# Contents

**List of Figures**  
*page vii*

**List of Tables**  
*viii*

**Preface**  
*ix*

**Acknowledgments**  
*xiv*

**Notes on Transcriptions and Translations**  
*xvi*

**List of Abbreviations**  
*xvii*

## Part I Setting the Stage

1. Introduction  
*3*

2. What Is Pollution?  
*27*

## Part II Embodying Pollution Through the Life Cycle

### Disease

3. The “Touch” of Leprosy: Diagnosing Disease between Language and Experience  
*59*

4. The Missing Ritual for Healing Skin Disease  
*76*

5. Diagnosing Sin  
*91*

6. Naturalizing Disease: Pollution as a Causal Theory  
*107*

### The Soul: From the Table to the Grave

7. You Are What You Eat: Impure Food and the Soul  
*131*

8. Death and the Polluting Spirit  
*145*
Contents

MATING

9 Sexual Pollutions: The Moralized Body 175
10 Gender Fluidity and the Danger of Leaky Manhood 207
11 Did Women Need to Wash? 225

PART III IMAGES, Codes AND DISCOURSE

12 Contagious Holiness 243
13 Conclusion: Naturalizing a Religious Concept 261

Works Cited 271
Index of Biblical Sources 301
Index of Selected Ancient Near Eastern Sources 308
Index of Rabbinic and Second Temple Literature Sources 309
Subject Index 311