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Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon*

1 Preliminary notes

The book of the Wisdom of Solomon, written in the late-first century BCE or in the early-first century CE, arguably in Alexandria, presents a unique mixture of sapiential instructions in the tradition of Proverbs and Ben Sira, and a specific form of exegesis of the exodus narrative in the Pentateuch. Also mentioned – as is typical of sapiential scriptures which aim for comprehensive human formation (παιδεία)¹ – are emotions, together with their essence, function and handling.

A basis for understanding the portrayal of *emotions in the prayers* of the Wisdom of Solomon may be found in two lectures given in the context of an ISDCL conference. At the inaugural ISDCL conference in 2003, Helmut Engel gave a programmatic lecture on “Prayer in the Book of Wisdom.” In this lecture, Engel sets out the immense compositional and text-pragmatic significance of prayer for the whole book of Wisdom. In his analysis, he orients his treatment by using the phenomenon of second-person descriptions of God’s actions found in the third part of the Wisdom of Solomon (11:2–19:22). These descriptions of the workings of wisdom and of God are continually interrupted by short doxological addresses to God as “You.” At the 2010 ISDCL conference, which was devoted to the theme “Emotions from Ben Sira to Paul,” Friedrich Reiterer provided an inventory of the “Emotions, Feelings and Affects in the Book of Wisdom.” Reiterer made two essential observations. First, emotions are culturally determined and play a significant role in the construction of social and religious identities. Second, a methodological focus on the emotions articulated in a text can contribute to a deeper understanding of that text, with regard to both its original authors and its later recipients. In the following, I would like to attempt a synthesis of the approaches found in Engel and Reiterer. The synthesis will proceed in two stages. First, I shall give a short review of the terms and forms of prayer in the book of Wisdom. I shall then analyse selected prayers with reference

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¹ Compare recently Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder*, 10–11.

to the divine and human emotions that they articulate. In considering emotions, we should also take into account how emotions are based on certain values, how they reveal religious value judgements, and how they determine religious behaviour and action.²

2 Terminology and forms of prayer in the Wisdom of Solomon

The book of Wisdom is distinctive on account of the manifold terminology it uses for prayer. The terms for prayer, which are found exclusively in the second and third part of the book (Wis 6:22–11:1; 11:2–19:22), include:

ἀξιόω (13:18);³ αἰνέω (10:20; 19:9)/(προαναμέλω *cum*)⁴ αἶνος (18:9);⁵ αἰτέω (13:19; [19:11]); δέομαι (8:21; 16:25; 18:2)/(δέησις [16:20]);⁶ δίδωμι (imperative/ 3. per. sg. optative/subjunctive, 7:15; 8:21; 9:4);⁷ ἐντυγχάνω (8:21; 16:28); ἐπιβοάω (14:1); ἐπικαλέομαι (7:7; 11:4; 13:17); εὐχαριστία (16:28); εὐχομαι (7:7)/προσεύχομαι (13:17)/προσευχή ([12:20]);⁸ 18:21; ἱκετεύω (13:18; [19:3]); προσλαλέω (13:17); ὑμνέω (10:20).⁹

With respect to *form*, these terms for prayer are distributed among three groups of texts. A first group are the *performed prayers*. Here the prayer's "I" addresses God as "You" to make an explicit request. This includes, first and foremost, the great prayer of Solomon in 9:1–18,¹⁰ which has its own narrative prayer-headline with two different terms for "praying" (8:21).¹¹ On a narrow definition of prayer, 9:1–18 would be the only real prayer in the book of Wisdom.

2 The value-reference of emotions is already present in the classical definitions of πάθη/ *per-turbationes* by Aristotle, *Rhet.* II.1; cf. Diog. Laert., *Vit.* IV.111; Cicero, *Tusc.* IV.7, and recently Brown, *Wisdom's Wonder*, 10–11.

3 Cf. Jer (LXX) 11:14; Dan (LXX) 6:6, 8–9; 1 Clem. 51:1; 53:5; 55:6; 59:4; Herm. 22:3.

4 According to Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, in Old Greek Literature the term προαναμέλω only appears in Wis 18:9 and could be a neologism.

5 Cf. Jdt 16:1 (*par.* ψαλμός).

6 Only in B, O, and the minuscule 637; cf. Syr.; Arab.

7 On δίδωμι as a term for answer to prayers compare 7:7; 11:7. In 7:15 read possibly δέδωκεν (Georgl, *Weishelt*, 425 n. 1, following the minuscule 68; Lat.^v; Arab.).

8 Only in the minuscule 637.

9 The general terms for religious veneration, such as σέβομαι (15:6, 18; cf. εὐσέβεια, 10:12) and θρησκεύω (11:15; 14:16; cf. θρησκεία, 14:18, 27), remain unconsidered here.

