprived of belongingness has negative emotional effects of numerous kinds.⁵

From a theoretical perspective, this alternative understanding of “belonging” spotlights the oft-neglected relationship between emotion and identity.⁶ Identity includes an affective component; emotions motivate us to act in pursuit, defense, or support of identity, and the prominent role played by emotions helps explain why matters of identity are often so contested, leading, for example, to identity politics. Political scientist

¹ On the dialectic “being-longing,” see David’s discussion at page 4.

² See Muzafer Sherif et al., *The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 199–214.

³ Sherif et al., 199–214.

⁴ See Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, “The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation,” *Psychological Bulletin* 117, no. 3 (1995): 497–529, at 508.

⁵ Baumeister and Leary, 505–06.

⁶ See Ari Mermelstein, *Power and Emotion in Ancient Judaism: Community and Identity in Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Jonathan Mercer describes the inevitable relationship between identity and emotion in the following way: “Identity and emotion depend on each other. Identification without emotion inspires no action for one does not care. Whereas indifference makes identities meaningless (and powerless), emotion makes them important. Pride in one’s group or hate of one’s enemy presupposes identities that one cares about. Or, whether one’s religious identity is important depends on how one feels—and sometimes how others’ feel—about that identity.”⁷

I would go one step further than Mercer and argue that because identities are *always* endowed with meaning, they depend on emotion for their very existence; “belonging” as a form of emotion thus both produces and reinforces identity.⁸ Belonging is neither an objective relation nor an unreflective state of being but is rather an emotional assertion of commitment and attachment.

Scholarly views about the nature of emotion further help clarify the basis for the association between emotion and identity. Researchers increasingly subscribe to a social-constructionist perspective on emotion, a view that describes emotions as culturally conditioned expressions of norms, values, and beliefs.⁹ For this view, emotions are the culturally determined ways in which individuals interpret specific instinctual, nonconscious, and chemical stirrings in the body—hence, “embodied thoughts.”¹⁰ Because of the role that culture plays in the production of emotion, emotions are one vehicle through which individuals produce, express, and reinforce their identity.

Because of the role that culture plays in shaping emotion, the fact that belonging reflects emotional commitment does not also require the further conclusion that, as David claims, belonging is a private matter. Admittedly, researchers who associate belonging with emotion often distinguish between *belonging* as a private, emotional commitment, and the *politics of belonging*, understood as “a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion.”¹¹ Such a distinction seems to regard emotions as limited to the private, internal sphere. However, emotion theorists have moved away from this perspective and instead offer an account of emotions that focuses on their embeddedness in and contribution to social life. This line of inquiry emphasizes both the performative and scripted nature of emotion;¹² the critical role that emotions play in social and political movements;¹³ and the impact of power and power relations on emotion.¹⁴ For these reasons, emotions are implicated in discussions about

⁷ Jonathan Mercer, “Feeling Like a State: Social Emotion and Identity,” *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014): 515–35, at 522.

⁸ See Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (London: Routledge, 2020), 2. Fortier views “institutional narratives of identity as part of the longing to belong, as constituted by the desire for an identity, rather than surfacing from an already constituted identity.” Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, 2.

⁹ See, for example, Claire Armon-Jones, “The Thesis of Constructionism,” in *The Social Construction of Emotions*, ed. Rom Harré (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 32–56.

¹⁰ Michelle Rosaldo, “Towards an Anthropology of Self and Feeling,” in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, ed. Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 137–57, at 143.

¹¹ Marco Antonsich, “Searching for Belonging—An Analytical Framework,” *Geography Compass* 4, no. 6 (2010): 644–59, at 645. See also Nira Yuval-Davis, “Belonging and the Politics of Belonging,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 3 (2006): 197–214.

