

# Manus Velatae: The Significance of IQS vii, 13-14, 15

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The following lines from IQS 7, although they have been translated and interpreted, have not as yet, it seems to me, been fully or adequately understood:

ואשר יוציא ידו מתוחת כנדרו והואה ... 13  
פוח ונראתה ערותו ונענש שלושים יום 14  
המוציא את ידו שמאולו לשוב בה ונענש עשרת ימים ... 15

The first question raised is the meaning of *ydw* in line 13. A number of translators and commentators<sup>1</sup> take it in its usual meaning 'his hand' and let the matter drop without explaining the nature of the transgression: Others<sup>2</sup> understand the word in what they argue is another meaning, '*membrum virile*'. Thus Vermes<sup>3</sup> puts quotation marks around hand, but his note, "sticking to proper behavior when satisfying a natural necessity," is itself not very satisfying. Marcus indicates that his understanding of this use is based on the thought "in some rabbinic circles"<sup>4</sup> that such is the meaning of *yd* in Isaiah 57:8. Braun,<sup>5</sup> with gratitude to L. Rost for the references, justifies his interpretation by citations from Gesenius and Köhler. These lexicographers, however, are far more cautious than Braun's note suggests, for their entries bristle with interrogation marks and the former refers to Robertson-Smith's<sup>6</sup>

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1 Theodor Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* revised and enlarged edition (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), 62 and 110, n. 64; Millar Burrow, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), 380; Johann Maier, *Die Texte Vom Toten Meer* (Munich/Basel: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1960), 1:35; 2:28, n. 13,14, 15; P. Wernberg-Møller, *The Manual of Discipline* (Leiden, 1957), 118, n. 30, 31, 32; G. Vermes, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (New York: Desclees Co., 1956), 146. These references are not intended to be all-inclusive. Citations of others are found in the notes to these works.

2 A. Dupont-Sommer, *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte* (Paris: Payot, 1959), 104-5, n. 6; H. Braun, *Spätjüdisch-häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus*, vol. 1, *Das Spätjudentum* (Tubingen, 1958), 40-41, n. 3b; R. Marcus, "Textual Notes on the Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," *JNES* 11 (1952). Again, this is not an all-inclusive list.

3 Vermes, *Discoveries*, 146.

4 He does not indicate what circles are referred to.

5 Braun, *Radikalismus*, 40-41, n. 36.

6 Gesenius and Köhler-Baumgartner, s.v., *yd*; W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 437: "Many commentators suppose that *yd* 'hand' in Isaiah 57, 8 means the phallus. This is the merest conjecture . . ."; cf., J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (Anchor Bible), 158.

emphatic denial of such a meaning. Given then the tenuous nature of this latter explanation, it is preferable to retain the ordinary meaning of the word. To what the nature of the transgression is we shall soon return.

The second problem surrounds the word *pwḥ* in line 14. The choice is between taking it from the root *pwḥ* 'to blow', or from the root *pḥḥ* 'to be in tatters or rags'.<sup>8</sup> Further, the subject of the action is not clear. Is it the *bgd*<sup>9</sup> or the man?<sup>10</sup>

The third question arises as to the meaning in line 15 of *šwḥ bb*. Again the commentators differ. Most understand it to mean 'to gesticulate', although one, Wernberg-Møller, deriving it from the root *šḥḥ* 'to crouch', 'bow down', translates it "to recline on it [his left hand]." Bartke<sup>11</sup> emends the text to *šwḥ* with the meaning 'beschwichtigen'. Of course, the root does not mean to 'gesticulate' but 'to muse', 'complain', 'talk about', hence the phrase whose literal meaning could be 'to speak with it [the left hand]' is interpreted to mean 'to gesture with' or, as Dupont-Sommer<sup>12</sup> puts it, "pour manifester ses réflexions avec elle." Whatever the meaning of the verb, it does seem evident that the transgression is the use of the left hand.<sup>13</sup>

Thus we return to the previous problem: What is being discussed? Perhaps the first item for our consideration is the nature of *bgd*. Krauss, in his *Talmudische Archäologie*,<sup>14</sup> notes that the terms most frequently used in rabbinic sources, whether biblical or mishnaic Hebrew, Aramaic or even the infrequent Latin, designate without exception the overgarment *ṭlyt* 'cloak', unless others are specifically referred to. A person's arms were covered by this outer garment and not by that worn next to the skin, the talmudic *ḥlwq*. This is clearly evident from the garments found by Y. Yadin in the cave on the southside of Nahal Hever.<sup>15</sup> These, whether single or double, are sleeveless or rather have no more arm covering than that provided by the width of the material falling off the shoulders.

