

# Das Gebet im Neuen Testament

Herausgegeben von  
HANS KLEIN, VASILE MIHOC  
und KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR  
unter Mitarbeit von  
CHRISTOS KARAKOLIS

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament  
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# Das Gebet im Neuen Testament

Vierte europäische orthodox-westliche  
Exegetenkonferenz in Sâmbăta de Sus  
4.–8. August 2007

Herausgegeben von  
Hans Klein, Vasile Mihoc  
und Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr

unter Mitarbeit von  
Christos Karakolis

Mohr Siebeck

HANS KLEIN ist Professor für Neues Testament an der Ev.-Theologischen Fakultät der Lucian-Blaga-Universität Sibiu, Rumänien.

VASILE MIHOC ist Professor für Neues Testament an der Orthodox-Theologischen Fakultät der Lucian-Blaga-Universität Sibiu, Rumänien.

KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR ist Professor für Neues Testament an der Theologischen Fakultät der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena.

CHRISTOS KARAKOLIS ist Assistenzprofessor für Neues Testament an der Theologischen Fakultät der Nationalen Kapodistrias-Universität Athen.

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ULRICH LUZ  
dem *spiritus rector*  
der Osteuropa-Arbeit der SNTS  
mit Dank und Gruß gewidmet



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## Vorwort

Das Symposium zum Thema „Das Gebet im Neuen Testament“, dessen Beiträge hier publiziert werden, fand vom 4.–8. August 2007 in der Akademie des Brâncoveanu-Klosters in Sâmbăta de Sus (Rumänien) statt. Es vereinigte Neutestamentler unterschiedlicher Konfessionen aus östlichen und westlichen Ländern und war das vierte seiner Art, das vom Eastern Europe Liaison Committee der *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* veranstaltet wurde. Gastgeber waren die Orthodoxe und die Evangelische Theologische Fakultät der Universität in Sibiu, der europäischen Kulturhauptstadt des Jahres 2007, in der unmittelbar vor dem Symposium auch das 62. General Meeting der SNTS abgehalten worden war. Schon diese Tatsache dokumentiert, dass die internationale Bibelwissenschaft inzwischen den „Eisernen Vorhang“ endgültig überwunden hat.

Wenn wir heute, 20 Jahre nach den politischen Umbrüchen des Jahres 1989, die Ergebnisse bibelwissenschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit von Kollegen aus ganz Europa vorlegen können, blicken wir mit großer Dankbarkeit auf einen seither zurückgelegten gemeinsamen Weg zurück, der ohne den Fall der Mauern in Europa ebenso wenig möglich gewesen wäre wie ohne das Engagement von Kollegen aus Ost und West, die sehr früh schon die neuen Möglichkeiten zum Austausch und zur Kooperation erkannten, welche sich nun auch für die Bibelwissenschaften ergeben hatten. Unter ihnen ist an erster Stelle unser Freund und Kollege Ulrich Luz zu nennen. Auf seine Initiative hin wurde schon im Jahr 1995 anlässlich des 50. General Meeting der SNTS in Prag eine Osteuropa-Gruppe ins Leben gerufen, die sich um die Kontaktaufnahme zwischen orthodoxen Neutestamentlern sowie Bibelwissenschaftlern anderer Konfessionen aus den ehemaligen Ostblock-Staaten und Mitgliedern der SNTS bemühen sollte. Während seiner Präsidentschaft in der SNTS hat Ulrich Luz dieses Vorhaben mit dem für ihn typischen Elan zu einem zentralen Anliegen der internationalen Neutestamentlergesellschaft als ganzer gemacht, und bis zum vergangenen Jahr war er als Präsident des Eastern Europe Liaison Committee der SNTS unermüdlich für die verschiedenen Projekte der Arbeitsgruppe federführend verantwortlich. Es entspricht wohl nicht bloß dem Wunsch der Herausgeber, sondern auch den Empfindungen der Teilnehmer am Sâmbăta-Symposium, der Mitglieder des Eastern Europe Liaison Committee und der

Mitglieder der SNTS, wenn wir den hier vorliegenden Band ihm als unserem *spiritus rector* in Dankbarkeit widmen.

An dem vierten Osteuropa-Symposium in Sâmbăta de Sus nahmen rund 40 Bibelwissenschaftler aus 14 Ländern teil, darunter 22 aus osteuropäischen Staaten. Unter den osteuropäischen Teilnehmern waren 19 Orthodoxe, ein Lutheraner, ein Reformierter und ein Baptist.

Folgende Vorträge wurden gehalten:

- Konstantinos Zarras (Athen): Silence and Proper Intention in Late Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Prayer
- Hans Klein (Sibiu): Das Vaterunser. Seine Geschichte und sein Verständnis bei Jesus und im frühen Christentum
- Hermut Löhr (Jena): Formen und Traditionen des Gebets bei Paulus
- Christos Karakolis (Athen): Paul Praying in the Post-Pauline Era. Prayers in the Epistle to the Ephesians
- Urs von Arx (Bern): Fürbittendes Gebet im Neuen Testament
- James Charlesworth (Princeton): Prayer in the Apocalypse of John
- Vasile Mihoc (Sibiu): Prayer to Jesus in the New Testament
- Constantin Preda (Bukarest): The Early Church and Prayer in the Book of Acts

Alle Vorträge wurden jeweils in Arbeitsgruppen und im Plenum ausführlich diskutiert. Am Ende des Symposiums wurden die Ergebnisse in einem abschließenden Plenum zusammengefasst.

Das Symposium diente über den wissenschaftlichen Ertrag der Vorträge und Diskussionen zum Tagungsthema hinaus auch dem fachlichen Austausch und dem Gespräch zu aktuellen Fragen der Ökumene und der kirchlichen Lage in den Ländern, aus denen die Teilnehmer kamen. Insbesondere wurden Fragen der theologischen Ausbildung an kirchlichen und staatlichen Institutionen in Osteuropa besprochen. Den zahlreichen, zum erheblichen Teil jüngeren Teilnehmern aus Rumänien, die nicht selbst durch Referate oder Diskussionsbeiträge am Programm beteiligt waren, gab das Symposium Einblicke in Teilbereiche der internationalen theologischen Forschung.

Zum Programm des Symposiums gehörten neben einer Exkursion zu Klöstern, Kirchen und kulturellen Stätten Siebenbürgens auch Begegnungen mit dem Metropoliten von Transsilvanien, Dr. Laurențiu Streza, und dem Abt des Brâncoveanu-Klosters, Vater Ilarion, sowie mit einem Starzen des Klosters, Vater Teofil. Auch durch die Teilnahme an den Liturgien und Tagzeitengottesdiensten der Klostergemeinschaft hatte die wissenschaftlich-theologische Arbeit des Symposiums einen geistlichen Rahmen und Zusammenhang.