10 On this prayer, see primarily Gilbert, *Structure*.

11 See ἐντυγχάνω, δέομαι and indirectly δίδωμι.

Alongside this prayer, one might also classify the prayer in 7:15–22a which is introduced by the call ἐμοὶ δὲ δῶρη, within this category, if one allows for a broader definition of prayer.

A second group are *reported prayers*, be they the *prayers* of an individual, or those of a group. These pericopes illustrate the particular understanding of prayer in the book of Wisdom. They fulfil the function of guiding readers to correct praying. To this group belongs, first, the report of Solomon about the occasion when he asks God for wisdom (7:7, with the introduction in 7:1–6 and the execution in 7:8–14); second, the reports of praise to God and the lament of the Exodus generation in 10:20; 11:4; 16:25; 18:9 and 19:8–10(11–12); third, the descriptions of the inappropriate prayer of the “idolaters” in 13:17–14:1; and fourth, the appreciation of intercession exemplified by the intercession of Aaron in 18:20–25. We may also add to this group meeting God with thanks in prayer (16:28) as a consequence of the manna-miracle in Exod 16, even if what we find here is less a prayer and more an invitation for the reader to pray. The majority of the reported prayers characteristically speak of God in the second person singular. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand, the basic structure of the book of Wisdom, which – although continually interrupted by excursions¹² – runs through from 9:1 to 19:22, is addressed directly to God as the speech of Solomon.¹³ On the other hand, past events are thereby vividly recalled and the reader is integrated into the community of his or her praying ancestors.

The *hymnic addresses to God* in the second person singular form a third group of prayers, in which God is praised for his nature and works. These texts have neither their own prayer terminology nor elements of a supplication, lament, or thanksgiving. Instead, they focus on a general praise of God. I call these forms of prayer a *general doxology*. Such doxologies repeatedly interrupt the description and interpretation of the actions of God and his wisdom from 10:1 to 19:22. Through these hymns the particular events of the Exodus and the survival of Israel in the desert are generalized. The remembered history in the exemplary prayer in Solomon’s address to God becomes prayed history and subsequently causes the reader of the book of Wisdom to address God. The following texts may be assigned to this group: 11:20–12:2; 12:15–18; 15:1–3(4–6); 16:13; 17:1a; 19:22.

¹² Cf. 13:1–14:2; 14:7–31; 17:3–21.

¹³ According to a broad definition of prayer, the whole passage from 9:1 to 19:22 could be described as a prayer. However, from the perspective of the history of literature it is a scribal reflection of history with doxological elements.

Passages that describe God's action in the second person singular are closely related to this third group and not clearly separable from it. They occur in the context of remarks on the Exodus and on Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. These passages do not contain actual request, thanksgiving, lament or general praise. In terms of form, they stand side-by-side with the so-called historical psalms or historical summaries of the Old Testament (cf. Pss 78; 105; 106; Neh 9; Jdt 16 and many others). They form a particular poetological form of exegesis in a mode of speech directed toward both God and a human audience, and represent a mixture of doxology and reflection. I shall call these passages *doxological reflections*.

3 Emotions in the prayers

3.1 Divine emotions

The essential emotions of God found in the prayers of the book of Wisdom are ἔλεος and ὄργη.

Solomon's great prayer for wisdom in 9:1–18¹⁴ is addressed to the θεός πατέρων and to the κύριος τοῦ ἐλέους (9:1), and extended by a hymnic explication of the creation of the cosmos and man (9:2). The combination of the epithets θεός πατέρων and κύριος τοῦ ἐλέους is unique in the Septuagint. It might be a deliberate creation of the author of Wisdom 9 (cf. 1 Kgs (LXX) 3:6–7).

In the background we find on the one hand the title "God of the fathers,"¹⁵ known from the Pentateuch, and on the other hand the idea of the mercy of God, embedded especially in the so-called formula of grace in Exod 34:6–7.¹⁶ By employing this address to God in prayer, Solomon places himself in the same category as the exemplary prayers of Israel, beginning with Abraham, and con-

14 V. 18 is often viewed as an introduction to the explanation about wisdom's work in history (cf. Schmitt, Weisheit, 49; Hübner, Weisheit, 131). The verse is, however, still a part of Solomon's direct prayer (cf. Engel, Buch, 147; Neher, Wesen, 121; Vignolo, Wisdom, 256). On the literary background of Wis 9:1–18, see 1 Kgs (LXX) 3:6–9 // 2 Chr (LXX) 1:8–10.

15 Cf. Gen 43:23; 46:3; Exod 3:13, 15–16; 4:5; Deut 4:1; 6:3; 12:1; 27:3; 1 Chr 5:25; 29:18; 2 Chr 30:7; 34:32–33; Ezra 8:28; Pr. Man. 1 et al.

