

TH449 Jewish Liturgy: Its History and Theology

Ruth Langer

Jewish liturgy, as we know it, emerged over the course of the first millennium CE. Embedded in this system of prayer is one of the most concise and normative statements of Jewish theology. After an examination of the precursors of rabbinic prayer and of the development of the synagogue as an institution, this course will examine the structures and ideas of the prayers themselves. This will create a context for a deeper discussion of some key Jewish theological concepts as well as a comparison of Jewish and Christian liturgical traditions. No prior knowledge of Judaism or Jewish prayer is presumed.

Syllabus

Requirements:

- Attendance, preparation for, and participation in class and in two synagogue visits.
 - Posting questions and brief reflections about the readings on the Blackboard Vista discussion page by noon the day of class. You may receive written or oral responses to these reflections and questions, but they will not be graded. (20% of grade, along with class participation).
 - Undergraduates, STM students: two reflection papers of 2000-3000 words each on an issue and/or idea raised in class discussion and readings (25% each). The first paper will be due March 1, the second May 3.
 - **OR**: Theology M.A. and Ph.D. students: a substantive research paper, on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor. Due May 3 (50%).
 - Take-home comprehensive, open-book final exam, due on the date of the scheduled exam (30%).
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Texts for Purchase:

- Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer: Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service* Schocken Books, 1995 ISBN 0805210229, BM660.H27 1994 (\$11.20 on Amazon) [EJP]
- Reuven Hammer, *Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals* (Rabbinical Assembly, 2003) ISBN 0916219208 (\$45) [OH]
- *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin, Marc Brettler (Oxford, 2003) ISBN 0195297547 (paperback, Amazon lists for \$29.99 new)
- Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer*, ed. Shalom Carmy (Ktav, Toras Harav, 2003) ISBN 0-88125-771-0

Other readings will be available as PDF files through Blackboard Vista, on the "Readings" page. If your internet connection at home is dial-up, you will want to be sure to download these large files on campus.

I. 1/15	Introduction
II.	Precursors in Sacrifices and in Words: Jewish Worship in the Second Temple Period --

1/22

the Bible and Qumran

Readings for class:

- Exodus 25-30:10, 31:12-16, 34:18-28; Leviticus 1-10, 16, 23; Deuteronomy 16; I Kings 6-9
- Mishnah Tamid, in Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, 862-873. BM497.5 E5 N48 1988
- E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63BCE-66CE*, 47-118, 306-314. BM176.S257 1992
- Joseph Tabory, "The Precursors of the 'Amidah," in *Identitaet durch Gebet...*, ed. Gerhards et.al.(Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 2003), 113-125 (or idem, "Ma'amadot: A Second Temple Non-Temple Liturgy, in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Esther Chazon (Brill, 2003), 235-261 [rest of volume recommended too]).
- Selections from James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works: Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2000): 216-219 (Daily Prayers); 239-266 (*Divrei HaMe'orot*, Words of the Luminaries)

Please bring all primary texts to class.

Bibliography for further reading:

- Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, Ch. 2, "The Biblical Inspiration." BM660.R45 1993
- Moshe Greenberg, *Biblical Prose Prayer as a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel*
- Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*
- Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*
- Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel*
- *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Mark Kiley et. al., BL560.P67 1997
- Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*
- Daniel Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*
- [Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature](#) - some pictures, and links to all academic resources on the internet on the DSS.
- Judith Newman, *Praying by the Book*
- *Prayers That Cite Scripture*, ed. James L. Kugel, essays by Newman and Chazon.

III.

The Synagogue as an Institution

1/29

If possible, this class will meet in a synagogue near Newton Campus and may be able to be present for the late-afternoon service.

Readings for class:

- Hammer EJP, Ch. 4
- *Sacred Place: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, ed. Steven Fine (Oxford and Yeshiva University Presses, 1996), Ch. 1. Eric M. Meyers, "Ancient Synagogues: An Archaeological Introduction," pp. 3-20; Ch. 2, Steven Fine, "From Meeting House to Sacred Realm: Holiness and the

