

NON-CANONICAL PSALMS FROM THE GENIZAH

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The aim of this paper is to discuss a text comprised of non-canonical psalms that was published as early as 1902. Some 80 years later the text was “rediscovered” and a connection to Qumran posited, but subsequent scholarly debate and the speculative nature of the discussions make it clear that the historical circumstances and contexts of the entire issue from its very beginnings require further clarification. The main objective of this paper is to describe the document in relation to the background history of the Jews in Antiquity, as well as to discuss its relationship to Qumran and various liturgical and theological elements of Judaism.

A. STATE OF THE ART

Archimandrite Antonin (1817–1894) was the head of the Russian mission in the Holy Land during 1865–1894 and he was a collector of real-estate as well as manuscripts.¹ After Antonin’s death, his collection went to the Oriental Institute at the University of St Petersburg. The Antonin collection contains about 1200 Hebrew manuscripts. It has been established that this collection is derived from the Cairo Genizah, though it also contains documents that Antonin collected from other sources.² This paper focuses on the analysis of a small text found in the Antonin collection at the Library in St Petersburg, Russia, that is assumed to have come from the Genizah, tentatively dated between the tenth to twelfth centuries.³

¹ A. Carmel, “Russian Activity in Palestine in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land* (ed. R.I. Cohen: Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1985), 45–77.

² A.I. Katsh, *The Antonin Genizah in the Saltykov-Schedrin Public Library in Leningrad* (New York: Institute of Hebrew Studies, 1963).

³ In the Antonin collection the siglum is B 798. At the Institute of Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem the old siglum is 32269 while the modern one is Antonin B 68735 (and Photostat 4598). My thanks are due to Mr. B. Richler who helped me to trace these sigla.

Before analyzing this “new” text it is important to be aware of the conclusions of former studies, albeit of necessity presented here only briefly. The document was first discovered by Abraham Eliyahu Harkavy (1835–1919), who published it in 1902.⁴ His main contribution was to draw initial attention to the text, but his very short introduction, which includes only minimal commentary, reveals his inability to trace its historical and cultural contexts. Harkavy, who was an expert in his own field, gaonic literature written in Arabic, did not have the academic background or knowledge to research this text comprehensively, and so his paper reads more like a puzzle than a piece of scholarship. Few have subsequently read or studied *HaGoren*, in which it was published, and it is no wonder that the text soon was forgotten.

After several decades, in 1982 David Flusser and Shmuel Safrai “rediscovered” the document (having been informed of its existence by others), and wrote a substantial study of it.⁵ Once again, the primary text itself was published with few corrections made with regard to the original publication; photocopies of the original were provided, but with no accompanying sigla. Though the breadth of knowledge and professional reputation of these scholars cannot be refuted, nor the value of their contributions to their fields, the academic rigor of this specific study may indeed be questioned.

As is evident from the title of their paper, Flusser and Safrai asserted premature conclusions that were deduced on the basis of assumptions concerning the authority and the provenance of the text. Instead of posing an objective investigative query, they presented their conjecture as fact at the outset of their paper. These researchers were ready to link theories together in a manner confusing to an experienced scholar, not sufficiently differentiating between fact and hypothesis. It appears that had they had written their paper prior to the discovery of Qumran, like Harkavy, they would not have been able to make any significant statements about the text.

⁴ A.E. Harkavy, “A Prayer by an Anonymous Writer in the Style of the Psalms,” *HaGoren* 3 (1902): 82–85 (Hebrew).

⁵ D. Flusser and S. Safrai, “A Fragment of the Songs of David and Qumran,” *Bible Studies: Y.M. Grintz in Memoriam* (ed. B. Uffenheimer; *Te’uda* 2; Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1982), 83–105 (Hebrew; English abstract: p. XV); repr. in D. Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period: Qumran and Apocalypticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002), 220–239; English translation in idem, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1: *Qumran and Apocalypticism* (trans. A. Yadin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 258–282.

Though the text appeared many centuries after (disappearance of) Qumran and its provenance is unknown (except for the fact that it is Egyptian), these scholars discuss its affinities with Qumranic, rabbinic, and Christian sources in a parallel fashion. While they state that the text refers to David as a messiah, the reader is not explicitly informed that the word “messiah” does not, in fact, appear in the text.

Flusser and Safrai’s paper regrettably relays no systematic study of the text itself, though it contains many insights and is replete with “intuitive” thinking. Not only does the paper reveal a lack of rigorous preparation, but a number of significant aspects of the text upon which it is based were ignored. One must therefore approach this research with caution.

None other than the late Ezra Fleischer censured this study, adding his own comments and assessments to the existing critique.⁶ Though Fleischer applauds Flusser and Safrai openly for their discovery, he criticizes almost every aspect of their scholarship, and in a long footnote condemns them for making a priori assumptions. Fleischer provides evidence that his colleagues copied the text inaccurately, and consequently some of their hypotheses are built on an erroneous reading. As one of the most renowned scholars of his day, Fleischer’s work and achievements compel us to read his arguments with respect; indeed, it is not easy to refute him. While acknowledging that Fleischer was more aware of the linguistic aspects of this text than were earlier scholars, however, it is difficult to determine whether or not Fleischer was predisposed to date the text from the Middle Ages primarily because he specialized in that period. In any event, Flusser wrote a partial response to Fleischer,⁷ although one must admit that most of Fleischer’s claims remain unrefuted. This scholarly debate can be summarized as follows: Flusser and Safrai were of the opinion that the text under discussion is to some extent Qumranite, while Fleischer alleges that the text “definitely” originated during a later period, after the Arab conquest of the Land of Israel—that is, from the seventh century onward.

An additional scholar, Menahem Haran, has written about this text,⁸ but the contributions of his research are minor, and his confidence in the

⁶ E. Fleischer, “Medieval Hebrew Poems in Biblical Style,” *Te’uda* 7 (1991): 200–248 (esp. 207–224) (Hebrew).

⁷ Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period: Qumran and Apocalypticism*, 240–243 (Hebrew).

⁸ M. Haran, *The Biblical Collection: Its Consolidation to the End of the Second Temple Times and Changes of Form to the End of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1996), 154–169 (Hebrew).

assumed “Karaite” origin of the text seems speculative in a manner analogous to the insufficiently substantiated claims of his predecessors. Surprisingly enough, Haran, whose specialty is closely related to the biblical *Quellen* theory, discussed a number of texts from different manuscripts in the same study without differentiating between the unique history of each of the documents; one of them is the text from the Genizah that is the subject of this paper.