16 Cf. Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17. Additionally there are more than twenty Old Testament allusions in which single elements of the formula of grace are quoted, and various extra-canonical quotations (CD-A II:4; 1QH^a VIII:24; 4Q511 frag. 52; 54–55; 57–59:1 [col. III:1]); cf. Spieckermann, Herr, 1–18; Scoralick, Gottes Güte; Franz, Gott; Witte, Barmherzigkeit.

tinuing with Moses. Both epithets underline the special character of the God of Israel as a God of relationship. Both ἔλεος, as well as its standard Hebrew equivalents יְיָ and יְיָ, stand for the salvific care of God, here developed in the creation of the world and humankind by the λόγος and σοφία.¹⁷ By understanding ἔλεος as a divine emotion, we can derive the λόγος and the σοφία from the ἔλεος of God. The creation of the world and humankind in its relation to God arises from the mercy of God. In other words, at the beginning of the creation there is divine emotion, God's stepping out of himself. This emotion is – contrary to common psychological definitions of emotions¹⁸ – not a reaction to an external stimulus, but arises from the very nature of God.¹⁹

This emotional characterization of God permeates the whole prayer of Solomon in chapter 9. The plea of Solomon for wisdom seeks to ascertain what is well-pleasing to God (εὐάρεστος 9:10),²⁰ performing that which is acceptable to God (προσδεκτός 9:12),²¹ and being well informed about that which pleases God (ἀρεστά 9:9, 18).²² Corresponding to the address to God as the “Lord of mercy” at the beginning of the prayer – which is an appeal to God to prove his ἔλεος again and again – the prayer ends with the word ἐσώθησαν in the emphasized final position (they, that is, the people of God, were saved, 9:18). This is at the same time a confirmation to the reader of the book of Wisdom that God will continue to save his people time and again.²³ The unique usage of the epithet σωτήρ πάντων in the LXX, within the context of a doxological reflection in Wis 16:7, occurs precisely in this line.²⁴

At the heart of the fundamental praise of God's universal power in **11:20–12:2** lies the recognition of God's mercy and love for his creation. God's mercy (ἔλεω) and love (ἀγαπάω) are consequences of his all-encompassing power. The idea that God as creator is a friend of life is summarized by the LXX *hapax legomenon* φιλόψυχος (“loving human beings”, 11:26)²⁵. God loves everything that

17 On the identity of λόγος and σοφία; cf. Neher, Wesen, 123.

18 Cf. McIntosh, Emotlonen, 1258–1259.

19 Cf. Vignolo, Wisdom, 263.

20 Cf. 4:10; in LXX, the term εὐάρεστος appears only in Wis 4:10 and 9:10, cf. however. T. Dan 1:3; Philo, *Spec.* 1.201; *Virt.* 67; Rom 12:1–2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Phil 4:18 et al.

21 Cf. Prov (LXX) 11:20; 16:15.

22 Cf. Wis 4:14; τὰ ἀρεστά does not mean the “best” (so Georgi, Weisheit, 436), but “that which is pleasing to God” (cf. Sir 48:22; Isa [LXX] 38:3; Tob 4:21; Dan [LXX] 4:37; Fichtner, Weisheit, 36; Winston, Wisdom, 206; Engel, Buch, 158).

23 Cf. 10:4; 14:4; 16:7; 18:5 (16:6; 18:7).

24 Cf. 1 Kgs (LXX) 10:19; Pss. Sol. 16:4; Philo, *Fug.* 162.3; *Deus* 156.6; 1 Tim 4:10.

25 In pagan literature, the term φιλόψυχος has the negative connotation “cowardly” (cf. Euphrosyne, *Hec.* 348; *Phoen.* 597; Marc Aurel 10:8).

lives (11:24; cf. 1:13), since he himself has given life to everything by means of his πνεῦμα (12:1); being the creator and hating creation (μισέω, βδελύσσω) are mutually exclusive (11:24b). In particular, this love of the “Master of All” (ὁ πάντων δεσπότης) applies first, to wisdom (8:3), second, to Israel as his children (16:26), and third, to the sage (7:28) and the just one (4:10). The close connection between God’s love and the desire for life becomes evident, especially in overcoming the fate of death (4:10–11)²⁶, which is revealed to the just one by means of rapture. The book of Wisdom, accordingly, does not understand death as the result of an emotion of the creator, but rather as stemming from a negative emotion, namely the envy (φθόνος)²⁷ of the Devil (διάβολος 2:24).

The “friendship of God” (φιλία Θεοῦ 7:14; cf. 7:27) stands in sharp contrast to this. This motif has its biblical roots in the designation of Abraham as a “friend/beloved of God”²⁸ and in the notion of a friendship between God and Moses.²⁹ It connects the book of Wisdom with the remarks about the relationship between God and humankind by Plato, the Cynics, and the Stoics.³⁰ Within the scope of Solomon’s prayer for wisdom in 7:1–14, this motif explains the petition for wisdom, since wisdom effects God’s friendship. It is exemplified in Solomon’s prayer for wisdom (cf. 7:7)³¹, but it is fundamentally accessible to every wise person. In Solomon’s prayer – as in Prov 8:30–31 – the σοφία fulfils a special emotional function by provoking the joy of God and causing God to establish friendship.

