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“DWELLING TOGETHER” AND DESCENDING TO ASCEND:

YACHAD, YASHAB, AND YARAD IN PSALM 133

Aidan Putnam

To what extent can Psalm 133 be read as a generic commentary on community (reflecting anthropological claims), and to what extent must it be read as a prescription for cultic practices (reflecting theological claims)?

Perhaps the images of community, worship, and sacred places can legitimately be interpreted metaphorically. That is, these images are used as symbols of blessing; symbols which could be transposed across community worship practices. But what would allow for that interpretation, and what would limit it? To explore these parameters and perimeters, this paper will consider the penultimate “Song of Ascent” in relation to its canonical cluster and the lexical linkages it shows across prophetic and wisdom literature. I will also consider the differing accounts of community and worship evoked by the psalm’s placement and possible use by the Qumran community. Finally, I seek to establish the complexity and ambiguity of its varied imagery, in order to uncover a subtext of reorientation of faith after exile.

Through this exploration it will be shown that the symbolic subtext of Psalm 133 can legitimately be understood as a focused but not exclusive exhortation for future behavior, rather than as simply a thanksgiving of praise for established cultic activity.

METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

In considering the feasibility of the claim for such a non-exclusive exhortation, one is drawn into the tension between univocal and universalist readings of the psalm, especially regarding the use of the term ‘unity’ (yachad) in each reading. Such tensions open various questions and necessitate further examination of this term. Are there any boundaries around such an exhortation? Does the psalm praise just any type of unity? If not, what type of unity would be excluded? Some scholars, such as Booij, disagree with any universalist readings, and argue that 133 should be read squarely as a plea for national unity after the Babylonian exile. This historical reading would indeed give depth to what could seem like a superficial beatitude of the priestly imagery. “The situation which the author had in mind can scarcely be other than the gathering of Israelites on the occasion of a religious festival in Jerusalem.”¹ If that is the case, and Booij does make a compelling argument based on his reading of the structure and progression of the psalm’s similes, then what would prevent future readers of the psalm from applying it to their own situation? Does adapting and adopting a song of an oppressed people constitute cultural imperialism, and if so, what would be the consequences?

It is difficult to rally behind a univocal reading of the psalm, where only one meaning can be ascribed and only one intention can be understood, especially considering the life of faith in the covenant community, which always already involves multiple considerations of layered authority, demands of interpretation, and standards of conduct, but also when considering the dialogical structure of the Psalter itself. For instance, the introductory two psalms establish a complex reading, whereby “all the psalms dealing with the living of life under the Lord must be understood and recited in the light of the reign of the Lord, and all psalms concerned with the kingship of

the Lord are to be understood and recited with the torah in mind.”² In a similar framework on a smaller scale, the superscription of 133 associates it with David, and so we are presented with a messianic interpretation from the start, especially since the placement of the Ascent Psalms suggests that they were composed after the fall of the Davidic monarchy.

A look at two psalms surrounding 133 can establish some of these connections, so as to allow for a more universalist reading of cultic imagery. Furthermore, I will seek to show that the symbols of blessing and worship in the body of Psalm 133 relate more closely to the wisdom genre of the torah psalms than the thanksgiving / praise genre of the historical or priestly psalms. After this canonical interpretation, I will follow with a close reading of the terms “dwelling unitedly” (yashab / yachad) in the first verse, and then will conclude with a presentation of the two main images of the rest of the psalm, “oil” and “dew,” through the interpretive lenses established in the first verse.

“DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY” - SITUATING COMMUNAL WORSHIP

There are a number of significant lexical links joining the last three Ascent Psalms [132, 133, 134]. The same word is used for David’s descendants “sitting” on the throne, YHWH “dwelling” in Zion, and the “dwelling” in unity of 133. Each psalm focuses on Zion: in 132, YHWH chooses to dwell there, the people journey there to worship in 133, and YHWH blesses his servants from Zion in 134. Indeed, each psalm emphasizes the “blessing” found in Zion: blessings of material needs in 132, the blessing of life in 133, and in return the people are told to bless YHWH in 134. In particular, “the reference to dew in Psalm 133 accentuates this blessing of Zion, because dew is used as a symbol of resurrection in Isaiah 29:19.”³ Such links would seem to situate our psalm ever more closely to the

cultic life of the temple situated on Zion. Are the “Songs of Ascent” thereby narrowing in on Jerusalem?