Summing up the present state of scholarship concerning this text is not easy, but the bottom line is that there is no agreement either on the provenance or the date of this text from the Genizah. The affiliation of the document with Qumran is debatable, and it is encircled by a cloud of hypotheses. In order to clarify the significance of this text, the entire subject must be reconsidered from the very beginning by examining the concrete textual evidence and determining what assumptions and conclusions can be made after the primary text itself is critically analyzed. Hereafter, therefore, follows a concise systematic examination of the text that will draw attention to its implications on the study of Qumran and of Judaism in Antiquity.

B. FEATURES OF THE TEXT

1. *Technical: General*

The manuscript in hand is a complete document in itself, but it is clear from its structure, which lacks a beginning and an end, that it is a remnant of a longer piece. It consists of two pages, with writing on both sides of each page, resulting in a total of four pages of text. On each page there are two columns, or stanzas, in a layout that may be seen as typical of biblical psalms as they are written in modern typography. This way of writing is not typical of ancient documents, however, and there are additional characteristics of the text that make it unique in several aspects.

a. *Length*

The text is divided into four chapters according to the four first days of the month of Iyar, but as mentioned, the beginning and the end of the manuscript are missing. The entire text that we possess is 998 words in length.

b. *The Name of the Lord*

The scribe wrote the name of the Lord as if this were a biblical text, not in an abbreviation such as יי, but rather יהיה. This way of writing the name of the Lord is very unusual in the rabbinic tradition, though there are a few parallels.⁹

2. *Liturgy: Four Hymns or Psalms*

When the text's structure is examined, it is clearly identifiable that portions of the manuscript were cut at the beginning as well as at its end. The intermediate selections are complete; they contain two full liturgies, so it can be reasonably surmised that the original text was composed of four liturgies (at least). At first glance the text appears to be a biblical psalm, but after only one line it becomes palpable that the author had neither the intention nor the skill to compose a biblical psalm. The author, rather, wrote poetry in his own personal style, idiosyncratic and unusual, and not biblical in any aspect.

The text is a liturgical piece, hence it should be analyzed according to its adherence to the accepted structure of liturgy as well as in relation to its content.

a. *A Different Prayer for Every Day*

In the heading of three liturgies, the date when the text should be recited is mentioned, as it is in Ps 91. In these selections the dates are sequential, however, so it is clear that the psalm recorded before those dated the fourth, third, and second of Iyar must have had the missing heading denoting it as intended for the first day in the month of Iyar.

The literary style of the liturgy for the first day of the month is slightly more elaborate and elevated than the other liturgies, as is evident from the prayer's alphabetic structure. This is unlike the other psalms, which indicates that this literary piece received special treatment and intellectual investment. Considering the enhanced ritual status of the first of the month in comparison to the other days in the month, it is apparent why the former is accorded special treatment; this phenomenon is demonstrated in the prayer-book, where on *Rosh-hodesh* the liturgy is much

⁹ Ibid., 161 n. 32.

more complex. This state of affairs makes the singularity of the liturgy of the first day of Iyar easy to explain. However, when we come to discuss the designation of a different prayer for each day, this is a different subject that requires further critical attention.

The assignment of a special prayer for each and every day is a non-rabbinic feature of liturgy. Though it is possible to claim that this practice is derived from the Mishnah (*Ber.* 4:4), it is known that this idea did not spread among the rabbis. In rabbinic liturgy, as is evidenced in the daily prayer service, each and every weekday has the same liturgy (excluding the readings from the Torah), while only the psalm, *Shir shel Yom*, is different for each day of the week. This liturgy, though derived from temple rituals like the *Ma'amadot*,¹⁰ was actually established in a post-Talmudic era. Another instance of this tradition is the *Hosha'anot*, where one is instructed to recite a different *Hosha'ana* poem every day during Sukkot. As far as can be determined, this custom comes from the days of the Gaonim (seventh to tenth centuries). It seems, in turn, that the practice of reciting a different *Hosha'ana* each day has its origin in the different sacrifices that were offered in the Temple each day during Sukkot. In any event, this provides further evidence that the idea of having a different liturgy for each day is non-rabbinic.

On the other hand, the practice of having a different liturgy for each day of the month is typical of the Qumran tradition. The most important text demonstrating this phenomenon is 4QpapPrQuot (4Q503), where it is stated: "and on the sixth of the mo[nth in the evening they shall bless and answer and s]ay, Ble[ssed be the God of] Israel" (III:18) etc.¹¹ In this fragmentary text we have evidence for a special prayer for the fifth, sixth, seventh, twelfth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fifth, and twenty-sixth days of the month; this is not the sole text attesting to such a custom (another is 4QDibHam^a [4Q504] 8 recto). It should be noted that this practice is augmented by the fact that for every Sabbath, or at least in a number of them, there was a special liturgy for that specific Sabbath,

¹⁰ Y. Ta'an. 4:3, 68b; b. Ta'an. 27b; J. Tabory, "Ma'amadot: A Second-Temple Non-Temple Liturgy," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, 19–23 January, 2000 (ed. E.G. Chazon; STDJ 48; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 235–261.

¹¹ B. Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Poetry* (Biblical Encyclopaedia Library 14; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1996), 35–44 (Hebrew); J.R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls 6; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 208–224.

as is revealed in 11QShirShabb (11Q17), 4QShirShabb^a (4Q400), and 4QShirShabb^d (4Q403); additional documents confirm the existence of the same custom.¹²

Thus, it is clear that the concept behind these non-canonical “new” psalms, as well as behind the liturgy of Qumran, is that of having a different prayer for every day; this idea is not found in the rabbinic tradition until a comparatively late period.

b. *The Benedictions*

There are three benedictions, or doxologies, in the text. Each is at the end of a chapter. This feature is only absent from the fourth chapter, where the end of the manuscript is missing. Making a benediction the literary closure of a piece is already present in the book of Psalms, but only at a later period did it become standard in rabbinic liturgical pieces such as the *Shemoneh Esre*. This practice is also attested to in Hekhalot literature (ca. fourth to fifth centuries), though its presence is not systematic. The structure and content of each of the benedictions, however, is different from any formerly known benedictions.