Furthermore, the detailed doxology in 15:1–3 refers back to the ἔλεος of God. It possibly derives from an originally independent hymn that was expanded by redaction in verses 4–6.³² In continuity with Exod 34:6–7, Wis 15:1–3 witnesses to God’s gracious, true and patient guidance of the universe. Again, both a universal (τὰ πάντα) and a particular dimension are assigned to the ἔλεος of God (cf. 11:23). Thus the ἔλεος manifests itself as belonging to God³³ and in the

26 Cf. Gen 5:22–24.

27 Cf. *L.A.E.* 9–17; Kaiser, *Anthropologie*, 350–351; 359; von Nordheim-Diehl, *Neid*.

28 Cf. Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; Jas 2:23; Jub 30:20–21; Sib. Or. II.245; T. Ab. A 1:6; Apoc. Sedr. 9:1; CD-A III:2; 4Q252 frag. 1 II, 8; Isa (LXX) 51:2; Dan (LXX) 3:35.

29 Exod 33:11; cf. Sir 45:1. On Solomon as “beloved of God” see also 2 Sam 12:24; Neh 13:26; on David see 2 Sam 7:18/1 Chr (LXX) 17:16.

30 Cf. Plato, *Leg.* 716cd; *Tim.* 53D; *Symp.* 193b; *Resp.* 621c; cf. Winston, *Wisdom*, 189.

31 Cf. 2 Kgs (LXX) 12:24; Neh 13:26.

32 Cf. Georgi, *Weisheit*, 455.

33 Cf., outside of prayer, in 3:9 and in 4:15 (here in each case parallel to χάρις) and in 6:6.

forgiveness of sins (15:2).³⁴ The target point of the small hymn is the mediation of justice and immortality (ἀθανασία),³⁵ which both result from the knowledge of God (15:3). If, however, God is merciful by his very nature, then justice and immortality are founded in this mercy. The mercy of God is the basis of both communion with God and the overcoming of death.

Finally the ἔλεος of God appears in the *doxological reflections*, on the one hand, in **12:22** as an object of the hope of Israel in judgement,³⁶ and, on the other, in **16:10** as a reason for the preservation of Israel, especially looking back to the salvation of Israel from the fiery snakes in the desert (with regard to Num 21:9; cf. Mark 16:17–18). Here the ἔλεος serves as a means of healing (ἰάομαι). Thus the ἔλεος thereby takes over the role of the healing God himself.³⁷ In this way an emotion of God becomes a function. This functional aspect of the divine ἔλεος, shown in different types of prayer and, moreover, in genres of the book of Wisdom, also applies to its important emotional counterpart, the ὀργή.³⁸

Analogously to the use of ὀργή elsewhere in the Septuagint or its Hebrew equivalents אַף, זַעַם, זַעַף, חַמָּה, חַרֹן, כַּעַס / כַּעַשׁ, עִבְרָה, קִצְף, רָגַז the book of Wisdom uses the term ὀργή for God's judgement and as a cipher for his punitive justice.³⁹ The report of the intercession of Aaron in **18:20–25** is particularly instructive for the connection between prayer and emotion in the matter of the divine wrath.⁴⁰ The passage refers to the murmuring story in Num 16:41–50: (LXX = Num 17:6–15 MT). At the same time, Wis 18 concentrates upon God turning away from his wrath, which flared up against the Israelites who rebelled against Moses and Aaron, on account of Aaron's intercession (προσευχή) and incense (θυμίαμα) (18:21). In keeping with the stylistic device of *antonomasia* employed elsewhere in the book of Wisdom, the text abstains from naming the heroes.⁴¹ For the addressees of the book of Wisdom, formed in the biblical tradition, the identification of the particular heroes is unambiguous because of the

³⁴ Cf. 10:13; 11:23. On the interrelation between "sins", that is to say, "forgiveness of sin" and "emotions", see Urbanz, *Emotionen*, 138–140.

³⁵ Cf. 3:4; 4:1; 8:13, 17.

³⁶ Compare the motif of the fairness (ἐπιείκεια) and forbearance (φειδώ) of the divine judge in 12:18.

³⁷ Cf. Exod 15:26; Pss 6:3; 102(103):3.

³⁸ Cf. terminologically concentrated in 19:1 (ἀνελεήμων θυμός).

³⁹ Cf. Witte, *Barmherzigkeit*, 199–202.

⁴⁰ The form of a report is only interrupted by addressing God as "You" in v. 20.

⁴¹ Compare the Solomon-fiction, which is found throughout the whole book of Wisdom (cf. 6:25; 7:1; 8:10–11; 9:7–8, 12), and the naming of the figures in 10:1–11:1. On the rhetorical device of *antonomasia*, see 1 En. 93:1–10 and 91:12–17.

associated motifs. Given the omission of the names, the example of the just also highlights the possibility of application and identification (perhaps even for pagan readers).

