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Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Yedidim: Piyyut as a Model for Creative Liturgy

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Digest

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Digest

Rabbinic Thesis

Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Yedidim: Piyyut as a Model for Creative Liturgy

What is creative liturgy? Often, people use the term to describe a variety of prayer-oriented developments, as if a definition were self-evident. However, creative liturgy can be defined very broadly as anything in a liturgical setting that deviates from the congregational norm, be it music, lighting, setting (time and place), texts, etc. How does one create creative liturgy? New liturgies cannot be written in a vacuum: they must be deemed meaningful by the community using them for worship, or else the experiment will fail. Is it, then, possible to give creative liturgy a structure, to create a kind of poetics of creative liturgy?

This thesis explores the possibility of using various genres of *piyyutim* as models for creative liturgy. *Piyyutim* were composed and recited as a deviation from the fixed text of the worship service, ~~and~~ through which a community could give voice to its own needs—be they religious, aesthetic, or homiletical—within the context of a relatively fixed rite. *Piyyut* was a way a community could make the liturgy its own, imposing its own tastes, dealing with its own crises and issues, responding to holidays and Torah portions in its own way. ✓

To examine these questions, this thesis will look at *piyyutim* and some of their various liturgical functions, and how they were written and utilized by different communities in different times. It will explore the poetry, seeking any implications for contemporary,

liberal, creative liturgy. In particular, how might that liturgy draw upon the *piyyut* as a resource in its form, its content or its function?

Each chapter is devoted to a particular genre of *piyyut*: Byzantine for the Sabbath (Yannai) and Festivals (Qallir and his imitators), Sephardic, and the poems of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. By examining (through translation and analysis) specific poems characteristic of that genre, the author explores that genre's development, liturgical function, and literary and aesthetic nature, and then attempt^S_^ to determine what aspects of that genre could serve as models for the composition of modern creative liturgy, identifying (or composing) contemporary parallels. ✓

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgments and Dedications	i
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Classical <i>Piyyut</i>	8
Appendix A: Poetry Translated for Chapter 1	30
Chapter 2: Qallir and <i>Piyyut</i> of the Ashkenazi Machzor	40
Appendix B: Poetry Translated for Chapter 2	64
Chapter 3: Sephardi <i>Piyyutim</i>	71
Appendix C: Poetry Translated for Chapter 3	97
Chapter 4: <i>Piyyut</i> and the <i>Hasidei Ashkenaz</i>	103
Appendix D: Poetry Translated for Chapter 4	132
Conclusion	138
Bibliography	146

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Introduction

The term "creative Jewish liturgy" usually evokes the liturgical innovation of the last half-century: the camp movement, the Havurah movement of the 1960's and 1970's, and liturgists such as Marcia Falk and Ruth Brin. The efforts of the early reformers, such as Abraham Geiger's *Israelitisches Gebetbuch* and Isaac Wise's *Minhag America*, also come to mind. It is a fairly safe assumption that the classical *piyyut* is not considered with them. Indeed, the average, moderately educated liberal Jew does not hold the *piyyut* in very high regard at all, assuming that he or she even knows what one is. At best, he or she may sing one on occasion, ignorant of what it really is. At worst, one may argue alongside the reformers of the 19th century that the *piyyut* has, over the generations, become an obstacle to *kavannah*—that essential component of personal intention and purpose—in prayer; outmoded hymns with primitive theologies whose very presence calcifies the liturgy. Of course, in order to make that argument, one needs to define what is meant when a person describes a worship style as "creative liturgy".

What is creative liturgy?

What is creative liturgy? How does one create creative liturgy? Despite the liturgical developments of the last fifty—if not two hundred—years, these are questions often unanswered and unsought. Certainly people use the term to describe a variety of prayer-oriented developments, as if a definition were self-evident, but is this actually the case? Often, services described as 'creative liturgy' are those that have been photocopied or typed on computer, using a variety of sources compiled by the author or authors; they may be in Hebrew or in another language (usually the vernacular) but why has that kind of service earned such an appellation? Why isn't *Gates of Prayer*, which is analogously

anthologized, considered 'creative liturgy'? Is it still 'creative liturgy' if a congregation worships from photocopied services every week?

Alternatively, some use the term 'creative liturgy' to describe any kind of variation from the regular worship experience for a community. Is it, then, 'creative liturgy' to simply change the melody of a familiar part of the service? Or even to sing what a congregation usually reads? Is the composition and introduction of new texts 'creative liturgy', or is it enough to photocopy a service from a standard prayer book, but use it in a different fashion? What about the changing of the prayer space itself, such as room orientation, lighting, seating (direction and type): is that also creative liturgy?

It is not enough to say that creative liturgy is self-evident, that people will 'know it when they see it'. At the same time, the term obviously describes such a wide variety of activity that definition becomes more and more problematic. Indeed, one could make the argument that all of the factors listed above represent some facet of creative liturgy: that *any* act of deviating from the liturgical idiom of a community makes it eligible for such standing. These changes may arise for a variety of reasons: boredom with the regular worship style of the community, the desire to tie the service to a particular theme, as a teaching exercise, a desire for a different atmosphere at worship. In other words, if there is a purpose—cosmic and/or personal—to a part of the worship service, and if the community feels that purpose unfulfilled, liturgical variation will emerge.

While we have defined—albeit broadly—what creative liturgy can be, we have not yet fully addressed the question of how one goes about fashioning creative liturgy. Must there be a rhyme or reason to it, or can it be such texts (or lighting or seating) as appeal to the author/service leader, whether they pertain to the regular service or not? Technically, in a liberal, American Jewish setting, we are not tied to the traditional text save by *minhag* and some sense of being a part of a larger Jewish community; there is no need, per se, to defer to a *halakha*. Nevertheless, new liturgies cannot be written in a vacuum: they must be found meaningful to the community using them for worship or else the experiment will fail. Is it, then, possible to give creative liturgy a structure, to create a kind of poetics of creative liturgy?

We have defined creative liturgy very broadly as anything in a liturgical setting that deviates from the congregational norm. However, we will be focusing specifically on creative liturgy in the form of text. While it is necessary to acknowledge that everything from the texts to the music to the way one arranges prayer space (lighting, seating, whether there is a specific room or not) could be construed as creative liturgy, the scope of this thesis only permits the analysis of text.

We return to *piyyutim*. Within the scope of the above definition, *piyyutim* clearly represent creative liturgies of particular times and locales. Their composition and recitation did, indeed, deviate from the fixed text of the worship service, and through their composition and recitation a community could give voice to its own needs—be they religious, aesthetic, or homiletical—within the context of a relatively fixed rite. *Piyyut* was a way a community could make the liturgy its own, imposing its own tastes, dealing

with its own crises and issues, responding to holidays and Torah portions in its own way. Could *piyyut* provide a possible framework for the modern liturgist, and serve as a model and resource on which the modern liturgist might draw?

To examine these questions, this thesis will look at *piyyutim* and some of their various liturgical functions, and how they were written and utilized by different communities at different times. It will explore the poetry, seeking any implications for contemporary, liberal, creative liturgy. In particular, how might that liturgy draw upon the *piyyut* as a resource in its form, its content or its function?

The *Piyyut*

There are myriads of *piyyutim*, originating from dozens of individual communities throughout Europe, North Africa and the Near East, each reflecting a certain aesthetic and communal need. *Piyyut* was not always well regarded: as Jakob Petuchowski reminds us, one generation's *kavvanah* will inevitably be another generation's *keva*; what is meaningful for one can be painful for another.¹ *Piyyut* was criticized early on by the *geonim*, who saw them as unnecessary additions to the fixed liturgy and a way of leading Jews to *chilul haShem*.² Abraham Ibn Ezra blasted *piyyutim* as unnecessarily obtuse and difficult, confusing the congregation with meaningless metaphors and leading them astray.³ Meanwhile, Judah al-Harizi mocked the *payyetan* as a buffoon who misunderstands his own highly affected poetry and the biblical verses he uses as fodder

¹ See Jakob Petuchowski, "Some Laws of Jewish Liturgical Development", in *Studies in Modern Theology and Prayer* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998), p. 154.

² See Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1998), pp. 119ff.

³ See Israel Levin, *Yalkut Ibn Ezra* (New York: Israel Matz Hebrew Classics Ltd., 1985), pp 291-295.

for his verse.⁴ Finally, the reformers of nineteenth-century Germany availed themselves of the opportunity to remove those poems that had become fixed and were, to their minds, no longer relevant or meaningful.⁵ Nevertheless, *piyyutim* existed as a part of the cultural matrix: they were written by poets for centuries for a variety of purposes, providing a liturgical voice for the community and a vehicle for the poet to display his virtuosity. Eventually the *piyyutim* were regarded as essential pieces of liturgy. They were glossed throughout the Middle Ages, and even today, many are recited as integral parts of the regular worship service.⁶

Issues of Scope

This thesis will not be a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of *piyyutim*, nor will it advocate (necessarily) for the reintroduction of the *piyyut* into the liturgy. Instead, this will be a survey of some types of *piyyut* in an attempt to determine whether those forms of poetry classified as *piyyut* can function as a kind of prototype, a model that may be used by the modern creative liturgist. We will be developing a reading strategy that asks some basic questions about type and usage, using as examples various case studies that illustrate particular features and functions of interest to this study.