The first psalm ends as follows: ברוך אתה יהוה אל לעבדו בכל עת קוראיו which is unusual, not only in its Hebrew format but because of the unique repetition of God’s name using different appellations. The second psalm ends with a doxology; there is no clear benediction, but the word ברוך is repeated not less than seven times. The third psalm ends with this benediction: ברוך אתה יהוה אל נא זוכר ברחמי את ברית עבדו לנצח; once again we note a previously unknown benediction that has no parallel and just as with the ending of the first psalm, the name of the Lord is repeated in different forms. In the Jewish liturgical heritage from Qumranic, rabbinic, and Karaite sources, there are altogether about 170 benedictions. However, the benedictions under discussion are an example of a unique style that is unparalleled elsewhere.¹³

3. *Content*

There are at least three themes that are expressed in different forms in these psalms. These themes reveal the essence of the text, and in doing so provide a unique “fingerprint” of the author, and of the text itself.

¹² Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Poetry*, 38, 207–237; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 147.

¹³ Cf. *b. Ber.* 59b.

a. *Universalistic versus Nationalistic Liturgy*

Biblical as well as rabbinic liturgy may be divided into two different categories: a personal or a national liturgy on the one hand and a universalistic liturgy on the other. These two types of prayers can be discerned in many texts; it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide examples of both groups from biblical or rabbinic liturgies, though they abound. Suffice it to say that a text that discusses "Israel" falls into the category of those that are nationalistic in nature, while a text that discusses "all the nations" has a universalistic appeal.

At the very beginning of this manuscript the Lord is described as one "who knows the ways of all living," the one who separated light from darkness in the world. In the first psalm it is stated that the "shoot of Jesse," that is King David, is said to be the "king of all nations" the one who smote "all kings of Midian" and who was stronger than all "the heroes of Qedar." In the second psalm it is stated that "all nations will recount Your glory" and later "all the inhabitants of the world" will learn from me (the psalmist). In the third psalm it is stated: "for all will know the Lord, from their great to their smaller people, since the Lord judges the whole world."

However, the first psalm represents the nation of Israel as "Your people," while in the second psalm Israel is called "the sheep that was slaughtered." The third psalm mentions "daughters of Jerusalem" and "His Torah." These variations indicate that the themes of these psalms are interwoven in a very unusual way. When juxtaposed to the nationalism in the Shemoneh Esre, it becomes clear that the combination of themes in the text under discussion is unusual.

The fourth psalm (from which the end is missing), in contrast, bears the character of a personal prayer, resembling many personal prayers in the book of Psalms. For that reason even a non-Jew may recite the words of the fourth psalm with no hesitation. In summary, in terms of the standard categorization of psalms according to theme, from the nationalistic versus the universalistic point of view three psalms out of four do not fit the standard models; clearly this issue merits more study.

b. *Praising the Lord: His Might and Theodicy*

One aspect of any prayer, no doubt, is praising God, and one can see this feature in almost any prayer in the Jewish liturgy. This is true, of course, of the text in hand, where in many cases the prayer speaks to his God

recounting His deeds. Of special importance is the epithet שופט צדק that appears twice, in the first and the fourth psalms. In the fourth psalm this concept is even more pronounced: כִּי אַתָּה הוּא שׁוֹפֵט הַצְּדָק / וְלֹא יֵצֵא מִלְּפָנֶיךָ מִשְׁפֵּט שֶׁקֶר (“since you are judge of justice and no false judgment will come out from you”); this statement can only be interpreted as theodicy. The fact that the second psalm begins with the tragedy of the slaughtered sheep followed by more prayers, petitions, and eulogy shows that the poet was thinking of the Deity in light of theodicy. The idea, of course, is not new, but weaving this theology into liturgical verses is a unique feature of this text.¹⁴

c. *Praising David*

In Jewish liturgy King David plays a role, since he is mentioned several times a day in rabbinic prayer. In Jewish tradition King David has an important position, not as a hero to be praised, but rather because of the belief that his descendent will save the Jewish people. In the Bible, the role of King David is even more prominent and elevated; see Ps 89:21 (4QPs^x [4Q98g]) or 132:11, where he is acclaimed.

In the text at hand, King David is praised much more extensively than in the Bible, and after reading a few verses it becomes evident that the author considered King David to be his hero. For example, in the second half of the first psalm twelve lines are devoted to praising King David in an unprecedented manner.

Before concluding the present discussion of the content of the prayers in this document, one should keep in mind that the majority of the liturgy of Qumran does not convey sectarian beliefs. That is to say, assuming fragments one may find are from a liturgical text, they do not necessarily reveal the text's theological background. A modern example of this phenomenon can be seen in present-day Jewish liturgies: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism alike do not present their uniqueness in each and every sentence of their literature of worship. This is especially true when one reads only one or two pages out of an entire book, and this principle applies to the matter under discussion in a similar manner.

¹⁴ Cf. *b. Ber.* 58b.

4. *Idiosyncratic Hebrew*

Flusser, Safrai, Fleischer, and Haran did their best to point out that some of the phrases in the text are common to and characteristic of Qumran. Such phrases are: בחירי צדק, חפצי רצונך, גתיבי צדקך, and perhaps one or two additional expressions. The number of these parallel phrases is small, however, and one needs to be aware of the broader picture before attempting to determine the significance of one specific aspect of the language.

The present text is composed in a unique and idiosyncratic form of Hebrew that utilizes unusual syntax and vocabulary. No doubt, translating the text is not easy. Some of the phrases are not known elsewhere, such as מבטחות גדולות, תקומי הארץ, and more. Others are extremely rare, such as רוני תבל.¹⁵

Another uncommon linguistic practice in the Hebrew text is the affinity of the author for expressing a single concept in two words, a formula that leads to a plethora of double-phrases. One might imagine that this practice implies that he is using a genitive construction, though this is not the case. This type of language is known from Qumran as well as from “classic” *piyyutim* (ca. fifth to eighth centuries). It is not clear whether this language formation exists in rabbinic texts, but it has been claimed that this type of phrasing was already present in the Bible.¹⁶

All in all, the Hebrew employed in this manuscript is neither biblical nor rabbinic, neither Qumranite nor Karaite. The text was written in atypical Hebrew that is one of a kind. Had but a few words been missing from the text, less than one percent, modern scholars would have been highly skeptical about any connection between these psalms and Qumran. It is true that even in Qumran more than one type of Hebrew was used,¹⁷ but the reader should nonetheless be cautious and keep the significance of parallel phraseology in proportion.

¹⁵ The last expression is found in a song attributed to Joshua in the book of Yashar. See D. Goldschmidt, ed., *Sepher hajaschar: Das Heldenbuch: Sagen, Berichte und Erzählungen aus der israelitischen Urzeit* (Berlin: Harz, 1923), 290.