In contrast to the template in the book of Numbers, Wis 18 particularly emphasizes divine wrath. Thus, the whole pericope is framed by the term *ὀργή* (18:20/25). The words *θυμός* (18:21)⁴² and *χόλος* (18:22) appear as synonyms for the threefold usage of the term *ὀργή*. The power based on this divine emotion is underlined, as well as the character of the God of Israel, reacting as *ⲗⲏⲛⲏⲗⲏ/θεὸς ζηλωτής* to the behaviour of the people of Israel.⁴³ The divine *ὀργή* is, equally, an expression of the holiness of God and a function of his justice. The violence of the *ὀργή* is relativized in Wis 18 in so far as the *ἔλεος* of God is always stronger than his *ὀργή*, thus creating an asymmetry between the divine *ἔλεος* and the divine *ὀργή* in the formula of grace. Hence, the wrath in the pericope is referred to twice as a “test” (*πείρα* 18:20, 25) and is limited temporally (18:20). Furthermore, the wrath of God loses its dynamism in so far as its “remaining” (*μένω*) appears primarily in a nominal form and only once as a verb.⁴⁴ The example of Aaron shows that the divine *ὀργή* can be both caused and influenced by humankind. The means of preventing and ending the divine *ὀργή* are human blamelessness (*ἄμειπτος*) – an epithet in the Septuagint predicated by name only to Abraham (Gen 17:1; cf. Wis 10:5), Job (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3) and Esther (Esth 16:13/Add Esth E 13)⁴⁵ – intercession, sacrifice and, additionally, God’s remembrance of the covenants made with the patriarchs of Israel (18:22). Here, the *λόγος* of the suffering servant (*θεράπων*)⁴⁶ has power over the divine emotion of wrath (18:22).

In the context of *doxological reflections*, the divine *ὀργή* appears in 11:9–10 (in relation to Deut 8:2–5) as an example of the punishment of the Egyptians as opposed to the testing of Israel. It is expressed metaphorically in the contrast between the judging of a king and the parenting of a father (cf. 2:16; 14:3), as in 16:5 (with reference to Num 21:4–9).

42 Cf. 19:1 and, outside of prayer, in 5:22; on *θυμός* as a negative human emotion, see Wis 10:3 (with reference to Cain).

43 Cf. Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 6:15; and Wis 5:17 (cf. Deut [LXX] 29:19; 2 Kgs [LXX] 19:31; Isa [LXX] 37:32; 63:15).

44 No part of the book of Wisdom employs verbs like *ὀργίζω*, *θυμώω* or *ἐκκαίω*; normally used in the LXX for the burning of the wrath of God (cf. also *ἐκχέω* in Sir 16:11; 36:6, or *ἐλλαίω* in Deut 29:19).

45 Compare 10:15, referring to the people of God saved from Egypt (cf. Engel, Gebet, 305).

46 Cf. 10:16: Moses.

3.2 Human emotions

In the prayers of the book of Wisdom human emotions play a smaller role than the divine emotions discussed in the previous section. In contrast to prayers in other books of the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint, especially those of the Psalms, only a few emotions are mentioned in the prayers of the book of Wisdom. Human emotions in the prayers are restricted to the performed prayers, to their contexts and to the reports about prayer. At the same time, human emotions are present in the historical flashbacks in the second and third parts of the book, which are interrupted by simple or reflective doxologies. These do not, however, relate to prayers in either their direct form or in their contents.⁴⁷

In the introduction to the great prayer in 9:1–18 presented above, the author allows the fictitious Solomon to say that he prayed to God “with his whole heart” (ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, 8:21). The formulation ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας is a typical Old Testament expression of piety and occurs throughout the Old Testament, not only in prayers.⁴⁸ It stands for the orientation of the whole person towards God and includes the human being with his or her rationality, morality and affectivity. In so far as Solomon prays here “with his whole heart,” he is rooted in the tradition of prayer and confession which, according to Deuteronomy, Moses taught Israel (cf. Deut 4:29; 6:5). Solomon appears as a faithful student of the *Shema’ Yisrael*.

We may detect a more subtle emotional aspect to the reflection upon human insight in Wis 9:13–16, which is embedded into the prayer of chapter 9.⁴⁹ In this passage, the praying Solomon poses the rhetorical question of who can comprehend (ἐνθυμέομαι) God’s will (9:16b). This term ἐνθυμέομαι always resonates with an emotional aspect.⁵⁰ We also find this aspect in a second shorter prayer by Solomon in 7:15 in which Solomon asks God for the ability to adjust things appropriately in his θυμός, i.e. to engage in contemplation (ἐνθυμέομαι). Finally, a reflection upon the limits of human cognitive abilities ends with an indication of negative connotations, namely, that humans can perceive things,

⁴⁷ To a certain degree the reference to Jacob (10:10–12) is an exception, in so far as Jacob, fleeing the wrath of his brother, learns that piety (εὐσέβεια), which includes praying, is more powerful than everything else (cf. Witte, Jakob).

