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POOL'S "KADDISH"

The Old Jewish-Aramaic Prayer. The Kaddish. By Dr. DAVID DE SOLA POOL. Leipzig: RUDOLF HAUPT, 1909. pp. xviii + 121.

As a *specimen eruditionis* Dr. Pool's dissertation deserves unstinted praise. The author shows himself a thorough master of his subject; he is at home in the widely ramified literature bearing on his theme (witness the Bibliography on pp. viii-x); he consults the sources at first hand; his notes are replete with references as they should be in a first scholarly attempt in which nothing ought to be taken for granted, testifying to the young scholar's familiarity with the contiguous problems and evidencing the entire range of his studies of which the present effort is naturally but a part. One must not look in a dissertation for startlingly novel results; had the author chosen a slightly different arrangement so as to place at the head of his work a resumé of previous attempts at solving the problem of the origin of the Kaddish, the identity of his conclusions with those of Zunz for instance would have stood out more prominently. The author preferred the deductive method once he had reached his conclusions; thus of necessity the process, naturally inductive, by which he made his way from the fixed stage to its fluid beginnings remains somewhat obscured. We should, however, readily acknowledge our indebtedness to the author for the painstaking industry with which all the facts, the greatest and the smallest, are gathered together; as a store-house of material Dr. Pool's work will have to be consulted by any future student dealing with the beginnings and history of the Kaddish.

For the Kaddish had a history. It was not at first what it came to be in aftertimes. To the modern Jew it is nothing but

a mourners' prayer. In the rituals of the nineteenth century elements borrowed from the old Hashkabah, or prayer for the dead, were dovetailed into it (p. 108, n. 9, with reference to p. 16). In the traditional service, however, the mourners' Kaddish, קריש יתום, is but one species of a prayer used in the liturgy as an integral part thereof: there is the half-Kaddish (חצי קריש) or lesser Kaddish (קריש זוטא) which is sung to a variety of tunes in conformity to the occasion, the full Kaddish (קריש שלם) at the conclusion of certain prayers (its excess over the mourners' Kaddish consists in the paragraph invoking the Divine acceptance of Israel's prayers), the "rabbinical Kaddish" (קריש רבנן) which is recited by mourners after a portion of Mishnah or haggadic Midrash and which in its tenor and phraseology is in the least reminiscent of the use to which it has been put. In an expanded form, the mourners' Kaddish becomes the burial Kaddish.

Of these various functions of the Kaddish the author treats in Appendixes B, C, and F. How the Kaddish came to be a mourners' prayer the writer concedes to be by no means clear. Prayers for the dead, to effect forgiveness of their sins, are alluded to II Maccab. 12, 44. As fixed prayers they are, however, met with first in Gaonic times, not without protest on the part of some authorities (Hai Gaon and others). Even as late as the sixteenth century a voice rises in protest against the importance attached to the Kaddish as a form of intercession for the dead. "Let the son keep a particular precept given him by his father, and it shall be of greater worth than the recital of the Kaddish" (Abraham Hurwitz, quoted p. 104 f.). Nevertheless, in popular conception the intercessional function of the Kaddish remained in force; a statement in the Mishnah fixing the longest period of suffering in Gehinnom at twelve months, the Kaddish was recited during the first year of mourning (in accordance with later custom, less a month; as Pool rightly adds, "so as not to cast an unworthy reflection on the parent"), evidently for the purpose of mitigating through intercession the deceased's purgatorial suffering.

The bulk of the treatise is devoted to the thesis propounded by Zunz and others which is here elaborated at great length, to the effect that originally the Kaddish, far from being a prayer

for the dead in any of its forms, was rather a prayer which followed the discourse in the synagogue; the latter, attaching itself to the Scriptural lesson, would be largely haggadic, in the nature of an edifying homily, concluding in a peroration which dealt with the glorious future in store for the harassed nation. This consolatory and eschatological peroration was summed up in a prayer having for its central thought the realization of God's sovereignty upon earth, the quintessence of Jewish eschatology. The argument for this thesis is presented with a fullness which leaves nothing to be desired. Though the rabbinic (talmudic) allusions to the response "Blessed be His great name, etc." are post-Christian in date, Dr. Pool takes up the question of the parallels between the Kaddish and the Paternoster to which others have applied themselves, enters into a discussion of the authenticity of the prayer which Jesus is said to have taught his disciples, and arrives at the conclusion that the origins of the Kaddish must be placed in pre-Christian times. All of which is eminently plausible. But we cannot follow the author when he vindicates for both the Jewish and the Christian prayer Essene antecedents. It is true, Dr. Pool is in good company with his theory of the Essenic authorship of the beginnings of the Jewish liturgy; I for one choose not to be enrolled therein. We know precious little about the Essenes; and why we should be compelled to go outside the main body of Judaism for all that is high and lofty and spiritual in the development of Jewish worship I fail to understand.

There are two further propositions which will challenge opposition. The one is the theory concerning the language of the Kaddish. Dr. Pool would make us believe that from the start it was written in the scholastic language which was a jargon, a mixture of Aramaic and Hebrew. He also solves *ambulando* the problem of the bilingual character of Daniel. To my sense of language, there is nothing of Hebrew in the first (oldest) paragraph of the Kaddish except **ואמרו אמן**; but **אמן** has become naturalized in Aramaic as in Greek, and **ואמרו** hardly constituted an original element. The congregation responds without invitation from the reader. The other theory born of a straining of the parallelism between the Kaddish and the Paternoster touches the exegesis of the opening words of the Jewish prayer. I cannot

say that Dr. Pool has convinced me; Baer's pointing seems to me to be right, and we ought to render: "Magnified and hallowed be His great name in the world which He created according to His will." The emphasis on the certainty that the will of God placed into the world when it was created shall in the end be realized is a sufficient parallelism to the prayer: "Thy will be done."

What the author has to say upon the schematic construction of post-exilic prayers in Scripture appears to me also to be a bit strained.

Dr. Pool seeks to establish in detail the correct orthography and pronunciation of the wording of the Kaddish in all its forms. A laudable undertaking. Sometimes he appears to go too far afield in trying to ascertain the proper vocalization of a word. An editor of a Greek liturgical text, e. g., will hardly have occasion to bolster up his readings with references to Brugmann's Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages; an ordinary text-book of Greek grammar will suffice. What he has to say on the merits of the superlinear pointing is correct enough. As a matter of fact it may be readily proved that just as the super-linear system is adequate for Hebrew, the Tiberian is ill-suited to Aramaic. But this matter cannot be entered into here. Dr. Pool, however, employs Tiberian pointing. Now the translation from the one system to the other has its pitfalls which the author has not always successfully avoided. Thus **בְּעִנְלָא** is impossible; point **בְּעִנְלָא**. The doubling is inorganic. While exceedingly cautious in the pointing of his own texts, when outside his immediate range he often accepts the current pointing which is wrong. E. g., **דרשן** should be vocalized **דְּרִישׁן**; it is **דְּרִישׁ** plus the pleonastic suffix *-an*. (**אבוהון**, by the way, is **מלרע**, Dr. Pool notwithstanding).

In conclusion it may be permitted to throw out a hint that, just as **נחמתא** applies to the prophetic lessons, **שירתא** and **תשבחתא** refer to lessons from the Psalms; comp. at the end of **על כל דברי שירות ותשבחות דוד**: **ובמקהלות**; **ישתבחה**: **נדול בתשבחות ... הבוחר בשירי זמרה**. On lessons from the Hagiographa see Zunz, *GDV.*, 2d ed., 7.