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Praying the *Amidah* as an Extension of the Eucharist
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Theological and historical study and ritual practice for me have always been inseparable from personal experience. My experience has been shaped by study and practice, but the questions I have taken up academically and the ritual I have adopted in daily life have also been guided by my experience. Nowhere has this process been more evident than in my learning to *daven* as a disciple of Yeshua and to participate in the Eucharist as a faithful Jew.

Raised as a Conservative Jew, I came to believe in Yeshua at the age of nineteen. Encouraged by my first spiritual mentors to deepen my life as a Jew, I began attending Shabbat services at my local synagogue. Though my Hebrew was poor and my knowledge of the liturgy almost non-existent, I found myself transported into another world. I loved poetry and music, and the language and melodies of the liturgy worked their magic upon me as a willing subject. I knew I was in the midst of something ancient, something powerful, and my ignorance of its mechanics only heightened its mysterious allure.

However, the sense of mystery transcended questions of liturgical competence – for what most astonished me was my vivid awareness of the presence of Yeshua in the midst of the synagogue worship. I knew he was there, and I experienced his presence as vividly in this context as I did when praying with Christians. I realized that what was evident to me, a Hebrew-challenged youth unschooled in rabbinic literature and confused by the apparent chaos of the Siddur, was opaque to my more mature, knowledgeable, and skilled fellow Jews who *davened* at my side. Here was the true mystery of the synagogue liturgy which challenged me in those early years, and which would stimulate much of my theological scholarship and religious practice for the next four decades. How could I encounter Yeshua so powerfully in a place where his name was unmentionable?

In the same period I also encountered Yeshua in liturgical worship among Christians. I had friends who attended a spiritually vibrant Lutheran church, and I would sometimes join them on a Sunday morning. I was deeply moved by their reverent celebration of the Eucharist, which included ancient prayers which (I soon learned) resembled those used by Episcopalian, Catholic, and eastern Orthodox Churches. As my experience of these related liturgies expanded, I came to see in them an awareness of the cosmic and historical dimensions of the people of God and of the redemptive work of Christ that was lacking among my low-church evangelical friends (whose faithful lives inspired me in other ways). Yet, something was missing, at least in the verbal content of the service -- namely, an explicit recognition of the enduring significance of the Jewish people in the plan of God. I sensed the presence of Israel in the Christian liturgy, but only in an implicit and veiled mode. The Jewish people seemed to be as much a mystery to the Church as Yeshua was to the Jewish people.

These liturgical experiences of Jewish and Christian worship were complemented and heightened by my experience of charismatic prayer. Whether participating in a charismatic prayer meeting with a thousand worshipers or standing alone in a prayer room with my guitar, I knew that I was in the presence of the Holy and Blessed One, surrounded by myriads of angels,

and given intimate access to the divine throne through the blood of the Lamb who was slain. Imagery from the book of Revelation shaped my inner vision of what was truly happening when I lifted my voice to heaven. I soon realized that this imagery was itself a reflection of Jewish worship at the Jerusalem Temple before its destruction in 70 CE, and in this way the Torah's blueprint for Israel's worship, and the Psalms that bore witness to that worship, assumed tremendous importance in my life.

I had experienced all of this before I had undertaken any serious study of Jewish and Christian worship. Challenged by these experiences, I opened my books and began to learn. I revived my Hebrew language skills, and studied the structure, history, and meaning of traditional Jewish prayer. Similarly, I took up the topic of the Eucharist, and probed its structure, history, and meaning. I was surprised at the way these two projects continually overlapped, and shed light on one another. I was also surprised at how they both carried me back to the reality which was antecedent to each of them: Israel's worship at the Jerusalem Temple. In what follows I will summarize what I learned, and the impact it has had on my life.

Sacrifice, Prayer, and the Jerusalem Temple

The offering of sacrifice at the Jerusalem Temple was a physically demanding activity, and the Hebrew term that describes this activity – *avodah* (“work,” “service”) – was appropriately chosen. Given the bodily exertion required, it is natural that the Bible, Second-Temple Jewish literature, and rabbinic texts have little to say about prayers recited by the priests as they performed the sacrificial ritual. The priests were occupied with much doing, but little talking. This does not mean that sacrifice was disconnected from verbal worship. While the priests were offering sacrifice, Levitical musicians sang psalms with instrumental accompaniment (1 Chronicles 15:16-22; 16:4-5; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14; 7:4-6). The priests also concluded the sacrificial ritual of the daily offering (the *tamid*) by blessing the people (Numbers 6:22-27; Leviticus 9:22-24). This act of “putting the Name upon the Israelites” (Numbers 6:27) is the climax of the sacrifice, representing and effecting the reality that the entire ritual was intended to accomplish.