Für die Publikation in diesem Band wurden sechs der acht in Sâmbăta de Sus gehaltenen Vorträge in bearbeiteter Fassung zur Verfügung gestellt. Sie werden in einem reflektierenden Rückblick von James D. G. Dunn, der auch selbst an dem Symposium teilgenommen hat, kritisch gewürdigt. Auf diese Weise können einige Linien der Diskussionen ebenso dokumentiert werden wie weiterführende Aspekte und Perspektiven, die sich aus den nun vorliegenden Druckfassungen der Beiträge ergeben.

Zusätzlich zu den beim Symposium gehaltenen Vorträgen wurde in den vorliegenden Band noch eine Reihe von Studien aufgenommen, die das Tagungsthema aus weiteren Blickwinkeln bearbeiten oder noch weitere Textbereiche im Neuen Testament explizit in den Blick nehmen. Auf diese Weise kommen stärker noch als in den Referaten des Symposiums auch alttestamentliche und frühjüdische Traditionen des Gebets in den Blick, die in den neutestamentlichen Schriften rezipiert worden sind (vgl. besonders die Beiträge von Barbara Schmitz und Franz Tóth). Neben die Überblicke zu Gebeten im ganzen Neuen Testament bzw. in neutestamentlichen Schriftengruppen oder Einzelschriften (Urs von Arx, Vasile Mihoc, Hermut Löhr, Christos Karakolis) treten jetzt noch Einzelstudien zum Johannesevangelium (Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer) und zur Johannesoffenbarung (Franz Tóth). Zu dem umfassenden Beitrag über das Vaterunser (Hans Klein) kommt ein spezieller zum Lobgesang des Simeon (Barbara Schmitz). Neben der Bearbeitung von Gebeten vorwiegend in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur (Konstantinos Zarras) kommt nun auch die Gebets-tradition des hellenistischen Judentums zur Geltung (Christfried Böttrich). Darüber hinaus wird der Blick dezidiert in das frühe Christentum hinein geweitet, wenn die Fürbitte für die Toten im frühen Christentum (Thomas J. Kraus) sowie Gebete in den frühchristlichen Märtyrerakten (Tobias Nicklas) untersucht werden. Zwei Studien zum Gebet in der Literatur der Kirchenväter (Dimitrij F. Bumazhnov, Konstantinos Kornarakis) beschließen den Band.

Erneut haben wir rückblickend denen zu danken, die durch ihre finanzielle Unterstützung die Durchführung des Symposiums überhaupt erst möglich gemacht haben. An erster Stelle sollen hier einmal die Teilnehmer einschließlich der Referenten aus westlichen Ländern genannt werden, die bereit waren, sämtliche Kosten für Reise, Aufenthalt und Unterbringung beim Symposium selbst zu tragen, eine keineswegs selbstverständliche Bereitschaft, ohne die freilich das Symposium so nicht hätte stattfinden können. Denn die Kosten für die Teilnehmer aus den osteuropäischen Ländern mussten natürlich anderweitig abgedeckt werden. Dankbar sind wir daher für Zuschüsse der Stiftung für historische und ökumenische Theologie Bern, des Diakonischen Werkes Mitteldeutschland und des International Fund der SNTS.

Dem Herausgeber der „Wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament“, Prof. Dr. Jörg Frey, danken wir ebenso herzlich für die Aufnahme unseres Bandes in seine Reihe wie dem Verlag Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen und seinen Mitarbeitern für die wiederum sehr gute Zusammenarbeit. Für die Erstellung der Druckvorlage war erneut Ionuț-Adrian Forga in Jena zuständig. An den Korrekturen hat sich auch Franz Tóth in Jena beteiligt. Christos Karakolis, derzeit in München, hat sich mit besonderer Aufmerksamkeit den Beiträgen von orthodoxen Autoren gewidmet. James D. G. Dunn in Durham hat sich erneut um die Glättung des Englischen in einigen Beiträgen verdient gemacht, ebenso wie Prof. James Kehlhoffer in anderen. Dr. Krastu Banev, Lecturer am Department of Theology and Religion der Durham University, war dankenswerter Weise bereit, sich mit dem Betrag von Konstantinos Kornarakis eingehend zu beschäftigen und Vorschläge zur besseren Verständlichkeit des Gedankengangs im Englischen zu machen.

An Ende steht der Dank an diejenigen, deren Gastfreundschaft und Organisationstalent wir im Brâncoveanu-Kloster in Sâmbăta de Sus genießen konnten. Unsere beiden Kollegen Vasile Mihoc und Hans Klein, die von Beginn an bei der Osteuropa-Arbeit in der SNTS dabei sind, konnten uns diesmal bei sich zu Hause empfangen und uns ihre Heimat auf vielfältige Weise nahe bringen. Dem Abt des Brâncoveanu-Klosters, Vater Ilarion, und seiner Gemeinschaft danken wir herzlich für die Offenheit und Gastfreundlichkeit, mit der sie uns bei sich aufnahmen, dem Personal der Akademie für die reibungs- und geräuschlose Erledigung aller technischen Aufgaben.

Jena im Juni 2009

Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr für die Herausgeber

## Abkürzungsverzeichnis

Die Abkürzungen folgen in der Regel S. M. Schwertner, Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete, Berlin/New York 2. Auflage 1992. Biblische Bücher werden nach dem Abkürzungsverzeichnis des Werkes Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, hg.v. H. D. Betz u.a., Bd. 1, Tübingen 4. Auflage 1998, abgekürzt. Abweichende Abkürzungen, die nur in einem Beitrag vorkommen, werden an Ort und Stelle aufgelöst. Darüber hinaus finden folgende Abkürzungen Verwendung:

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ARGU	Arbeiten zur Religion und Geschichte des Urchristentums
BGU 2	Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin. Griechische Urkunden 2, Berlin 1898
DNP	Der Neue Pauly
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
HABES	Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien
JSJT	Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought
LACL	Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur
SJSJ.TS	Supplements for the Journal for the Study of Judaism. Texts and Studies
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
ZAC	Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum



*Beiträge vom Symposium*





## Silence and Proper Intention in Late Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Prayer: the Case for *mBerakhot 5,1*

KONSTANTINOS T. ZARRAS

After the sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem temple came to a sudden end in 70 C.E., new modes or channels connecting the Community with God had to be invented, structured, and formalized.<sup>1</sup> The consequent ritualization of Prayer or blessings recited came as fulfilling the need to substitute what was lost in a gradual process<sup>2</sup>. The spine of this new ritual praxis mainly consisted of two different sets of recitations, namely, the *Shema*<sup>3</sup> and the *Amidah*.<sup>4</sup> Either at home in private, or at the Synagogue, the Study Hall or

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbinic liturgy in its various phases of development presents a rather complex, albeit meaningful and interesting, phenomenon. Even from the initial stages, daily prayers were thought to replace or substitute the sacrificial system as it were before the destruction; Cf. S. C. REIF, *Problems with Prayers: Studies in the Textual History of Early Rabbinic Liturgy*, SJ 37, Berlin 2006, 16–17; I. ELBOGEN, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, Philadelphia etc. 1993, 3 ff. For an overall view, see the wealth of material in J. H. CHARLESWORTH, *Jewish Hymns, Odes, and Prayers* (ca. 167 B.C.E. – 135 C.E.), in: R. A. KRAFT/G. W. E. NICKELSBURG (Ed.), *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, Atlanta 1986, 411–436.

