

MEDITATIONS ON THE ORIGINAL PRAYER

AVI SAGI

Bar Ilan University

Abstract

This article is based on the foundations laid in my book *Prayer after the Death of God*. In this book, I presented the claim that, ontologically, humans are praying entities, and prayer is a constant possibility that emerges in an individual's real life. It grows immanently from human existence and is not an institution first established by religions. The deep expression of the precedence of prayer is manifest in what I call "original prayer," which is neither institutionalized nor necessarily realized in a ritual construct but is a momentary outburst in human existence. Mostly, the religious institution of prayer blurs the traces of original prayer. Disclosing its existence at the core of institutionalized prayer requires an effort to locate its implicit presence. This article is an attempt to engage in such an effort, to trace the presence of the original prayer in a series of texts, beginning with Scripture. I will also analyze the institutional response to this original prayer that, fundamentally, is independent of any organized or ritual setting.