The intimate connection between prayer and the Temple service is seen most clearly at the dedication of Solomon's Temple. The King “stood before the altar of Adonai in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven” (1 Kings 8:22). Central to the petition that follows is this request:

“Have regard to your servant's prayer and his plea, Adonai my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you said, “My name shall be there”, that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays towards this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive.” (1 Kings 8:28-30)

Solomon asks that God would answer prayer that is directed “toward this place.” As Solomon continues, it becomes evident that this phrase refers not only to those who journey to Jerusalem

and pray in the Temple courts, but also to those in distant regions who pray “toward their land, which you gave to their ancestors, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your Name” (1 Kings 8:48). Solomon asks that this particular geographical location on earth would be so linked to God’s heavenly dwelling place that prayers offered towards the earthly Temple would be received with favor in the heavenly Temple. This provides the biblical basis for Jews praying towards Jerusalem, which is attested already in the book of Daniel (6:10). It also explains why Isaiah can refer to the Temple as “my house of prayer” in the same verse in which he speaks of sacrifices being presented on the altar (Isaiah 56:7): the prayers of those who look to Jerusalem are mingled with the sacrifices offered by the priests, and received together by God in the heavenly sanctuary. Prayer directed to the Jerusalem Temple is counted as incense and as an evening sacrifice (Psalm 141:2) because it is associated with the literal incense and sacrifice offered in that very place.

While the priests were apparently silent in the act of offering sacrifice, the Mishnah tells us that they also offered prayer in connection with the sacrifice – and, if this tradition is historically credible, their sacrificial prayers became the basis of the post-70 Jewish liturgy. The Mishnah records the order and details of the daily *tamid* offering, presented each morning to God in fulfillment of Israel’s corporate duty of worship (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:2-8). The priests slaughtered the designated lamb, poured its blood on the sides and base of the altar, and skinned and dismembered its carcass (m. Tamid 4:1-2). At this point they did something surprising. Instead of completing the sacrifice by taking the pieces up to the altar to be burned, the priests instead deposited the pieces on the ramp that led up to the altar and departed from the site of sacrifice to gather in a special hall in the Temple precincts that was used by the Great Sanhedrin (m. Tamid 4:3). Here they conducted a short prayer service, described by the Mishnah in this way:

The official said to them: Bless one blessing! And they blessed, recited the Ten Commandments, *Shema*,¹ *Vehaya Im Shamo’a*,² *Vayomer*.³ They blessed the people three blessings: *Emet Veyatziv*, and *Avodah*, and the blessing of the *kohanim*. And on Shabbat they would add one blessing for the outgoing *mishmar*.⁴ [m. Tamid 5:1; trans. Pinhas Kehati]

The priests made a blessing before reciting four paradigmatic paragraphs from the Torah which represented the Torah in its entirety. They then acknowledged the truth of what they had recited (*Emet Veyatziv*), and asked that God might look with favor on the *tamid* sacrifice which they were in the midst of offering (*Avodah*) and give *shalom* to the people of Israel (“the blessing of the *kohanim*”). Upon concluding this prayer service, the priests returned to the Temple courts, and completed the morning sacrifice by placing the pieces of the lamb on the bronze altar, by burning incense at the golden altar in the holy place, and by pronouncing the Aaronic benediction.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-9, the first paragraph of the Shema.

² Deuteronomy 11:13-21, the second paragraph of the Shema.

³ Numbers 15:37-41, the third paragraph of the Shema.

⁴ The division of priests who served in the Temple in any given one-week period. There were twenty-four such divisions. See Luke 1:5, 8.