<sup>2</sup> For the three main components of Rabbinic prayer, see T. ZAHAVY, *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, *Studies in Judaism*, Lanham 1990, 6–8. For the ‘mechanics’ of “institutionalized prayer”, see S. TALMON, *The Emergence of Institutionalized Prayer in Israel in the Light of the Qumran Literature*, in: M. DELCOR (Ed.), *Qumrân: Sa Pieté, sa Théologie et son Milieu*, Paris etc. 1978, 265–284, esp. 266–267.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shema* was constituted by three passages in Deuteronomy (6,4–9; 11,13–21) and Numbers (15,37–41) and it was to be recited twice (in evening and morning). Some early references to the recitation of the *Shema* might be found in the *Letter of Aristeeas* (158–160) and Josephus’ *Antiquities* 4.212. For “Rabbinic Judaism’s most famous prayer”, cf. REIF, *Problems* (see n. 1), 6–7.82–84 and esp. 107–125; R. KIMELMAN, *The Shema and the Amidah: Rabbinic Prayer*, in: M. KILEY et al. (Ed.), *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, London 1997, 108–120; A. Z. IDELSOHN, *Jewish Liturgy and its Development*, republ. of the original 1932 edition, New York 1995, 88ff; ELBOGEN, *Jewish Liturgy* (see n. 1), 16–24.

<sup>4</sup> The *Amidah* or *Tefillah* was considered to be *the* Prayer and it was composed in eighteen benedictions; that is why it is usually called *The Eighteen* or *Shemoneh Esreh*. The *Amidah* was expected to be recited three times (evening, morning, and afternoon)

during work, the devoted Jew had to recite the proper words at the proper times, assuming a certain body position and following the dicta of the Sages.<sup>5</sup> Each and every relevant detail came as the outcome of long debates and discussions among prominent Tannaim. Prayer as a sacred act came as a composite and demanding ritual.<sup>6</sup> Among its elements comes silence and proper intention as a kind of quality prerequisite for fulfilling this mitzvah. Although references to intention or concentration in its various forms or disguises might seem relatively easier to locate, the examination of the pairing of private or communal devotional praxis with silence is more difficult and problematic. Consequently, our treatment of both will have to be non-symmetrical, as the case may be. Of course in this presentation we cannot – and we will not – claim that all or most of the sources are treated. In the following paragraphs only the cases most relevant will be examined.

On this occasion we will have to pass Aristotle's call "to start by first defining the terms", for reasons to become obvious during our treatment of the sources. Unfortunately, the material found in the early Rabbinic corpus of texts is scant at best and should be approached with caution. The issue becomes all the more difficult when coupled with the long attested problem of dating the various Rabbinic traditions and their sources<sup>7</sup>. Nonetheless, during the last few decades scholars have shown a deep interest in the history and the development of Jewish Liturgy during all of its phases and especially for the first normative ones<sup>8</sup>.

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and is preserved in two versions, the Palestinian, and the Babylonian. The Palestinian one is deemed to be more ancient. It is interesting that in *Didache* (8,2–3) the Lord's Prayer is to be recited three times daily, too. On the *Amidah*, see J. HEINEMANN, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns*, Berlin 1977, 45ff.218–227; L. FINKELSTEIN, *The Development of the Amidah*, JQR.NS 16 (1925) 1–43; IDELSOHN, *Jewish Liturgy* (see n. 3), 92ff; J. H. CHARLESWORTH, *Prayer in Early Judaism*, in: D. N. FREEDMAN (Ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, New York 1992, 449–450; ELBOGEN, *Jewish Liturgy* (see n. 1), 24–53.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, as attested in Gen 13,3–4 and 26,25, prayer and the act of sacrifice are shown to be connected from an early time.

<sup>6</sup> On the contrast of Biblical (mostly "spontaneous") to Rabbinic ("institutionalized") prayer, see S. TALMON, *The World of Qumran from Within*. Collected Studies, Leiden 1989, 200–202; B. NITZAN, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, STDJ 12, Leiden 1994, 1–3.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the useful remarks in J. NEUSNER, *The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of First-Century Pharisaism*, in: W. S. GREEN, *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, BJSt I, Missoula 1978, 215–225.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. C. REIF, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, Cambridge 1993; J. TABORY, *Jewish Prayer and the Yearly Cycle: A List of Articles*, Kiryat Sefer 64, Jerusalem 1992/3; I. KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence: The Relationship Between Prayer and Cult*, JBL 115 (1996) 17–30; L. H. SCHIFFMAN, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early History of Jewish Liturgy*, in: L. I. LEVINE (Ed.), *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1987, 33–48; NITZAN, *Qumran Prayer* (see n.

Now, both of the aforementioned criteria, of silence and intention, are first to be found in tandem in the Mishnaic Tractate *Berakhot* and especially in the mishnah examined in this presentation. But neither of these elements is totally new here. In various works from different authors, one finds allusions or clear references to both of them, but mostly on silent prayer. What follows is a partial treatment of selected textual instances that helped predicate the evolution of this practice.

The first and most important reference to silent prayer is found in 1 Sam 1,13.<sup>9</sup> The fact that this passage is interpreted and used by later rabbis as a pattern to be followed calls at least for a brief comment. The narrative presents Hannah, a pious yet childless woman, who goes to the temple at Shiloh to pray for a child. During her prayer Eli the priest was observing her; what he saw was that her lips were moving, yet no sound was heard:

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken” (1 Sam 1,12–13).<sup>10</sup>

The fact that at the time this practice was not common is proven by the reaction of Eli: he thought that the woman was drunk. It is important to note here that Eli comments not on her praying at the temple; his surprise comes from the fact that she prays silently. Her way of praying is misunderstood by Eli; her prayer was silent. But not only is it heard by God, her petition is granted in a most remarkable and meaningful manner. Therefore, in Hannah’s case one may say that the following elements are clearly evident:

- there is a strong need for a prayer that will be heard and answered;
- there is a thought-and-emotion containment (whether intended or otherwise is not relevant) that leads to a kind of self-restriction concerning the use of words during prayer;
- there is an internalization of an otherwise external and verbal act, that is, prayer;
- and finally, this formula seems to work: it is effective.