⁴⁸ Cf. LXX; Deut 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10; 2 Chr 15:12; Joel 2:12; Zeph 3:14; Jer 3:10; 24:7; 4 Macc 7:18; 13:13.

⁴⁹ Cf. 1 Kgs 3:9; Prov 30:1–4; Job 11:7–8; 40:3–5; 42:1–6; Eccl 8:16–17; Sir 18:4–7; 24:28–29; 43:27–33; Bar 3:29–31; Isa 40:13–14; 55:8–9; 1 En. 93:11–14.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gen 6:6; Deut 21:11; Josh 6:18; 7:21; 1 Macc 6:8; Sir 16:20 et al.

even those in plain sight, only with effort (πόνος, 9:16).⁵¹ In the reports about prayers, and in particular the act of praying, we can find human emotions in six passages (7:7; 10:20; 11:4; 18:9; 19:8–10[11] and in 13:17–19 with 14:1).

In 7:7 Solomon reports his prayers (εὐχόμεαι, ἐπικαλέομαι) for insight and wisdom. The context of his request is the recognition of his common creatureliness and mortality (7:1, cf. 9:5). As a consequence of the prayer, Solomon receives the spirit of wisdom, leading to the *passionate love* of wisdom (7:10),⁵² the *joy* of the goods bestowed by wisdom (7:12),⁵³ the transmission of wisdom without *envy* (7:13) and *friendship* with God (7:14). The description of the *conditio humana* in the prologue of Solomon's prayer (7:1–6) mentions only one emotion with an obviously negative connotation: nocturnal *lust* (ἡδονή 7:2)⁵⁴. Nevertheless, the epilogue (7:8–14) mentions a whole set of positive emotions: love, joy, the absence of envy and friendship with God. The wisdom granted as a consequence of prayer not only concerns humans in their reason and ethics, but also releases positive emotions. Incidentally, this emotional aspect of the nature and work of wisdom characterizes the picture of σοφία in the whole book, especially in the hymnic descriptions of wisdom (cf. 7:22–8:9).⁵⁵

In 10:20, pseudo-Solomon reports the praise of God by the Israelites who have left Egypt and are called the "just".⁵⁶ At the same time, the Reed Sea song from Exodus 15 is prosaically summed up as a praising (ὕμνέω) and singing (ἀνέω) with regard to the *name* (cf. Exod 15:3)⁵⁷ and the *hand* of God (cf. Exod 15:6).⁵⁸ The prayer's point of departure is the experience of salvation that expresses itself in the solidarity (ὁμοθυμαδόν) in prayer demonstrated by the rescued. The prayer is made possible by the workings of wisdom, which even opens the mouth of the dumb.⁵⁹ With respect to our present concerns, the emphasis on the fact that this prayer took place ὁμοθυμαδόν is noteworthy: it stresses the contrast between the community of the just (δίκαιοι), represented

⁵¹ On the classification of πόνος (cf. Wis 3:15; 5:1; 8:7, 18; 10:9–10; 15:4; 19:16) as a negative emotion, see Reiterer, *Emotionen*, 283–284.

⁵² Cf. 6:12; 8:2 (φιλέω); Priotto, *Temple*, 268.

⁵³ On "joy" (εὐφραίνομαι/εὐφροσύνη; τέρψις) based on wisdom, see 8:16, 18.

⁵⁴ For a positive use of the term ἡδονή, see 16:20 (in the sense of "pleasant taste"; cf. Herm. 42:3; 48:3). In the background are Exod 16:31 and Num 11:8; cf. Ps (LXX) 77:24.

⁵⁵ In Ben Sira, σοφία appears to be more emotionally charged (cf. Sir 24:1–13; 51:13–30; Ellis, *Gender*, 173–175 passim).

⁵⁶ Compare, as background of this note, Exod 11:2; 12:35.

⁵⁷ Cf. Isa (LXX) 12:4–5; 25:1; Sir (G) 51:10; Esth 13:17 (Add Esth C 10).

⁵⁸ Cf. 3:1; 5:16; 7:16; 10:20; 11:17; 14:6; 16:15; 19:8.

⁵⁹ Cf. Exod 4:10–12; Ps 8:3; Isa 35:6.

by the Israelites at the time of the Exodus on the one hand, and the evil-doers (ἄσεβεῖς), here represented by the Egyptians on the other.⁶⁰ Moreover, the addressees of the book of Wisdom (the “community”) are exhorted to laud and praise God with *one mind*.⁶¹ A similar exhortation may be found in the obligation placed upon the Exodus generation to sing “the praises (αἴνων) of the fathers” on the night of the first Passover in one accord (ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ)⁶², as stipulated by the law (νόμος) (18:9). Against this background, the praise of God appears as a prayer causing and requiring unanimity and solidarity.