The last two “blessings” mentioned in the Mishnah text are of special importance to our purpose here. The first of the two – *Avodah* (“Temple Worship”) – is an early version of what is now the seventeenth blessing in the daily Amidah.⁵ In its current form it as follows:

Find favor (*retzay*), Adonai our God, in your People Israel and in their prayer. And return the service-of-worship (*avodah*) to the Holy of Holies (*devir*). In favor (*be-ratzon*) accept (*tekabel*) the fire-offerings (*ishay*) of Israel and their prayers in love. And may the service-of-worship (*avodah*) of Israel your People always (*tamid*) be favorable (*ratzon*). May our eyes behold your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are You, Adonai, who restores his divine presence (*Shechinah*) to Zion. (Hoffman, 154, 157 – with one word changed [the first “avodah” is rendered as “sacrifice” in Hoffman]).

This is a prayer for the restoration of the Temple. As seen in the technical terms employed (appearing above in transliteration), the prayer is replete with priestly language related to sacrificial worship. It is generally recognized that our current version of this prayer derives from an earlier one used in the priestly prayer service described in the Mishnah, which consisted of a request that Israel’s sacrifices be accepted. Lawrence Hoffman argues for the following reconstruction of that original prayer:

Find favor (*retzay*), Adonai our God, in your People Israel. And the fire-offerings (*ishay*) of Israel, accept (*tekabel*) favorably (*be-ratzon*). And may you find favor (*ratzon*) in the *tamid*, the sacrificial service (*avodah*) of Israel, your People. Blessed are You, Adonai, whom we will serve (*na’avod*) with awe.⁶

The final prayer recited by the priests – referred to in the Mishnah as “the blessing of the *kohanim*” – corresponds to the final blessing in every Amidah. It consists of a prayer that all the good things included in the Aaronic benediction (Numbers 6:24-26) would be bestowed upon Israel. Thus, these two final prayers are in reality two aspects of one petition: that God would accept Israel’s sacrificial worship, and demonstrate that acceptance by bestowing upon them the blessing of *shalom*.

The priests thus interrupted their sacrificial action by retreating to a private place to acknowledge the gift of the Torah and to pray for the acceptance of their sacrifice. They then returned to the Temple courts, completed the sacrifice, and blessed the people. While the priestly sacrifice and the priestly prayer maintain their distinct identities in this ritual, they are bound together so tightly as to be inextricable.

The Temple service – both of sacrifice and of prayer – was the special business of the priests and Levites. The priests and Levites were divided into twenty-four groups, each of which was called a *mishmar* (literally, a “guard”).⁷ A priestly *mishmar* would officiate in the Temple for one week at a time, and then be relieved by the next *mishmar*. Apart from the festivals, they

⁵ In the Amidah for Shabbat and holidays, *Avodah* is the fifth blessing. In every Amidah it takes the position two blessings before the final blessing (i.e., the seventeenth of nineteen blessings, or the fifth of seven blessings).

⁶ Hoffman, 162. The final line of the blessing is derived from a Genizah fragment, and was used in the old *Union Prayer Book* of the Reform movement (Hoffman, 163).

⁷ For the twenty-four courses, see 1 Chronicles 23:3-4.

would therefore serve two weeks per year. While the priests and Levites had primary responsibility for Israel's corporate worship, the Mishnah informs us that the participation of lay Israelites was also required (m. Ta'anit 4:2). Ordinary Jews in the Land of Israel were thus similarly divided into twenty-four groups corresponding to the priestly *mishmarot*. Together with the priests and Levites of a particular *mishmar*, these lay Israelites constituted what was called a *ma'amad* – a representative body which “stood” before God on behalf of the entire people. Some members of each lay *ma'amad* would go to Jerusalem with their corresponding *mishmar*, and attend the sacrificial service. However, most of the members would remain in their towns and villages during the week and gather daily – at the times when the sacrifices were offered in the Temple -- to pray, fast, and read from the Torah. Thus, for two weeks per year ordinary Israelites had a “priestly” obligation to stand before God in prayer and study on behalf of the entire people, and to participate – onsite or at a distance – in the sacrificial service of the Temple.