At the same time that the lexicon of 133 attaches it to other Songs of Ascent, however, it also can serve as a transition out of that cluster. The coupling of “good” and “pleasant” in verse one is a pairing that occurs only in three other places in the entire Bible (Job 36:11; Pss 135:3; 147:1). “Psalm 133, like Psalm 134, is rather short, and it is significant that so much of its vocabulary, even the unique words, is shared by nearby psalms.”⁴ As for the usage in Job, it also stands in a transitional passage. During Elihu’s speech to Job, the last of the “friends” addressed before YHWH appears in the whirlwind, “good” and “pleasant” are used in a wisdom saying to exhort Job to obedience. Is this usage ironic, in light of the theophany to come? If so, what would that mean for its appearance in our psalm?

These lexical links serve to underpin the thematic connections among these three psalms. Since the Ascent cluster comes after the conclusion of Book III and the ostensible end of the Davidic monarchy, what significance can we take from the repeated allusions to David in 132-133? Whereas 132 petitions on David’s behalf in the body of the text, only the superscription in 133 refers to David. It would seem that the blessing of the Lord’s presence, asked for in 132, is applied to David’s priestly descendants in 133. “In 132:9 and 16 the priests are clothed with righteousness and salvation [...] In 133:2, the imagery of oil being poured over Aaron evokes the description of a priestly anointing.”⁵ Finally, the last of the Ascent Psalms, 134, exhorts the “servants of the Lord” to bless God in Zion. Who is to be understood as the “servants” here? Have we gone from the king as intercessor for the people, to the priests as intercessors for the people, to the people themselves addressing God directly? To respond to such questions as these, which take up the issues of object and intention, we have to ask other questions, ones that relate to the issues of context and situation. In contrast to Armstrong’s

claim that the lexical links among these concluding Ascent Psalms demonstrate a *sitz-im-leben* of worship in Jerusalem, other scholars critique this nationalist approach, even claiming that the word “Zion” in 133:3b is a lingering scribal error.⁶ The immediate textual context, however, would seem to undermine this critique, as the images of blessing, anointing, and dew each have their own resonances with the capital’s mountain, as seen above. Nevertheless, even if the geographical location is asserted, what in the psalm would limit our reading to a strict literal interpretation? Could there be other signals that would prompt an additional, metaphorical, approach?

Again, raising these questions brings us back to the beginning. How we are to read this psalm in part depends on what kind of psalm it is. While understanding that genres and categories are artificial constructs, they do lend an insight into the choices made in the psalm’s use. If we read 133 as a song of praise or a song of thanksgiving, then we consequently have an opportunity to ask about the preceding events that prompted the praise or thanksgiving. Seeing that 133 appears after the conclusion of the third book of psalms, we might be well-founded in taking that preceding event to be the return to Judah after the Babylonian exile.⁷ However, if we read 133 as a wisdom psalm, then what we have here is partially a description of beatitude and partially a prescription for future actions.

To guide our reading of 133, let us consider how it opens. Similar to how Psalms 1 and 2 serve as dual “gates” for reading the Psalter as a whole, the first two full words of Psalm 133 (after the superscription and invocation) serve as doorposts for our entrance into these three compact verses. “The term *mah-tobb*, ‘what is good’, appears seven times in the Bible, mostly in the Wisdom Literature,”⁸ and can be used as an exclamation, a prescription for practical behavior, or an invitation for philosophical debate (as seen in Job 34:4). Most significantly, *mah-tobb* appears in Micah 6:8, the famous source

of “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.” Is it possible, then, to read the opening of Psalm 133 as a similar exhortation, both defining what it means to “dwell together in unity” and prescribing ongoing behavior?