Each chapter will be devoted to a particular genre of *piyyut*, and will explore its development, liturgical function, and literary and aesthetic nature by examining (through

⁴ See Victor Reichert, *The Takhmoni of Judah al-Harizi* (Jerusalem: R.H. Hachohen Press, 1965), pp. 144-159.

⁵ See Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 24ff, 36ff, 49ff.

⁶ See Haym Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in Sefer *Hasidim*," in *AJS Review*, 1976; pp. 345ff; also see Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1993), pp 246ff.

translation and analysis) specific poems characteristic of that genre, the author will then attempt to determine what aspects of that genre could serve as models for the composition of modern creative liturgy, identifying (or composing) contemporary parallels. Chapter One explores the Byzantine *piyyut* used each Sabbath to tie the liturgy to the weekly Torah *sidra*; our case study will be a *kerovah* of Yannai. Chapter Two focuses on the use of a different kind of classical *piyyut*, that of Qallir, in the Ashkenazi *Mahzor*, and will explore both his and his imitators' poetry within the holiday cycle. Chapter Three will move away from the classical *piyyut* and explore the development of the *Sephardi* liturgical poem. Finally, Chapter Four will explore the pietistic approach of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* as exemplified in the *kinah*.

Chapter 1: Creative Liturgy and the *Aggadah*: *Piyyut* as Homily

One of the many challenges in writing and organizing Jewish worship is how to make the recitation of Torah texts within the service relevant to the congregant: how can the average Jew connect with the Torah portion in the context of the service? Over the years, individuals and prayer communities experimented with moving the Torah reading itself (from Saturday morning to Friday night), as well as modifying the Torah portion itself, either by abridging the regular text or substituting another text altogether. Obviously, the sermon or *d'var Torah* can be seen as an attempt to relate the text of Torah in such a fashion that it resonates with the congregation, perhaps even teaching a Jewish value or two along the way. Interpretation of the text is an old part of the service, possibly as old as the recitation of the text itself. However, is there a liturgical, poetic way of relating the text of Torah to the congregation? In other words, can the liturgy itself serve as a homiletical tool: a conveyer of Jewish traditions and values, as well as an understanding of the Torah text itself? For that, we turn to the *payyetanim* of what Ezra Fleischer categorizes as the classical period of *piyyutim*, specifically to the *piyyutim* of Yannai.

What we know today of the *piyyutim*—and the poets—of the pre-classical and classical periods has mostly come to light in the last century. While it was once argued that the *piyyut* only flourished from the 7th century on and, according to R. Judah b. Barzilai, that it was “only introduced at a time of persecution because they were not able to speak of the words of Torah”¹, poetic innovation in the field of liturgy had thrived for some time before that. As Heinemann writes, “The wellspring of Hebrew poetry was never stopped, even at the close of the biblical period...just when the statutory prayers were being edited

¹ See Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 222.

and fixed, poems of a different type were being composed in Palestine.”² These pieces are seen by scholars as ‘proto-*piyyutim*’ (that are themselves sometimes worked into the fixed liturgy), which preceded the development of *piyyutim*; that is, hymns written as supplemental material for a fixed liturgy, possibly as early as the 3rd century.³

Yannai and His Poetry

As little as we know of the *piyyutim* of this time period and their authors, we know almost nothing of the poet Yannai. Even his dating is questioned, with some scholars placing him either around the 4-5th centuries, others in the 6-7th centuries.⁴ Regardless of time period, he is usually placed in between Yose b. Yose (the first *payyetan* we know by name) and Eleazar Qallir, separated from the former by several generations, and the latter by at least one.⁵ We know from his use of Palestinian midrashic material in his poetry, as well as his use of the triennial cycle for the writing of his *kerovot*, that he was from Palestine and that he lived in Palestine in the Byzantine period⁶. While he is known to such figures as Saadia Gaon, among others, and is named in many works, nothing is known of his life or congregation, and it is only recently that we have a significant number of his poems. This did not stop certain legends regarding this figure from cropping up, one (being similar to many tales about Italian poets) claiming that he was Qallir’s teacher and, in a pique of jealousy, killed him by placing a scorpion in his shoe.⁷

² Ibid. 220.

³ Ibid., 220ff., 238; Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography* p. 28.

⁴ See *EJ*, Vol. 16, p. 711-712.

⁵ Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* (including Heinemann’s editorial notes), pp. 238, 240-241.

⁶ Ibid. 220ff.; *EJ*, Vol. 16, p. 711-712.

⁷ Ibid. 241; *EJ*, Vol. 16, p. 711-712.

While lacking any historical basis, this legend explained the dearth of poetry from Yannai in the liturgical canon. Indeed, until recently, very little was known of Yannai: bits and pieces of a *kerovah* and one poem found in the Haggadah. It wasn't until the discovery and study of the Genizah fragments in Fostat (Old Cairo) that more of his poetry became known. Ironically, the piece from the Haggadah originally was part of a Yannai *kerovah*, the same one that had been known before the discovery of the Genizah.

We now know⁸ that Yannai composed *kerovot* for each of the Torah portions, following the Palestinian community's triennial cycle. While probably not the originator of the form, he did create some innovations in the form, adapting it to his own aesthetic. This will be seen as we move into the translation and evaluation of his *kerovah*.

Types of Piyyut: The *Kerovah*

A *kerovah*, generally speaking, is a *piyyut* that is inserted into (replaces?) the Shabbat morning *T'fillah*. It is possible to discuss distinct types of *kerovot*, such as the *selichah*, 'azharah, 'avodah and *kedushta*, so named for the part of the *T'fillah* with which they are associated. The type executed by Yannai is actually a movement of *kerovot*, known as a *shivata*, named for the sevenfold blessings of the Shabbat *T'fillah*, inserted specifically into the first three benedictions: the *Magein*, which discusses God's protective power, illustrated in His relationship to the patriarchs, the *Mechayeh*, which praises God's ability to revitalize the dead, and the three-fold praise of God found in the *Kedusha*. This movement can be broken down into three parts, which would normally contain eight

⁸ Though Gershom b. Judah mentions this fact in his writings, it was not confirmed until close study of the Genizah material.

distinct *piyyutim*. Yannai, however, includes nine poems, each of which utilizes midrashic material for both interpretation and metonymic imagery. There is some question as to whether or not Yannai is citing specific midrashic homiletical written texts (as Rabinowitz indicates), or whether these are simply interpretive traditions (without fixed verbal form) contemporary to Yannai that he would have known and studied. Regardless, there is a similarity between the way homiletical material is used by both midrashic anthologies and the *piyyutim*. For example, both associate homiletical tradition with the same biblical verses: the former as *petichta* verses that lead to interpretation, the latter for metonymic imagery. In *Mahsavtan shel surot hapiyyut*, Aharon Mirsky argues that 'primitive' *piyyutim* exist already in the midrashic material themselves.⁹ Through translation and analysis we shall see that, while the material is similar, its function changes with usage. To borrow the language of Michael Isaacson, homily uses Midrash in a left-brain, or linear analytical fashion, whereas *piyyut* uses it in a right-brain, or nonlinear, evocative, aesthetic fashion.¹⁰

The particular *kerovah* movement of Yannai's that we will be evaluating has an interesting history. As mentioned before, only one *kerovah* and one 'other poem' were known before the discovery and analysis of the fragments found in the Cairo Genizah: parts of the *kerovah* for Exodus 12:29, and the poem *az rov nisim*, which can be found in the Passover Haggadah to this day. After the study of the Genizah material, it was discovered that this 'other poem' was actually part of this same *kerovah* itself. Therefore,

⁹ See Heinemann's note in Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 220

¹⁰ See Isaacson, "A Paradigm Reconsidered", in *CCAR Journal*, (Winter 2002), pp. 5-18

it is with some irony that we will look to this text—known before the discovery in Fostat—as our exemplary text.