	<p>Ancient Synagogue," pp. 21-47.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuven Kimelman, "Rabbinic Prayer in Late Antiquity, Part II: The Synagogue and Prayer," in <i>The Cambridge History of Judaism, Part IV: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period</i>, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 573-580. <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee I. Levine, <i>The Ancient Synagogue</i> (Yale University Press, 2000) [the definitive work to date on all aspects of the topic] • Steven Fine, <i>This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period</i> (Notre Dame, 1997) • Steven Fine, ed., <i>Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World</i> (Yeshiva University, 1996) • Steven Fine, ed., <i>Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue</i> (1999) • Philip A. Harland, <i>Associations, Synagogues and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society</i> (Augsburg/Fortress, 2003) • Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher, eds., <i>Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery</i> (recent anthology of most important articles, many otherwise not in English.)
<p>IV. 2/5</p>	<p>Origins and Development of Rabbinic Liturgy: Its Structures and Patterns</p> <p>Readings for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammer EJP, Chs. 3, 5. • SKIM the Weekday Evening Service in Hammer OH, pp. 281-298, to get a sense of the flow of the prayers. We will return to the details and commentary in coming weeks. • Ruth Langer, <i>To Worship God Properly: Tensions Between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism</i> (Cincinnati, 1998), Ch. 1, "The Creation of a Valid Non-Sacrificial Liturgy," pp. 1-40. • Ruth Langer, "Revisiting Early Rabbinic Liturgy: The Recent Contributions of Ezra Fleischer," <i>Prooftexts</i> 19:2 (1999): 179-204. <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reif, <i>Judaism and Hebrew Prayer</i>, Chs. 3-4. • Joseph Heinemann, <i>Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns</i>, Chs. III, IV (highly recommended: Chs. I, II, XI and the entire book) BM660.H4613 1977 • Lawrence A. Hoffman, <i>The Canonization of the Synagogue Service</i>
<p>V., VI. 2/12,</p>	<p>The Shema and its Blessings</p>

2/19

Readings for class:

- EJP Ch. 8, 121-155.
- OH xxi-xxiv, 28-34, 107-114.
- *Mishnah Berakhot*, Ch. 1-3, in Neusner, *The Mishnah...3-7*. BM497.5 E5 N48 1988
- Reuven Kimelman, "The Shema` and its Rhetoric: The Case for the Shema` Being More than Creation, Revelation and Redemption," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 2 (1992): 111-156.
- Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer*, ed. Shalom Carmy (Ktav, Toras Harav, 2003), Chs. 7, 8, 9, pp. 107-143.

Bibliography for further reading -- relevant sections of the following:

- Elie Munk, *The World of Prayer*
- Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* BM660.E513 1993
- B.S. Jacobson, *Weekday Siddur: An Exposition and Analysis of Its Structure, Content, Language, and Ideas* BM675.D3 Z813 1978
- Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed., *My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries* (eight volumes)

VII.,
VIII.

The Amidah, Weekday, Sabbath, and Festival

2/26,
3/11

Readings for class -- this week and week VIII:

- EJP Ch. 9, 156-197
- OH xxiv-xxvi, 3a-9, 35a-38, 115a-120, 123a-128, 156a-161 (glance also at 168-175), 236.
- *Mishnah Berakhot*, Ch. 4-5, in Neusner, *The Mishnah...7-9*. BM497.5 E5 N48 1988
- Reuven Kimelman, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," in *The Echoes of Many Texts: Reflection on Jewish and Christian Traditions, Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman* (Scholars Press, 1997): 171-218.
- Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer*, ed. Shalom Carmy (Ktav, Toras Harav, 2003), Chs. 2, 6, 10

Bibliography for further reading:

- As listed in the previous unit
- Ruth Langer, "The Amidah as Formative Jewish Prayer," in *Identität durch Gebet: Zur gemeinschaftsbildenden Funktion institutionalisierten Betens in Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Albert Gerhards, Andrea Doeker and Peter Ebenbauer (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), 127-156.
- Ruth Langer, "Early Rabbinic Liturgy in its Palestinian Milieu: Did Non-Rabbis Know the 'Amidah?'" in