If it is an exhortation, then the reference to “brothers” could possibly surpass mere familial ties. Indeed, *achiyim* signifies both literal relation and metaphorical affinity or resemblance. Scholars are divided about whether this usage in 133 should be read as the “brotherhood of tribes in Jerusalem,” or, more generally, “people who are living on a joint parcel of land.”⁹ As for *achiyim*, it is used in many different contexts in the Old Testament, too many to count. The nearest usage to our psalm, however, is in Psalm 122, one of the first Psalms of Ascent. There, it is used in tandem with *rea*, often translated “companion.” Based on how parallelism often emphasizes previously stated terms, rather than introduce a new one, it would seem, then, that “brethren” is used in the Ascent Psalms as a synonym for “companions.”

Even if we have an idea of who these people are, what are they doing together when they “dwell”? Whatever it is precisely, it seems that it is prescribed behavior, because of the use of *mah-tobb*, discussed above. Furthermore, there appears to be a direct link to worshipping at the temple, based on other lexical links with nearby psalms. “In the two other verses in which the adjectives ‘good’ (*tobb*) and ‘pleasant’ (*na'im*) appear, it is in a similar context of Jerusalem and the Temple. In Ps 135:2-3 we read: ‘You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord, for the Lord is good [*tobb*]; sing praises to his name for it is pleasant [*na'im*].’ And in Ps 147:1-2 we have again: ‘Hallelujah; for it is good [*tobb*] to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant [*na'im*] to sing glorious praise. The Lord builds Jerusalem, he gathers together the dispersed of Israel.”¹⁰ Does this mean, then, that in Psalm 133 we have strictly a testimony to the return of the exiles from Babylon? Is

that what it would mean for them to “dwell together in unity?” Reading 133 with this lens would seem to give our psalm an added depth beyond the surface portrait of blessing and abundance. Far more than a naïve celebration of unity, we would have also here the relief from suffering and the joy of unexpected new life. Indeed, “the ones who give thanks and sing genuinely new songs must be naïve or they would not bother to sing songs and to give thanks. But it is a praise in which the anguish of disorientation is not forgotten, removed or absent.”¹¹ Still, is this the only interpretation that can legitimately be given to these lines? Is there a parallel, metaphorical exhortation here, one that could be applied to communities in differing contexts?

In the Qumran scrolls, we have evidence of an attempt to do exactly that.

Much as the torah psalm 119’s repositioning after the bulk of the Ascent Psalms signals a differing destination for the image of pilgrimage, 133 itself was a further reposition in 11QPs^a, to the effect that it evokes new lexical links with its surrounding texts. Instead of concluding the cluster of Ascent Psalms, which 11QPs^a largely preserves, 133 here stands in the third-to-final grouping of songs and hymns, which end with a messianic theme that supersedes the Davidic covenant.¹² Positioned between Psalms 141 and 144, 133 provides a striking contrast. Both 141 and 144 are written as prayers of an individual; 141 petitions for protection from evil; and 144 bears a predominant martial tone, while 133 consists of a continual beatitude spoken in the voice of a wisdom saying or praise song dominated by pastoral imagery.¹³ With such thematic and structural differences highlighted (which could not have been accidental, due to 11QPs^a’s retention of the superscription “a song of ascent,”) ¹⁴ 133 is here put into the position of addressing a context broader than the return from the Babylonian exile. This decision raises central questions.

Instead of exhorting the divided nation of Israel to unity, could 133 be read as a hymn to a more universal companionship? If so, what would legitimate that reading, and to what extent? If not, what would limit that reading, and why?