Structure of The Kerovah

The first two *piyyutim* of Yannai's 'sequence' are similar in structure, rhyme and meter. Each poem is made up of three strophes divided into four stichs. Both are alphabetical acrostics, the first one ending with the letter *lamed*, and the second continuing through to the end of the alphabet. In both cases, the strophes are followed by the quotation of various biblical texts. The first quote emerges from the Torah portion itself: the first poem quotes the first verse to be analyzed; the second poem quotes the second verse (in this case, poem one is concerned with Exodus 12:29, and poem two 12:30). The next verses emerge from non-pentateuchal biblical material: specifically, material that can be found in midrashic 'co-texts' as either proof texts or *petichta* verses. The last line of each then leads into the *chatimah* of the benediction. The first poem is called the *magein*, since it is meant to be inserted into (or replace) the first benediction of the *Amidah* and, therefore, incorporates that imagery into its poetry. Likewise, the second is called the *michayeh*, and follows the same pattern as the *magein*; utilizing the *beracha*'s imagery to transition to the *chatimah*, with which it ends.¹¹

The third poem, called the *meshullash*, leads into the *Qedusha*. It is similar to the previous two poems, though not identical. Made up of four rhyming strophes, it uses the poet's name for its acrostic. While it too leads into biblical verses, here the first verse

¹¹ Notes, R. Sarason/Y. Yahalom,; Weinberger, pp. 51ff; Rabinowitz, *Piyutei Rabbi Yannai l'torah ul'moadim*, pp. 296ff.

cited is a verse from the Haftarah, followed by non-pentateuchal, midrashically cited material.¹² It ends with a verse from the *qedusha* (translated: 'The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Hallelujah'), which leads to *atah qadosh* and *eil na*.¹³

Poem four is a short, monorhymed piece, called *atah qadosh*. It is unstructured, generally brief, and resembles a *siluk*-style concluding *piyyut*. It always ends with the word *qadosh*.¹⁴

Poem five is called an *asirit*, being a 10 stich alphabetical acrostic (letters *aleph* through *yud*). It brings aggadic material into sharp relief, and, like the third poem, ends with the words *eil na*.¹⁵

While poem six is absent from our text, it would have been something called *hadrasha*. Made up of 11 rhyming strophes, it was a complete alphabetic acrostic, based on aggadic material, with the first verse of the Torah portion used at the beginning of each verse.¹⁶

Poem seven is called *r'hit*. An alphabetic acrostic, each verse ends with the same word, leading into the *chatimah uv'chein*. In our text, this is the poem recontextualized in the Passover Haggadah.¹⁷

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Poem eight is called the *siluk*, and for other poets (such as Yose b. Yose) would be the concluding *piyyut*. It begins with the last significant word of the previous poem, and introduces the *qedusha* proper. It is written in rhymed prose, much like poem four, only longer. It ends with the verse from Isaiah 6:3, which begins the threefold benediction of the *qedusha*.¹⁸

Yannai usually ends with a ninth poem, called *haqedusha*, and that is the case here.

While we only have fragments of this particular poem, we know that, structurally, it is a rhymed, poetic elaboration on the *Qedusha*, repeating the verses from Isaiah 6:3 as well as Ezekiel 3:12, weaving midrashic elements into the poetry.¹⁹

Kerovah of Yannai on Exodus 12:29

I. An alphabetical acrostic, this *piyyut* is made up of 3 strophes divided into 4 rhyming stichs, followed by the verse being read that Shabbat, and various related Biblical verses from the Prophets and Writings sections of *Tanakh*.²⁰

1. The firstborn of his father's strength and the first fruit of his mother's womb²¹
You slaughtered from among those who were likened to asses.²²
2. Your Might passed over Your children; the plague differentiated between them.
3. You ordained that they should die in an instant, You slaughtered their exalted ones with plague²³

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Throughout these translations, biblical verses are taken from the JPS translation, with some emphasis or alteration my own.

²¹ Midrash Shemot Rabbah, 17:5: "The Eternal will pass through to smite Egypt...the expression 'to smite' refers to pregnant women, for it says: *And smite a woman with child* (Ex. 21:22)." See Lehrman, *Midrash Rabbah Exodus*, p. 215

²² Egypt, Ezekiel 23:20, "She lusted for concubinage with [Egypt], whose members were like those of asses and whose organs were like those of stallions"

²³ *Pesikta Rabbati*, Piska 49:4: "Another comment...*In a moment they died, and at midnight* (Job 34:20)...this verse alludes to the smiting of the first-born of Egypt whom the Holy One, blessed be He,

4. You smashed the might of the enemy, their firstborns. You passed through there at midnight.
5. You destroyed all who profaned one another, and showed favor to all who loved each other²⁴
6. Every firstborn in every degree You wiped out utterly, at that moment when you split the night in half like a thread²⁵

AS IT IS WRITTEN: "In the [precise] middle of the night THE ETERNAL struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first born of the cattle."²⁶

AND IT IS SAID: "Who struck down Egypt through their first-born, His steadfast love is eternal"²⁷

AND IT IS SAID: "Some die suddenly in the middle of the night; people are in turmoil and pass on; even great men are removed—not by human hands."²⁸

With Your hand—yea, Your right hand—You support us. From plague you save us. With the shade of Your shield You protect us.

מגן

ברוך

II. This *piyyut* continues the acrostic in I, with the same rhyme, meter, and pattern.

1. The dead were in every household in Egypt²⁹ as if they were strangled, they groaned the groans of those struck down.³⁰

smote all in a moment, so that, as Scripture says, *In a moment they died, and at midnight.*" See William Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) p. 833.

²⁴ *Pesikta derav kahana*, Piska 7:7: "[The first-born] went to Pharaoh and said to him: 'Since Moses has said *All the first-born....shall die* and since all that he had predicted heretofore concerning the Egyptian people has befallen them, rise up and let these Hebrews get out of our midst...' But Pharaoh said [to his servants]: 'Get going and beat these poltroons until they are humpbacked!' ...At once the first-born went out and slew sixty myriads of their fathers." See Braude, Kapstein, *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*, p. 147; Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, pp. 128-129

²⁵ *Pesikta Derav Kahana*, Piska 7:2: "No other being can be so knowing as to apprehend the exact instant of midnight—only the Holy One can—therefore Scripture says, *And it came to pass [precisely] at midnight, that THE LORD smote all the first-born.*" See Braude, Kapstein, *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*, pp. 140-141; Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, p. 122

²⁶ Ex. 12:29

²⁷ Psalms 136:10

²⁸ Job 34:10

²⁹ Literally, נָוָה

³⁰ Ezekiel 30:34 "I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he shall groan before him with the groans of one stuck down."

2. They were delivered [into punishment], their hearts fainted away. They fainted, their spirits were laid waste.³¹
3. You made them all corpses: every first-born, even those confined in their wombs
You did not spare
4. To your own first born (Israel) you spoke, "Arise!" There you delivered both healing (to the Israelites) and plague (to the Egyptians).
5. Ruin, desolation³² and terror, sinister ruin, destruction and trembling³³
6. The howling assaulted them; in confusion they arose and went forth in the night

AS IT IS WRITTEN: "And Pharaoh arose in the night, with all his courtiers and all the Egyptians—because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead."³⁴

AND IT IS SAID: "He struck down the first-born of Egypt, man and beast alike"³⁵

AND IT IS SAID: "Egypt shall be drained of spirit, and I will confound its plans, so they will consult the idols and the shades and the ghosts and the familiar spirits."³⁶

AND IT IS SAID: "'And I will place the Egyptians at the mercy of a harsh master, and a ruthless king shall rule them'—declares the Sovereign, the LORD of Hosts."³⁷

AND IT IS SAID: "The ETERNAL will first afflict and then heal the Egyptians; when they turn back to the ETERNAL, He will respond to their entreaties and heal them."³⁸

AND IT IS SAID: "Wasted from want and starvation, they flee to a parched land, to the gloom of desolate wasteland."³⁹

Amid desolate waste, you cast the oppressors into the pit, but we will be revitalized through the rain of salvation.

מחיה ברך

III. This *piyyut* is a name acrostic made up of 4 strophes, with a rhyme. Similar to the previous two, this will quote from the Haftarah.

³¹ Isaiah 19:4, "I will place (deliver) the Egyptians at the mercy of a harsh master, and a ruthless king shall rule them."

³² Job 30:3, "Wasted from want and starvation, they flee to a parched land, to the gloom of desolate wasteland."

³³ Isaiah 6:11, "I asked, 'how long, my Lord?' and He replied: 'till towns lie waste without inhabitants, and houses without people, and the ground lies waste and desolate—'". Jeremiah 25:13, 31, "And I will bring upon that land all that I have decreed against it, all that is recorded in this book—that which Jeremiah prophesized against all nations", "Tumult has reached the ends of the earth, for THE ETERNAL has a case against the nations, He contends with all flesh. He delivers the wicked to the sword."

³⁴ Exodus 12:30

³⁵ Psalms 135:8

³⁶ Isaiah 19:3

³⁷ Isaiah 19:4

³⁸ Isaiah 19:22

³⁹ Job 30:3

1. Let it be heard by Edom, just as Egypt heard, the pronouncement upon Duma (Edom), identical to Egypt's.⁴⁰
2. You punished Egypt⁴¹ in consummation of the 10th [plague], and Edom you will punish in consummation of the 10th horn⁴².
3. The wild oxen (the Romans) will fall down with them⁴³, the first-born, the rulers of their kingdom. May you strip them of their laurels, their coronets. In anger may You destroy them.
4. Salvation is appointed, it is the appointed night, the watch-night: the Watcher says, "the appointed time (of salvation) has come!"