¹⁶ N. Aloni, *Tiberian School of Hebrew Grammar* (Jerusalem: Mass, 1995), 74 (Hebrew); Haran, *Biblical Collection*, 1:159 n. 29.

¹⁷ J.F. Elwolde, “Developments of Hebrew Vocabulary between Bible and Mishnah,” in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira: Proceedings of a Symposium held at Leiden University 11–14 December 1995* (ed. T. Muraoka and J.F. Elwolde; STDJ 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 17–55 (nn. 14, 38).

5. *Poor Poetry*

When the text is analyzed from a poetical perspective, as a manuscript that appears to be poetic in nature, one cannot but be surprised at the fact that the writer attempted to create poetry notwithstanding the deficiency of his skills in this art. If one thinks of a poet, certainly of a prophet, as a sage who is assumed to have a total command of his own language, then in this case one would be disappointed. It is true that Harkavy wrote as the title of his paper that the text is composed in the style of the book of Psalms. A closer look at the text, however, readily reveals that this characterization is an overstatement. The most that can be claimed is that the author of the document was familiar with the book of Psalms, which is not a particularly daring assumption. Moreover, when reading the psalms in the manuscript under discussion, one may wonder why an author with such limited ability would attempt the poetic genre in the first place.

6. *Prophecy*

The role of prophecy in these psalms deserves special treatment, both because of its unprecedented character and because close study may provide a clue as to its nature.

Although the first psalm lacks a heading, the other three psalms begin with a header, or a superscript, that reads as follows: "On that date in the month I saw in a (holy) vision and all prophecies, and I prayed before the Lord and said." In the first psalm, since the superscript is missing, one cannot be certain of the connection between the author and the prophecy, that is, to whom to attribute the ensuing prophecy. The author does mention prophecy as a spiritual experience of "Your servant," however, which leads the reader to assume that the speaker is the author himself. That is to say, the author implies that he himself is a prophet, which is a very unusual phenomenon.

The problem of prophecy in this text should be divided into two different issues: a) an author who is a prophet; and b) a prayer that was made in relation to a prophecy. The statement that implies the speaker himself was a prophet raises the immediate question: when did this prophet live, or until what historical era did the Jews believe they had prophets among them? The other question is striking as well, though more uncommon: do we know of any other liturgical composition—a prophetic prayer or a prayer by a prophet—that is said to have been composed under the

influence of a vision? Though there are many liturgical pieces in the Bible, it seems that the most relevant, if not the only parallel,¹⁸ is Ps 89:20–38, in which a vision is related to a hymn and David is praised, as occurs in the first psalm in our text.¹⁹

In any event, the text under discussion is unique in terms of the prophetic tradition, especially when taking into consideration the fact that according to the rabbis of the first centuries, prophecy had disappeared a considerable time previously. In this text, on the contrary, the author speaks of prophecy as a living phenomenon, implying that he was not part of rabbinic tradition.

7. *The Author*

Harkavy was in doubt concerning the identity and chronology of the author of this text. In contrast to Harkavy's caution, Flusser and Safrai were confident that the text was composed by someone who attributed the psalms it contained to King David, and thus convinced that the text itself is pseudepigraphic. A close look at Flusser and Safrai's study reveals how much emphasis they put on this aspect of the manuscript. When reading the primary document without the aid of former studies, however, it becomes clear that the author does not explicitly clarify his identity at any point, nor does he imply that King David rather than he is the author of the psalms. On the contrary, the poet speaks of David in the third person. It is thus not surprising that Fleischer began his refutation of Flusser and Safrai's research exactly at this point. In other words, King David's authorship was attributed to the text without textual evidence.

The intellectual profile of the author is not easy to reconstruct and hence the following is but conjecture. The text itself indicates that the author had some knowledge of the Bible, especially the book of Psalms, though the Bible did not leave a noticeable imprint on his way of thinking or expression. His writing evidences knowledge of some of Qumranic literature as well as some of rabbinic liturgy, but to what extent cannot be determined. There is almost no indication that the author knew any rabbinic tract. Most of the text is not sectarian, a feature already noted in relation to Qumran. Non-rabbinic features of the text are the practice

¹⁸ Cf. Jer 32:14–17.

¹⁹ See P.W. Flint, "The Prophet David at Qumran," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 158–167.

of the scribe writing the biblical form of the name of the Lord and of recording a different prayer each day, but these features may be seen in rabbinic circles as well. The most notable difference between this author and the rabbi is his claim of seeing visions (and his unprecedented benedictions). Since the author was a prophet, he was thus not part of rabbinic society. It seems the author played a role in his congregation as the prayer leader, or perhaps as a religious leader in some other capacity.

C. DATING THE TEXT

Some people consider the dating of any given text as the most important aspect in understanding its meaning, and this idea is increasingly valid the older the text is considered to be. Finding a “new” text that is not known through tradition is similar to an archeological discovery, and it is no wonder that scholars debate such matters, especially when an element that is sectarian, or in some way unusual, is involved. It seems that the goal of determining the date of the text in hand influenced the thinking of the scholars involved in analyzing its content, as they assumed that unless they ascertained when it was written, the publication would suffer a real lacuna. There is of course no problem in declaring the date of a text even before analyzing it, though some appear to think that first and foremost a conclusion as to the chronological context is required, and only afterwards can the text be properly analyzed. Needless to say, this type of scholarship is not the most optimal means of building knowledge.

Harkavy was of the opinion that the text was composed by “either David Alroi, or Abraham Abulafia or some other false prophet,” postulating that perhaps it was composed between the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Flusser and Safrai declared that the text was composed before the destruction of the Second Temple, which put its composition sometime between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. Fleischer stated that: “certainly (the author) worked after the Arab conquest of the Land of Israel,” implying an approximate date of between the seventh to ninth centuries. Haran was of the opinion that this text (along with another that is not studied here) was composed by a Karaite, without giving a specific date, though it may be surmised that his opinion was that the text was composed probably around the eighth to ninth centuries C.E. All this leaves the reader with the tentative conclusion, according to the span of time between these opinions, that the date of the text’s composition is anywhere within a timeframe of around 1300 years! Contemplating

this wide span may remind the reader of the analogous problem of *Hermes Trismegistus*, or else may lead one to consider the poor status of our knowledge of Hebrew textual historiography.

