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Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism)

Michael D Swartz

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Michael D Swartz : *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good academic overview of the texts. By Avid Reader A good

academic overview of the texts, with sound theories regarding sources and dating. A complete translation is supplied, but many angelic names and other Hebrew words are not translated, but are transliterated using an academic standard of the time (which has since been updated in some academic circles), and it is worth noting that a basic knowledge of Hebrew and the difference between the available transliteration tables is required to get the most out of this. No transliteration table is provided in the book. If you want to use the texts for practical magic, look for *The Poetics of Ascent*, where Janowitz gives a more limited overview of the same texts but hints at practical possibilities more than in this volume. If you're looking for an insight into the source materials, this book is good for research. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Helpful guide By Todd Jasmin Competent collection of resources but lacks translation of many of the texts referred to. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Important text of Merkabah mysticism By Dominus Liminis M.D. Swartz's edition of the *Maaseh Merkavah* is the first English translation of this valuable text, which was originally published in its Hebrew form by Gershom Scholem as an appendix in his excellent "Jewish Gnosticism" book. Swartz's book consists of a large analysis of this text, followed by a complete English translation (pg. 224). The *Maaseh Merkavah* ("Work of the Chariot") is an ancient Hebrew text belonging to the Hekhalot-Merkabah school of Jewish mysticism. It contains many long hymns, and puts a strong focus on the theurgical power of prayer and Divine names. It includes formulae and rituals to call down the Angel of the Presence (section II, pg. 235), and numerous divine and angelic names, some of which form part of an interesting protection ritual (pg. 238), whereby the mystic must recite specific Names over different parts of his body and limbs. A fascinating work for the student of Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, despite being hard to find and expensive. I hope it will get reprinted and made available in a lower cost edition, as it deserves a place among the essential texts of Jewish mysticism.

Includes text of *Maaseh merkavah* in English translation.

About the Author Michael D. Swartz is Professor of Hebrew and Religious Studies at the Ohio State University. He is the author of *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah* (1992) and *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (1996).