AS IT IS WRITTEN: "The Dumah Pronouncement: A call comes to me from Seir: 'Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?'"⁴⁴

AS IT IS SAID: "The watchman replied, 'Morning came, and so did night. If you would inquire, inquire. Come back again.'"⁴⁵

AS IT IS SAID: "but there shall be a continuous day—only THE ETERNAL knows when—of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at eventide."⁴⁶

AS IT IS SAID: "THE ETERNAL shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Hallelujah."⁴⁷

*You are holy, enthroned upon the praise of Israel.*⁴⁸

IV. Free-verse with rhyme: five verses; four with 2 stichs, the last with five. Ends with words "Qadosh".

1. You went forth at midnight in order to save your people, and brought them out that very same day.⁴⁹
2. The Judge of His people by day and of the nations by night; for day is Yours, as is the Night.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ *Pesikta deRav Kahana*, Piska 7:11 cf. Is. 23:5: "[In further comment on the measure of God's justice], R. Levi the son-in-law of R. Zechariah, taught in the name of R. Berechiah: *As at the report concerning Egypt, so they shall be startled at the fall of the Adversary* (צור) (Isaiah 23:5). Whenever the word צור is spelled in full [צור] it refers...to the principality of Tyre; and whenever, as here, it is spelled defectively, Scripture has reference to wicked Rome [the Adversary]." See Braude, Kapstein, *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*, p. 151; Mandelbaum *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, p. 132-133.

⁴¹ Literally, "Patros".

⁴² From the prophecy of horns found in Daniel and interpreted in rabbinic lit. (Eicha Rabba, for example) associating the horns with the kingdoms that have mastered Israel at various stages in history. Rome is the last (10th) horn.

⁴³ *Pesikta derav kahana*, Piska 7:11: "As Egypt, all kinds of wild beasts; so, too, Edom." See Braude, Kapstein, *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*, p.152; Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana* p. 133

⁴⁴ Isaiah 21:11

⁴⁵ Ibid. vs. 12

⁴⁶ Zechariah, 14:7

⁴⁷ Psalms 146:10

⁴⁸ This is a fixed liturgical formula at this junction.

⁴⁹ Exodus 12:51, "That very day THE ETERNAL freed the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop."

3. That night on which the first ones (the ancestors) were redeemed, You declared to be set aside for the salvation of their descendents, as well.
4. And that which took place at the beginning will come to pass at the end, as Egypt's pronouncement, You will pronounce against the enemies
5. You will save (Israel) and destroy (Edom)⁵¹ for the sake of the people

*Great, Mighty and Holy.*⁵²

V. 10 verse rhyming alphabetic acrostic (letters א-י), based on the Aggadah.

1. Thus 9 plagues befell the harsh lords to whom you turned over a people with a hardened heart.
2. Through the callousness a harsh king⁵³ came a 10th plague, that you set upon those who oppressed the tenfold-tested ones.⁵⁴
3. Cutting down the first-born was their final punishment, as Your wrath was spent in wasting them.
4. You judged their gods before them, even their idols you knocked down in their homes (lit. "tents")⁵⁵
5. You killed every firstborn and every head of household; every first-born, of man and of woman.⁵⁶
6. And the first-born of every beast, the first born of every thing; in the home and outside; the plague devoured everything.
7. Rage and deliverance, you revealed Yourself smiting and healing.⁵⁷ For the first-born of the enemy were smitten and Your first born children were healed.
8. Then, at midnight, those indebted to You acknowledged You, for Your just ordinances and loving righteousness

⁵⁰ Genesis Rabbah 50:3: "R. Levi said: the Holy One, blessed be He, judges the nations at night only, when they are asleep from their sins; while He judges Israel by day only, when they are engaged in good deeds."; Palestinian Talmud tractate *Rosh Hashanah* 57a: "Said Rabbi Levi: *And He will judge the world in righteousness, He will minister judgment to the peoples with equity* (Psalms 9:9). The Holy One blessed be He judges Israel by day, at the time when they are occupied with divine commandments; and the nations by night, at the time when they have abstained from transgressions." See Goldman, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel Vol. 16 Rosh Hashanah*, p. 40. Mekhilta, *Parasha* 14: "R. Levi said, 'The Holy One only judges the nations of the world at night, at the hour in which they are asleep from their transgressions. And He only judges Israel during the day at the hour in which they are occupied with [fulfilling the] commandments, as it is written, 'it is He who judges the world with righteousness, rules the peoples with equity'" (Psalms 9:9).

⁵¹ Numerous synonyms here, citing such sources as Psalm 45:5 and Isaiah 18:3.

⁵² A fixed liturgical rubric, referring to God's attributes.

⁵³ Isaiah 19:4, "I will place (deliver) the Egyptians at the mercy of a harsh master, and a ruthless king shall rule them."

⁵⁴ Exodus Rabbah 15:27: "God brought ten plagues upon him, corresponding to the ten trials with which Abraham our father was tried and all of which he withstood."

⁵⁵ Exodus 12:12, *Peskita derav kahana*, piska 7: See Albeck p. 127.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Isaiah 19:21-22: "For the LORD will make Himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall acknowledge the LORD in that day, and they shall serve [Him] with sacrifice and oblation and shall make vows to the LORD and fulfill them. The LORD will first afflict and then heal the Egyptians; when they turn back to the LORD, He will respond to their entreaties and heal them."

9. Your finger's design made 9 plagues, your full hand made the slaughter of the first-born.
10. Your strong right hand drowned the enemy and all praised You, Your holy arm will redeem us and be exalted over all.

*O God, may You be eternally venerated and eternally sanctified...*⁵⁸

VI. Not found for this text. See above.

VII. An alphabetic acrostic, it begins with the word "וּבִכְן". This particular *piyyut* was transposed to the traditional Passover *haggadah*, and until the discovery of the Genizah, was the only *piyyut* composed by Yanai known.⁵⁹

And so it came to pass at midnight

1. Thusly you performed many miracles at night.⁶⁰
2. In all of the watches on this night.
3. You gave victory to a righteous convert in the middle of the night.⁶¹
4. You judged the king of Gerar in a dream of the night.⁶²
5. You terrorized the Aramean in the darkness of night.⁶³
6. And Israel wrestled with an angel and triumphed over him at night.⁶⁴
7. You crushed the first born offspring of Egypt⁶⁵ at midnight.
8. You dismayed the Midianites and their allies with a whirling bread-loaf in a vision of the night.⁶⁶
9. The prince of Haroshet's host You leveled by the stars of night.⁶⁷
10. The blasphemer took counsel to conquer Your chosen; you rotted his corpses at night.⁶⁸
11. Bel and those who set him up fell in a vision of the night.⁶⁹

⁵⁸ Formulaic liturgical ending

⁵⁹ Translations assisted/based on translations found in Schocken Haggadah.

⁶⁰ *Pesikta deRav Kahana*, Piska 17:1, citing Psalms 77:7-8: ("I recall at night their jibes at me; I commune with myself; my spirit inquires, 'Will the LORD reject forever and never again show His favor?'"): "The psalmist, speaking for the congregation of Israel, is alluding to a particular night, the night of Pharaoh's discomfiture, of which it is written 'And it came to pass at midnight...' A discussion of all the miracles God has done for Israel at various nights. See Braude, Kapstein, *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*, pp. 304-305; Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, pp. 281-283.

⁶¹ Abraham: Gen. Rabbah 42, 43:3: "And the night was divided against them... The rabbis say: Its Creator divided it. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'Abraham has labored with Me at midnight; therefore I too will act for his sons at midnight.'" Gen. 14:15: "At night, he and his servants deployed against them and defeated them; and he pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus."

⁶² Abimelech: see Gen. 20:6.

⁶³ Laban: see Gen. 31:24.

⁶⁴ Jacob: see Gen. 32:26-30, Hosea 12:5.

⁶⁵ Again, Patros. See note 40 above.

⁶⁶ See Judges 7:9-13.

⁶⁷ Sisera: Judges 4:2, 5:20.

⁶⁸ Senacharib: II Kings 18:4, 19:35, Is. 10:32.

⁶⁹ Gen. Rabbah 68:13: "Thus it is written, *And I will punish Bel in Babylon...* (Jer. 51:44). For Nebuchadnezzar had a great dragon which swallowed up everything thrown to it. Said Nebuchadnezzar to

12. To the beloved man was revealed the secrets of visions and dreams of the night.⁷⁰
13. He who made himself drunk with the holy vessels was killed at night.⁷¹
14. He who was saved from the lion's den interpreted dreams at night.⁷²
15. The Agagite stored up hate and wrote scrolls at night.
16. You began working your triumph over him when sleep wandered from the king in the night.⁷³
17. You tread out the vintage [like one who asks], "Watchman, what of the night?"⁷⁴
18. He (God) will sing out like a watchman, saying, "the morning comes and also the night."⁷⁵
19. Bring closer the day that is neither day nor night.
20. Make known, Mighty One, that yours is day, yours is night.
21. Set watchmen over your city every day and night.⁷⁶
22. Cause to shine like daylight the darkness of night.