Attempting to solve the problem of dating seems formidable, especially when taking into account the aforementioned scholarship but, nevertheless, finding the *Sitz im Leben* is part of understanding a text and this leads us to discern unsatisfactory arguments in former studies. It seems that Fleischer puts excessive stress on the word Qedar, claiming that since Qedar was a common epithet for Arabs in the Middle Ages, this word suggests a Medieval date for the text. As Fleischer knew the origin of each and every Hebrew word, it appears that he was confident that his readers share this knowledge, and so he did not provide them with additional information about the term Qedar. Biblical Qedar is the name of one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen 25:13) and Isaiah made a prophecy against “heroes, children of Qedar” (Isa 21:16–17). In Ezek 27:21 Qedar is cited together with Arabia (and Sheba), and therefore it cannot be claimed that the mention of “heroes of Qedar” as enemies of King David in the first psalm can be taken as proof of its connection to Arabs, and thus denote a later date of composition. Thus, the fact that the presence of a particular biblical word is taken by Fleischer to suggest a late date looks as if it is based upon a self-convinced scholar’s assumption. Moreover, Fleischer is well aware of the cry against idolatry in the second psalm but he does not interpret this as an indication of pre-Arab times. He is undoubtedly cognizant of the similarity between this text and a liturgical piece named “*Aleinu*,” but for some reason he fails to declare that this piece of liturgy originated in the Hekhalot literature,²⁰ perhaps because he ignored it (along with more than thirty poems in this literature). Given this evidence, it must be admitted that Fleischer’s arguments are flawed, and consequently it is more legitimate to accept Flusser and Safrai’s claims for an earlier date of composition.

Going “backwards” in time does not necessarily lead us to agree with Flusser and Safrai that the text under consideration originated in Qumran, however. On the contrary, the affiliations with Qumran literature, valid as they are, are too few to convincingly validate the claim the text came from Qumran. That is to say, just as Fleischer overemphasized the word Qedar to denote lateness, Flusser and Safrai “sinned” in the other

²⁰ M. Bar-Ilan, “The Source of ‘Aleinu le-Shabe’ah’ Prayer,” *Da’at* 43 (1999): 5–24 (Hebrew).

direction, claiming Qumran provenance on very meager grounds (as well as attributing pseudepigraphy and messianism to the text without sufficient basis).

It seems that a key point in determining the chronology of this text is the phrase “the sheep that was slaughtered,” words derived from Ps 44:23. Taking the usage of this phrase as denoting real history leads one to surmise that it reflects the aftermath of either the first or the second rebellion against the Romans (70 or 135 C.E.). As previously noted, there is no reason to assume that the author had any rabbinic training or that the way he expressed his thoughts reflects a world-view different than any other of his time and place. The author’s claim to prophecy leads one to speculate that he could not be one of the rabbis who believed that prophecy had left Israel centuries before the second destruction. On the other hand, we know for a fact that there were many Jews, not including rabbis, who in the first and second centuries believed in a living prophecy.²¹ Jews in those times might have had connections or even access to the Qumran library, and hence using Qumranic phraseology does not necessarily or automatically lead to Qumran itself. The main “source” of the text is the Bible, the common heritage of all Jews in Antiquity. Using words assumed to be taken from Qumran, on the one hand, and using words assumed to be taken from rabbinic circles (as claimed by Fleischer), on the other, hint at the theory that what we have at hand is a non-rabbinic and non-Qumranic (and needless to say, not a Karaite) text. Rather, the text at hand reflects a form of Jewish thinking at the end of the first century or in the second century that later was considered to be sectarian, though those who prayed in this manner, with this piece of liturgy, would not have considered themselves as such during their own times.

R. Yohanan (d. 279 C.E.) stated that the Jews went into exile (when Jerusalem was destroyed) only after they were separated into twenty-four (that is, numerous) sects of heresies.²² This well-known statement has been accepted by modern scholarship as a kind of proof for the division of the Jews into sects, though none have really asked how to validate testimony given some 200 years after the event. For that reason, it is assumed that the words of R. Yohanan, true as they are, also reflect his

²¹ D.E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); R. Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²² *Y. Sanh.* 10:5, 29c.

own times. In other words, though it seems that after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem only the rabbis were left to preserve the national spirit, so to speak, the truth was that a number of other types of Jews were living at the time, as some scholars have already argued.²³

In all, the text in hand is a reflection of one of the many Jews who lived in Palestine a century or so after the destruction of the Second Temple. In Antiquity there were numerous groups of Jews, many more than attested to by our sources, and the text from the Genizah affords additional evidence of the diversity of Judaisms in Antiquity.²⁴

D. SOME METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

Analyzing a text according to a pre-conceived opinion derived from prior scholarly expertise is nothing but an example of academic dogma, which is not far from fixed theological doctrine. Modern criticism should be free of such academic bias even when opinions of this nature are expressed by a respected scholar of great repute.

Although scholars are anxious to know the exact date of any text that comes from Antiquity, there are numerous additional questions that must be posed, such as: what data can be considered “proof” of the assumed date of a previously unknown text? Once again, we refer to a well-known methodological understanding: the fewer hypotheses the better in order to form solid conclusions, which need be established and backed up by a systematic analysis.

Former scholars have looked at the text under study here as a dichotomy: either it is from Qumran or it is a non-rabbinic text, assumed to be Karaite. Historical evidence allows more than only these two possibilities, however, and having two options does not exclude the option of a third. In other words, if the text is not rabbinic, that allows but does not of

²³ M. Black, “The Patristic Accounts of Jewish Sectarianism,” *BJRL* 41 (1958–1959): 285–303; A.F.J. Klijn and G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (NovT-Sup 36; Leiden: Brill 1973); M.D. Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 67; Leiden: Brill 2007), 33–46.

²⁴ A.F. Segal, *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity* (BJS 127; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); G. Boccaccini, “Middle Judaism and its Contemporary Interpreters (1986–1992): Methodological Foundations for the Study of Judaisms, 300 BCE to 200 CE,” *Hen* 15 (1993): 207–233; J.J. Collins, “Varieties of Judaisms in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,” *JR* 77 (1997): 605–611.

necessity entail the conclusion that it is a Karaite text, for one scholar, or a Qumranite text, for another.

The issue of authoritatively dating a text cannot depend upon a single phrase, nor on any one particular custom, since in Antiquity, like today, there were many diverse categories of Jews; it is not possible to determine exactly who belonged to what group. In order to understand ancient documents, therefore, instead of focusing solely on particular words, one should look for other phenomena, such as special liturgy, prophecy, and more.