The priestly prayer-service at the hall of the Sanhedrin and the institution of the lay *ma'amad* together establish the groundwork for what will become the statutory pattern of Jewish prayer after the destruction of the Temple. But even before that decisive event, many Jews and god-fearing gentiles expressed their devotion to God by praying every day (and not just during their *ma'amad* weeks) at or towards the Temple at the time of sacrifice. Daniel 6:10 implies this -- even while describing a period when the Temple was not standing. But the most explicit historical witness to this custom is the author of Luke-Acts. Luke 1 tells how Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, fulfilled the priestly function of offering the daily incense. In passing, verse 10 states: “Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside.” While this could simply refer to the *ma'amad*, an even more explicit text in Acts suggests that it also included pious lay Israelites who voluntarily joined their prayers to the priestly service. Acts 3:1 states: “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.” It is striking that this is called “the hour of prayer” – for it is actually the hour of sacrifice. Obviously, sacrifice and prayer were already seen as inseparable, and dedicated Jews who lived in Jerusalem made it their practice to enter the Temple precincts at the time of sacrifice in order to pray that Israel's sacrifice would be acceptable and that God would bless his people with *shalom*.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the texts from Luke-Acts on this subject concerns Cornelius, the Roman centurion. This man is a gentile who is devoted to the God of Israel. He lives not in Jerusalem but in Caesarea, on the coast of the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, at three o'clock in the afternoon he pauses from work and turns to prayer (Acts 10:3, 30). He thus joins his prayer to those of pious Jews in Jerusalem and around the world, and identifies personally with the sacrifice being offered by the priests in the Jerusalem Temple at that very hour. In response to this man's piety, an angel appears to him, saying, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God” (10:4). This is the language of sacrifice: the prayer of Cornelius, empowered by *tzedakah* and sincere piety, has arisen to God along with the smoke from the altar in Jerusalem, and has been accepted. Often unnoticed but just as important, Peter also addresses the household of Cornelius at the hour of sacrifice (10:30).⁸ The gift of the Spirit to Cornelius and his household is thus like the fire from heaven that consumed the sacrifice at the consecration of the tabernacle (Leviticus 9:24), and like the cloud of glory that filled the Temple

⁸ This further suggests that the time of the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost (nine o'clock, the hour of the morning sacrifice) has a similar significance (Acts 2:15).

of Solomon at its consecration (1 Kings 8:10). The fact that this all takes place at the same hour as the sacrifice in Jerusalem underlines a basic feature of the message of Luke-Acts: the Yeshua-movement confirms and fulfills Israel's corporate worship.

Later Jewish Liturgy & the Temple

After the destruction of the Temple, the sages of the rabbinic tradition fashioned from these long-established customs a new framework of statutory prayer in which every Jewish male is obligated to fulfill the duties that had previously been undertaken primarily by the priests. This framework includes the twice-daily reading of the Shema, which (as we have seen) the priests had recited in a liturgy that both interrupted and interpreted the sacrificial service of the Temple. However, an even greater connection to the Temple service exists for the second core unit of the daily liturgy, the *Tefillah* (prayer). On weekdays, this unit consists of nineteen blessings, which are eschatologically oriented petitions couched in the language of thanksgiving. As seen above, the seventeenth and the nineteenth of these blessings derive from the priestly liturgy in the Temple. When the *Tefillah* is recited aloud in a congregational setting, the *birkat kohanim* (Aaronic benediction) is chanted by the prayer leader before the nineteenth blessing. Ending the *Tefillah* in the same way as the sacrificial service of the Temple underlines the intimate bond that exist between the two.

This bond is emphasized in many other ways as well. First, the *Tefillah* is to be prayed only in a standing posture, and the importance of this posture is also expressed in another common name for the unit – the *Amidah* (the “standing” prayer). Standing is the posture of priestly service (e.g., Psalm 134:1). In contrast, the Shema may be recited in any posture, and the posture of sitting eventually became one of its characteristic features. Second, the *Tefillah* is recited facing Jerusalem, and, if in Jerusalem, facing the Temple mount. Third, the afternoon service in which the *Tefillah* is the exclusive centerpiece (since the Shema is read only in the morning and evening services) is called *Minchah*, a term which means “sacrificial gift” and which is associated in the Torah especially with the grain offering (Leviticus 2:1-16). Fourth, the hour of the recitation of the *Tefillah* is ordered according to the timing of the Temple sacrifices (b. Berachot 26b). Just as we see Peter, John, and Cornelius praying at the hour of the afternoon sacrifice, so the *Minchah* service instituted by the sages is prayed at the hour of the afternoon sacrifice. Fifth, on special days in the calendar when an additional daily offering had been presented in the Temple (the *Musaf* offering), the sages established the requirement of reciting an additional *Tefillah* which would include the verses in Numbers 28-29 that described the additional offering for that day. This special *Tefillah* is called *Musaf* – the same name as the additional offering in the Temple.

