

TRANSLATION

PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM  
AT THE TIME OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

by

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*The Temple's Significance in the Life of the People*

When the Jewish people returned to Zion from the Babylonian captivity, their principal object was to restore the Temple and its worship. Cyrus's proclamation, recorded in the Books of Ezra and Chronicles, limited their aim to reconstructing the House of God (Ezra 1:2; cf. 2 Chron. 36:23). However, the distinctive character of the Second Temple in comparison with the first one is evident right from the start

At the time of the First Temple, a number of authorities had established themselves in the lives and minds of the people. These were the kingdom, the prophets, the Temple and the priesthood. Not only were these authorities independent of one another, both in their history and their development, they were also very different from one another in practice as well as in theory. The Temple was not dependent for its authority on the king or the prophets, and neither were these in any way dependent on the Temple and its priests. The king was occasionally anointed by the high priest in the Temple but his office was not bestowed upon him by the priesthood. The prophets neither received their inspiration in the Temple nor derived their authority from it.

The First Temple was not the principal focus of prayer, neither was it the only place of worship. The special quality of the Temple as the sole place of worship developed with the passing of time. All in all, it can be said that the First Temple had a place in the lives of the people but it did not encompass all areas of their spiritual and practical life. All this changed at the time of the Second Temple. The first people to return settled around the altar and the Temple. As time passed, and perhaps even from the very beginning, worship in the form of sacrifice was again not the only expression of their religious and social life. The emphasis shifted towards Torah, the synagogue and the House of Study. In their thoughts and goals the people were concerned with seeking patterns and forms of life related to the doing of good. Already in the saying of Simon Ha-Tzaddik we find: By

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three things the world is sustained, by the Torah, by the Temple-service and by deeds of loving-kindness" (*Avot* 1, 2). For most of the time, leadership and the administration of justice were not the sole province of the priests. Those institutions, as well as the basic concepts of religious, social and national thought, were all connected with the life of the Temple and through it spread out and took root among the people. The city of Jerusalem with the Temple at its centre was not only the cradle of all social and other activities, it was the actual theatre and setting for those activities, even though by their nature they diminished and restricted the authority of the Temple and its priesthood. The gatherings of the people for public readings of the Torah in the Temple courtyard probably marked the beginnings of the synagogue. These gatherings are first mentioned at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In later generations we find synagogues and houses of Torah-study and prayer within the courts of the Temple. The prayers were not said instead of sacrifices, but were considered to be "purer" than sacrifices, and prayers were said at the times of sacrifice and the people would turn towards Jerusalem and the Temple. A number of other basic liturgical elements of the synagogue owe their origin to the service in the Temple. The priests' blessing of the people, the waving of the *lulav*, the blowing of the *shofar* and the *Hallel* prayer first appear in connection with the altar service and only at a later date spread to the synagogue in Israel as well as in the diaspora. Most of these traditions and customs spread to the synagogues during the Temple period.

These activities demonstrate the meaning of the Second Temple as a focal point in the lives of the people and are further illustrated by the form of worship and by the people's relationship to the Temple and its courtyards.

At the time of the Second Temple all priests and all levites who belonged to the tribe of Levi served in the Temple. Service in the Temple was divided into twenty-four groups. Each group served for one week and travelled up to the Temple twice a year for this purpose (cf. 1 Chron. 24ff. and Neh. 10, 12:1-7). Any money needed for the sacrifices or for the Temple was not paid by the king, ruler or the heads of the people, but was taken from the half-shekels contributed by all the people. In this connection we read that there were special representatives of the people chosen according to districts who dealt with the sacrifices, and this expressed the fact that the daily sacrifice was performed on behalf of all the people.

The Temple was the permanent seat of the Sanhedrin, which carried authority only when sitting in the Temple. At the time of the Second Temple, the Sanhedrin functioned not only as a legislative and judiciary authority, it was also an academic institute, a House of Study (*Beit-Midrash*). On Sabbaths and festivals the members of the Sanhedrin did not enter the Chamber of Hewn Stones but met in the House of Study on the rampart and officiated only as an academic institute for Torah study.

The teaching of Torah in the Temple was not carried out solely by the official central authorities. It was not only men of official status, like Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkay who "sat and taught in the shadow of the Temple". Rabbis such as Judah, son of Zipporai, and Mattathias, son of Margalit, both of whom persuaded their students to tear down the golden eagle that Herod had placed in the Temple, daily taught the young people who were eager to learn from their wisdom (Josephus, *Ant.* 17,6 2-3). The Christian Gospels say that Jesus taught daily in the Temple, as did after his death members of the apostolic Judeo-Christian congregation (Mt. 21:23; 26:5; Mk. 11:27; 14:49; Lk. 18:20; 20:1; 21:37; Acts chs. 2-4).

