
This important work offers the first comprehensive treatment of Qumran prayer. Nitzan incorporates the results of recent scrolls' research in this translation and updated version of her doctoral dissertation (Biblical Influence in Qumran: Prayer and Religious Poetry, Tel Aviv University, 1989).

The book focuses on liturgical texts used by the Qumran community—those comparable to rabbinc prayer (Part I) as well as those unique to the sect (Part II). These liturgical texts are contrasted with individual thanksgiving hymns (Hodayot) in the final chapter (Part III). The presentation is clear and well-organized. Unfortunately, the English is a bit unwieldy.

Nitzan's method is form-critical. She delineates the types of prayer used at Qumran, traces their development from and adaptation of biblical models, and outlines similarities with rabbinc forms and practices. This approach suits the author's purpose: to "examine the prayer and poetry of the people of Qumran in conjunction with...Jewish prayer and religious poetry throughout the generations" (p. 1).

Nitzan proposes that Qumran witnesses to a transitional stage between the sacrificial worship and spontaneous prayer of biblical Judaism and the worship through fixed prayer established by the Rabbis. She develops this thesis in the first part of the book.

Chapter one outlines the "occasional" character of prayer in the biblical and Second Temple periods as well as the phenomenon of prayer "alongside" sacrifice at the Second Temple. Nitzan correctly notes that prayer became a fixed and obligatory form of worship in rabbinc Judaism only after the Temple's destruction.

In the next two chapters, Nitzan cogently presents the sectarian ideology of worship through prayer together with the substantial documentary evidence of daily, Sabbath and festival liturgies from Qumran. She analyzes the fixed order, form and content of these liturgies in light of rabbinc practice and draws conclusions about Jewish liturgical history. For example, she likens the liturgical collections from Qumran to tannaic prayer orders and the Jewish prayerbook (Siddur, Mahzor) while noting different principles of organization. Similarly, she compares the systematic use of opening and closing benedictions in Qumran prayers with the more uniform rabbinc system. In these and other cases, Nitzan is interested in demonstrating that Qumran exhibits a tradition of liturgical editing parallel to but less developed than rabbinc prayer. In addition, Nitzan considers the striking parallels between the daily petitions in 4QDibre hamme'orot and rabbinc prayer (Shemoneh 'Esre) as evidence for "a core of petitions which were presumably fixed during the Second
Temple period" and "a certain process of crystallization of the prayer texts" (pp. 109-110). The reader should be cautioned that Nitzan often quotes "normative Jewish liturgy" without citing a specific rabbinic source or prayerbook edition and sometimes lists quotations from medieval or modern prayerbooks under "prayers formulated by the tanna'im and 'amora'im" (e.g., pp. 100, 107-110, 214).

Nitzan concludes that the Qumran texts drew upon a contemporary tradition of prayer "alongside" cult. She had similarly proposed in her introduction that the parallels between the fixed prayers at Qumran and in rabbinic practice indicate the existence of fixed prayer in Second Temple period Judaism.

While the close parallels noted here do point to a shared liturgical tradition, it is difficult to prove a common practice of fixed prayer in Second Temple period Judaism on the strength of Nitzan's data alone. If, however, the liturgies from Qumran are non-Qumranic in origin, as many scholars contend, they would directly attest fixed prayer in non-sectarian circles. Nitzan's presumption of sectarian origin for these liturgies is thus quite surprising. Nitzan does suggest a few supposedly sectarian formulations in these texts but she does not address the question of provenance systematically (see below).

The second part of the book presents the congregational prayers for distinctively sectarian ceremonies and occasions. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss blessings and curses in the annual covenant ceremony, in a magic rite, and in several eschatological rituals. Nitzan follows the astute analysis of her teacher, Jacob Licht (The Rule Scroll [Jerusalem: Bialik, 1965] in Hebrew), regarding the sect's adaptation and interpretation of biblical sources to create ceremonies infused with its own dualistic, deterministic and eschatological ideology. For example, the covenant ceremony expands the priestly blessing into a blessing for the "sons of light" while its inverse forms the curse for the "sons of darkness." Nitzan offers her own intriguing suggestion that the blessings and curses in the War Scroll not only facilitated the warriors' ceremonial identification with the "sons of light" but were actually intended as magic weapons to be used in the battle between the forces of light and darkness.

Songs of praise for different ritual functions are discussed in the remaining chapters of Part II. Nitzan first outlines the biblical forms and illustrates their continuity in the poetry from Qumran (Chapter 6). In her discussion of eschatological poetry in the War Scroll (Chapter 7), she shows how conventionally-structured hymns were imbued with apocalyptic themes, applied to the sect's historical-eschatological setting, and incorporated in "an operative program" for the end-time.

Nitzan was the first scholar to appreciate fully the prophylactic function of the Songs of the Maskil ("Hymns from Qumran [לפנינו מצהלי והז תוק חס היל ג תוק חס היל ג תוק חס היל ג תוק חס Hymns from Qumran [לפנינו מצהלי והז תוק חס היל ג תוק חס Hymns from Qumran [לפנינו מצהלי והז תוק חס Hymns from Qumran [לפň

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