Brueggemann and Bellinger claim that in 133, “a family saying has been brought into the context of a community on pilgrimage to Zion.”¹⁵ Can we take that claim at face value? How do we know that the “brethren” referred to in verse 1 is specifically referring to family relations? Secondly, while the superscript again refers to the “ascents” of the current cluster, the claim that the songs were to be sung on pilgrimages to Jerusalem is speculative at best. Granted, the development of the themes and images of place, travel, expectation and celebration is marked throughout the cluster, and 133 as a conclusion to that pilgrimage is an appealing idea, but we simply do not know.

What is more, the alternative arrangements of the psalm scrolls at the Qumran caves witness to a different usage. Further research is needed to ascertain the changes in prayer, liturgy and worship in the second Temple period. The current study is focused on the text(s) that had emerged by the era contemporaneous with Jesus. How those texts had developed and what they had meant in the intervening centuries is unclear.

What we do have seems to be a wisdom saying set in the context of communal worship. Note that the similes of verses 2 and 3 do not directly claim that priestly blessing or worship at Jerusalem constitutes blessedness. Rather, the similes elaborate on the mah-tobb of verse 1, “when brethren dwell together in unity.” Again, the question is the quality and content of such “dwelling.” Brueggemann and Bellinger assert that this “dwelling” is itself a metaphor for temple worship, and the lexical links identified by Assis seem to support this claim. Why, then, would verse 2 take the form of a simile, rather than a synecdoche? Having the part represent the

whole is a common trope of Psalter poeticism, after all. If temple worship was the object of “dwelling in unity,” the second verse could very well have discarded the prefix *ka*, the “particle of comparison” linking the brethren with the anointing image.

On the other hand, some authors do not translate the *yashab* of 1b as “dwelling” at all, but rather have it as “sitting,” in which case the image of a pilgrimage could be seen as more explicit. “Dwelling,” it would seem, implies a more lasting community. In his criticism of this view, Booiij points out that “the particle *gam*, ‘also’, points to a situation that suits brotherhood pre-eminently,” in that it emphasizes the concluding qualifier of the verse, *yachad*, ‘unitedly.’ “For a situation like that,” Booiij continues, presumably referring to the *yachad*, “‘dwelling together’ qualifies better than a momentary ‘sitting together.’”¹⁶ What is more, you can easily notice the wordplay between *yashab* and the adverbial *yachad*. Such a rhyme serves to emphasize the dual stability and dynamism of the action at issue.

To review our work so far: we’ve looked briefly at 133 in the context of the surrounding Ascent Psalms, which serves to both situate it in the temple at Jerusalem and generalize its action. We’ve looked closely at the invocation “How good and pleasant it is” to see how it establishes our psalm as a piece of Wisdom literature. We’ve questioned the extent to which these terms depend on a definition of cultic worship and how far they might go towards moral exhortation, as in the prophet Micah. We’ve considered the possible identities of the “brethren” in verse 1, whether they are linked by blood, kinship, or affinity. We’ve asked what constitutes the “dwelling together in unity,” whether the verse must be read as Temple worship. With the evidence as ambiguous as it is, we are not in a position to draw conclusions. However, I’ve focused closely on the first verse to orient and guide our reading of the last two.

SYMBOLISM IN “DESCENT” - OIL, EXPERIENCE, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

The rest of this study will focus on two of the main images of the concluding verses, namely “oil” (or “ointment”) and “dew.” In large part, I will leave aside other considerations, for instance, the figure of Aaron, mention of his beard and garments, or the use of the two mountains, except insofar as they elaborate on the significance of the “oil” and “dew.”

First, a structural overview, in order to venture a *sitz-im-leben*: this transitional Ascent Psalm concludes with three images of descent. Perhaps it shouldn’t surprise that the root *yamad*, “descend,” plays a close companion to the *yashab* and *yachad* (“dwelling” and “unitedly,” respectively) of the first verse. This repetition of sound serves a dual purpose, both to emphasize the content of the message and to emphasize the artificiality of the medium. Such a dual enhancing/distancing, in turn, reinforces the transcendent nature of the wisdom saying. In effect, “the use of the participle ‘coming down’ three times suggests that the hearers/readers look up to the heavens whence comes the divine help and blessing.”¹⁷

The question is whether the divine help “descends” only on the Temple in Jerusalem, or if it descends on brethren dwelling in unity, wherever they may be. To evaluate that issue, it may help to again consider the historical context.