The religious-social and national streams as well as the messianic movements at the time of the Second Temple originated or crystallised in the Temple premises. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple served as a platform for the battles between the various groups during all the time of the Second Temple, from the beginning of the return to Zion, with the struggle of the returning chiefs against the Samaritans, Tobiah the Ammonite and Sanballat, throughout the period of Hellenisation, the battles between Pharisees and Sadducees, and right up to the very last days of the Temple.

### *The pilgrimage and its place in the life of the people and of the city of Jerusalem*

One of the most important aspects showing the character of the Second Temple was the pilgrimage that took place three times a year. For people within the country as well as in the diaspora the pilgrimage renewed and enriched religious and national feelings, strengthened their wish to study Torah and heightened the emotions. Not everyone, either in the country or in the diaspora, took part in every pilgrimage and the performance of the pilgrimage was not regarded by everyone as a command or a duty. Sometimes a Jew would spend years preparing himself for that particular day and event. However, there were many in Israel who did go up for every festival, so that crowds came there to appear before God. Talmudic and Christian tradition tells us that the holy spirit appeared not only to the priests in the performance of their duties but to people who had come on their pilgrimage. Early on in the time of the Second Temple, in Nehemiah's covenant, the people took it upon themselves to finance the Temple with a tax consisting of a third of a shekel, as well as by bringing their tithes and their first fruits and other gifts to the priesthood (Neh. 10:35-40). Most of these contributions were either directly or indirectly connected with the pilgrimage. The half-shekel was brought to Jerusalem from Israel as well as from the diaspora on the occasion of pilgrimage. Confession regarding unpaid tithes took place at Passover and people brought their first fruits to the Temple between Shavuot and Sukkot. Further on we shall see that the pil-

grimage was not only an occasion for the individual. Both within Israel and in the diaspora it was organised by institutions of the community and of the city. The pilgrims came in organised groups led by heads of communities and accompanied by people who held an official position.

The pilgrimage had a great effect on life in Jerusalem and in the Temple. The very presence of so many Israelites in the city and in the Temple at each pilgrimage had a great influence on economic and commercial life immediately before and after a pilgrimage, and also all year round, for pilgrims often stayed a while or came early, while others stayed in Jerusalem because it was holy and because the Temple was there.

It was the Sanhedrin's duty to look after the pilgrims during their stay in the city and to provide them with food and water and lodgings. It also assisted with the construction of roads and was responsible for the planting of trees to provide shade and for provision and upkeep of cisterns for the pilgrims. However, the main impact of the pilgrimage did not lie solely in the economic sphere or in its administrative and organisational aspects. Its main influence lay elsewhere. One of the main characteristics of the Jewish people was the fact that the majority lived in the diaspora. A relatively large section of the population lived in Israel but it was, after all, only the minority. The majority of the Jewish people had settled in neighbouring countries such as Syria and Egypt, as well as further off in Babylon and Europe. The pilgrimage provided an opportunity for people to renew contact between the centre and the rest of the people. Its importance is expressed in the literature of the time of the Second Temple in the numerous halakhic decisions in connection with it, in the annulment of decisions regarding clean and unclean, the prohibition of housing and land rental in Jerusalem and many other aspects.

At the times of pilgrimage, when so many thousands of Israelites gather together, people's hearts beat strongly, national pride increases on account of religious particularity, the nation's faithfulness to God, and the strength latent in this people that, although scattered throughout the world, is yet a united body.

As is known, Josephus tells how at the time of pilgrimage there was frequent unrest and uprisings against the kingdom. It could of course be said that mass gatherings are conducive to uprisings, but a more likely explanation is that the cause of these uprisings and revolts was the national and religious feelings that were aroused on these occasions coupled with a feeling of oppression in the individual pilgrim upon seeing a military presence in the city of God and in the vicinity of the Temple.

The presence of pilgrims from all over the world gave the city a special atmosphere and broadened the inhabitants' horizons. The clothes and effects brought by the pilgrims from various places left their mark on the pottery, weaving, tailoring and smithery and other arts and crafts of the

time. Their influence is also evident in various forms of architecture still standing today in Jerusalem. It is expressly mentioned in the literature that all currencies were admitted in Jerusalem, because all languages were spoken there.