The prohibition noted in our passage is thus that of bringing out one's hand from concealment beneath one's cloak in which one was enwrapped. (The technical term for this state which will be discussed below is *lbt'ṭp* 'to enwrap oneself'.) This first clue to the interpretation of this prohibition was found in Kraeling's discussion of the mural on the synagogue of Dura-Europos portraying the anointing of David by Samuel. There David is seen wearing a cloak, his hands enwrapped in it and crossed at the wrists. Kraeling's brief discussion of this latter act, the "*gestus* of adoration and submission" and of the covering of the hands, points to its antiquity and is suggestive of the motive in the situation in question.<sup>16</sup>

7 Cf. Maier and Vermes.

8 Cf. Burrows, Gaster, Wernberg-Møller, Dupont-Sommer.

9 Cf. Burrows, Maier.

10 Cf. Gaster, Vermes (?), Wernberg-Møller, Dupont-Sommer.

11 Apud Maier.

12 Dupont-Sommer, *Les écrits esséniens*, 104-5, n. 6.

13 Cf. Wernberg-Møller, Dupont-Sommer, Gaster.

14 S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* (Leipzig' G. Fock, 1910-12), 1:160-61.

15 Y. Yadin, *Bar-Kokhba* (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 69-72.

16 C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue Excavations at Dura-Europos. Final Report 8. Part 1* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 166-67, 235, 238.

These two procedures, the *gestus* and *manus velatae* have been discussed rather extensively in connection with Christian iconography and the material dealing with the latter has been brought together by Franz Cumont in the section, "Le rite des mains voilées," in his paper "L'adoration des Magès et l'art triomphal de Rome."<sup>17</sup> The former need not concern us for it is not mentioned in our text. Nonetheless, for the sake of completeness let me indicate that it is discussed by Heuzey in *Les Origines de L'Art Recueil de Mémoires Archéologiques et de Monuments Figurés*. That it was not unknown in the Jewish world is evident from a rubric in the *Siddur* (The Order of Service) describing the proper position for reciting the *Amidah*, the petitionary part of the synagogal service. "One places his feet together as though the two were one foot, and places his right hand upon his left hand and both together over his heart . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Of greater concern, however, is the matter of the covered hands in Jewish circles other than Qumran. On the basis of the few references noted by Kraeling,<sup>19</sup> one can tentatively assert that there was such a practice, so that its presence in Qumran is not to be seen as isolated, and the citations from non-Jewish traditions would be understood merely to point to a more or less plausible interpretation of the Qumran practice. However, there is more material available than the several passages cited by Kraeling. In interpreting the mural portraying David's anointing Kraeling quotes the following passage from the Babylonian Talmud *Shabbath* 10a:

Raba removed (*šdy*) his cloak, clasped (*pkv*) his hands and prayed, "[I pray] like a slave before his master." R. Ashi said: "I saw R. Kahana, when there was trouble in the world, removing his cloak, clasp his hands and pray, saying, '[I pray] like a slave before his master.' When there was peace, he would put it on, cover and enfold himself and pray, quoting, 'Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel'." (Amos 4:12)

Kraeling interprets: "if under particularly difficult circumstances R. Kahana thought it proper to shed his cloak (in partial simulation of servile nudity) when appearing before the deity in prayer, the more normal procedure was undoubtedly covering ones self in the presence of deity." It is this latter point Kraeling emphasizes in his discussion.<sup>20</sup> However, in the case under discussion, we are not explicitly told that the prohibition against uncovering the hand is limited to the act of worship. One can, of course, argue that the original *Sitz im Leben* of each of the prohibitions is not stated or even known by the codifier of Qumran regulations.