A polar opposite to the report of the praise of God by the Exodus generation in 10:20 is to be found in the note of complaint (ἐπικαλέομαι) of the people of God in 11:4, on account of the lack of water in the desert. Here again, the author changes from a report about praying in the third person singular to a direct address of God in the second person singular. In contrast to the template in Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:7–13, the murmuring story becomes a story of prayer by Israel. While, in Exodus 17, Moses, and in Numbers 20 Moses and Aaron, pray, in Wis 11:4 it is the people who pray (cf. Ps 107:4–6). In contrast to Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, there is no mention of any emotions expressed by the Israelites in Wisdom 11. Thus, the book of Wisdom exhibits a double ideal in this report of prayer: first, the prayer of the group and, second, the ideal of the self-controlled sage.⁶³ By the change of address to “You” (11:4b) the Wisdom of Solomon motivates its readers to pray themselves in situations of existential emergency. Moreover, it holds out the prospect of an answer from God, who always finds the appropriate remedy (ἴαμα).

In 19:8–10, the author again refers back to the salvation and to the praise of God at the Reed Sea (cf. Exod 14:30–31; 15:1–21). Here, the praise (αἰνέω) is explicitly accompanied by emotions of joy, described by the metaphors of grazing horses and leaping lambs. The images come very close to the description of the Exodus in Isa 63:13–14 (and in Ps 77:21). Wisdom 19 shares, together with numerous Psalms, the depiction of corporeal jubilation in response to rescue.⁶⁴ The Wisdom of Solomon also generalizes the template in Exod 15:20, by applying the dance of Miriam and the women to the whole people.⁶⁵ The close connection between the experience of rescue – here especially qualified as a “miracle”

⁶⁰ Cf. 18:5, 12.

⁶¹ Cf. Jdt 4:12; 15:9; Acts 4:24; Rom 15:6; 2 En. 19:6; Ascen. Isa. 7:15; 9:28.

⁶² Compare, in contrast to this: 10:5.

⁶³ Contrast the unjust “Cain” (10:3–5) and “Esau” (10:10) who are moved by wrath.

⁶⁴ Compare in detail Abart, Herz. On the image of the “leaping lambs”, see also Ps 114:4, 6; Mal 3:20.

⁶⁵ So with Engel, Buch, 298.

(θαυμαστά τέρατα, cf. Exod 15:11)⁶⁶ – the praise of God, and the remembrance of God’s action is characteristic for an understanding of prayer in the book of Wisdom. Θεωρέω, αίνέω and μνησκόω unite the book of Wisdom as a whole. At the same time, the joy of the Exodus generation is an encouragement and a reminder of joy for the contemporary reader, and functions as a mirror of the eschatological joy of the redeemed people in the future (cf. Mal 3:20). By contrast, the remembrance of Israel’s supplication or, more precisely, demand (αἰτέω) for more and different varieties of food in the wilderness in 19:11 is negatively qualified as ἐπιθυμία (“desire”)⁶⁷ in line with Num 11:4, 33–34 (cf. Exod 16,13; Ps 78:18–31).

That the most extensive reflection about prayer in the Wisdom of Solomon is found in the second excursus on the nonsense of idolatry (13:1–15:17[19]) is significant. With a total of seven different terms for prayer⁶⁸ in 13:17–14:1, the absent prayers of the ones who lack correct knowledge of God are described ironically (14:1). The objects of their requests include possessions, marriage, children, health, protection when travelling, and economical success. These petitions are not criticized by pseudo-Solomon on account of what is requested, but rather because they are addressed to the wrong addressee; they do not petition the living God but self-made idols. The book of Wisdom continues the polemic against idols familiar from Deutero-Isaiah,⁶⁹ yet emphasizes vitality⁷⁰ as a criterion for the one and true God (12:13, 27)⁷¹. The image of God as the creator of the universe and the Old Testament prohibition against worshipping God by means of a cultic image are further elaborations of a monotheistic perspective. Since the book of Wisdom has a strong emphasis on the vitality of God as “being” (13:1, cf. Exod [LXX] 3:14–15), it retains the traditional Israelite-Jewish image of the God as a person. Precisely on account of this personalism, the book of Wisdom can speak about the emotions of God.

A lack of knowledge of the true God becomes evident when people are not ashamed (οὐκ αἰσχύνεται) to worship idols (13:17). Shame or, better, the absence of shame is the only emotional reference that arises within the framework of the

66 On the relevance of wonder in the sapiential books of the Hebrew Bible, see Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder*.

67 Cf. Wis 4:12; 6:17, 20; 16:2, 21 and, relatedly, 6:11, 13; 16:3. On the role of the ἐπιθυμία/*libido* in the classical theory of emotions, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* II.12; Cicero, *Tusc.* IV.6.