¹² On the performative dimension of emotion, see Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotions,” *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 193–220. On emotional scripts, see Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

¹³ See, for example, Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹⁴ See Mermelstein, *Power and Emotion in Ancient Judaism*.

inclusion or exclusion that are generally associated with identity politics.¹⁵ In contrast to David's definition, then, I argue that "belonging" is an emotional commitment that is not private or internal and whose emotional performance or display plays a critical role in both producing and reinforcing identity.¹⁶

Emotions are a necessary component of and contributor to identity, but cultures play a decisive role in determining precisely which emotions are expected of group members. Because the emotional attachment of belonging is linked with identity, the nature of that emotional attachment will depend on the contours of identity. Two ancient Jewish corpora, the Dead Sea sect and Philo of Alexandria represent opposing views about the boundaries between inside and outside. Not surprisingly, the sense of belonging in each reflects divergent emotions as an expression of different identity politics. Analysis of these corpora demonstrates that belonging represents culturally defined emotional commitments that are both public and expressive of group identity. Both sets of texts further demonstrate that belonging manifests itself in the form of practices and rituals that make up communal life.

Indeed, ancient Jewish texts can make meaningful contributions to the study of belonging because Jewish identity in that period was in tremendous flux, with new forms of practice emerging as centrally important.¹⁷ In addition, Jews at that time lived in numerous and diverse cultural contexts, including in the Greco-Roman diaspora and in recently formed sects.¹⁸ Indeed, David draws upon such sources at various points, particularly in his discussion on corporal union as a form of belonging in chapter 1.

Did Ancient Jews Hate Their Greek Neighbors?

Philo of Alexandria lived in the Egyptian city of Alexandria during the end of the first century BCE and the first half of the first century CE. His large corpus of biblical interpretation, all written in Greek, is part of a project of synthesis between the traditions of Greek learning and philosophy and Judaism. His effort at synthesis belies the fact that he lived in a time and place that was often hostile to the large communities of Jews that lived in Alexandria.¹⁹

The writings of Philo himself and those of other Jewish and Greek authors during the course of the first century CE present a picture of this hostility. Jews stood out by virtue of ritual practices that cut Jews off, socially and ideologically, from the ambient culture. Jewish dietary practices and observance of the Sabbath limited the degree of social contact with gentiles; Jewish aversion to intermarriage deepened the fact of distance; and the Jewish

¹⁵ See Antonsich, "Searching for Belonging," 649.

¹⁶ For the idea that belonging is performed or displayed—an approach that views belonging as dynamic rather than static—see Vikki Bell, "Performativity and Belonging: An Introduction," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (1999): 1–10, and the articles published in that issue of the journal.

¹⁷ On new forms of Jewish practice and belief, see Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 49–99. On Jewish sectarianism during the Second Temple period, see Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*, trans. Allan W. Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

¹⁸ On the ancient Jewish diaspora, see John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996). For the study of later diasporas in the context of belonging, see Dalia Abdelhandy, "Representing the Homeland: Lebanese Diasporic Notions of Home and Return in a Global Context," *Cultural Dynamics* 20, no. 1 (2008): 53–72; Sharika Thiranagama, "Moving On? Generating Homes in the Future for Displaced Northern Muslims in Sri Lanka," in *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*, ed. Janet Carsten (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 126–49.

¹⁹ See Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 136–60.

(male) body was different by virtue of the practice of circumcision. This set of practices was not coincidental but was viewed as originating in Jewish *misanthropy*, or hatred of humanity.²⁰ Jews with a sense of belonging were forced to argue that they did not, in fact, hate all outsiders.

As someone with a sense of belonging within his cultural environment, Philo undertook the challenge of arguing, both to Jews and Gentiles, that Jewish and Greek mores were not mutually antagonistic and that Jewish practice did not entail hatred of outsiders.²¹ Toward that end, Philo argued that the two traditions are not only compatible but also share similar goals. Mosaic law, according to Philo, is simply a written copy of the unwritten law of nature revered by Stoic philosophers.²² Similarly, Philo identified as a rationale for many of the stipulations within Mosaic law the cardinal virtues—courage, temperance, justice, and prudence—that together are the elements that constitute a good life.²³ Even the Patriarchs of the book of Genesis, according to Philo, are model Stoic sages, with each one modeling the law of nature within their own lives.²⁴ Philo constructed these arguments in order to suggest to both Jews and Greeks that Jews could remain loyal to the Mosaic law and simultaneously participate in the ambient Greek culture.