In addition to the holiness of God's city, the pilgrims saw there much splendour and beauty. Towards the end of the Second Temple they saw Jerusalem as the city of the "nine Kabs of beauty, bringing fellowship to all of Israel".

*The earliest information regarding the pilgrimage from Israel and the Diaspora*

The Torah commands pilgrimage, and in 1 Samuel ch. 1 there is a description of the pilgrimage made by Elkana and his family. Nevertheless, it appears that at the time of the First Temple, pilgrimages were not a significant feature in the life of the city or of the Temple. In any event, there are only a few records of pilgrimages in the time of the kings. Throughout the period of the kings as well as that of judges, no political event is connected with a pilgrimage and there is no trace of any prophet who might have addressed the people gathered together on the occasion of a festival. When the golden calves were erected at Beth El and Dan we only read that Jeroboam feared: "if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem" (1 Kings 12:27), but no mention is made of a pilgrimage on a festival. In the description of Passover at the time of Josiah in the Book of Kings, the king turns to the people and tells them to celebrate the Passover but there is no allusion to a pilgrimage where the people might appear before God. The Book of Ezekiel contains numerous descriptions of the Temple with its structure and customs but there is no mention of a pilgrimage. It is true that the references are to the common people who came to adore God on festival occasions, but they came to adore God on the Sabbaths as well as for the start of the month and there is no special injunction instructing them to appear on festivals. Furthermore, in the descriptions of Passover at the time of Hezekiah and Josiah in the Book of Chronicles, which makes every effort to glorify the Temple and its customs, there is no reference to a pilgrimage on the occasion of a festival.

It is clear that pilgrimages took place at the time of the First Temple. This is evident from the account of Elkana and his wives, and from sections of pilgrimage songs in Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah and Jonah. There is additional evidence in Lamentations 1:4: "The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the appointed feasts". However, pilgrimages were not as widespread then as they were at the time of the Second Temple, neither did they have the same significance,

The Book of Nehemiah, which specifies the duties of the people regarding the Temple, does not mention the commandment regarding pilgrimage neither does it mention pilgrimage proceedings. Nor are pilgrimages an out-

standing phenomenon in literary sources post-dating the Hebrew Bible. This creates some doubt as to whether pilgrimages from the diaspora were customary in the early period of the Second Temple. We find that reports on pilgrimages from the diaspora as well as from Israel are increasing towards the end of the Maccabean period and become prominent at the latter period of the Temple from Herod up to the destruction. From then on tens of thousands of pilgrims are mentioned who came from Israel as well as from the diaspora filling the city and its surroundings. Pilgrimages then became a part of life in Jerusalem and a powerful means whereby the people formed an attachment to the city and to the Temple.

### *Pilgrimages on festivals and other occasions*

Pilgrimage is mentioned three times in the Torah (Ex. 23:15; 32:23; Num. 15:15) with regard to three festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. At the time of the Second Temple there were other, additional forms of pilgrimage developed, for example the pilgrimages on the occasion of Hanukka, a festival established at the time of the Second Temple (John 10:22). Most important are those festivals which came into existence, or to further crystallisation, during the period of the Second Temple, in which group pilgrimage to the Temple was the main feature.

At Shavuot the pilgrims brought their first fruits, although most of the fruit in the country ripened only after Shavuot and there were only a few districts from which fruit could be brought at the time of the Festival. Usually first fruits were brought between Shavuot and Sukkot. The bringing of first fruits was the occasion for a special minor pilgrimage organised along the lines of those on festivals. The pilgrims, bringing their offerings, came in groups according to their place of residence. As in the pilgrimages made at festival time, they had to sleep in the city. Similar to the bringing of the first fruits is the bringing of wood for an offering. Under Nehemiah, they were obliged to bring wood at certain times of the year according to families (Neh. 10:34). From then on, this became a festival for the old families belonging to Judah and Benjamin, and an appointed date was also fixed for the whole nation for all those wishing to participate in bringing wood to the altar. Here too we find offerings, the obligation to stay overnight, and the rest of the customs of the regular pilgrimage. Also the coming of those who maintained the Temple service and the Temple watch for a week was a motive of pilgrimage for people of the same districts.