A final sign of the bond linking the *Tefillah* to Temple sacrifice will be of particular importance for our discussion of the Eucharist (see below). As already noted, the seventeenth blessing of the daily *Tefillah* originated in the pre-70 priestly liturgy as a prayer that the Temple sacrifices would be acceptable to God, and in its post-70 form consists of a prayer for the restoration of the Temple service. On Torah-mandated holidays other than Shabbat a special petition (*ya'aleh veyavo*) is inserted within this blessing. The key word in this insertion is *zikaron* (remembrance, memorial, *anamnesis*). The prayer asks God to remember the Messiah,

the patriarchs, the city of Jerusalem, and the people of Israel, and by virtue of this remembrance to have mercy and to bring redemption. It is often taken to correspond to the blowing of the priestly trumpets that accompanied the special offerings presented during the holidays, and which were “to serve for remembrance (*le-zikkaron*) on your behalf before Adonai” (Numbers 10:10). The opening words of the insertion (*ya’aleh veyavo* – “may it [our remembrance] **ascend** and **come** [before you]”) employ the image of the smoke rising from the Temple altars to speak of God’s remembering Israel and the divine promises which Israel had received. This connection between prayer, sacrifice, memorial, and ascent is identical to that seen above in the angelic response to the pious life of Cornelius: “Your *prayers* and your alms have *ascended* as a *memorial* before God” (Acts 10:4)

In the liturgy which became normative for faithful Jews, the Temple service endured as the institution that defined Israel’s worship responsibilities. The Temple as a physical structure had been destroyed, yet it lived on in the Jewish imagination, and its memory continues to shape the spiritual life of the Jewish people. On a daily basis, it does so especially through the *Tefillah*, Israel’s priestly prayer, in which Jews pray for the full restoration of Israel and the coming of God’s universal reign.

The Eucharist & the Sacrifice of the Messiah

I will be much briefer in summarizing what I learned about the Eucharist, since my main focus in this presentation is on how I have come to engage in traditional Jewish prayer as a follower of Yeshua. But this material is nonetheless crucial, as what I learned about the Eucharist played an important role in shaping my perspective on Jewish prayer.

Just as the Eucharist was instituted in the context of a meal, so it was celebrated among the first followers of Yeshua in the context of a meal. This is evident from 1 Corinthians 11, where Paul seeks to correct Eucharistic abuses related to conduct at a communal meal (see verses 20-22). Paul’s exhortation in the previous chapter indicates that this meal was viewed as sacrificial in character.

...flee from the worship of idols...The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:14-21)

Paul compares three ritual actions: (1) the Eucharist; (2) the partaking of meat sacrificed at the Temple in Jerusalem; and (3) participation in a sacrificial meal at a pagan temple. Mention of the second ritual action is necessary to establish the meaning of the first, since it is not self-evident that the Eucharist is a sacrificial meal: the Eucharist is not conducted in a temple building, no

animal is slain, no blood poured out, no parts burned on an altar. Yet, for Paul, and presumably for his audience, it is as much a sacrificial banquet as any conducted in a more obviously sacrificial context. This is crucial for the argument of 1 Corinthians 10, since Paul uses the sacrificial character of the Eucharist as the basis for his argument against partaking of pagan sacrifices. In summary, he cites the example of Jewish Temple sacrifice to explain the meaning of Eucharistic communion, and then cites the Eucharist (understood as a sacrificial banquet) as a reason for avoiding pagan sacrificial banquets. (It is worth noting that the logic of the argument suggests that Paul has a positive view of the sacrificial worship of the Jerusalem Temple – since he cites it as an explanatory parallel to the Eucharist.)