In seeking to justify a Jewish sense of belonging in the Greek world, Philo went even further, arguing that not only do Jews and Greeks aspire to a common set of ideals but also that Jewish ritual practice is specifically designed to facilitate *philanthropy*—a love for humanity.²⁵ His work, *On the Virtues*, focuses on two virtues: manly courage (*andreia*) and *philanthropy*. Philo's essential argument is that Jews, through their observances, share in common specific virtues with their Greco-Roman neighbors—with *philanthropy* being chief among them.²⁶ Philo even refers to *philanthropy* as “the virtue closest akin to piety, its sister and twin.”²⁷ Accordingly, Philo discusses repentance—*metanoia*—at the conclusion of his

²⁰ See Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 15–33. On the association in Greek and Latin literature between a peoples' laws and their character and its bearing on attitudes toward Jews, see Steve Mason, “Essenes and Lurking Spartans in Josephus' *Judean War*: From Story to History,” in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 219–61, at 223–25.

²¹ On apologetic literature as intended for Jewish consumption, see Victor Tcherikover, “Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered,” *Eos* 48, no. 3 (1956): 169–93. On the possibility that some of Philo's writings, particularly those on Jewish law, also address gentiles, see Maren Niehoff, “Philo's *Exposition* in a Roman Context,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 23 (2011): 1–21, at 2; Michael Cover, “Colonial Narratives and Philo's Roman Accuser in the *Hypothetica*,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 22 (2010): 183–207.

²² See Hindy Najman, “A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?” *Studia Philonica Annual* 15 (2003): 54–63.

²³ See Walter T. Wilson, “Pious Soldiers, Gender Deviants, and the Ideology of Actium: Courage and Warfare in Philo's *De fortitudine*,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 17 (2005): 1–32.

²⁴ Philo, *On Abraham* 4–6.

²⁵ On *philanthropy* in Philo, see Peder Borgen, “*Philanthropy* in Philo's Writings: Some Observations,” in *Biblical and Humane: A Festschrift for John F. Priest*, ed. Linda Bennett Elder, David L. Barr, and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 173–88; Katell Berthelot, *Philanthropia Judaica: le débat autour de la “misanthropie” des lois juives dans l'Antiquité* [Philanthropia Judaica: The debate on the “misanthropy” of Jewish laws in antiquity] (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 233–321.

²⁶ Philo refers to *philanthropy* as a virtue. Philo, *On the Virtues*, trans. F. H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 8:195 (51). (For the specialist reader or those accessing Philo's works in different translations from those I use here, I include in parentheses the standard reference by book and/or section.) As David Konstan writes, by that time, *philanthropy* was “a virtue term in Hellenistic literature.” David Konstan, “Philo's *De virtutibus* in the Perspective of Classical Greek Philosophy,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 18 (2006): 59–72, at 66. The Roman ideal of *clementia*, an ethic of humaneness with which *philanthropy* shared much in common, was listed among the emperor's cardinal virtues beginning in 27 BCE; see Melissa Barden Dowling, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 76–125.

²⁷ Philo, *On the Virtues*, 8:195 (51).

sketch of *philanthropia* apparently in order to demonstrate “Israel’s *philanthropia* to all who practice virtue.”²⁸

According to Philo, Jewish observance is actually the ideal medium for Jews to express an emotional attachment to non-Jews since the driving ambition underlying Mosaic law is to facilitate this kind of relationship, for Philo writes: “This is what our most holy prophet through all his regulations especially desires to create, unanimity, neighbourliness, fellowship, reciprocity of feeling, whereby houses and cities and nations and countries and the whole human race may advance to supreme happiness.”²⁹ Their emotional attachment to humanity was expressed through their traditions, which, accordingly, they should continue practicing. Though he recognized that the kind of emotional relationships he envisioned “live only in our prayers,” he was “convinced” that God would eventually “grant[] that the virtues should bear abundantly.”³⁰

Philo did not need to argue that Jews should abandon their ancestral practice. To the contrary: because Jewish ritual practice constitutes the unwritten law of nature and facilitates love rather than hatred, he looked forward to the day when the entire world would embrace Jewish law. Philo makes this point most vividly in his remarkable account of the translation of the Mosaic law into Greek. The translation was commissioned by King Ptolemy II Philadelphus, acting on behalf of those who considered it “a shame that the laws should be found in one half only of the human race ... and denied altogether to the Greeks.”³¹ The accomplishment, which was in truth orchestrated by God behind the scenes, is so momentous that, Philo reports, it continues to be commemorated by an annual festival held at the site of the translation. He concludes his account with the following stunning ambition for the future: “I believe that each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone.”³² Jewish law is not an obstacle to Jewish belonging but is rather the basis for an eventual union among all humanity. According to Philo, “unanimity, neighbourliness, fellowship, [and] reciprocity of feeling,” not misanthropic hate, are the emotional expressions of Jewish belonging in the Greek world.³³