This discussion concludes by drawing attention to a case analogous to the one under study, the critical history of a text whose discovery is similar in many aspects to the one being analyzed in this paper: *Die Weisheitsschrift*.²⁵ In both instances, texts from the Genizah led to ensuing critical debate over dating spanning centuries, where several hundred years stand between the contending opinions.

CONCLUSION

Though the text from the Genizah that is the subject of this study has already been published and analyzed, many of its aspects still need further clarification, and would benefit from additional, more thorough studies free of predetermined hypotheses.

The text under discussion is no more than a small fragment, but it does constitute testimony to a non-rabbinic Judaism, and as such its importance is unequivocal.

In conclusion, rather than discussing Judaisms in Antiquity on the scant existing evidence, one should look forward to collecting and analyzing additional texts in a mode free from pre-conceived characterizations; their number is larger than one would expect.

²⁵ S.Z. Schechter, "Genizah Fragments," *JQR* 16 (1904): 425–452; K. Berger, *Die Weisheitsschrift aus der Kairoer Geniza: Erstedition, Kommentar und Übersetzung* (Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 1; Tübingen: Francke, 1989); E. Fleischer, *The Proverbs of Sa'id ben Babshad* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1990), 241–263; G.W. Nebe, "Die wiederentdeckte Weisheitsschrift aus der Kairoer Geniza und ihre 'Nähe' zum Schrifttum von Qumran und zu Essenern," in *New Qumran Texts and Studies: Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, Paris 1992 (ed. G.J. Brooke and F. García Martínez; STDJ 15; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 241–254; J.J. Collins, "Review of K. Berger, *Die Weisheitsschrift aus der Kairoer Geniza*," *JBL* 110 (1991): 148–150.

APPENDIX 2
TRANSCRIPTION OF THE HEBREW TEXT²⁶

שירי דוד החיצוניים

א	ולא תבקיש עליהם עידי אדם: יודיע בדרכי כל חי: ולא יתיצבו הוללים לנגד כבודך: ובין טמא לטהור ובין צדק לשקר: וטהרת צאנך מן חיה טמאה: כי מיבין בכלום כחפצי רצונך: ומשפט הרביתה בעולמים: אשר יאמינו בדברי עבדך: ופועלי טובתם אשר אהבו בלבבם: וישרתה כוחם בכל מעשי פלאך: ולנצח נצחים ירוממו את שמך: ומי ידמה לך על רב כל מעשיך: וכפרת באהבה על כל פשעינו: כי קרבתי קץ ועוד לא תאחר: ומשחת ברחמך את שורשי ישי: כי היכין שבחך עד אפסי ארץ: וגודר פרץ ובונה חורבות: ועלית לראש מעל כל האומים: והוד כל הגוים קראת את שמו: ושלום וברכות עד בלי מספר: כי ישמחו בא[רץ ח]מדה: ושירות עונך יספר כל היום: ומלך כל האומים נתתו לנצח: וטבעת במצולות כל שונאי נפשו: וחזקת ורועו על כל גיבורי קידר: ולא יכשל כוחו כי עזרתו באהבה: כי לעולם לעולם לא נכלמו פניו: ברוך אתה יהוה אל עונה לעבדו בכל עת קוראיו: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד: ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל מן העולם ועד העולם	א	גלוי לפניך צדיק ורשע דיין דורות ושופט בצדק חפצת בצדק ומאסת בעוול והבדלתה עולם בין חושך לאור 5 זריתה מעצמך כל בני זרים חוכמת עונך נתתה לעבדך טעתה צדקות בארץ אמת ילמדו שיר כל עובדי שמך כנגד כל הארץ ירבו צדקתם 10 כוננת דרכם אל מצותך לעולם לעולם יעבדו את שמך מי כמעשיך ומי כפועליך מחלת וסלחת על כל חטאתינו ניבאת ברוחך על פי עבדך 15 נשבעת מראש לדויד עבדך סמכת זרועו בקדושתך עמוד עולם שמתה את שמו פינה ממואסה אשר מאסו הבונים פאר ועטרת הינחלתו ברינה 20 צדק ומשפט הרביתה בימיו צהלו לפניך כל בחירי צדק קדשת על פיו את שם הגדול רוב כל מלאכים עשית גדולתו שברת לפניו כל מלכי מדין 25 תמכת ימינו על הרבו לא ימוט רגלו כי בטח בשמך אשרי הגבר אשר יבטח בדברך ב
	ב	בך בטחה נפשי חוניני ועוניני: אלהי הרחמן רחים עלינו: ברוך שם כבודו לעולם ועד: ואמר כל העם אמן: 5 והתפללתי לפני יהוה ואמרת: יהי רחמך יהוה אלהינו על צאן הריגה חבוש ברחמך עצמות דכות כי לטוב העולם העמדתני לפניך כל האומים יספרו כבודך 10 יקבצו סוגנים וכל מלכי ארץ לראות את גבורות ימינך וידעו כולם את גבורתך	

²⁶ The Hebrew text is based on former readings but compared to the Photostats (that do not show each and every word). In comparison with Flusser's text there are eight emendations but only in two cases (2:11; 3:13) are these changes significant. Few minor typographical changes were made to clarify the reading.