	<p><i>When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini</i>, ed. Alan A. Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington, Jacob Neusner (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), II: 423-439.</p>
3/5	BC Spring Break - No Class
IX.	<p>Reading and Preaching Torah</p> <p>3/19 Readings for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mishnah</i> Megillah Ch. 3-4. in Neusner, <i>The Mishnah...</i>320-324. BM497.5 E5 N48 1988 • OH 139-154. • Ruth Langer, "From Study of Scripture to a Reenactment of Sinai: The Emergence of the Synagogue Torah Service," <i>Worship</i> 72:1 (January 1998): 43-67 • <i>Jewish Study Bible</i>, David Stern, "Midrash and Midrashic Interpretation", 1863-1875; Avigdor Shinan, "The Bible in the Synagogue," 1929-1937; Stefan C. Reif, "The Bible in the Liturgy," 1937-1948. • Marc Saperstein, <i>Your Voice is Like a Ram's Horn: Themes and Texts in Traditional Jewish Preaching</i> (Hebrew Union College Press, 1996), Ch. 1, "'Your Voice is Like a Ram's Horn': Conceptions of Jewish Preaching," 1-10; Ch. 2 "Preaching for Pesach," 11-22 <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marc Saperstein, <i>Jewish Preaching: 1200-1800</i> (Yale) • David Ruderman, <i>Preachers of the Italian Ghetto</i> • Ruth Langer, "Sinai, Zion, and God in the Synagogue: The Ashkenazi Celebration of Torah," in <i>Liturgy and the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer</i>, ed. Steven Fine and Ruth Langer (Eisenbrauns, 2005) • Midrash: a huge literature -- ask if you are interested!
X.	<p>Introductory Prayers and Psalms (Pesukei d'Zimra, Hallel, Kabbalat Shabbat)</p> <p>3/26 Readings for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJP, Chs. 7, "Preparation for Prayer"; 12, "Garments of Prayer"; 11, "Sabbath and Holidays" • OH 61-106, 132-137, 13-27 <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As listed in the Shema unit • Joseph Tabory, "The Benedictions of Self-Identity and the Changing Status of Women and of Orthodoxy," <i>Kenishta</i> 1 (2001): 107-138. • Yoel Kahn, <i>The three morning blessings '...who did not make me...': A historical study of a Jewish liturgical text</i> (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1999) -- available through the BC Library,

	<p>ProQuest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuven Kimelman, "Psalm 145: Theme, Structure, and Impact" <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 113,1 (1994): 37-58 (available online through BC) • <i>Prayers that Cite Scripture</i>, ed. Kugel, essay by Brody, "Liturgical Uses of the Book of Psalms in the Geonic Period."
<p>XI.</p> <p>4/2</p>	<p>Supplicatory Prayers (Tahanun, Selihot, Tkhines)</p> <p>Readings for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer texts (pdfs) • Soloveitchik, Chs.2 "Prayer, Petition and Crisis," 3 "The Human Condition and Prayer", 5 "The Absence of God and the Community of Prayer." • Chava Weissler, <i>Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women</i> (Beacon, 1998), Ch. 1 "The <i>Tkhines</i>: An Introduction", pp. 3-35, 192-205. <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeking the Favor of God</i> -- 3 volumes on the development of penitential prayer from the SBL, from the Second Temple period through early Judaism and Christianity.
<p>4/9, 4/16</p>	<p>Passover and Easter Break - No Class - Passover begins on Wednesday evening April 8 (15 Nisan) and ends at dark, Thursday evening April 16 (22 Nisan). The first two days and the last two days are holy days.</p>
<p>XII.</p> <p>4/23</p>	<p>Home Rituals, Passover Seder</p> <p>Readings for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mishnah Berakhot</i>, Ch. 6-7, in Neusner, <i>The Mishnah...</i> 9-12. BM497.5 E5 N48 1988 • OH 301-350, 299-300 • EJP, Ch. 13 "The Blessing After Meals" • Mishnah Pesachim Ch. 10 • Passover Haggadah <p>Bibliography for further reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barukh M. Bokser, <i>The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism</i> BM695.P35 B64 1984. • Noam Zion and David Dishon, <i>A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah</i> (Shalom Hartman Institute) • Ruth Gruber Fredman, <i>The Passover Seder: Afikoman in Exile</i>

- Isaac Yerushalmi, *Haggadah and History*

Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) is observed on Tuesday April 21 (27 Nisan)

XIII.

Contemporary Issues (Liberal liturgies, Feminism, Aesthetics, Holocaust and Israel)

4/30

Readings for class:

- Attend a Friday night service at a Reform synagogue (suggestions available)
- Ruth Langer, "Prayer and Worship" in *Modern Judaism: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford, 2005)
- Stefan Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, Ch. 8-9.
- Joseph Tabory, "The Prayer for the State of Israel," in *Liturgy and the Life of the Synagogue*, ed. Langer and Fine (Eisenbrauns, 2005)

Bibliography for further reading:

- Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*
- Eric Friedland, *Were Our Mouths Filled with Song: Studies in Liberal Jewish Liturgy*

Yom HaAtzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day) is observed on Monday April 23 (5 Iyyar)