There is scant disagreement that the psalm was composed after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC and the subsequent deportation into exile. But was it composed in Babylon, or after Cyrus’ decree and the return to the homeland? Assis points out that verse three “expresses the standpoint of those living outside of Judah, for it speaks about it as ‘there.’”¹⁸ Whether or not we read this as indicative of the place of composition, it does indicate that the voicing of the psalmist is at some distance or remove from the “mountains of Zion.” With such a distancing effect in mind, we can look closer at the text

to see what the images might suggest about an intended audience. Some scholars assert categorically that the psalm is intended to encourage and exhort pilgrims on the way to worship at the Temple, while others claim that the message is meant for those exiles returning from Babylon, while still others speculate that the purpose of the poem is to unify the fractured nation as the Temple was being rebuilt. Is there any reason to rule any of those possibilities out? If not, is there any reason not to continue to adopt the psalm and adapt its interpretation in subsequent scenarios? Indeed, the Qumran arrangement would seem to testify to such intent. But what does the text itself indicate?

Assis poses the problem that, while most interpreters of our psalm attest to the symbolism of good feeling, abundance, and prosperity attached to the image of oil, few have attempted “to explain in what way [...] these images illustrate the concept of dwelling together.”¹⁹ He cites the use of oil in priestly sanctification (e.g., Ex 29; Lev 8:12), general well-being (Deut 28:40; Pss 104 and 23), and even sexual attraction (Song 1:3; Est 2:12). It’s unclear why he neglects to note the consecrating use of oil in the story of Jacob’s recognition of divine presence at Bethel (Gen 28:18). Especially significant for our purposes is the narrator’s refiguring of this consecration in the subsequent covenant dialogue of Gen 35 and its reapplication of the oil imagery:

God said to [Jacob]: I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed an assembly of nations, will stem from you, and kings will issue from your loins. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you; and to your descendants after you I will give the land [...] In the place where God had spoken with him, Jacob set up a sacred pillar, and upon it he made a libation and poured out oil. (vv. 11-14, NABRE)

Considering the use of familiar imagery in 133:1, it seems that this symbolic linkage would be legitimate. But do the covenant language

and cultic imagery refute any claim to reading “brethren” as general affinity rather than specific familial association? I wouldn’t want to lean too hard on the phrase “assembly of nations” in the above passage from Genesis, but it is suggestive, especially in light of the subsequent links with Isaiah’s prophecy of eternal life and universal worship of YHWH.

On the other hand, Armstrong points out that the Qumran psalter positions our 133 immediately after 141, which also uses the image of “oil on the head.”² However, 141 specifies that the “rebuke of the righteous” is the target term of the metaphor. Here again we have a symbolic use of oil contextualized in the communal life of faith. “Both use the image of anointing the head with oil to speak of relatedness between people,” but 133’s use is placid while 141’s is somewhat contentious: “in 11QPs^a, this lexical link provides two counterimages, one positive and one negative.”² Based on this dual use of the symbol, I would advance the claim that the “oil” image could be deployed – and read – in multivalent ways. I would hesitate to assert that it necessarily and exclusively refers specifically to the priestly cult.

At the same time, we do see “oil” used immediately before reference to Aaron, the prototypical figure of priestly worship at the Temple. But how is this figure used in 133, especially with the “beard” and “robe” images? Brown-Driver-Briggs establishes Aaron’s “beard,” *zaqan*, as evocative of “aged,” *zaqen*. Here we have another wordplay which seems to suggest that the referents are intended to be more open than conclusive. Within the Psalter itself, *zaqen* is used in layered terms referring to righteousness: “Neither in my youth, nor now in old age [*zaqen*], have I ever seen the just abandoned, or his children begging for bread” (Ps 37:25). Could our psalm 133 be read as if to say, then, that “dwelling together in unity” is not to be imagined as an immediate situation, but rather a complex of relationships that develop over years?

The paratactic style of verse 2 itself seems to suggest an outward layering of meaning. These “segments coordinated without connecting particles” can simultaneously serve to generate “a progression of thought that can serve any number of purposes from clarification to intensification, even deconstruction.”² In 133, could this progression be read to mean a complexification of the figure of Aaron, so that, more than representing just the priestly cult, he also stands in for the righteousness sought after through years of communal living and worship?

The third image in verse 2, “collar,” *peh*, also develops links which evoke multiple associations. Literally, *peh* means “mouth,” and is used elsewhere in the Ascent Psalms to celebrate deliverance from exile (126:2). But there also can be negative implications, as derived in Ps 135 (the first to follow the MT arrangement of the Ascent cluster), as well as in the psalms which surround 133 in the Qumran arrangement. Psalm 135 derides the mouths of idols, which do not speak or breathe; could the collar of Aaron’s robe be used as a contrast, to emphasize the life bestowed by “dwelling together in unity”? Similarly, 141 and 144 (which bracket 133 in 11QPs^a) use *peh* in a negative way: to illustrate the entrance to Sheol (in 141:7) in reference to foreigners “whose mouths speak lies” (144:8 and 11). “Again, Psalm 133 has the only positive use of the term.”²

To summarize, verse two: has established the “downward” motif of descent, in fruitful contrast to the general upward inclination of the Ascent Psalms; has introduced imagery which links to consecration, experience, and righteousness; and, thirdly, has developed a dialectic of positive associations which could be read to refer to and counteract the negative associations of the linked terms (especially as demonstrated by the Qumran arrangement).

Such rich usage of symbolism would seem to work against a reading which attempts to pin the psalm down to one particular, exclusive interpretation.

Symbolism in “descent” – dew, mountains, and command

Finally, I would like to look briefly at a couple of the images used in verse 3, which continues the “descent” (yarad) motif. Here we have the “dew of Hermon” and “mountains of Zion,” which are brought together in an imaginative connection. “One need not suppose that the psalmist imagined that the dew which fell upon the mountains of Zion was physically influenced by Mount Hermon. What he probably meant is that the life-producing effect of harmonious living is as though the most copious dew fell upon the mountains of Zion.”²⁴ Since Hermon is regularly covered with heavy snow or dew, the psalmist seems to suggest, with the simile of the dew from there “descending” on Mount Zion, a particularly abundant watering of an otherwise usually arid landscape.²⁵ This counter-intuitive combination of images is expanded by investigation of the use of “dew” itself.

“In some texts dew is a symbol of what is refreshing and invigorating, but in Isaiah 26:19 it symbolizes the resurrection and immortality.”²⁶ What’s especially important for our purposes is the context in which Isaiah uses dew to symbolize this particular blessing. A few verses before the “your dew is a dew of light, and you cause the land of shades to give birth” of verse 19, we have “On this mountain [the Lord] will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations” (25:7) and “You have increased the nation, Lord, you have increased the nation, have added to your glory; you have extended far all the boundaries of the land” (26:17). While these universalist themes do not necessarily establish “dew” as a symbol of YHWH’s blessing on all nations, perhaps they cannot rule out such a reading.