17 *In Memorie della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 3: series 3 (1932), 93-99. In addition to the sources cited in the notes to this article, see Otto Georg von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 104 and n. 139; Günther Wolfgang Morath, *Die Maximianskathedra in Ravenna: Ein Meisterwerk Christlich - Antiker Reliefkunst* (Freiburg i/B: Herder and Herder, 1940), 26, 44, 80, 84. The widespread scope of the practice of covering the hands should dispel any consideration of the interpretation suggested by the authors cited in n. 2 above.

18 *Seder Abodath Yisrael* (Baer Siddur republished by Schocken in 1937), the rubrics at the top of page 87.

19 Kraeling, *Dura-Europos*, 166-67.

20 *Ibid.*

Indeed, the language of the second part of the rule seems to reflect the worship situation, as will be pointed out below. Nonetheless, it seems evident from rabbinic material that the covering of the hand(s) was not limited to this situation.

In the texts to be discussed here, the crucial term is the root *ʿtp* either in the Nithpa'el or Hithpa'el form. It means 'to enwrap oneself' as in the passage above. The act of enwrapping oneself is frequently referred to in situations other than worship. For example, in the Palestinian Talmud *Abodab Zarab* 1:9 it is reported that Rabban Gamaliel when he absolved a man from a vow did so seated and enwrapped *nt'ʿtp*. From this, the general rule is drawn "vows are not absolved while one is journeying but only when one is enwrapped (*ʿtwpym qal* passive participle and seated." On the same page of tractate *Shabbath* quoted by Kraeling (10a), an answer is given to the question of the point at which a lawsuit begins: When the judges wrap themselves round.<sup>21</sup>

In tractate *Yoma* 77b, in a passage that is not altogether clear, it is reported that a person may wade across a canal on the Day of Atonement (apparently) to inquire about a decision of the Law. "provided one take not one's hand out of the bosom of his shirt." The phrase reads almost like the Qumran passage: *šl' ywšy' ydw mtbt hpt hlwqw*. The meaning of the prohibition is not clear to the commentators, who suggest that it related either to carrying a burden, something forbidden on the Day of Atonement, or to squeezing a dripping garment, likewise forbidden. In this case the person is not, apparently, wearing a cloak but merely a *hlwq*, yet even so his hand is concealed in its *hpt*. The meaning of this latter term is, perhaps, the source of the difficulty. Krauss,<sup>22</sup> after noting that it is related to roots in other semitic languages meaning bosom, insists that since in Hebrew it is always used with *hlwq*, it means "Unterärmel, der Kurze A. des Hemdes." What the phrase quoted above can thus mean is not clear, for how does one bring forth his hand from his short sleeve. Jastrow explains it as "border of a garment (*limbus*), a kind of front bosom in which things can be hidden."<sup>23</sup> Ben Yehuda<sup>24</sup> explains it as the doubling over of the skirt of a garment, that is, a fold made by doubling it over. Whatever the correct meaning, it seems evident that for some reason the hand must, on this occasion, be covered.

Returning to the question of worship occasions in which the covering of the arm is required, we find that in *Pesikta Rabbati* 9 where proper behavior for the recitation of the grace after meals is discussed, the word *mt'ʿtp* is explained: "... if his arm be uncovered, he must cover it, and then he may say the blessing."<sup>25</sup> In a similar passage in the Palestinian Talmud, *Berakhoth* 7 end, the reason for such behavior is that according to Isaiah 6 the

21 Cf. *Mekilta*, tractate *Nezikin* 18 (Lauterbach edition, 3:141-42) which seems to be an attack on those who observe the nicety of 'wrapping in the cloak' before rendering judgment and thus delaying justice.

22 Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, 1:587, n. 426; cf. Levy, *Wörterbuch*, s.v.

23 *Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, s.v.