In characterizing Jewish ritual observance as an emotional practice of love for humanity, Philo expresses a sense of belonging that is social, political, and culturally conditioned.³⁴ The nature of this emotional attachment is largely determined by Philo’s universalistic conception of Jewish identity and his expectation of an eventual rapprochement between Jew and Greek. For Jews like Philo, their ritual observance represented the emotional experience of belonging to a Greek world with which their tradition has much in common—but for their gentile detractors, Jewish ritual observance actually channels hate and is therefore an impediment to belonging. In either case, it is clear that “belonging” is an emotional expression that is not privately held but performed in the pursuit (or denial) of one’s identity.

²⁸ Gregory Sterling, “‘The Queen of the Virtues’: Piety in Philo of Alexandria,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 18 (2006): 103–23, at 110.

²⁹ Philo, *On the Virtues*, 8:235 (119).

³⁰ Philo, *On the Virtues*, 8:235 (120).

³¹ Philo, *On the Life of Moses*, trans. F. H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 6:463 (2.27).

³² Philo, *On the Life of Moses*, 6:471 (2.44).

³³ Philo, *On the Virtues*, 8:235 (119).

³⁴ On the concept of emotional practice, see Mermelstein, *Power and Emotion in Ancient Judaism*, 221–57.

Could Ancient Jews Learn to Hate Other Jews?

As mentioned above, the emotional commitment represented by “belonging” varies depending on the contours of group identity. While in Philo’s case, belonging was incompatible with the emotion of hate, in the case of the Dead Sea Sect, belonging mandated it. The social structure of this insular group, one sect among several that dotted the landscape of Second Temple Judaism, was radically different from that of Philo. Whereas Philo sought to promote an emotional sense of belonging that would enable Jews to attach themselves to their Greek surroundings, the Dead Sea Sect sought to create a group that would erect impermeable boundaries separating it from other Jewish groups.³⁵ The sect sought to create a sense of belonging among its initiates by mandating that they love fellow sectarians and hate all other Jews.

The opening lines of the sectarian text known as the *Rule of the Community* (1QS)³⁶ delineate the core commitments that every member must embrace, several of which are formulated in emotional terms: he must “love all that [God] has chosen and hate all that [God] has rejected” (1QS 1:3–4), and he must similarly “love all the Sons of Light—each one according to his lot in God’s plan—and hate all the Sons of Darkness, each commensurate with his guilt in the vengeance of God” (1QS 1:9–11).³⁷ The parallel between these two love/hate pairs suggests that the sectarian emotions toward insiders and outsiders is modeled upon divine love and hate—or, put differently, in loving insiders and hating outsiders, the sectarian fulfills the mandate of loving that which God has chosen and hating that which God has rejected. This list of commitments is then followed by a description of an annual covenant renewal ceremony, an event that was suffused with emotional meaning and that, as I discuss below, seems to ritualize the emotional commitments of love and hate.

As related in the text, the covenant renewal ceremony consists of four elements, each of which opens with statements by the community’s priests and Levites and concludes with responses by the ritual actors: The Levites would praise God, and the ritual actors would respond “Amen, amen”; the priests would rehearse God’s gracious and merciful actions toward Israel, the Levites would recall the sinful actions of Israel “during the dominion of Belial,” and the ritual actors would confess their sins; the priests would bless “the men of God’s lot,” the Levites would curse “the men of the lot of Belial,” and the ritual actors would respond “Amen, amen”; and both the priests and Levites together would curse the insincere sectarian, who participates in the ritual but does so without the intention to repent, and the ritual actors would respond “Amen, amen.”