### *Pilgrimage and the development of halakhah*

The image of the pilgrimage changed greatly with the course of time, growing in size and eventually encompassing many countries. This is apparent in a number of points of halakhah. It is evident in the legal decisions that laid down the Sanhedrin's duties regarding the upkeep of the roads and

cisterns as well as the provision of water along the route, and the instructions regarding the Temple during festivals as well as the provision of lodgings for pilgrims. Beyond this, however, the influence of the pilgrimage is to be felt in some of the more fundamental decisions. A number of decisions regarding clean and unclean and regarding the Sabbath were influenced by the frequent pilgrimages. They concern the route of the pilgrim and his stay in Jerusalem. A point was established whereby women who had to offer a nest of doves every time they gave birth were able to offer one nest for a number of births. The influence of the pilgrimage is felt more keenly when dealing with the establishment of the leap year. Most of the reasons used for its establishment are connected with pilgrimage.

Due to the widespreading and growth of the pilgrimage, the halakhah concerning the eating of less important sacrifices changed. The ancient halakhah, as it is found in Ezekiel and in Chronicles, and which still appears in the early Mishnah, states that all sacrifices of which it is said that they are to be eaten before God could only be eaten in the courtyard of the Temple and with the participation of the people of Israel. But as the number of pilgrims grew it was decided that sacrifices of lesser significance as far as holiness is concerned could be eaten in any part of the city. This decision appears in a number of places in the Talmud and many decisions are based on it.

### *The sources*

The main source for the growth of the image of pilgrimage is the *Talmudic literature*, i. e. the literature of the Tanna'im, and the traditions of the Amoraim. Many chapters of our Mishnah are devoted to the halakhah concerning the Temple, and contain information about it. In connection with the words of the Mishnah there are Tannaitic traditions in all the Tannaitic and Amoraic literature for which our Mishnah served as a basis of speculation and halakhic verdict.

It seems likely that during the later generations of Tannaites certain customs and regulations concerning the daily practices in the Temple were no longer known, and at times it seems doubtful whether they were ever practised in the Temple. One must almost say that they belong only to the field of amplification of speculative halakhah. Needless to say, the Amoraic literature contains material which is solely expository and homiletic. This material came into being at a time when everything connected with the Temple had acquired an aura of saga or legend. The celebration of pilgrimage belonged to an ideal past, to a time when the Temple stood and Israel inhabited its own land. A great deal of Amoraic writing must be regarded as imaginative literature born of a yearning for the Temple and for the re-establishment of the past rather than as based on original first-hand knowledge.

Nevertheless, Tannaite writing and the greater part of Amoraic writing is based on reliable tradition. A good deal of halakhah and passages about daily life as they are found in Tannaite teaching – the teaching of the first generation of sages after the Temple’s destruction, or their pupils – has been passed down to us. The two tractates in the division *Kodashim* of the Mishnah, namely *Tamid* and *Midot*, which describe the daily service and the measurements of the Temple and its courtyard, and which contain a considerable amount of information regarding pilgrimage, belong to the oldest sections of the Mishnah. In the whole of *Tamid*, no single Tanai is cited. The language is archaic and its expressions bear a greater resemblance to the later books of the Bible than to the Mishnah. The end of the tractate becomes very lyrical: “This is the book about the carrying out of the Daily Whole-offering in the service of the house of our God. May it be his will that it shall be built up again, speedily, in our days. Amen.” According to Tannaite tradition, and according to both Talmuds, Rabbi Shimon from Mitzpa was the Tanai from whom the tractate *Tamid* originated. He lived at the time of the Temple and we know that in the presence of the Sanhedrin in the “Chamber of Hewn Stones” halakhic questions were addressed to him. We know also that he lived after the destruction for he is always known as “rabbi”, a title that was used only for Tannaite who lived after the destruction. According to the Talmuds, the tractate *Midot* has its origin with Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaacov. This rabbi too, belongs to the generation that lived at the time of the destruction and is an eye-witness concerning the regulations and many of the customs in the Temple. He belonged to a family of priests or levites and he bears witness to what befell his mother’s brothers while he was performing his tasks in the Temple. At times Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaacov mentions that even in his days some detail or other has already been forgotten: “I have forgotten what the wooden chamber was used for”, he says.