24 E. Ben Yehuda, *Thesaurus*, s.v.

25 *Pesikta Rabbati* translated by William Braude (Yale Judaica Series, 18: 1), 160, "Even if his arm be uncovered, he must cover it, and then he may say the blessing." *Tales in Praise of the Ari*, translated by A. and J. M. Klein (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1970), 56-58, where Rabbi Israel Nejará is condemned as a 'shameful man' and a 'base fellow' because "he eats at the Lord's table in an uncovered head with only a red band around it, and with bared arms . . ."

ministering angels were covered by their wings. An episode in tractate *Taanith* (19b-20a) notes that when Nakdimon b. Gurion prayed "he wrapped himself in his cloak . . ." Again in tractate *Shabbath*, in the famous story about Hillel and the questioning heathen (31a), the teacher enwraps himself *nt'ip* before confronting his visitor, and at the end of the episode, when his questioner indicates he has many more queries, Hillel enwraps himself and sits down, the same procedure described above in the instance of Rabban Gamaliel.

What emerges from these citations is the clear indication that on certain specific occasions, worship, judging and teaching, the wearing of a cloak over the usual garment was expected. The appearance of the enwrapped person is to be seen not only in the Dura-Europos mural but as well from a bronze statue of an Egyptian priest in the Louvre (fig. 6 on page 97 of Cumont's article). Thus it may be concluded that the Manual of Discipline prohibits the stretching forth of a hand from beneath an enfolding cloak as a matter of etiquette.<sup>26</sup> Cumont suggests that "l'origine du rite des mains voilées est donc certainement magique, même si plus tard d'autres motifs purent être invoqués pour le justifier, crainte de salir ce qu'on présentait, désir d'éviter le contact direct avec la peau polluée par des besognes malpropres ou simplement moite de sueur, respect pour un homme ou une chose vénérable." What the effective reason for Qumran usage was, is, of course, no longer evident. Perhaps only that noted by Cumont in his penultimate phrase, and no more; perhaps one or more of the others.<sup>27</sup>

The text as here understood is divided into two coordinate clauses and not into a main clause followed by a subordinate clause: 1. He who brings his hand from beneath his cloak [perhaps the situation is the general meeting of the society], is punished by a thirty day deprivation. 2. He who is *pwḥ* or *pwḥḥ* so that his private parts are visible is similarly punished.

This division of the text requires our turning to the second phrase *wbw'h pwḥ <ḥ>*. As just noted, many of the commentators make this phrase, and the subsequent words, subordinate to the first. It is the bringing forth of the hand that causes the indecent exposure, with the intervening indication that this occurs because the individual is in rags. This is by no means impossible. The person is wearing under his cloak a ragged and tattered *ḥwq* that insufficiently covers him; when he stretches forth his hand from beneath his cloak his uncovered organ is seen. However, the suggestion is here made that there are two separate malfeasances: the uncovering of the hand; the lack of suitable covering for the private parts. Haberman in his note to the passage,<sup>28</sup> refers to the Mishna, tractate *Megillab* (IV:6) where it is stated that a *pwḥḥ* is permitted to lead in the recitation of the liturgical portion called *Shema* and to translate the pentateuchal portion into Aramaic. While the rabbinic interpreters agree that *pwḥḥ* refers to nakedness, there is no agreement as to what part of the body is thus exposed. Rabbenu Asher holds it means his shoulders are bare while others explain it to mean torn clothes, presumably exposing any part of the body.<sup>29</sup> The Qumran text is then

26 Cf. the reference to Xenophon in n. 88 of Cumont's article.

27 Cumont, "L'adoration de Magès," 94.

28 *Megillat Midbar Yebuda* (Tel Aviv: Machbaroth Lesifrut, 1959), 187, n. 14 to page 67.

29 Cf. Rabbenu Asher *ad loc.* in Talmud Babli. Rashi quotes tractate *Soferim* as explaining it to mean "the lower part of whose thighs are exposed."

to be understood as defining the *pwb*<*b*> with the words *wnr'th 'rwtw* 'one whose private parts are visible'.

A considerable part of our problem derives from our lack of knowledge as to how clothing was manipulated. The Rabbinic texts quoted above indicate that the putting on of certain garments was not just a matter of being clothed, but often signified the particular situation. The suggestion is here made that on certain occasions—not defined in our text, although some of the preceding rules apply to 'public sessions',—the uncovering of the hand as an act of disrespect and the wearing of such garments as did not cover the private parts brought punishment to a member of the community.