Through his confession in the second phase, the initiate connects himself with the dominion of Belial while pledging to escape his influence. The confession does not only serve to sever ties with the rest of Israel but also to forge a bond among sectarians. The confession is a collective admission of guilt formulated in the first-person plural: “We have acted sinfully, we have [trans]gressed, we have [si]nned, we have committed evil, we and our [fa]thers before us” (1QS 1:24–25). The ritual actors break away together from their common past and enter together into a community of penitents. During the next phase, insiders receive blessing and outsiders are cursed. With the reminder before the ritual that he has something to fear “during (the time of) Belial’s dominion,” the ritual actor participates with

³⁵ See Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 65–157.

³⁶ My translations are based on that of Sarianna Metso, *The Community Rule: A Critical Edition with Translation* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019). References to 1QS are provided in parentheses.

³⁷ My use of the masculine pronoun throughout this article reflects the scholarly view that the community associated with 1QS was a group of celibate men. For a survey of the issue and discussion of the possibility that the sect also included women, see Tal Ilan, “Women in Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–47, at 123–26.

an awareness of the power that Belial and his devotees wield over him. The second and third phases of the ritual serve to empower him; he is now in a safe space, aligned with his fellow sectarians against the forces of Belial.

The covenant renewal ritual was an emotional practice designed to provide the sectarian with an embodied experience of love and hate. The language of the blessing directed at “the men of God’s lot” and the curse intended for “the men of the lot of Belial” recalls the mandate in column 1 to love the Sons of Light and hate the Sons of Darkness. The initiate is instructed in column 1 “to walk *faultless before Him* ... to love all the Sons of Light—each one according to his *lot in God’s plan*” (1QS 1:9–10). The priests’ blessing during the covenant renewal ritual echoes much of this language: they “bless all the *men of God’s lot*, who walk *faultless* in all of His paths” (1QS 2:1–2). The sectarians are enjoined to love “each one according to his lot in God’s plan”; when the priests bless “the men of God’s lot,” therefore, they are fulfilling that love mandate.³⁸ The curses directed to the “men of the lot of Belial” also echo the hate command of 1QS 1:10–11, which requires sectarians “to hate all the Sons of *Darkness*, each commensurate with his *guilt* in the *vengeance* of God.” During the covenant renewal ritual, the Levites curse the men in Belial’s lot as follows: “Accursed are you for all your wicked, *guilty* deeds. May God hand you over to terror by the hand of all those carrying out acts of *vengeance* ... without mercy in return for your *dark deeds*” (1QS 2:5–7). The linguistic connections suggest that, as with the association between the love command and the blessing, the curse is the enactment of the command to hate the Sons of Darkness. Column 1 insists that sectarian belonging is expressed in each member’s love of insiders and hate of outsiders; the parallels between that text and the description of the covenant renewal ritual suggests that the latter functions as a performance of those emotions.

The curses leveled at the insincere sectarian constitute the final phase of the ritual. The imprecation resembles the one directed at nonsectarians in the previous phase, but the cursing of the insincere sectarian is presented as a distinct element of the ritual. The insincere sectarian is described in language suggesting that he is dangerous because he masquerades as one of the elect. In the adjacent passage, the text states that the priests “bless” those who “walk *faultless* in his ways,” including that God should “enlighten your *heart* with the discernment of life” and “lift up his gracious countenance upon you for everlasting *peace*” (1QS 2:2–4). The insincere sectarian echoes this language as he “blesses himself in his *heart* saying, ‘*Peace* be with me, though I walk in the stubbornness of my *heart*’” (1QS 2:13–14). The text uses the same language in order to highlight that both the sect and the insincere sectarian engage in the same behavior—that is, blessings that involve walking, the heart, and peace. The insincere sectarian appears outwardly to conform to sectarian expectations but internally harbors sentiments that are more reminiscent of those aligned with Belial.

The revelation, during the final phase, that there could be unrepentant sinners in their midst—those who had not broken from Belial—is a bombshell. Belial’s influence is both boundless and, in the case of the secretly insincere member, imperceptible. Of course, the extent of the problem and identity of the offenders cannot be known, but that is precisely what makes insincerity so threatening; the danger could be nonexistent, or it could be pervasive.