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6); S. TALMON, *The Emergence* (see n. 2), 265–284; D. INSTONE-BREWER, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*, vol. I: Prayer and Agriculture, Michigan 2004; M. J. BODA/D. K. FALK/R. A. WERLINE (Ed.), *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. I: *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, Atlanta 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Only the most specific and relevant elements of 1 Sam 1,13 will be discussed here; see also P. VAN DER HORST, *Silent Prayer in Antiquity*, *Numen* 41 (1994) 1–25, where in a masterful way he presents evidence from Greek, Latin, and Jewish texts; he refers to Hannah and 1 Sam 1,12–13 in p. 12–13.

<sup>10</sup> καὶ ἐγενήθη ὅτε ἐπλήθυνεν προσευχομένη ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ Ἡλὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐφύλαξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς καὶ αὐτὴ ἐλάλει ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῆς ἐκινεῖτο καὶ φωνὴ αὐτῆς οὐκ ἠκούετο καὶ ἐλογίσαστο αὐτὴν Ἡλὶ εἰς μεθύουσαν.

All in all, in Hannah's prayer we have the prototype of an external, that is, verbal, sacred act become intrinsic with the minimum participation of the physical ("only her lips moved" – τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῆς ἐκινεῖτο).<sup>11</sup> In other words, a physical activity involving speech becomes internalized without losing its power or effectiveness. Later on and when treating Rabbinic sources we will return to 1 Sam 1.

Apart from the various (mostly) indirect references in the books of Old Testament<sup>12</sup> and in spite of the originality of Hannah's case, the element of silence seems to have played an important role in the temple ritual praxis at Jerusalem. It has been shown elsewhere that during the service at the temple there were two elements of great importance; one was the hymn and song of the Levites; and the other was the silence that prevailed within the temple.<sup>13</sup> According to this approach, in the relation between God and Israel, as expressed in the temple cult, direct speech was limited,<sup>14</sup> while silence was a main characteristic of the sacrificial cult, though only in the inner circle of the priesthood.<sup>15</sup> This inference has been drawn by Yehezkiel Kaufmann<sup>16</sup> and further developed by Israel Knohl.<sup>17</sup> Citing his own words, "the priestly temple is the kingdom of silence" and "all the various acts of the priest are performed in silence" – though nothing is known on his inner attitude.

While silence seemed to have been the main characteristic in the rites of the inner circle priesthood, beyond this, Levites were singing songs, and still in the outer perimeter, people were either praying or shouting in joy.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, what is contrasted here is the silence in the centre with the song and joy in the perimeter. The closer one came to the holy of holies, the less human activity and especially speech were deemed appropriate. An impressive example used to portray the contrast between voice and silence can be found in the ceremony of bringing the first fruits to the priest (Deut 26,1–10). Though the one who brings the offering recites a prescribed speech, the priest leaves the offering silently before the altar.<sup>19</sup> And still, it is only the High Priest who recites a prayer inside the Temple, yet not in

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<sup>11</sup> In Judith 13,4, Judith also prays silently (εἶπεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς) by the bed of Holofernes she is about to kill, but for quite different reasons.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see Exod 22,23.27; 2 Chr 7,14; Isa 55,6; Bar 1,5.14.

<sup>13</sup> I. KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 17–29.20–24.

<sup>14</sup> I. KNOHL, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*, Minneapolis 1995, 128ff; IDEM, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 20.

<sup>15</sup> IDEM, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 18.

<sup>16</sup> Y. KAUFMANN, *The Religion of Israel*, Chicago 1966, 303–305.

<sup>17</sup> KNOHL, *Sanctuary of Silence* (see n. 14), 148ff.

<sup>18</sup> For the functions of the Levites see 1 Chr 6,31–48, 25,7–31; Ezra 3,10–11.

<sup>19</sup> See KAUFMANN, *Religion* (see n. 16), 303. KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 21 n. 7.

the *devir*, after the completion of the ritual, and separately from the cultic act.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, the prayers spoken during the fast days on the temple mount took place only at the periphery of the holy place and at the eastern gates.

In all probability, although at the end of the Second Temple era (spoken) prayer was gradually increasing in importance in the priestly cultus, it did so only in the periphery, whereas service at the heart of the Temple retained its characteristic of silence.<sup>21</sup> In the *Letter of Aristeas* (92)<sup>22</sup> it is stated that the service of the priests was characterized by three elements: rigor, order, and silence. As described, silence was dominant even among the seven hundred of them during the placing of the victims, while everything was performed in awe.<sup>23</sup>

One of the foremost authors on Rabbinic prayer, Joseph Heineman, in his monumental *Prayer in the Talmud*, mentions that the individual prayers offered after the incense burning in the temple were also non-verbal, that is, they were silent.<sup>24</sup> In the New Testament, when in Luke 1,9–10 Zechariah enters into the temple to offer incense, it is only the people outside who are mentioned as praying. Still, it is especially interesting that the silence in heaven at Rev 8,1 is interpreted in the same context as the prevailing silence during the priestly service within the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup> In this case, a sacrifice of incense is described and though an angel offers prayers before the throne of God, silence is not broken since the prayers are presented as already completed or said. An interesting parallel is also to be found in the *Testament of Adam* (1,12), where it is mentioned that, while the priest burns incense, silence is imposed even on the weather elements.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> mTaanit 2,5; tTaanit 1,12; KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 23.

<sup>21</sup> KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Arist.* 92: Τῶν δὲ ἱερέων ἡ λειτουργία κατὰ πᾶν ἀνυπέρβλητός ἐστι τῇ ῥώμῃ καὶ τῇ τῆς εὐκοσμίας καὶ σιγῆς διαθέσει.

<sup>23</sup> *Arist.* 95: Ἡ τε πᾶσα σιγή καθέστηκεν, ὥσθ' ὑπολαμβάνειν, μὴθ' ἓνα ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῷ τόπῳ παρεῖναι, πρὸς τοὺς ἑπτακοσίους παρόντων τῶν λειτουργῶν – καὶ τῶν προσαγόντων δὲ τὰ θύματα πολὺ τι πλῆθος – ἀλλὰ φόβῳ καὶ καταξίως μεγάλης θεϊότητος ἅπαντ' ἐπιτελεῖται.