ובכן

VIII. Called the *siluk*; for other poets (such as Yose b. Yose) this would be the concluding *piyyut*. It begins with the last significant word of the previous poem, and introduces the *qedusha* proper. It is written in rhymed prose, much like poem four, only longer. It ends with the verse from Isaiah 6:3, which begins the threefold benediction of the *qedusha*.⁷⁷

1. For there is no night (darkness) before You / and everything before You is day (light) / and day to day one makes utterance / night to night one proclaims knowledge/⁷⁸
5. And darkness conceals nothing from You⁷⁹ / and light dwells with You⁸⁰ / Mornings tell of your grace / and evenings proclaim your fidelity continuously /⁸¹

Daniel: 'How great is its might that it swallows up everything that is thrown to it!' 'Give me permission,' he rejoined, 'and I will make him weak.' On being granted permission, what did he do? He took straw, hid nails in it, and threw it to the dragon, and the nails lacerated his bowels."

⁷⁰ Daniel 2:19, 10:11.

⁷¹ Nebuchadnezzar. See Dān. 2:5-30.

⁷² Dan. 5:30.

⁷³ Esther 6:1.

⁷⁴ Isaiah 63:3-4.

⁷⁵ Is. 42:13.

⁷⁶ Is. 62:6: "Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen, who shall never be silent by day or by night."

⁷⁷ Numbers indicate individual stichs, rather than strophes or verses.

⁷⁸ Psalms 19:3: "Day to day makes utterance, night to night speaks out."

⁷⁹ Psalms 139:12; *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, Piska 7, Albeck p. 126

⁸⁰ Daniel 2:22: "He reveals deep and hidden things, knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him."

⁸¹ Psalms 92:3: "To proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak, Your faithfulness each night."

9. Dawn and sunrise and morning and day and noon and afternoon and eve and twilight and night and every season and moment and time and minute and occasion announce your wondrous miracles/
10. And are heralds of your great marvels/
11. [You are] the One who renews salvation and performs wondrous deeds/ who counts days and enumerates moments/ whose day is a thousand years⁸²/and whose years are unending/
15. For everything grows old/ but you do not age/And just like [You/ are Your servants/You] live and they [live/ You are pure] and they are [pure]/You are holy and they are holy [and they sanctify the Holy One with threefold sanctifications] as it is written and they call out...

IX. *Hagedusha*, of which we only have fragments. Structurally, it is a rhymed, poetic elaboration on the *Qedusha*, repeating the verses from Isaiah 6:3 as well as Ezekiel 3:12, weaving midrashic elements into the poetry.⁸³

...] Evenings in their times and in their seasons to.....

[HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! Is THE LORD of Hosts! The whole earth is filled with His Glory!]

[HOLY] in the watches of the morning /[holy in the midpoint of the night]/holy at the [rising of the dawn]

[HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! Is THE LORD of Hosts! The whole earth is filled with His Glory!]

[HOLY]...like thunder at the last watch of morning

The Holy One slaughtered all the enemy's first-born in an instant....[night]

[HOLY]...for your first-born children at the rise of [dawn]

[HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! Is THE LORD of Hosts! The whole earth is filled with His Glory!]

From His place that is [pure].....

From His holy place he descends for our sake in a place....

⁸² Psalms 90:4: "For in Your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that has passed, like a watch in the night."; Gen. Rabbah 19:8.

⁸³ Ibid.

[From His place.....]

Performative Issues:

When speaking of liturgical performance before the advent of printing, we assume that worship is an oral/aural, rather than literary, experience. Worship is led by a single *chazan*, who chants the liturgy. "The style is ritualistic, that is, filled with litanies, standardized rhetoric, and other devices that connect the prayer leader with the congregation because of the predictability with which it can anticipate the end of the lines..."⁸⁴ While we do not have musical notation for the *piyyutim* (assuming there was any), poetry is meant to be sung: the Hebrew term *shir* describes music and verse. We can also find evidence in the structure of the *piyyutim* of standardized rhetoric and litany: rhyme and meter help the congregation follow along, while allowing the poet/performer to show off his virtuosity. Poem seven is an excellent example of this: not only is it rhymed, but the rhetoric is highly standardized: one knows exactly how each line is going to end, and if one knows the *midrashim* and aggadic material, he can anticipate the lyrics. The same is true for acrostics: one knows the letter with which the next verse will begin, and may therefore anticipate the next line in much the same way literate Jews today can anticipate the lyrics of *mipi-el*. Whether the poem is an alphabetic or name acrostic makes no difference: chances are, the *piyyutim* were written by those who were going to perform them, the *payatan* as *chazan*.⁸⁵ To borrow the language of detective novels, it was the *chazanim* who, as service leaders, were the ones who had motive and opportunity to introduce such poetic pieces.

⁸⁴See Hoffman, "Re-imagining Jewish Worship," *CCAR Journal* (Winter 2002), pp. 69-87

⁸⁵Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography* pp. 28ff; See Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry*, pp. 11ff.

That said, there is debate as to how, exactly, *piyyutim* such as our *kerovah* were used. It would be easy to say that they were insertions, embellishments to a fixed service. Or, as Ezra Fleischer argues, that they were substitutions: that while a fixed liturgy did exist at the time of their composition, they were meant to replace that fixed liturgy entirely, and only later became relegated to the 'secondary' status of embellishment.⁸⁶ It is also possible, as others argue, that the *piyyut* is as old as the fixed liturgy itself, developing simultaneously with it and the midrashic elements of rabbinic literature and, in doing so, having great impact on the rhetoric of the fixed liturgy.⁸⁷ Regardless of one's academic position, it is apparent that the *piyyut* had a relationship with something that resembled the liturgy we now know as the fixed liturgy of the *siddur*, and the aggadic, homiletical elements of rabbinic Midrash.

The Question Before Us

The question remains: can we, as moderns, glean anything from this model of liturgy? Does this model speak to us? It is the opinion of this author that a great deal can be learned from these *piyyutim* and utilized in our own settings. The issue now is to attempt to list and explain those opportunities for use.

One of the elements that comes to mind is the tying together of liturgy, the Torah portion and rabbinic homily. Since the earliest days of the service, interpretation of the Torah text has been a standard part of the liturgical recitation, whether it was *Targum* and paraphrase, the traditional *drasha*, or the more contemporary sermon. As discussed

⁸⁶ See Fleischer, "Studies in the Problems relating to the Liturgical Function of the Types of Early *Piyyut*." *Tarbiz*, vol. 40; Fleischer, *Shirat Hakodesh ha'ivrit b'yemei habineinim*, pp. 110ff.

⁸⁷ Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry*, pp. 11ff, p. 144 (note 14).

previously, exploring and interpreting the text in a liturgical setting works in ways that a traditional sermon cannot. Firstly, it connects with people in a 'right-brain', aesthetic, non-judgmental fashion: people can connect with it on a sub- or unconscious level, and gain insights they might never see in a traditional *d'var torah*. This is not to say that a well-written sermon only functions on an analytical level: a sermon should blur the distinction between right and left-brain stimulation, moving people emotionally and intellectually. However, poetry, song and liturgy moves interpretation further over that edge, allowing another channel into learning and understanding the Torah text of the weekly *parasha*. Additionally, it emphasizes the performative aspect of the text. In other words, rather than looking at the text critically, in the mode of study, the congregation is invited to look at the text in a religious fashion, to connect with it in a spiritual and aesthetic, rather than analytical, way. This emphasizes the purpose of the Torah service itself, for while Torah study is the pursuit of understanding of the text, the reading of Torah in worship is liturgical; it is the utilization of the text as prayer.

Depending on when this type of liturgy is used, the benefits could be impressive. Imagine a Friday night Shabbat service where Torah is not read. People are probably coming from work, or may not have 'wound down' from the workday. They are tired and overstimulated from a week of effort. One could present a sermon on the Torah portion with some, questionable, success. Or, one could introduce a prayer or meditation that ties that liturgical rubric⁸⁸ to the weekly portion. Now, the same idea could be conveyed, the

⁸⁸ Perhaps the rubrics emended and embellished never change: perhaps they rotate weekly, or monthly. That is a decision for a ritual committee and a congregational rabbi, and is not in the purview of this paper.

Torah portion taught, and the congregant could even be challenged, but in the form of poetic reverie, perhaps even song.

This is not to say that there aren't difficulties with creating and using this model. Leaving aside the issues of Hebrew and rhetorical style⁸⁹, there is the issue of using rabbinic literature. From the heavy use of rabbinic and biblical 'co-texts' in *piyyutim*, we can deduce that, to a lesser or greater degree, the congregants had familiarity with the biblical and rabbinic texts and traditions cited. We cannot make that assumption of our congregations or individual laypeople. Therefore, I offer two options (presumably there are more).