The following Tannaite must be mentioned who bore witness to and described a number of details concerning the Temple: R. Zadok and his son R. Eliezer, R. Zachariah ben Kavutal, R. Hanania the deputy priest, R. Tarfon, R. Yochanan ben Gudgada, R. Yehoshua ben Hanania, Abba Shaul ben Batnit and Raban Yochanan ben Zakkay. All these men survived the destruction of the Temple either as lay priests or levites, or as holding the highest positions after the high priests. The following are the most prominent men of a later generation who passed on information regarding Temple customs: R. Yehuda ben Elai, a pupil of Tarfon, and R. Yona ben Halafta ben Zipori who even reports some traditions concerning the relationship of his own town Sephoris to the Temple.

Most of the Tannaite traditions relate to the Temple as it was during the last one or two generations but it is clear that a number of customs in use at that time are simply a continuation of earlier tradition, some of them



going back as far as the First Temple. For example the Mishnah, in *Ta'arit*, tells of the offering of wood as mentioned in Nehemiah (10:34), and the tractate *Bikkurim* tells of the flute that accompanied the pilgrims, the same flute that accompanied the pilgrims in the Book of Isaiah (30:29).

After the Mishnah, the books of *Josephus* serve as notable sources. Apart from the sections in *Antiquities* and the *Wars of the Jews* which deal extensively with the Temple, there is much information on this subject in all his works especially in his *Autobiography* and in his book *Contra Apion*. In many instances the Tannaic literature and Josephus complement one another but they also frequently differ from one another and there is no way of determining which is the more reliable; whether to prefer the Tannaites because of their precision and eye-witness accounts and their wish to determine the laws for the Temple that shall be rebuilt, or whether to rely on Josephus because he customarily gives accurate reports and witnessed the Temple himself and may even have served in it as a priest. The Tannaites, as well as Josephus, used written and oral sources belonging to different periods and it is impossible to tell what proportion of "tradition" and what of "reality" was embodied in those sources. We have no choice but to take each case individually and decide it on its merits as far as possible.

*Philo's* books on law, and other of his books, contain information regarding several fields of daily life in the Temple. His contribution in this field is not due to the fact that he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, since we do not know when he did this and whether his descriptions of the Temple and its festivals are connected with his journey to Jerusalem; Philo is significant because of the good Jewish information which is contained in his books. However, it would be superficial to look for the non-Jewish (Greek) source in relation to every contradiction between Philo and halakhah. The halakhah contained in the Talmud belongs to a period that is several generations later than Philo and when we compare him with the Talmudic halakhah we have to examine whether this information belongs to an earlier period or to the period reported by the Tannaites shortly before the Temple's destruction and after it. There are many instances in which the sages believed that Philo simply copied from foreign sources, but these were in fact halakhic decisions interpreted and ratified from early Tannaitic sources, although in our present Mishnah these points have not been decided in the same way.

There is a great deal of relevant material in Christian literature, especially in the *Gospels* and the *Acts*. Jesus performed his great public deeds in Jerusalem at the time of pilgrimage and there is much we can learn relating to the pilgrimage route, his visit to the Temple, the Passover meal, and his lodging within the city and outside it. According to the synoptic Gospels Jesus's pilgrimage at Passover when he was to be sentenced and crucified was in fact his first one. On the other hand, John tells of a number of other pilgrimages made by him on the occasion of other festivals.

Luke tells of a pilgrimage made by his parents. Paul too made pilgrimages and a number of events in his life are connected with his pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

There is also quite a lot of information in the *extra-canonical Christian literature* and in particular we must mention Papyrus Oxyrhynch as published in the Papyrus collection OXYRHYNCHUS 5, No. 840. The papyrus consists of only one sheet being a section of a gospel written in the form of a canonical gospel. The section comprises 45 lines and contains in its entirety an argument between Jesus who had come to the Temple with his disciples and the Pharisee high priest, and is reminiscent of the arguments between Jesus and the Pharisees. The argument is over Jesus's right to enter the Temple and see the holy objects. The editors, who relied on Schürer's opinion, did not attribute any historical significance to this gospel section but a number of scholars have pointed out the similarity between the gospel and the Talmudic sources. There are also a number of unclear sections in the *Baraitot* which are clarified by the argument between Jesus and the priest in the Temple. In other historical sources of the time of the Second Temple there are isolated reports that have a direct or indirect bearing on our subject. These occur in the apocryphal literature as well as in a number of named and known Greek, Roman and Christian authors.