68 See ἀξιώω, (13:18); αἰτέω (13:19); ἐπιβοάω (14:1); ἐπικαλέομαι (13:17); ἰκετεύω (13:18); προσεύχομαι (13:17); προσλαλέω (13:17).

69 Isa 40:18–25; 44:9–21.

70 Cf. 15:17; 16:13.

71 Cf. Deut 4:35, 39; 32:39; Isa 44:6; 45:5–8; 46:9.

discussion of misguided prayer.⁷² As a natural human emotion, shame can prevent one from worshipping idols. Once again, the close connection between human rationality, affectivity and morality envisaged by the book of Wisdom can be seen⁷³. Knowledge, feeling and ethical behaviour all pertain to humanity. *True humanity* distinguishes itself by knowledge and worship of the *true God*.

4 Conclusions

For the book of Wisdom, prayer belongs to the human as a creature, created by the living God and in relationship with this God (2:23; 9:2–3). The *prerequisites* of prayer are the awareness of one's own status as creature and the acceptance of one's own finitude (7:1–6), as well as an experience of divine action (10:20–21; 11:4; 19:8–10). Prayer *enabled* by true knowledge of God is wisdom (10:20–21). The *addressee* of prayer may only be the one, true and living God. Prayers not addressed to him are ultimately not prayers at all, but self-deception (13:17–14:1). The *aim* of prayer is communion with God realized through friendship with God, justice and immortality (7:14; 15:3). As a *reaction* to the works of God, prayer – be it petition, thanksgiving, lament or praise – is a response to God himself (18:20–25).

Emotions play only a minor role in the prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon. Where divine emotions such as *ἀγάπη*, *ἔλεος* and *ὀργή/θυμός/χόλος* are mentioned, they are deeply rooted in the Israelite-Jewish tradition of a personal God and in the metaphorical language of religion. Thus, the book of Wisdom preserves the image of a personal God, who is active in his creation and responds to it, in a context in which pagan philosophers emphasize that the gods are unemotional and indifferent.

The human emotions mentioned in the prayers include *love* of wisdom (7:10), *unanimity* and *solidarity* in prayer (10:20), *joy* at the experience of divine rescue (19:8–10) and *shame* as a natural feeling of difference between the creator⁷⁴ and the creature, between the living and the dead (13:18).

As is true of prayers elsewhere, the explicit mention of emotion in the prayers of the book of Wisdom serves, first, to provide self-assurance to the one

⁷² In contrast to Ben Sira, where the debate about shame plays an important role (4:20–21; 5:14–15; 13:7; 20:22–23; 20:26; 21:22; 22:25; 25:22; 29:14; 41:16–17; 42:1; 51:18, 29; cf. Ellis, *Gender*, 64–69; 134–137 *passim*), the book of Wisdom deals with shame only in 13:17.

⁷³ Compare the continuation of the excursus in 14:22–31.

⁷⁴ Cf. 2:23; 9:1; 13:3, 5; 11:17; 16:24.

praying; second, to determine his or her relationship to God; third, to articulate the particular circumstances of his or her life; and, fourth, to attempt to persuade God to act. As *emotions refracted through literature*,⁷⁵ they characterize the particular protagonists of the text. At the same time, this four-fold function of the emotions is directed towards the addressees of the Wisdom of Solomon. The degree to which the readers participate in the emotions mentioned, and identify with them, depends upon the degree to which they are affected by the consciousness of existence („Daseinsverständnis“)⁷⁶ articulated in the prayers of the book. There are two reasons why only a few human emotions are mentioned in the Wisdom of Solomon: a form-critical one and a traditio-historical one. With respect to the former, the book of Wisdom contains no laments or prayers of praise, in which emotions are an important element of the genre. With respect to the latter, Wisdom shares with Egyptian sapiential instructions and pagan philosophical images, primarily Platonic, Cynic and Stoic ones, the ideal of the sage who exercises self-control, who is less characterized by emotions than by insight and an attitude grounded in love.⁷⁷

Abstract

This article provides an overview of terms for prayer in the Wisdom of Solomon, classifies the prayers in Wisdom according to form, function and contents, and evaluates the names of God and the divine epithets in these prayers. It traces the essential elements of Wisdom's theory of prayer and identifies the divine and human emotions expressed in the prayers within their literary and traditio-historical contexts. Special attention is devoted to a) the divine emotions of “wrath” and “mercy”; b) an anthropological and theological interpretation of the prayer of Solomon in Wis 8:21–9:18; and c) the text-pragmatic function of selected human affects and emotions mentioned in the book of Wisdom such as “love”, “joy”, “envy”, “desire” and “shame”.

75 See Gillmayer-Bucher, *Emotion*, 283–285, who speaks here of „Manifestation in der verbalen Thematisierung“.

76 Cf. Stock, *Emotionen*.

77 Cf. 6:18; 10:5, 10–12 (see Witte, Jakob).

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