One is to use the model as we see it here: to present liturgies that quote extensively from rabbinic and biblical 'co-texts'. The difference here would be purpose: whereas for the ancient congregant these texts were part of the cultural milieu, here they would be a didactic tool, a way of introducing rabbinic interpretation and further knowledge of the Bible to the congregant. The danger in this is that the worship can quickly turn into a seminar, replete with handouts appropriately footnoted. This would depend on the culture of the congregation and its way of 'davening' the Shabbat liturgy.

Another option is to utilize interpretive texts that may be familiar to the congregation. This could mean some *midrashim* and biblical quotations, as well as Hasidic literature and pithy quotations, and modern Jewish literature both fictional/poetic and instructional.

⁸⁹ My instinct is that all liturgies that grow out of this will be in English and in a rhetorical style with which people are comfortable and conversant.

For example, one could compose a poem based on *Acharei mot-Kedoshim* that employs the language and imagery of Nachman of Bratzlav, Henry Roth's *Call it Sleep*, Harold Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, verses from Job, and the *Midrash* on the death of Rabbi Meir's and Bruria's sons. In a liberal setting, one could conceive of borrowing non-Jewish literary sources: imagery from Shakespeare or Milton or Neruda or Japanese poetry or Billy Collins. A modern *piyyut* on *Lech lecha* could just as easily include verses from Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium", or be written in Haiku form, rather than our own plain verse.

The danger here is the danger of all creative liturgy: what is the limit? Once the door is opened to include non-Jewish sources, what is, exactly, "Jewish" about either the prayer or the interpretation of the Torah text? Even if one sticks to ostensibly Jewish material, there is the possibility that the material may be too familiar; that the material used could either be inappropriate or trite. While one does not necessarily want the congregant to be totally unfamiliar with the material cited, one does not want it reduced to the liturgical equivalent of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, either.

Synthesis is possible: creating a liturgy where Jews learn their tradition and encounter familiar cultural landmarks. The best example of balance would be the work of a poet such as Ruth Brin: her *Interpretations* goes through the entirety of the Torah and provides a poetic interpretation of a text of each Torah portion that incorporates Jewish tradition and her own observations, written in a poetic language and rhetoric as familiar to us as

Robert Frost or Maya Angelou. By way of example, this is her interpretation of *Parashat Bo*, the same portion as in Yannai's *kerovah* (albeit from Exodus 10, rather than 12):

After a crater erupts, volcanic ash may blacken
The sky and make the sunsets lurid for months;
There are eclipses of the sun, the stinging
Darkness of dust storms, and the totality
Of blackout.

All of these remind us of the Egyptian darkness,
So thick it could be tasted and felt.

Could the Children of Israel, rebellious
And frightened slaves, have lit their homes
With the symbolic light of faith or good deeds?
Perhaps they cherished a glimmering hope
That they could achieve greatness on earth,
Rather than in the pyramids of the dead.

Perhaps they blew on the sparks of their hope
That Israel, the lowliest of peoples,
Might achieve freedom.

In the thick darkness of the Egyptian night
They could not foresee how often the nations
Would shoulder them out into the shadow,
How often their freedom would be reduced
To a flicker, burning for a moment
After the oil is gone.

We pray You renew this miracle for us:
That in the darkness of our age, in blackout
And rejection, in fear and ignorance,
You will cause a light to burn for us,
A light of learning, a light of freedom,
A light of faith, a light of good deeds.
These are the lights we pray will burn together
To make a bright blaze of hope for our world.⁹⁰

The imagery is recognizable, and we can identify certain elements in her poetry. There is the language of modernity: the imagery of the sciences of geology, archeology and astronomy, as well as the languages of electricity and technology. We hear the rejection of, and fight against, xenophobia and bigotry, the concern for psychological health, and the American value of freedom. There is history of woe so familiar to even the casual

⁹⁰ Brin, *Harvest*, pp. 44-45

reader of the Haggadah, as well as the imagery of the *siddur*: 'cause a new light to burn for us' resonates like the end of the *yotzeir* benediction. Finally, Brin utilizes the images provided by the Bible, the language of the portion itself, alluding to the darkness which could be felt, and how the Israelites had light in their dwellings. With all of these elements, plus her own narrative abilities, understanding of the text, and insights into people and worship, we are presented with a prayer for hope, for new light and renewed vigor, a prayer that fits nicely in the morning liturgy for a Shabbat worship, either as a meditation or a substitution for the *yotzeir* blessing. The success of such a piece is, of course, contingent on the abilities of the poet, and this issue will be discussed in a later chapter.

There is another element to consider: the issue of text. As mentioned before, the *piyyut* was created for a worship service in which the only person to have a text would be the *chazan*: the *piyyut* was created in a time of aural/oral recitation. While Lawrence Hoffman and others have called for experimentation with non-text services in this age of computers⁹¹, the assumption is that most congregants will have a prayer text of some kind in front of them. This means that the texts not only have to work well for the ear, they also have to work well on the page. Indeed, depending on its purpose, the creative reading may have to work better on the page than aloud (if it is a silent meditation, for example). As this is an issue that pertains to all *piyyutim*, it will be taken up in greater detail in the following chapters.

⁹¹ Hoffman, "Re-imagining Jewish Worship," *CCAR Journal* (Winter 2002), pp. 69-87

Appendix A: Poetry Translated For
Chapter 1

קדוש קדוש קדוש | יי צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו
קדוש מחיה קדוש מאופן קדוש מכרוב
לעומתם כל יאמרו וג

ממקומו פרע לפרעה באשר פרע
ממקומו מד לו סאון באשר מד
ממקומו הכהו מכות באשר הכה
ממקומו יפן בעם המיחדים בכל יום פעמים ואומרים פעמים

[ויהי בחצי הלילה]

נג / שמות יב כט

תוכן הקרובה: הפייטן מתאר את מפלת המצרים במכת בכורות בחצי הלילה. בהלה וחזרה תוקפות את פרעה ועמו. יד ה' חרעו מתגלות לעיני ישראל והעולם. החושך נהפך לאור גדול. גאולת ישראל בימים ההם היא סמל להתגלות הצדק וגדיעת זרוע הרשע בכל הדורות. הרבה נסים נעשו לישראל בחצי הלילה. הפייטן מתפלל שאותם הנסים יתגלו גם בימיו, רמה שהיה בראשונה הוא שיהיה באחרונה.

א אוני פטרי רחמתי // בתקת במשולי חמורות
גדלך פסע בינותי // דבר לתמשיל בינותי

24 ממקומו ... פרע: עי' מכילתא דר"י, בשלח פ"ו, עמ' 110: 'במחשבה שחשבו מצרים לאבד את ישראל בה אני דנין, הם חשבו לאבד את בני במים, אף אני איני נפרע מהם אלא במים'; מכילתא דרשב"י, עמ' 66.

25 ממקומו ... מד: השווה מכילתא, פ"ה, עמ' 109: 'וינהגהו בכבודות, ר' יהודה אומר, במדה שמדדו בה מדד להם, דכתיב תכבד העבדה, לכן, נאמר וינהגהו בכבודות'; מכילתא דרשב"י, עמ' 65: המלה 'סאון' מצינת מידה כנגד מידה, השווה ירוש' סוטה, פ"א ה"ז, י"ז ע"א: 'תני בשם רבי מאיר, במדה שאדם מדד בה מודדין לו, מאי טעמא? — בסאסא (יש' כו,ח) בסאה, סאה ... כי כל סאון סואן ברעש' (שם ט,ד).

26 ממקומו ... הכה: השווה תנח' בובר בא, ה, סדרן של כל המכות כמדה נגד מדה; תנח' וארא, יד.

א תוכן הפיוט: בדיוק בחצי הלילה פסח ה' על בתי בני ישראל והרג את כל בכורי מצרים. זרוע המצרים נשברה. בבתי המצרים — הרג ומריבה, ובבתי ישראל — שלום וריצוי.
1 אוני ... חמורות: בכורות המצרים, ראשית אונם, גם אלה שבמעי אמם מתו בכורות, השווה שמ"ר י"ה: 'ועבר ה' לנגוף את מצרים ... מלמד שאף המעוברות שהיו ראויות לילד הפילו ומתו האימהות'. פטרי רחמתי: לפי שמ' יג,יג: שופ' ה,ל. בתקת: דקרת, לפי יח' טז,מ. במשולי חמורות: כינוי למצרים, לפי שם, כג,כ.

2 גדלך ... בינותי: ה' פסע-פסח על בתי בני ישראל, ובכורות המצרים בלבד מתו בדבר. בינותי: השווה בר' כו,כח: בינותינו (סגל, דקדוק לשון המשנה, עמ' 157, 158).