The function of the insincere sectarian in the ritual’s liturgy, I argue, is to reinforce and deepen the sectarian’s commitment to love the Sons of Light and hate the Sons of Darkness. The appearance of language of blessing in connection with the insincere sectarian is crucial

³⁸ The language of the blessing itself recycles a number of words from the first ten lines of column 1. See Mermelstein, *Power and Emotion in Ancient Judaism*, 235n45.

in this regard. The blessing of those assigned to the lot of God is an emotional performance of love. The insincere sectarian, too, is involved in an act of blessing, but his blessing is directed toward himself (“Peace be with me, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart”) rather than toward the sect. This mirroring of the sect’s enunciated blessing, which constitutes an act of love, prompts us to see this blessing as a performance of self-love. The contrast between the sincere and insincere sectarian revolves around blessing, the sectarian performance of love. By framing the contrast in these terms, 1QS reinforces for the ritual actor that his sense of belonging must express itself in love for the sect, isolating and assigning for divine punishment the one who only loves himself.

1QS introduces its audience to another renegade sectarian following the completion of the description of the ritual—this time, the recalcitrant group member who refuses to participate in the covenant renewal ceremony. One who “declines to enter (המואס) [the covenant of Go]d” (1QS 2:25–26) is isolated from sectarian life while he “maintains the stubbornness of his heart, since he regards darkness as paths of light” (1QS 3:3).

Refusal to join in the ceremony is described using the participle of מואס, the same verbal root used in 1QS 1:4, which requires that the sectarians hate that which God “rejects” (מואס). As with the insincere sectarian, the text uses language suggesting that the recalcitrant sectarian violates the emotional mandate of love and hate. The one who refuses to participate in the ritual is called a מואס, like God, except that the former “regards darkness as paths of light” (1QS 3:3). 1QS 1:3–4 requires that the sectarian love that which God chooses and hate that which He rejects, a command that seems to form the basis for the directive to love the Sons of Light and hate the Sons of Darkness (1QS 1:9–10): God chose the Sons of Light and rejected the Sons of Darkness, and the sectarian is therefore bound to replicate these emotions in the form of this ritual. Sectarians must hate the Sons of Darkness because God “rejects” (מואס) them, but the recalcitrant sectarian implicitly rejects that which God loves: he confuses light and dark in being מואס the ritual. The ritual is thus not just a performance of love and hate directed at the Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness—a fulfillment of 1QS 1:9–10—but also of love and hate toward God in fulfillment of 1QS 1:3–4. In refusing to participate in the ritual, the recalcitrant sectarian, like his insincere counterpart, has violated the sectarian imperatives of love and hate. These renegades serve a rhetorical purpose in the context of the ritual: by contrasting himself with these deviants, the committed sectarian comes to appreciate the ritual as an emotional practice of love and hate and understand how to express his sense of belonging.

As with Philo, the emotions associated with belonging are not internal or private emotions, or at least not initially so. God’s covenantal relationship represents His love for the sect, and the ritual act through which they enter into that covenant constitutes their emotional performance of love and hate.

Conclusion

These two salient examples from ancient Judaism offer a different account of the relationship between belonging and identity than the one sketched by David in *Kinship, Law and Politics: An Anatomy of Belonging*. Recent scholarship from the field of emotion theory, which views emotions as deeply embedded in social life, suggests that belonging is the emotional dimension associated with identity. This emotional attachment to a location or group does not *emerge* from identity but rather *produces* identity in the first place.

A sense of belonging assumes different forms depending on the context. For Philo, belonging reflects a universalistic love for all humanity that helps shape an identity embracing Jewish practice and Greek virtue. By contrast, the Dead Sea sect’s antipathy toward all other Jews—referred to in the Rule of the Community as the “Sons of

Darkness”—requires that a sense of belonging express not only love for fellow sectarians but also hate for all outsiders. The contours of belonging and identity politics are intimately linked.

I have also argued against the distinction, drawn by some theorists, between *belonging* as a private emotion and the *politics of belonging*. Belonging is not a private matter but an emotional relationship that shapes social life, reinforces a group’s identity politics, and is expressed through a society’s practices. Jewish law for Philo and the annual covenant renewal ceremony for the Dead Sea sect are emotional practices that constitute the ritual actor’s sense of belonging and delineate the boundaries between inside and outside.