<sup>24</sup> HEINEMAN, *Prayer in the Talmud* (see n. 4), 125 n. 7; cf. also ELBOGEN, *Jewish Liturgy* (see n. 1), 73.

<sup>25</sup> P. WICK, 'There was Silence in Heaven' (Rev 8,1): An Annotation to Israel Knohl's 'Between Voice and Silence', *JBL* 117/3 (1998) 512–514.

<sup>26</sup> WICK, *There was Silence* (see n. 25), 513; or, better see *TestAdam* 1,10–12 in both Greek and Syriac versions. For a fuller examination of the relevant evidence, see S. E. ROBINSON, *The Testament of Adam: An Examination of the Syriac and the Greek Traditions*, SBL.DS 52, Chico/California 1982, 110–127.

In the Qumran congregation, long before the Sages at Yavneh,<sup>27</sup> and due to the lack of a sacrificial cult, prayer became a very important component in the life of the pious.<sup>28</sup> A templeless piety brought as a substitute “stereotyped forms of prayer” and the “development of worship patterns fixed in time”.<sup>29</sup> Later on and after the destruction of 70 C.E., the rabbis would only follow in the footsteps of the Qumranites. Among the Covenanters, the element of silence had a strong influence, too. In a series of songs known as *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* angels act as priests in the heavenly temple.<sup>30</sup> They serve God not by offering sacrifices, contrary to the ritual praxis at the Jerusalem Temple, but by chanting songs of bliss and

<sup>27</sup> The notion that there was a Council at Yavneh (supported by Heinrich Graetz in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that decided on *halakhic* issues, prayer and the accepted books in the Canon of the Hebrew Bible, has been under severe re-examination during the last few decades, see e.g. D. E. AUNE, *On the Origins of the ‘Council of Yavneh’ Myth*, JBL 110/3 (1991) 491ff; S. J. D. COHEN, *The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis and the End of Jewish Sectarianism*, HUCA 55 (1984) 27–54.

<sup>28</sup> See E. G. CHAZON, *An Introduction to Prayer at Qumran*, in: M. KILEY (Ed.), *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, London 1997, 9–13; IDEM, *Prayers from Qumran and their Historical Implications*, DSD 1 (1994) 265–284; D. K. FALK, *Prayer in the Qumran Texts*, in: W. HORBURY/W. D. DAVIES/J. STURDY (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period*, Cambridge 1999, 852–876. For the last ten years there has been a ‘hail’ of remarkable publications on this voluminous issue. While examining in the light of the evolution of Jewish worship and Liturgy, they have helped to clarify on the one hand, yet have raised new questions on the other; see for example, L. H. SCHIFFMAN, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early History of Jewish Liturgy*, in: L. I. LEVINE (Ed.), *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1987, 33–48; E. ESHEL, *Prayer at Qumran and the Synagogue*, in: B. EGO/A. LANGE/P. PILHOFFER (Ed.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel: zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, WUNT 118, Tübingen 1999, 323–334; R. S. SARASON, *Communal Prayer at Qumran and Among the Rabbis: Certainties and Uncertainties*, in: E. G. CHAZON (Ed.), *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 48, Leiden 2003, 151–172.

<sup>29</sup> TALMON, *The World of Qumran* (see n. 6), 239ff. For the wider perspective, see REIF, *Problems with prayers* (see n. 3), 4–5; D. K. FALK, *Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple*, in: D. K. FALK/F. GARCIA MARTINEZ/E. M. SCHULLER (Ed.), *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran*, STDJ 35, Leiden 2000, 115–117; M. WEINFELD, *Prayer and Liturgical Practice in the Qumran Sect*, in: D. DIMANT/U. RAPPAPORT (Ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, STDJ 10, Leiden 1992, 241–258.

<sup>30</sup> See for example, E. M. SCHULLER, *Worship, Temple and Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: A. J. AVERY-PECK/J. NEUSNER (Ed.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, Part 5, section 1, Leiden 2001, 125–143; E. G. CHAZON, *Liturgical Communion with the Angels at Qumran*, in: FALK, *Sapiential, Liturgical* (see n. 29), 95–105; E. G. CHAZON, *Human and Angelic Prayer in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: CHAZON, *Liturgical Perspectives* (see n. 28), 35–47; C. A. NEWSOM, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, in: KILEY (Ed.), *Prayer* (see n. 28), 28–32; on the function of the *Songs*, see J. J. COLLINS, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London/New York 1997, 140–143.

praise. What is most interesting is that in the song called *Angelic Liturgy* (presented by John Strugnell<sup>31</sup> some fifty years ago, and then by Carol Newsom<sup>32</sup>) ‘silence’ appears as a main characteristic of the heavenly liturgy. But ‘silence’ is here coupled with another original element, that of ‘stillness’. The following verses have attracted the attention of scholars:

(a) “[there is] a still sound of blessing in the tumult of their movement”, and (b) “the sound of glad rejoicing falls silent, and [there is] a stillness of divine blessing in all the camps of the godlike beings”.<sup>33</sup>

Newsom finds here an influence by 1 Kgs 19,12, where “a small still voice” (φωνὴ αὐραὺς λεπτῆς κακεῖ κύριος) came after the fire.<sup>34</sup> It has also been suggested that in these *Songs* sung in the heavenly temple, the angels were totally silent.<sup>35</sup> According to Dale Allison, this is explained due to the poverty of human language to express the heavenly praise. Yet, this view has been criticized, since the term *demama* refers not to total silence, but rather to a very quite voice, like a whisper<sup>36</sup> – an observation that again echoes 1 Kgs 19,12.

As occurred in the *Angelic Liturgy*, the sequence hymn/silence-motion/stillness might be far more revealing than previously thought. In the glorious ceremony that is portrayed here, one may ask: What do the elements of silence and stillness stand for? What do they represent? What was thought to be taking place during those moments? When the angels cease their activity, what is the necessity of the empty spaces created in between? Does the passiveness of the angels point to God’s participation in the heavenly ritual? Or, do they point to some internal aspects, where the priest (or the angels) awaits for a response from above? Since the silence/stillness element seems to have a predefined place and role in the ritual, we can infer that its existence was designed. From that point on one may infer that there was a specific purpose for its existence in the sequence of the various sacred acts that constitute the ritual. Then again, what did silence (or stillness) stand for? Both, from the temple sacrificial praxis and

<sup>31</sup> J. STRUGNELL, *The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran: 4Q Sereq Shirot Olat HaShabbat*, in: *Congress Volumen Oxford 1959, VT.S 7*, Leiden 1960, 318–345.