הן רגע ימותו דברת // וגאונם בדבר הדברת
זרוע צר בבכוריו שברת // תצות לילה שם עברת

טמאים זה בזה נצית // ידידים זה לזה רצית
כל בכור שהוא בכליון מצית // לילה פחות השערה בעת מצית

כך ויהי בחצי הלילה ויהי הכה כל בכור בארץ מצרים | מבכור פרעה
הישב על כסאו עד בכור השבי אשר בבית הבכור וכל בכור בהמה
ונ למכה מצרים בבכוריהם כי לעולם חסדו וגו'
ונ רגע ימותו וחצות לילה יגעשו עם ויעברו ויסירו אביר לא ביד

בִּיד וּבְיָמִין תִּסְמְכֵנוּ / וּמִנֶּגֶף תִּחְסְכֵנוּ / וּבְצֵל מְגִינָךְ תִּגְוַנְנוּ
ברוך

מגן

מתים בכל בית בנוף פנחנקו // נאקות חללים נאקו
סכרו ולבוותם נמקו // עלפו ורוחותם נבקו

3 הן ... הדברת: ברגע אחד מתו הבכורות והוכרעו בדבר, השווה פסי"ר, הוספה, דף קצו, ע"א: 'דבר
אחר, ויהי בחצי הלילה, [כך] פתח ר' תנחומא, וז"ה רגע ימותו וחצות לילה יגעשו (איוב לד, כ),
מדבר בבכורי מצרים שהכם הקב"ה ברגע'. הדברת: הכרעת במכת 'דבר'.

5 טמאים ... רצית: המצרים הטמאים רבו זה עם זה, הבכורים עם הוריהם, אבל לבני ישראל
(=ידידים) היה שלום ורצון; השווה פסיקתא דר"כ, פיסקא ז, (ויהי בחצי הלילה), עמ' 128: 'מבכור
פרעה (שם' יב, כט), מכאן שפרעה היה בכור. נתכנסו כל הבכורות אצל אבותיהם ... הלכו להם
אצל פרעה ... אמר (להם פרעה), צאו וקפחו שוקיהם של אלו ... מיד יצאו הבכורות והרגו
באבותיהם ששים רבוא, הה"ד למכה מצרים בבכוריהם' (תה' קלו, ו); מדרש שו"ס קלו, ו, עמ'
520; פסי"ר יז, פח, א; תנח' בובר בא, יח.

6 כל ... מצית: כל הבכורות מתו אפילו 'כל שהוא' — בכור מאביו ולא מאמו או להפך. ע"י להלן,
שר 45. מצית: לפי תה' עה, יט: 'ימצו ישתו כל רשעי ארץ', 'כשם שאדם ממצה את הכלי ואינו
מניח בו כלום כך לא הניח הקב"ה ביניהם שום בכור' (מחזור יניי, דידוקן, עמ' 33). לילה ...
מצית: בזמן מכות בכורות היה חצי הלילה בדיוק, השווה פסיקתא דר"כ, שם, עמ' 122: 'ויהי בחצי
הלילה ... אמר דוד: אין בריה יכולה לעמד על חצי הלילה אלא הקב"ה ... לפיכך כתוב ויהי
בחצי הלילה'. ע"י בר"ר מבג, עמ' 417; פסי"ר יז, פח, ב; תנח' לך, ט; תנח' בובר בא, יז; המלים
'כחוט השערה' מובאות במכילתא דרשב"י בא, יב, עמ' 28, 231; ע"י רבינוביץ, הלכה ואגדה, עמ'
31.

7 כל ... בהמה: שם' יב, כט. תחילת הסדר לפי מנהג א"י, (מאן, עמ' 411, 568).

8 וז' ... חסדו: תה' קלו, הפסוק נדרש בפסיקתא, השווה לעיל, שר 5.

9 וז' ... ביד: איוב לד, כ. השווה לעיל, שר 3.

ב תוכן הפיוט: בכל בתי המצרים נשמעו זעקות חרדה, ואילו בני ישראל יצאו ביד רמה.

12 מתים ... נאקו: לפי יח' ללד: 'ונאק נאקות חללי'. נוף: כינוי למצרים.

13 סכרו ... נבקו: המצרים נמסרו למוות, לבם נמק, ונפחו נשמחם. סכרו: נסגרו, נמסרו לפי יש' יט, ד.
ורוחותם נבקו: לפי יש' שם, יג: 'ונבקה רוח מצרים'.

פגרים מתים למו עשית // צורת כל בכור גם במעיהם לא חסר
קומי לך לבכורך שחת // רפוא ונגוף שמה שחת

15

שואה ומשואה ובהלה // שמות ושאות ותלהלה
תקפה בהם הלהלה // תמהון קמו וצאו בלהלה

כז ויקם פרעה לילה הוא וכל עבדיו וכל מצרים ותהי | צעקה גדלה
במצרים כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת

20

ונ שהכה בכורי מצרים מאדם עד בהמה
ונ ונבקה רוח מצרים בקרבו | ועצמו אבלע ודרשו אל האלילים
ואל האטים ואל האבות ואל הידענים
ונ וסכרתי את מצרים ביד אדונים קשה ומלך עז | ימשל בם נאם
האדון יי צבאות

ונ ונגף יי את מצרים נגוף ורפוא ושבו עד יי | ונעתר להם ורפאם
ונ בחסר ובכפן גלמוד הערקים ציה אמש שואה ומשאה

שואה ומשואה / תפיל צר לשוחה / ונחיה בגשם ישועה
ברוך

25

מחיה

ג. ישמע לאדום קשמע מצרים // משא דומה קמשא מצרים

ג

14 פגרים ... במעיהם: כל הבכורות מתו, גם אלה שבמעי אמם. השווה לעיל, שר 1.
15 קומי ... שחת: לבני ישראל הנקראים 'בני בכורי', לפי שמ' ד, כב, נאמר: פקד פקדתי וגר (שם
טז-יח). רפוא ... שמת: לפי יש' יט, כב: 'ונגף ה' את מצרים נגף ורפוא'; הפייטן עצמו מפרש את
דבריו להלן, שר 47: 'זעף ונחת נגלית נגוף ורפוא / לבכורי צר (=למצרים) נגוף, ולבנך בכורך
(=ישראל) — רפוא'.

16 שואה ומשואה: איוב לג. שמות ושאות: כולם לשונות של חרדה ואסון, לפי יש' ו, יא; יר' כה, יא, לא.
17 תקפה ... בלהלה: שמ' יב, ל.

18 כז ... מת: שם.

19 ונ ... בהמה: תהי קלה, ת.

20 ונ ... הידענים: יש' יט, ג; הפרק מדבר במפלת מצרים.

21 ונ ... צבאות: שם שם, יד; הפסוק נדרש על מכות מצרים, השווה תנח' במדבר, ג.
22 ונ ... ורפאם: יש' יט, כב; עי' לעיל, שר 15.

23 ונ ... ומשאה: איוב לג, ג.

24 שואה ... ישועה: תפילה לגשמי ברכה ולהפלת צר (=שונאי ישראל) לשוחה; יש כאן חרח של ח'
עם א' ועי', משואה — שוחה — ישועה. בגשם ישועה: בדרך כלל הפייטן מזכיר 'טל' ולא 'גשם' גם
בקרובות החורף, עי' לעיל, מבוא, עמ' 13.

ג תוכן הפיוט: תפילה להי שקרנה של אדום, ביזאנטיק, תרד כקרנה של מצרים, וליל הפסח בימינו
יהיה, כימי צאתנו ממצרים, ליל הגאולה והישועה.
26 ישמע ... מצרים: השווה פסיקתא דר"ב, שם, עמ' 132: 'ר' לוי ... בש"ר ברכיה אמר: כאשר

נפרעת מפתרום בתקלית מפת עשירית // ומאדום תפרע בתקלית קרן

עשירית

ירדו ראמים עמם / בכורי מלכות עמם // מזר תערימם / באף תחרימם
ישע שמור / הוא ליל שמור // אמר שומר אָתָא קץ אָשְׁמור

כך משא דומה אלי קורא משעיר שומר מה מלילה | שמר מה מליל

ונ אמר שומר אתא בקר וגם לילה | אם תבעיון בעיו שבו אתיו

ונ והיה יום אחד הוא ידע ליי לא יום ולא לילה | והיה לעת ערב

יהיה אור

ונ ימלך יי לעולם אלהיך ציון לדור ודור הללויה

אל נא

ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל

שמע למצרים יחילו כשמע צר (יש' כגה), א"ר אליעזר, כל צור מלא במקרא בצור המדינה הכתוב מדבר, וכל 'צר' חסר במקרא ברומי הרשעה הכתוב מדבר. השווה בר"ר סא,ז, עמ' 669; תנח' וארא, יג; שמ"ר ט,יג. דומה: כינוי לאדום, לפי יש' כא,יא, ע"ר לעיל, מבוא, עמ' 46.