Reflecting this original table context, the Eucharistic prayers in the Didache appear to draw from ancient forms of the Jewish grace after meals (*birkat hamazon*). However, at a relatively early period in the Yeshua-movement a shift occurred in which the Eucharist began to be celebrated outside the setting of a communal meal. At this point the synagogue liturgy provided a closer analogue to Eucharistic worship than did table prayers, and the Eucharistic liturgies from the patristic period show a continuing readiness to draw upon existing Jewish models. The opening of the classic Eucharistic prayer (which gives thanks for creation, rehearses the angelic sanctification of the divine Name of Isaiah 6 [the *sanctus*], and praises God for redemptive history) has much in common with the two synagogue blessings which precede the Shema. After the words of institution are recounted and the death and resurrection of Yeshua proclaimed so that God might “remember” the sacrifice of his Son, prayers of petition are offered which culminate in the prayer for the coming of the kingdom and which are summed up in the Lord’s Prayer. These prayers of petition likely derive from early versions of the *Tefillah*, with the proclamation of Yeshua’s redeeming act and the call for its remembrance corresponding to the opening two blessings of the *Tefillah* which provide the basis for the petitions that follow.⁹ The Eucharistic prayer of remembrance (*anamnesis*) also corresponds to the *ya’aleh veyavo* prayer which is inserted near the end of the *Tefillah* on biblically-mandated holidays other than Shabbat.

By drawing upon a Jewish prayer which was itself rooted in the priestly worship of the Temple, the early Yeshua-community merely elaborated the sacrificial significance of the Eucharist which was already presumed by the Apostle Paul. The Eucharist is both a sacrificial banquet in which the followers of Yeshua confirm and strengthen their baptismal union with the Messiah, and a sacrificial prayer in which they beseech God to look upon and remember the self-offering of the Messiah and (as a consequence) to establish the messianic kingdom in its fullness. The place where the Eucharist is offered becomes an earthly Temple, and is joined to the heavenly Temple where the glorified High Priest now stands before God as the Lamb who was slain (Revelation 5).

While the Jerusalem Temple still stood, the followers of Yeshua do not appear to have seen this Eucharistic sacrifice as negating those offerings presented in obedience to the commandments of the Torah. The self-offering of Yeshua realizes the true intent of Torah-ordained sacrifice, but – at least for a time – those sacrifices remained. Likewise, the Eucharistic prayer realizes the true intent of the priestly petitions of the *Tefillah*. Does it thereby replace the *Tefillah* of Israel? If the Church itself were seen as a fulfilled Israel which replaced genealogical

⁹ The first blessing addresses God as the one who “remembers (*zocher*) the loyal deeds of the patriarchs” (such as the binding of Isaac), and the second praises God as the One who demonstrates fidelity to Israel by raising the dead.

Israel, then the Eucharist could be understood likewise as both transcending Israel's *Tefillah* and rendering it obsolete. But if genealogical Israel retains its priestly dignity, it must also have divinely sanctioned instruments for performing its priestly duties. I would contend that the *Tefillah* is a preeminent example of such an instrument.

Praying the Amidah in Yeshua

I will now turn from the historical and theological plane to the level of my own personal experience. As I began to incorporate the Jewish liturgy into my daily practice, I discovered four aspects of the *Amidah* which provided an essential supplement to my ecclesial Eucharistic experience. First, I was praying the same prayers at the same time as observant Jews throughout the world, in the same way as my fellow Jews had been doing since the days of the Temple. I thus both felt and expressed the covenantal bond that united me to my fellow Jews everywhere, past, present, and future. Second, I was reciting prayers which originated in the Temple liturgy, and doing so at the same times as the daily sacrifices had been offered when the Temple stood. I thus sensed that I was joining the ranks of those Jews in every generation who acknowledged Israel's priestly duties ordained by the Torah and who sought to fulfill those duties faithfully. Third, I prayed facing Jerusalem, and thus recognized the enduring significance of the Land of Israel and its covenantal connection to the Jewish people. It was as if I were standing at the *Kotel* itself, even though I prayed in a distant land. I faced the holy mount as Solomon had ordained, as Daniel had modeled in exile, and as Jews have done ever since. Fourth and finally, the focus of my prayer was the full realization of God's promises to genealogical Israel – with the understanding implicit in the prayers themselves that Israel's redemption would signal and initiate the redemption of the entire world. The centrality of the Jewish people in the divine plan – which was absent in all traditional Eucharistic liturgies – was here undeniable.