- ישמח צדיק כי יראה זאת
 ילמדו ממני כל יושבי תבל
 15 ויקדמו פניך בתודה
 יגדלו כבודך בתוך מחנותם
 יבושו כל עובדי סמל
 לא יעבדו עוד את אלילים
 והאלילים כליל יחלופו
 20 ותתגדל ותתקדש מפי כל מעשך
 כי עבדך יספר בנפלאותיך
 כי אין לי שמחת כל דבר
 אל תסתיר ממני ברחמך הרבים
 כי אהבתי מעון ביתך
 25 טוב לי תורתך
 טוב לי קדוש דברך
 טוב לי מצוות רצונך מכל אבנים טובות
 3 אשרי שימצא כבוד בחפצי רצונך
 וזה חפצי על כל בקשותי
 ואהליך בצדקתך בלא עוון
 אל תמנע ממני את שאלתי
 5 אעמוד בהם עד עולם
 ברוך אל עושה זאת
 ברוך אשר בחר בעבדו
 ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם:
 ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל מן העולם ועד
 10 בשלשה בחדש אייר ראיתי במראה וכל נבואוי
 והתפללתי לפני יהוה ואמרתי:
 וברוך מוריש ומעשיר
 מהקים מעפר דל
 ויגדל כסאו מעל כל השרים
 15 ויתן לו כל חמדת מלכים
 ננות מלכים לכבודו
 אשריו יאמרו כל העולמים
 ויבטחו ביהוה כי הגדיל לעשות
 כי כולם ידעו את יהוה
 20 כי יהוה שופט בכל העולם
 לאשר ירצה יתן
 כי בידו נפש כל חי
 שירו לו זמרו לו
 שירו לשמו בכל עת
 25 אשר היציל מצרה את נפש אוהבו
 כי בטח בשמו ובכבוד מראה
 לעד נעבוד את שמו
 ד כי הוא רופא לנשברי לב
 והוא הפך דוויה לשמחה
 כי לו ארץ ומלוואה
 כי מלפניו צוה על עבדו
 5 אשר חפץ בטוב עמו
 והכביד תורתו על פי עבדו
 הירבה בלבו חכמה ובינה
 מי דומה לו ומי כמותו
 וזכר ברחמי עני ודל וגם אנכי כי זכרתי
- ויגיל לפניך בשירות והודאות:
 וישבו אל דרכך ויעבדוך באימונה:
 בזמירות ובשירות והודאות:
 וידעו כי אתה יהוה בראתם:
 כי יחכמו בפסיליהם:
 ולא ישתחוו לעד למעשה ידיהם:
 מחמדיהם יאבדו לנצח:
 מעתה ועד עולם:
 כאשר כוחו ורוחו דבריו:
 כי אם דברך ומראה כבודך:
 ואל תמיתני בעבור אהבתם:
 מכל היכלי מלכים:
 מאלף אלפים ככרי זהב:
 מכל כלי חמדה:
 ומרגליות חפצי מלכים:
 ובעבורך אני כן אשאל מפניך:
 כי אהיה לפניך תמיד:
 וארדוף באמיתך כל יום כאשר יושר בעיניך:
 ועשה בקשתי כחפצי רצונך:
 לדעת כל נתיבי צדקך:
 ברוך פועל את כל אלה:
 וימלא אותי כל משאלות לבי:
 ברוך שם כבודו לעולם ועד:
 העולם ואמר כל העם אמן:
 ומבורך משפיל ומרים:
 ומאשפות הירים אביון
 ויגביר כוחו על כל מושלים:
 וחיל גוים ואוצרות מלכים:
 ובנות ירושלם לתפארת מלכותו:
 ולפניו ישתחוו כל תקומי ארץ:
 ולא יטעו עוד בהבל ומשגה:
 מגדולי אדם ועד קטני אינוש:
 אחד משפיל ואחד מירים:
 ולאביוני אדם ירש נחלה:
 ורוח כל בשר אליו ישתחוו:
 שיחו כל נפלאותיו:
 כי לו נאה תפארתו ועוז:
 ומיד כל מרעים רוח חסידו:
 ובדברי קדשו ובכל דרכי חיים:
 ולנצח נצחים נגיד גבורתו:
 וחובש את עצם דכים:
 חויע ורתת למבטחות גדולות:
 תבל וכל יושבי בה:
 הוד והדר וכבוד מלכותו:
 ושלח הרופא ורפא בשרם:
 ומצות דברו על ידי נאמנו:
 ורב קדושתו עד בלי מספר:
 אשר לא שכח צעקת איביון:
 גבורות ועוז ממשלתו ותפארת עוז:

ואברך את זכרו על כל מעשיו: תתקדש ותתפאר מושיל בכל מעשיו: שופט צדק ודיין אמת: את ברית עבדו לנצח: ברוך שם כבודו לעולם ועד:	10 לילה ויום אעמוד לפניו תתברך ותתרומם אדון כל הדורות תתיחד מלכי מפי כל משרתך ברוך אתה יהוה אל נא זוכר ברחמי ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד:
ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל מן העולם ועד העולם ואמר כל העם אמן: בארבעה בחודש אייר ראיתי ברות במראה הקודש וכל נבואיו והתפללתי לפני יהוה ואמרתי: והעמיד קרן צדיקים: כי אתה הוא שופט הצדק: כי אם אמת ואמונה: וכפרי מעלליו תשיב לו: ואין כזב בכל דברך: ועול בל ימצא במעשך: וכורע מבורך הצמחתה צדקתך: יספר כבודך בכל יום: לאוכל לנצח לעמוד ברצונך אשרי שומרי פקודיך:	15 20 25 כי ת[מולו]היום

APPENDIX 3
ENGLISH TRANSLATION²⁷

- I. Revealed before you are the righteous and the evil;
you want not for human witnesses:
Judge of generations, your rulings are just,
knowing in the ways of all living things:
You desire justice and despise injustice;
the boastful will not stand before your glory:
You divided the world into darkness and light,
into pure and impure, justice and lie:
5 You cast off from your nation all aliens,
purifying your flock of impure beasts:
You bestow upon your servant your mighty wisdom;
he understands all according to your desire:
You have planted righteousness in the land of truth,
multiplying justice throughout eternity:
All who worship your name will teach a song,
all those who believe the words of your servant:
Their righteousness is increased in the sight of all the land
and of those who do justice, whom they love in their hearts:
10 You have set their path toward your commandments,
extending their might through your wondrous deeds:

²⁷ The English translation was made by Azzan Yadin. © All rights reserved to William B. Eerdmans and Magnes publishing companies. The translation is highly acclaimed but a few corrections have been made.

- For all eternity they worship your name,
 glorifying it forevermore:
 Who is like you in deeds, who in exploits,
 who is like you in your many great feats:
 You have forgiven and absolved us all our sins,
 loving exonerated all our transgressions:
 Your spirit prophesies through your servant;
 for you draw the end near, it will tarry no more:
- 15 You vowed of old to your servant David,
 mercifully anointing the shoot of Jesse:
 You sustained his authority in your sanctity
 for he spread your praise to the ends of earth:
 You set his name as an eternal pillar;
 he repairs the breach and rebuilds the ruins:
 A cornerstone despised by the builders
 you have raised to the headstone above all nations:
 Joyfully you crown him with glory,
 calling him the splendor of all nations:
- 20 You multiplied justice and the righteousness in his day,
 peace and blessings forever beyond counting:
 All the elect of justice rejoiced before you
 for they will glory in the beloved land:
 You have sanctified through him the holy name,
 and he recounts daily the songs of your might:
 You made him greater than all the angels,
 establishing him as king of all nations forever:
 You broke before him all the kings of Midian,
 drowning in the abyss all those who hate him:
- 25 You sustained his right arm, bearing the sword,
 giving strength to his arm over all the warriors of Qedar:
 His leg will not stumble for he trusts in your Name;
 his power will not wane for you lovingly aided him:
 Blessed is the man whose faith is in your teaching
 for he shall not be shamed forevermore:
- II. My soul trusted in you, answer me in your grace.
 Blessed are you, O Lord God, who answers his servant at the time
 that he calls unto him:
 Merciful God, have mercy upon us.
 Blessed is the name of the glory of his kingdom forever:
 Blessed are you, O Lord God of Israel, for all eternity.
 And the entire people said: Amen.
- 5 On the second day of Iyar I beheld a vision and all his prophecies,
 and I prayed before the Lord, saying:
 May your mercy, O Lord our God, rest upon the flock doomed to
 slaughter;
 the shepherds have killed it without mercy:

- Mercifully bind the crushed bones;
 heal lovingly the wounds of your lot:
 For you have placed me before you for the sake of the world;
 you have placed me in your might as a light to the nations:
 All the nations will tell your glory,
 for they will see your justice on your faithful.
- 10 Let the rulers gather, all the kings of earth,
 the lords of the world and the rulers of man:
 That they may see the might of your right hand
 and understand your holy words till the end:
 All will know your might,
 for your hand, O Lord, has done all these:
 Let the righteous man be gladdened when he sees this,
 rejoicing before you with hymns and gratitude:
 Let all the inhabitants of earth learn from me,
 and return to your way and worship you in faith:
- 15 They will greet your presence with thanksgiving,
 with hymns and songs and giving thanks:
 Magnifying your glory within their encampment
 let them know that you, O Lord, created them:
 All who worship idols shall be shamed
 for they will come to recognize their statues:
 No longer will they worship idols
 nor bow down to artifacts:
 The idols will utterly pass away,
 their delights lost forever:
- 20 All your creatures will glorify and sanctify you
 from now and for all eternity:
 Your servant will speak of your wondrous deeds
 according to his strength and the spirit of his words:
 For I take joy in nothing
 save your teachings and the appearance of your glory:
 For the sake of your great mercies, do not hide yourself from me;
 do not cause me to die for their love:
 For I have loved your residence
 more than all the palaces of kings:
- 25 The teachings of yours are better for me
 than a myriad of gold bullion:
 Your sacred words are better for me
 than any fine garment:
 The commandments of your will are better for me
 than the precious stones and pearls, the desire of kings:
- III. Blessed is he who finds glory in the wishes of your will;
 for your sake I shall indeed request of you:
 And this is my desire above all my wishes
 that I reside in your presence forever:

- And to walk in your righteousness without sin
 and pursue your truth every day, as is right in your eyes:
 Do not deny me my request;
 fulfill my wish as though it were the wish of your will:
- 5 I will set myself in them for all eternity,
 knowing the paths of your righteousness:
 Blessed be God who does this,
 blessed the one who performs these feats:
 Blessed be He who selected his servant
 and who fulfills all the wishes of my heart:
 Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever,
 blessed be the name of his glory forever:
 Blessed is the Lord God of Israel for all eternity.
 And the people respond: Amen.
- 10 On the third day of Iyar I beheld a vision and all his prophecies,
 and I prayed before the Lord, saying:
 Blessed be He who impoverishes and enriches,
 blessed be He who lays low and raises on high:
 For He had raised the lowly from the dust,
 the poor man from the refuse heap:
 He made his throne greater than all ministers,
 his power mightier than all rulers:
- 15 He gave all that kings desire,
 the might of nations and treasures of kings:
 Kings' daughters for his glory,
 daughters of Jerusalem for the glory of his kingdom:
 His blessed ones speak for all eternity;
 all the mighty of earth will bow before him:
 They will put their trust in the Lord for He has done mighty deeds,
 no longer going astray after vanity and error:
 For all will know the Lord
 from the mightiest man to the most humble:
- 20 For the Lord is judge over the entire world;
 He sets one on high while laying the other low:
 He gives to whom He will,
 providing an inheritance for the poorest of men:
 For the soul of every man is in his power,
 and the spirit of all flesh will bow down to him:
 Sing to him, raise your voices in song,
 speak all his great deeds:
 Sing to his name at all times
 for splendor and might are befitting him:
- 25 He saved the soul of his beloved from the straits
 and the spirit of his righteous ones from all harm:
 For he trusts in his Name and in the glory of the vision
 and in His holy words, in all the paths of life:

- Forever will we worship his Name,
speaking his might for all eternity:
- IV. For He heals the brokenhearted,
bandages the bones of the downtrodden:
He turns sorrow to joy,
fear and trembling to refuge:
For his is the earth and all that is in it,
the universe and all its inhabitants:
He has commanded his servant before him,
the splendor and brilliance and glory of his kingship:
- 5 He wills the good of his people,
sending the healer to heal their flesh:
He made weighty his teaching upon his servant,
his commands by the agency of his trusted messenger:
He magnified wisdom and understanding in his heart,
great sanctity without measure:
Who is like him? Who compares to him?
For he has not forgotten the cry of the poor.
He recalls in his abundant mercies the poor and the downtrodden;
I too recalled the mighty deed and power of his kingship, the
splendor of his power:
- 10 Night and day I stand before him,
blessing his memory for all his creatures:
May you be blessed and glorified, master of the generations,
Sanctified and glorified, the governor of all creatures:
May the mouths of all your servants speak your unity,
righteous and true judge:
Blessed are you, O Lord God,
who kindly recalls his servant's covenant forever:
Blessed is the name of the glory of his kinship forevermore,
blessed is the name of his glory forever:
- 15 Blessed is the Lord God of Israel for all eternity.
And the people said: Amen.
On the fourth day of Iyar I beheld a vision and all his prophecies,
and I prayed before the Lord, saying:
Blessed is He for He has broken the wicked
and raised up the horn of the righteous:
His knowledge and wisdom are in my heart,
for you are the righteous judge:
- 20 No false judgment will you proclaim
but only truth and faithfulness:
You give to all according their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings:
There is no deceit in your actions,
no falsity in your words:

Your action is wholly pure,
no injustice in your deeds:
You have multiplied your judgment like a flowing river,
growing your righteousness like a blessed seed:
25 Blessed is he who receives your holiness;
he will speak of your glory every day:
My support lies in the presence of your glory
for eternity to stand in your will:
For yesterday and today
blessed are they that keep your commandments: