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978-0-521-48341-4 - Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish  
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Stefan C. Relf

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Are the origins of the synagogue to be sought in a reaction to the centralisation of worship in Judaism, or in a wider context? When did prayer become central to Jews and how are the conflicts and tensions of the talmudic period reflected in the history of its liturgy? Did Christianity and Islam have something to do with the emergence of the first Jewish prayer codices? Can one identify in today's Hebrew prayers the influences of the massive demographical changes in the distribution of the Jewish people and of the establishment of the State of Israel? In this first attempt for almost three quarters of a century to provide a scientific overview of Jewish liturgical history, the latest scholarship and the most original sources are carefully identified and exploited. The result is a book that will prove attractive to both scholarly and lay opinion, and which makes liturgical research accessible to modern readers.

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# JUDAISM AND HEBREW PRAYER

*New perspectives on Jewish liturgical history*

STEFAN C. REIF

*Director of Genizah Research and Head  
of the Oriental Division of the University Library,  
University of Cambridge*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
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לזכר נשמת אבי מורי

ר' פינחס ב"ר צבי אריה הכהן

נולד בקאלוש גליציה תרע"א

נלב"ע בסורונסו קנדה תשמ"ט

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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## *Preface*

Of the various books and numerous articles that have appeared over my name in the course of twenty-three years of scholarly publication, none has given me so much satisfaction in its completion as the volume here being prefaced. It has been my ambition for a number of years to offer such an overview of Jewish liturgical history and, given my many other commitments, it has been no easy task to find the time and energy to effect its realisation. Now that the final touches have been put to the text submitted to Cambridge University Press a few months ago, I can only express the hope that the study proves as useful and acceptable to the student, non-specialist and scholar in its reading as it has proved absorbing and challenging to me in its composition.

Some earlier versions of sections of the book have appeared in a number of publications and I welcome the opportunity of thanking the editors and publishers for kindly granting their permission to incorporate that material here. The first half of chapter 1 appeared as 'Jewish Liturgical Research: Past, Present and Future' in the *Journal of Jewish Studies* 34 (1983), pp. 161–70, edited by Geza Vermes and published by the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies; an earlier draft of chapter 3 was submitted to Cambridge University Press in December 1986 and will appear in the third volume of the *Cambridge History of Judaism* edited by Louis Finkelstein and W. D. Davies; a substantial proportion of chapter 4 was published in *Studia Liturgica* 15 (1982–3), pp. 188–206, now edited by Paul Bradshaw for Societas Liturgica. Paul also

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included an earlier version of chapter 5 as ‘The Early History of Jewish Worship’ in *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship* edited by him and Larry Hoffman for the University of Notre Dame Press (Notre Dame and London, 1991), pp. 109–36; and a small part of chapter 6 was delivered as a lecture at a congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies held in Troyes in 1990 and is scheduled to appear in its proceedings being edited by Gabrielle Sed-Rajna of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris.

I am also indebted to a number of institutions and scholars whose assistance has been invaluable but who are of course in no way responsible for the manner in which I have made use of it. The Lady Davis Fellowship Trust in Jerusalem generously made it possible for me to spend a semester as a visiting professor at the Hebrew University in 1989, where I taught an MA course in Jewish liturgy and benefited from the Jewish National and University Library, from the responses of my students, and from discussions with my friends Ezra Fleischer, Menahem Ben-Sasson, Robert Brody and Tsvi Groner. I lectured to the evening MA class at Jews’ College in London for three terms in 1990–1 and gained important insights during these sessions; I was also assisted by academic and library staff there and in Leo Baeck College, the British Library, the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds, and the John Rylands Research Institute at the University of Manchester. My colleagues here in Cambridge, in the University Library (particularly in the Genizah Research Unit) and in the Faculties of Oriental Studies and Divinity (especially the Old Testament Seminar), have generously provided comments and information, and specific enquiries have met with the kind responses of Robert Attal of the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, Eleazar Gutwirth of Tel Aviv University, Chaim Milikowsky of Bar-Ilan University, Philip Scheim of Toronto, and Louis Jacobs, Abraham Levy, Raphael Loewe, Naftali Loewenthal and Michael Weitzman in London. Warm thanks are also due to my secretary, Sandra McGivern, for typing daunting scripts, and to the staff at Cambridge University Press, especially the religious studies editor, Alex Wright, and my copy-editor,



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Glennis Foote, for applying their various skills to the production of the volume.

The original inspiration for my interest in the subject of Jewish liturgy came from an outstanding scholar and teacher, Naphtali Wieder, while the everyday inspiration for all my efforts comes from my closest colleague, collaborator and friend, my wife Shulie. My late father would have taken great pleasure in handling this volume and it is fitting that it should be dedicated to his memory and, through him, to the memory of the Eastern European world in which our forbears were raised. I sign this preface on a date which serves as the *yahrzeit* for a number of them.

14 Menaḥem Av 5752 = 13 August 1992

S.C.R.