<sup>32</sup> C. A. NEWSOM, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, *Harvard Semitic Studies 27*, Atlanta 1985; see also, J. H. CHARLESWORTH/C. A. NEWSOM/H. W. L. RIETZ (Ed.), *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, vol. 4/B, Tübingen 1999.

<sup>33</sup> See NEWSOM, *Songs* (see n. 32), 303.306.

<sup>34</sup> NEWSOM, *Songs* (see n. 32), 313. For the obvious mystical elements, see B. NITZAN, *Harmonic and Mystical Characteristics in Poetic and Liturgic Writings from Qumran*, *JQR 85* (1994) 163–183.

<sup>35</sup> D. ALLISON, *The Silence of Angels: Reflections of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, *RdQ 13* (1988) 193–195; cf. KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 24–25.

<sup>36</sup> KNOHL, *Between Voice and Silence* (see n. 8), 25.



the ritual in the *Angelic Liturgy*, one may think that at specific moments of the rite some kind of ‘response’ was sought from the receiver of all the hymns and blessings. Though extremely difficult (or plainly impossible) to show or to know the answer, could there have been a kind of a ‘dialogue’ between the two sides, as expressed in the various stages of the ritual? The priestly character of the *yahad*, the absence of temple, and the elevated role of its members as equals in the divine retinue,<sup>37</sup> might all point toward that direction.

References to prayer connected with the element of silence are found in the work of Philo, too. It is believed that the acceptance of silent prayer in early Christianity owes a lot to the influence exerted by the material he preserves. In his work one witnesses a most productive marriage or a “combination of biblical and Platonic elements that facilitated the acceptance and propagation of silent prayer”.<sup>38</sup> His disposition is quite positive and he shows no surprise at the existence of the practice. In his work *De Plantatione Noe* (126)<sup>39</sup> and referring to the ways that a man may use to express his gratitude to God, he mentions “hymns of praise, and these not such as the audible voice will sing, but strains raised and re-echoed by the mind too pure for the eye to discern”.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the most tale-telling reference to silent prayer in Philo can be found in *De Gigantibus* (52).<sup>41</sup> Here it is maintained that one has to meditate on the Existent (τὸ ὄν) without the use of voice and only within his soul (ἄνευ φωνῆς μόνη ψυχῆ). From the context one may conclude that non-verbal prayer or absorbed contemplation is deemed of higher value. In the same instance and using the example of the high priest entering the Holy of Holies, it is maintained that one should approach God “in totally pure mind” (γυμνῆ τῆ διανοίᾳ). In *De Specialibus Legibus* (1.272) Philo refers to the way worshippers honour God. “Hymns” and “thanksgivings” are mentioned, but sometimes the pious ones may do so without “the organs of speech”; that is, “without tongue or mouth (ἄνευ γλώττης καὶ στόματος), when within the soul

<sup>37</sup> For example, see 4Q471b, “who is like me among the gods?”; also, cf. 4Q491 and 4Q427.

<sup>38</sup> See VAN DER HORST, *Silent Prayer* (see n. 9), 13.

<sup>39</sup> *Plant.* 126: θεῷ δὲ οὐκ ἔνεστι γνησίως εὐχαριστήσαι δι’ ὧν νομίζουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ κατασκευῶν ἀναθημάτων θυσιῶν ..., ἀλλὰ δι’ ἐπαίνων καὶ ὕμνων, οὐχ οὕς ἢ γεγωνὸς ἔσεται φωνή, ἀλλὰ οὕς ὁ ἀειδῆς καὶ καθαρῶτατος νοῦς ἐπηχίσει καὶ ἀναμέλψει.

<sup>40</sup> See VAN DER HORST, *Silent Prayer* (see n. 9), 13, where the autor notices that Philo “does not reflect on the biblical text” and that his (that is, Philo’s) “phraseology [is] more reminiscent of the just quoted Hermetic and Neoplatonic passages than of 1 Sam 1”.

<sup>41</sup> VAN DER HORST, *Silent Prayer* (see n. 9), 13.

alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise”.<sup>42</sup> The terminology used here clearly echoes 1 Sam 1. And still, in a closer examination this passage may yield an even richer harvest. “Without tongue or mouth” indicates the non-verbal element; “within the soul alone” points in the direction of a totally internalized δρώμενον; and, “*their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise*” is perhaps even more important, because here it is stated that the loss of the verbal element leads not to a subsequent loss of prayer’s rigor.<sup>43</sup> Special attention should be paid to the phrase “their minds recite the tale”. As is known, in the early forms of mystical Judaism, that is, the Maaseh Merkavah,<sup>44</sup> the practitioner strove to re-live in his mind the events in Ezekiel 1, while seeking to crown his effort with the vision of the enthroned God, thus imitating the prophet. Is it possible that here we have a shard of a reference to a technique used by the later Hekhalot mystics?

But, equally impressive is Josephus’ reference to the “silence” (σιωπή) that prevailed at the Essene communities, too.<sup>45</sup> As he mentions, silence there came as a result of “perpetual sobriety” (διηνεκῆς νήψις).<sup>46</sup> In sum,

<sup>42</sup> VAN DER HORST, *Silent Prayer* (see n. 9), 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Spec. Leg.* 1.272: κὰν μέντοι μηδὲν ἕτερον κομίζωσιν, αὐτοὺς φέροντες πλήρωμα καλοκάγαθίας τελειότατον τὴν ἀρίστην ἀνάγουσι θυσίαν, ὕμνοις καὶ εὐχαριστίαις τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα θεὸν γεραίροντες, τῇ μὲν διὰ τῶν φωνητηρίων ὀργάνων, τῇ δὲ ἄνευ γλώττης καὶ στόματος, μόνη ψυχῇ τὰς νοητὰς ποιούμενοι διεξόδους καὶ ἐκβοήσεις, ὧν ἓν μόνον οὐς ἀντιλαμβάνεται τὸ θεῖον; notice the contrast between the offering of “hymns” and “thanksgivings” “by the organs of the voice” and the silent sacrifice “without the agency of the voice or mouth”.

<sup>44</sup> Starting from the one who started it all in this field of research, see G. G. SCHOLEM, *Major trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Jerusalem 1941 (first print), 40–79; E. E. URBACH, *The Esoteric Traditions in the Tanna’ic Period in: Studies in the Kabbalah and the History of the Religions Presented to Gershom Scholem*, Jerusalem 1968, 1–28; I. CHERNUS, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, Berlin 1982; IDEM, *Visions of God in Merkavah Mysticism*, JSJ 13 (1982) 123–46; IDEM, *The Pilgrimage to the Merkavah: An Interpretation of Early Jewish Mysticism*, JSJT 6 (1987) 1–36; D. J. HALPERIN, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature*, AOS 62, Indiana 1980; IDEM, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision*, TSAJ 16, Tübingen 1988; P. SCHÄFER (Ed.), *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, TSAJ 2, Tübingen 1981; IDEM (Ed.), *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, TSAJ 6, Tübingen 1986; I. GRUENWALD, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, Leiden 1980; IDEM, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism: Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism*, BEAT 14, Frankfurt a.M. 1988.

<sup>45</sup> For a thorough study on the specific subject of prayer in the work of the first century historian, see T. M. JONQUIERE, *Prayer in Josephus, Ancient Judaism and early Christianity* 70, Leiden 2007, esp. 54–55.

<sup>46</sup> *Bell.* 2.132–133: οὐτε δὲ κραυγὴ ποτε τὸν οἶκον οὐτε θόρυβος μιαίνει, τὰς δὲ λαλιάς ἐν τάξει παραχωροῦσιν ἀλλήλοις. καὶ τοῖς ἔξωθεν ὡς μυστήριον τι φρικτὸν ἢ τῶν ἔνδον σιωπῇ καταφαίνεται, τούτου δ’ αἰτίον ἢ διηνεκῆς νήψις καὶ τὸ μετρεῖσθαι παρ’ αὐτοῖς τροφήν καὶ ποτὸν μέχρι κόρου.

it seems that in 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. the connection of silence with prayer or with the sacrificial cult is attested.

In a number of verses in the New Testament, seclusion or remoteness and “elevation” are also mentioned as connected to prayer.<sup>47</sup> Following the norms of his time,<sup>48</sup> Jesus prefers to pray alone (Mark 1,35; 6,46; Matt 14,23) or to go up to the mountain (Mark 6,46; Matt 14,23) in order to pray.<sup>49</sup> In one instance (Acts 10,9) Peter is mentioned as going to the upper room to pray. But, perhaps the most important passage in the New Testament, concerning prayer is in Matthew 6,5–6.<sup>50</sup> One may glean many elements of special interest here. Jesus says that one should enter alone in a room of his house and close the door.<sup>51</sup> Only then one may pray to his heavenly Father “in secret” (ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ). The exhortation to seclusion (to stay away from the many) and the passage from the outer to the inner are easily discerned in this verse. Does it also mean to pray in silence? A positive answer is not more likely than a negative one. In the very next verse (7) Jesus warns against the long prayers of the non-Jews and reminds his disciples that “your Father knows of your needs long before you raise your supplication”.<sup>52</sup> Could then this last verse mean to pray in silence? Again, the answer cannot be clear or definite.

In a seemingly more revealing way, in Luke (18,1) Jesus counsels his disciples to pray constantly<sup>53</sup> and here one may see, though indirectly, the shadow of silent prayer. In a similar way, Paul’s advice for “to pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5,17: ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε), should mean the

<sup>47</sup> For prayer in the times of Jesus, see for example J. D. G. DUNN’s highly informative article Prayer, in: J. B. GREEN/S. MCKNIGHT (Ed.), Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, Downers Grove/Leicester 1992, 617–625 (where bibliography, too); also, see below.

<sup>48</sup> See J. H. CHARLESWORTH, Jewish Prayers in the Times of Jesus, in: D. L. MIGLIORE (Ed.), The Lord’s Prayer: Perspectives for Reclaiming Christian Prayer, Grand Rapids 1993, 36–55; J. JEREMIAS, The Prayers of Jesus, London 1967; R. J. KARRIS, Prayer and the New Testament, New York 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. also Matt 26,39; Luke 4,42; 5,16; 6,12; 9,18; 22,41. In the face of Mark 12,26 and 29–30, where Deut 6,4–5 (part of the *Shema*) is quoted, it has been suggested that Jesus was well-accustomed to the *Eighteen* (Benedictions, the *Shemoneh Esreh*) and the *Shema*; see JEREMIAS, The Prayers (see n. 48), 73–75. The opposite would be much more difficult to prove.

<sup>50</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), treats the passage briefly in p. 16–17.

<sup>51</sup> Matt 6,6: εἴσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου καὶ κλείσας τὴν θύραν σου, compare to 2 Kgs 4,32–33, where Elisha before bringing back to life a child is praying to God alone in a room with closed doors.

<sup>52</sup> v.8: ἴδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὃν χρειαίαν ἔχετε πρὸ τοῦ ὑμᾶς αἰτῆσαι αὐτόν, here brevity of prayer is considered as superior (also cf. Sirach 7,14).

<sup>53</sup> πρὸς τὸ δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι αὐτοῦς.

practice of silent prayer, since it would be impossible for the average person to pray aloud all day long. In all probability, what is meant is the continuous contact of the believer with God in his heart.<sup>54</sup>

In a more impressive way, in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* (39, or *Peter's Martyrion* 10), when Peter is crucified he addresses his thanks to the Lord, “the word of life”, not with his lips, neither with his tongue or with a word, but with the voice of silence, with that voice which is conceived in silence (διὰ συγῆς νοουμένη). And as he continues, he offers thanks “with the silence of a voice (συγῆ φωνῆς).”<sup>55</sup> Another very interesting element here lies in the words the author/editor uses to address Jesus Christ: “O word of life”. The fact that Peter, in his last moments, is depicted as choosing a silent voice – or a voice in silence – as his penultimate offering to the Word (Λόγος) might carry a special significance for the listener/reader. The clearly intended contradistinction of both terms and their contents must elude our attention here. Peter is shown as offering his last breath (voice) in an exclamation of thankful silence towards the fountain of all sound: to the Word himself.<sup>56</sup> It is also of special interest that just in the previous verse Peter asks

What is Christ, if not word, the sound of God?

Τί γάρ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἀλλ’ὁ λόγος, ἦχος τοῦ Θεοῦ;

On the other hand, the passage in Matthew (6,5–6) has a lot to say on the issue of concentration or proper intention. If Jesus would like his disciples to pray in public, yet in a more discreet way, he might have just used a milder description of what was the norm.<sup>57</sup> Instead, he uses three very strong verbs – two of them in the imperative: εἰσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου καὶ κλείσας τὴν θύραν σου, and ρόσευξαι τῷ πατρὶ σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ. The scheme leads to closing out all external distractions, being apart from the many, alone, and focused on one’s relationship with the Father. This means a one-to-one relationship, with all the attention devoted

<sup>54</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 17.

<sup>55</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 18.