The numerous *grave inscriptions* that have been found in Jerusalem within the 19th and 20th centuries are particularly problematic. Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek grave inscriptions dating back to the Second Temple have been found in and around Jerusalem. In a number of cases the name of the city is stated next to the name of the person or couple buried in the same ossuary, and at times their place of origin is discernible from the script and the language. The place names refer to places in Israel as well as in the diaspora. There are places close to Jerusalem such as Beth El, going as far as Beth Sha'an and the Galilee. There are place names from the diaspora such as Chalcis not far from Israel and as far away as Palmyra, Egypt, Greece, Italy and Africa.

It is possible to assume that the grave inscriptions of people from the diaspora applied to people who died in the city, or who came to the city to die. It cannot of course be assumed that trade and commerce are solely responsible for the existence of so many graves in Jerusalem. Their presence is connected in some way with pilgrimage. Even if we assume that these Jews settled in the city and moved from their original places this very movement must have been connected with pilgrimage to the Temple. In any case on one of the inscriptions found on the eastern side of the city on Mount Scopus it is stated that the man was on his way to the Temple to offer his gift. The inscription is on the grave of Nikanor "who made the doors". It was found in 1902, and has been clarified in the *Baraitot* where it states that Nikanor went on a pilgrimage to offer his doors to the Temple.

It is possible that Nikanor decided to settle permanently in the city together with his sons, since there is evidence in the inscription that his sons are buried in the same grave, or perhaps his sons were brought there for burial with their father.

The inscriptions on the graves are therefore a source of information about pilgrimage from Israel and the diaspora. In most cases they are not the only source concerning pilgrimage from a certain country, but they combine with other evidence taken from literary sources. A witness similar to that of grave inscriptions is the synagogue inscription known as Theodotos's inscription. This tells us about the construction of a synagogue with adjoining chambers for the lodging of indigents coming from abroad. In the literature we read of a number of synagogues in Jerusalem that belonged to people from the diaspora and this evidence confirms these literary sources.

Finally, we wish to deal with the *Psalms*. How can the psalms help to clarify the problems linked with the subject of pilgrimage at the time of the Second Temple? Judging by their atmosphere and mood, as well as by their language and mode of expression, it appears that a considerable number of these songs belong to an early stage of the Second Temple. In Ps. 42-43 we read (42:4): "I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival". We have no way of knowing its date and whether it refers to the First or to the Second Temple, neither do we know who are the "ungodly people" and the "deceitful and unjust man" (43:1) who prevent the pious man whose soul yearns for God, the living God, from going and appearing in the presence of God. There are however a number of psalms, e. g. Ps. 84, which express longing for the courts of the Lord and speak of jealousy of those who dwell in the house of God, which surely have their origin at the time of the Second Temple because the psalmist and those who sat in the Temple were neither priests nor levites but were pilgrims who "go from strength to strength" (v. 7) in order to appear before God. "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (v. 10); this description belongs to the Second and not to the First Temple. There are descriptions of groups of pious men in the Temple who participate in the sacrificial meals and the songs of thanksgiving to God; these too most likely belong to the time of the Second Temple. Great esteem for the city of Jerusalem and its Temple and memories of the city's glorious past – for this had been the seat of the law courts and the thrones of the house of David – are remarkable in some of the psalms of pilgrimage. These can only have been written at the time of the Second Temple (e. g. Ps. 122 and 48). In two of the psalms, side by side with the "House of Aaron" and the "House of Israel" there are "those who fear the Lord" (115:11; 118:4). The latter expression represents a class of the population by itself. Scholars have formulated a theory

that this is the first mention of the "God-fearers" known to us from the literature of the end of the Temple period. The mention of the God-fearers indicates that these songs date no earlier than the end of the Persian period. In two of the psalms called "Songs of Ascents" which contain strong evidence of a reference to pilgrimage we find the later conjunction -  $\Psi$  (see Ps. 122:2ff).

The Tannaite literature contains parallel references to some of the usages mentioned in the psalms and this would indicate unity and continuity from the first days to the end of the Temple. Even if we assume that those portions of the psalms which are relevant to our subject are old and refer to the First Temple, we can still infer that there was unity and continuity in pilgrimage customs that applied to the entire period. We can even infer certain usages in the Mishnah from passages in the psalms and vice versa. Many sacred customs in the ancient East, such as Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia, and in the Hellenistic world contain usage that is parallel to that of pilgrimage. Sometimes the similarity is trifling but at times it is considerable. Notwithstanding, these similarities do not detract from the unique quality of the worship of God as practised by Israel, the splendour of its holy practices and the fear of God which marked the deeds of the priests and Israelites. The special quality of the pilgrimage in Israel is evident from its social, public and national significance.

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