While davening the *Tefillah* thus opened new doors to me, it was not the *Tefillah* alone which did so: it was the *Tefillah* prayed in light of the Eucharist, or rather *as an extension of the Eucharist*. In the Eucharist the heavenly high priest – who is the high priest of all by virtue of being the messianic high priest of Israel – offers himself to the Father with, in, and through his Body, the Church. On the merit of Messiah's once-for-all sacrifice, sacramentally re-presented before God, the Body of Messiah prays for the present manifestation and final coming of the kingdom. This Eucharistic reality has formed my life of Jewish prayer.

Just as Israel's prayer was an essential component of the priestly sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, so Israel's prayer today is likewise an essential component in the heavenly liturgy in which the ascended Messiah is both the priestly officiant and the once-for-all offering. Yet, while essential, prayer was always a secondary accompaniment to the priestly sacrifice, and only became a substitute for it in exceptional circumstances. In the same way, it is Yeshua's sacrifice -- and also Yeshua's own prayer -- which remain primary, and which impart meaning to Israel's prayer.

When I stand to recite the *Amidah*, I first call to mind the fact that Yeshua stands before the Father as heavenly high priest, and that Israel's priestly service is acceptable to God only in and through its Messiah. I then pray the first blessing of the *Amidah* which praises the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, who remembers the loyal deeds of my ancestors, and who brings a messianic redeemer to their children's children for His Name's sake. In doing so, I implicitly praise God as the one who remembers the loyal deeds of that messianic redeemer, especially his atoning death which realized the ultimate intent of the binding of Isaac. This is the basis for all the prayers of the *Tefillah* which follow.

I proceed to the second blessing of the *Amidah* which praises God as the one who demonstrates fidelity to His promises and His unique power by raising the dead. While most of my fellow Jews recite this blessing in hope of a future divine action that has not yet begun, I pray these words believing that God's fidelity and power have already been demonstrated in the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, who is the first-fruits of those who sleep. For me, this second blessing is – like the first – a remembrance before God of what has already been accomplished, as the basis of a petition that God bring to completion the good work that has begun.

I then pray the third *blessing* of the *Amidah*, which proclaims the holiness of God and the daily praise of the Holy One offered by the angels in the heavenly courts. If the first blessing implicitly pointed to the *death* of Yeshua which God “remembers” along with the binding of Isaac, and the second alludes to his *resurrection*, this third blessing raises our eyes to heaven to behold the *ascended* Messiah who intercedes for us at God's right hand. We have moved from the depths to the heights, and now – as those united to the ascended Messiah – we are ready to present our petitions for the redemption of Israel.

In this manner – with, in, and through the crucified, risen, and ascended Messiah -- I pray through all of the blessings of the *Tefillah*, as an extension of the Eucharistic prayer for the coming of the kingdom. Of course, this is not the intentionality of most Jews who pray this prayer. Almost all pray it without conscious awareness of Yeshua's redemptive work or heavenly mediation. Nevertheless, I am convinced – both through experience and through theological reflection – that Yeshua mediates their recitation of the *Amidah* just as he does mine. His effective action may be limited by our ignorance, but it cannot be utterly thwarted.

My experiences of Jewish liturgical prayer, Christian liturgical prayer, and charismatic prayer have thus all come together in my experience of praying the *Tefillah*, like three separate lines meeting at a common central point. Through praying the *Tefillah* as an extension of the Eucharist I have encountered Israel (and the Church), Yeshua, and the heavenly Temple as three inseparable realities, all of which point forward to the healing of the nations and the redemption of the cosmos. My experience has guided my study, and the results of my study have also shaped my experience.

My hope is that in the coming years more of my fellow Jewish disciples of Yeshua – whether in the Messianic Jewish movement or in the Churches – would have a similar experience of Jewish prayer, and would incorporate it as part of their daily practice. Perhaps this will prepare the way for more of our fellow Jews who are not yet disciples of Yeshua to see him as he really is, so that all Israel might pray the *Amidah* as an extension of the Eucharist, and celebrate the Eucharist as the realization of the *Amidah*. And perhaps that, in turn, will prepare the way for God's final answer to the Eucharistic prayer for the kingdom.

Maranatha – Come Lord Yeshua!