Once again, the Qumran arrangement provides an example of alternative emphases which would decenter focus from Zion and the Temple cult. Armstrong points out that, while the Masoretic Text has v. 3b as “There YHWH commands the blessing: life forevermore,”

both 11QPs^a and 11QPs^b read “There YHWH commands the blessing forevermore: peace upon Israel.”²⁷ While this divergence ostensibly acts against claims for the hope of resurrection, it also does not directly contradict the theme, leaving the possible connection with the Isaian text intact. What is more, as we have seen before, 11QPs^a follows 133 with 144, which begins by showing YHWH in military guise. “The juxtaposition of these two psalms provides yet another instance in which Psalm 133 contains a positive counter-image to an adjacent psalm” in the Qumran collection.²⁸

With contextual juxtaposition beyond the psalm and symbolic contrast within it, 133:3 offers a rich and varied field for interpretation. Rather than closing down readings at the conclusion of the short poem, the use of parallels, repetition, and simile serves to suggest an overabundance of meaning, an elusiveness of identifiers, or a spreading of signification which cannot be contained by any one word, cult, or community. Such a brief, compact set of verses to stand at multiple junctures!

CONCLUSION

This study has considered genre affiliation, historical referents, practical implications, and theological claims to advance the possibility that 133 could fruitfully and legitimately be read as a paean to communal worship of the God of Zion, a worship which goes beyond familial, cultic, or dogmatic determination. Particularly allusive are the lexical links of that illustrate “dwelling in unity” as a process, rather than static goal. From the initial invocation, through wordplay and simile, into prophetic association and with immortality in mind, 133 demonstrates in form as much as content the varied, multivalent, and at times contrasting nature of human striving for faith. While the Psalmist’s intent and audience cannot

be determined with certainty at this time, the open-ended style of wisdom saying, parataxis, and divergent arrangements also cannot categorically rule out an interpretation of 133 which would allow for covenantal development. This possibility has obvious implications for Christian religious practice, especially monasticism, as shown as early as the writings of Basil the Great. Perhaps he, like us, should not have been discouraged to learn that the numeric value of shemen, the “ointment” that ran down Aaron’s beard, is the same gematria as that for mishkan, “tabernacle.”²⁹ After all, while monastic life isn’t always obviously characterized by the blessing of “brethren dwelling together in unity,” the tabernacle, or tent of meeting, itself wasn’t always filled with oil and incense.

Notes

- 1 Thijs Booij, “Psalm 133: ‘behold, how good and how pleasant.’” *Biblica*; 83 no. 2 (2002): 59.
- 2 James Luther Mays, “The Place of the Torah – Psalms in the Psalter,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 1 (1987): 10.
- 3 Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity: The Placement of Psalms 133 and 134 in Two Different Psalms Collections,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*; 131, no. 3 (2012): 497-498; cf. Mitchel Dahood, *Psalms* 101-150. New York: Doubleday, 1970.
- 4 *ibid.* 498.
- 5 *ibid.* 499.
- 6 Elie Assis “Family and community as substitutes for the temple after its destruction: new readings in Psalms 127 and 133,” *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 85 no. 1 (2009): 58.
- 7 Alastair G. Hunter, *An Introduction to the Psalms*. (New York: Continuum, 2007), 36.
- 8 Gershon Brin, “The Significance of the Form Mah-ttob,” *Vetus Testamentum*

38 (1988): 462.

9 Assis, “Family and community as substitutes for the temple,” 59.

10 *ibid.* 60.

11 William H. Bellinger and Walter Brueggemann, *Psalms*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16.

12 Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity,” 491.

13 *ibid.* 506.

14 *ibid.* 499.

15 Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 559.

16 Booi, “Psalm 133,” 260.

17 Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 559.

18 Assis, “Family and community as substitutes for the temple,” 59.

19 *ibid.* 59.

20 Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity,” 501.

21 *ibid.* 502-3; cf. Ulrich Dahmen, *Psalmen und Psalter Rezeption im Frühjudentum*, (Brill, 2003).

22 Walter Brown, *Psalms*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 11-12

23 Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity,” 503.

24 Dahood, “Psalms 101-150,” 252.

25 *ibid.* 252.

26 *ibid.* 252.

27 Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity,” 505.

28 *ibid.* 505.

29 Hieronymous, J. Zohara Meyerhoff. *Sanctuary of the Divine Presence: Hebraic Teachings on Initiation and Illumination*. Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2012.,

n.a.