<sup>56</sup> The instance bears some resemblance to the well-known tradition concerning R. Akiva during his last moments (see jBerakoth 9,5.14b; bBerakoth 61b). Executed by the Romans, he recites the *Shema* and then he finally grasps the meaning of the verse *be-khol nafsheka* in Deut 6,5; soon after, he “expires in perfection” (FISHBANE, see below, 67), while his martyrology finally comes as “a living exemplification of exegesis” (FISHBANE, see below, 68). See L. FINKELSTEIN, *Akiva: Scholar, Saint and Martyr*, Atheneum/NY 1964, 276–77; on the issue in its wider context in later Judasim, see M. FISHBANE, *The Sanctification of God in Love*, in: IDEM, *The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism*, Seattle/London 1996, 67.

<sup>57</sup> Though Jesus is mentioned as frequent to the synagogue (cf. Mark 1,21.39; 12,9; Matt 4,23; 12,29; Luke 4,16.44; 6,6), he is not to be found praying in the temple, too.

to the task. In a similar way, all the verbs used in the imperative presuppose focused intention, too: προσεύχεσθε, εἷσελθε, πρόσευξε, μὴ βαταλογήσητε, μὴ ὁμοιωθῆτε.

In other instances other teachings of Jesus could be connected with proper intention or focused concentration. Jesus himself connects prayer with faith, especially when prayer is effective. In Matthew 21,21–22<sup>58</sup> the faith he proposes sounds like proper or focused intention: πιστεύοντες λήψετε and then nothing seems impossible (cf. Mark 9,23: πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι). In Mark 11,22–24: πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε, πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν, Jesus teaches his disciples that if they believe with their prayer, if they have the inner certainty that what they pray for will be given to them, then their prayer will be answered.<sup>59</sup> In this verse to pray with faith seems equal to praying with fixed or correct intention, as to the purpose of it.

References to silence and to proper or focused intention are to be found in works of early Christian Fathers and authors, too. In Cyril's of Jerusalem *Procatechesis* 14, while the catechumens were waiting for the pre-baptismal praxis to be completed, they were "praying Psalms or reading in silence"; their lips were moving, but no voice was heard.<sup>60</sup> Clement's seventh chapter of *Stromateis* (VII 7.39.6)<sup>61</sup> deals with the prayers of the devout. He mentions the "whispering", the silence of the lips, in direct contrast with the inward cry.<sup>62</sup> During the practice of prayer uttered in inward silence, all of the human spirit is focused on the task. For Clement, then, true prayer is non-verbal. In a similar way, Tertullian (*On Exhortation to Chastity*, 11) holds that "it is the *pneuma* that conducts the prayer". Cyprian, too, in *De dominica oratione* 4–5 (esp. 5) refers to silent prayer and maintains that Jesus' disciples prayed constantly. God listens to our hearts, he continues, not to our voices, and he refers to the case of Hannah in 1 Sam 1 as an example of "hidden prayer", "silent and modest", while con-

<sup>58</sup> Matt 21,21–22: ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν καὶ μὴ διακριθῆτε, οὐ μόνον τὸ τῆς συκῆς ποιήσετε, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ εἴπητε· ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, γενήσεται· καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσητε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ πιστεύοντες λήψετε.

<sup>59</sup> The power of (selected?) words is also implied here; see Mark 11,12–4 and Matt 21,18–9, where a fig tree is withered with a word. Or, in Mark 4,38–41 (and parallels), where the storm is stilled after a direct order; a similar task is shown to be performed by Hanina ben Dosa (bTaanit 24b) when rain is stopped and started again after a short prayer.

<sup>60</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 19.

<sup>61</sup> *Strom.* VII 7,39,6: ἔστιν οὖν, ὡς εἰπεῖν τολμηρότερον, ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἢ εὐχή· καὶ ψιθυρίζοντες ἄρα μηδὲ τὰ χεῖλη ἀνοίγοντες μετὰ σιγῆς προσλαλῶμεν, ἔνδοθεν κεκραγάμεν· πᾶσαν γὰρ τὴν ἐνδιάθετον ὁμιλίαν ὁ θεὸς ἀδιαλείπτως ἐπαίει.

<sup>62</sup> Also see *Strom.* VII 7,43,5; also, cf. VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 18.

necting with Matthew 6.<sup>63</sup> Instances and elements like all the above mentioned must have played a role in facilitating “the acceptance of silent prayer as a respectable way of communicating with God” in later Christianity.<sup>64</sup>

Now we come to mBerakhot 5,1. The following teaching of the Sages is referring to the recitation of the *Amidah* or the Prayer or the Eighteen Benedictions. Though in general the elements needed are sparsely scattered, the mishnah examined here contains a wealth of information and offers a valuable view in the world of rules that shaped early Rabbinic prayer, while at the same time the presence of much older elements is also attested.

mBer 5,1  
 אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך כבוד ראש.  
 חסידים הראשונים היו שוהים שעה אחת ומתפללים.  
 כדי שיכוננו את לבם למקום.  
 אפילו המלך שואל בשלומו. לא ישיבנו.  
 ואפילו נחש כרוך על עקבו. לא יפסיק:

- A. One stands to pray only in a solemn frame of mind.
- B. The ancient saints used to tarry for one hour, [and only then they would] pray,
- C. so that they could direct their hearts to the Omnipresent.
- D. (While one is praying) even if the king greets him, he may not respond.
- E. And even if a serpent is entwined around his heel, he may not interrupt (his prayer).<sup>65</sup>

Firstly, we should notice that each and every sentence carries a different, yet quite relevant, message for the one who hearkens. While insinuating a restriction at the same time, A refers to the inner attitude, B to the necessity of preparation for achieving the proper degree of concentration, C elucidates the way for achieving what A and B present as prerequisites, and D and E offer extreme examples as to portray the paramount importance of this mitzvah. One may notice that normally B and C should precede A, since preparation comes first and it is through this level that one acquires the “solemn frame of mind” mentioned in A. On the other hand, B, C, D and E seem to expand and explain the instruction in A.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore the points to focus on in this mishnah are the following: the instruction to “pray only with a solemn frame of mind”, the reference to the habit (they “used to”) of the “ancient saints” to “tarry for one hour” in order to “first direct their hearts”; and finally, the great seriousness of this

<sup>63</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 19.

<sup>64</sup> VAN DER HORST, Silent Prayer (see n. 9), 17.

<sup>65</sup> See J. NEUSNER’s translation in: *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, New Haven/London 1988, 8; also, T. ZAHAVY, *The Mishnaic law of blessings and prayers: tractate Berakhot*, Atlanta 1987, 65–68.

<sup>66</sup> See ZAHAVY, *The Mishnaic Law* (see n. 65), 66.