27 נפרעת ... עשירית: ה' נפרע מפתרום (= כינוי למצרים) במכת בכורות, המכה העשירית; וממלכות רומא יפרע עם ביאת המשיח כשתעלה קרן ישראל, השווה איכ"ר ב,ו: 'גדע בחרי אף כל קרן ישראל. עשר קרנות הן: קרנו של אברהם ... יצחק, יוסף, משה, תורה, כהונה, לוויה, נבואה, בית המקדש ... קרנו של משיח ... שני' ויתן עוז למלכו וירם קרן משיחו, וכולן היו נתונות בראשן של ישראל, וכיון שחטאו ניטלו מהן, הה"ד גדע בחרי אף כל קרן ישראל, וניתנו לאומות העולם ... אימתי הוא מחזירן למקומם? — לכשירומם הקב"ה קרן משיחו, דכתיב יתן עוז למלכו וגר'; מדרש תהלים עה, עמ' 340; מדרש שמואל פ"ד.

28 ירדו ... עמם: כשם שבכורי מצרים מתו כך גם מלכות רומא (ראמים — רומיים) וגדוליה, השווה פסידר"כ שם: 'ר' לר' בש"ר חמא בר חנינא, מי שפרע מן הראשונים הוא יפרע מן האחרונים, מה מצרים דם אף אדום כן, ונתתי מופתים בשמים ובארץ דם ואש (יואל ג,ג) ... ומה מצרים הגדול גדול שבהם הרגו, אף אדום כן. וירדו ראמים עמם (יש' לד,ז), א"ר מאיר, וירדו רומיים עמם. מזר תערימם: תציגם ערומים מכתר מלכות.

29 ישע ... שמור: ליל הפסח הוא ליל ישועה גם לעתיד לבוא, השווה מכילתא פי"ד, עמ' 52: 'ליל שמורים הוא לה' (שמ' יב,מב), בו נגאלו ובו עתידין להגאל, דברי ר' יהושע, שנאמר הוא הלילה הזה לה' (שם). ובדברי הפייטן להלן שר' 37: 'לילה אשר בו נפדו ראשונים / שמורים נמת יהי לאחרונים'. אמר ... אשמור: אמר השומר שהגיע קץ אשמור (=משמרת, ואשמורה בלילה' תה' צ,ד) — בא קץ לליל הגלות.

30 כך ... מליל: יש' כא,יא; הפטרת הסדר (מאן, עמ' 411): השווה מכילתא דרשב"י בא, יב, עמ' 35: 'הוא הלילה הזה שמורים, גאולה זו נגאלין בפרק זה, שנייה נגאלין בפרק אחר, וכן הוא אומר ... משא דומה אלי קורא משעיר וגר, ואומר אמר שומר אתא בקר וגם לילה וגר. ונ ... אתיו: שם, יב.

31 ונ ... אור: זכ' יד,ז; השווה פסי"ר, פיסקא ח, ל, ע"א: 'ד"א והיה בעת ... זש"ה והיה ביום ההוא לא יהיה אור יקרות וקפאון, אלא מה יהיה — יום אחד הוא ידע לה' לא יום ולא לילה, לא יום לרשעים ולא לילה לצדיקים, אלא מה, והיה לעת ערב יהיה אור (שם), ה' אורי וישעי ממי אירא, ה' מעוז חיי ממי אפחד (תה' כו,א). ע"י להלן, שורות 72-73: 'דם החדיע כי לך היום וגם לך לילה'. ונ ... הללויה: תה' קמז, רמז לימות המשיח ולגאולה האחרונה.

- 35 ד לישע עמך בקצי ליל יצאת / ובקצם היום אותם הוצאת
הדן עמו ביום ועמים בלילה / כי לך יום אף לך לילה
לילה אשר בו נפדו ראשונים / שמורים נמף יהי לאחרונים
ומה שהיה בראשונה הוא שיהיה באחרונה / כשמע מצרים תשמיע
לצורים
תצמח ותצנח / תצלח ותרכב / תתקע ותתקף / תצרח ותצנח
על עם נורא מרום וקדוש 40
- ה אז תשע מכות היו אדונים קשה // אשר בם ספרת גוי לבו מקשה
בעזות מלך עז היתה מכת עשירית // אשר המשלח בנוגשי בגי גופה
עשירית
גדיעת בכורות היתה תכליתם // אשר שמה אפך על תבליתם
דנת לפניהם את אלהיהם // וגם צורתם הפלת באהליהם

- ד תוכן הפיוט: הפייטן שב ומתפלל לגאולת ישראל בימינו ולמפלת אדום כמו בליל השימורים
במצרים.
- 35 לישע ... הוצאת: שמ' יב, נא.
- 36 הדן ... בלילה: השווה בר"ר נג, עמ' 519: 'א"ר לוי, אין הקב"ה דן את אומות העולם אלא בלילה
בשעה שישנים מן העבירות, ואינו דן את ישראל אלא ביום בשעה שעסוקים במצות, הה"ד והוא
ישפוט תבל בצדק (תה' ט, ט); עי' ירוש' ר"ה, פ"א ה"ג, נו ע"א. כי ... לילה: תה' עד, טז.
- 39 תצמח ... ותצנח: יש כאן בנוסחאות חילופי הבנה בסיום דברי הפייטן, אם כוונתו על אדום (תצרח
ותצנח) או על ישראל בלשון טובה (ותצמח), ואולי הפייטן החליף את הביטויים בכל צמד מלים
פעם לנחמת ישראל ופעם לנקמה מאדום, והגירסאות נשתכשו. תצלח ותרכב: לפי תה' מה, ה.
תתקע: לפי יש' יח, ג. תצרח: שם, מב, יג.
- ה תוכן הפיוט: מכת בכורות הקשה הכניעה את מצרים המקשים לבם. כל בכורי מצרים — בכור אדם
ובכור בהמה, אלהי מצרים ופסיליהם — כולם נפלו בדבר. הגיע זמן המשפט והעונש למצרים,
החסד והצדק — לישראל. יד ה' ואצבע אלוהים נגלו בעבר ויתגלו גם בימינו.
- 41 אז ... מקשה: בתשע מכות הסגיר ה' את פרעה המקשה לבו, לפי יש' יט, ד: 'וסכרתי את מצרים ביד
אדונים קשה'. אדונים: אולי צ"ל: לאדונים, או שהמכות הן הן האדונים שבידם 'נסכרה' מצרים.
סכרת: הסגרת.
- 42 בעזות ... עשירית: לפי סוף הפסוק ביש' שם: 'ומלך עז ימשל בם'. אשר ... עשירית: ה' המשיל,
השליט את מכת בכורות העשירית במצרים הנוגשים בבני אברהם שנתנסה בעשרה נסיונות, השווה
שמ"ר טו, כז: 'והביא הקב"ה עליו עשר מכות כנגד עשר נסיונות שנתנסה אברהם אבינו ועמד
בכולן'.
- 43 גדיעת ... תבליתם: מכת בכורות היתה האחרונה (=תכליתם), שנענשו בה המצרים על פשעיהם
— גידופיהם, לפי יש' י, כה: 'וכלה זעם ואפי על תבליתם'; עי' בפירושי רש"י, ראב"ע ושד"ל, שם.
- 44 דנת ... אלהיהם: לפי שמ' יב, יב: 'ובכל אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים' ובמכילתא דפסחא פ"ו, עמ'
24: 'שפטים משונים זה מזה, צלם של אבן היתה נמסית, ושל עץ היתה נרקבת ושל מתכת נעשית
חררה'; מכילתא דרשב"י בא יב, עמ' 228. וגם ... באהליהם: השווה פסיקתא דר"כ ז, עמ' 127:
'תני בש"ר נתן, ביום שהיה בכורו של אחד מהם מת, צר איקונין שלו בתוך ביתו ואותו היום היתה

45 הפית כל בכור וכל ראש משפחה // כל בכור לאיש וכל בכור לאשה
 ובכור לכל בהמה ובכור לכל דבר // בפית ובחיוץ דבר שתה לכל דבר
 זעף ונחת נגליה נגוף ורפוא // לבכורי צר נגוף ולבנה בכורך רפוא
 חצות לילה בכן יודוך מודוך // על משפטי צדקך ועל צדק אוהביך
 טכס אצבעך עשתה תשע מכות // ידך עשתה מפת בכורות
 50 ימין עזך טבעה צר וירוממוך הכל // וזרוע קדשך תפדנו ותרום
 על כל
 אל נא

לעולם תוערץ ולעולם תוקדש וכו

1

- נידקת ונשחקת' (דודקח, מחזור יניי, עמ' 36); 'ייתכן ש'צורתם' מכוונת לאלוהי מצרים, בהקבלה
 ל'צלם' שבמכילתא ולא לבכורות; עי' רבינוביץ, הלכה ואגדה, עמ' 31, הערה 6.
- 45 הכית ... לאשה: השווה פסיקתא דר"כ, שם: 'וה' הכה כל בכור בארץ מצרים (שמות יב, כט). בכור,
 כל בכור, בכור לאיש בכור לאשה, בכור לזכר בכור לנקבה ... א"ר אבא בר אחא, אפטרופוס של
 בית היה מת, כד"א שמרי הראש כי לא היה בכור ושימיהו אביוהו לראש (דהי"א כו, י); עי' פסי"ר
 פיסקא יז פז, ב.
- 46 ובכור ... דבר: במדרש תהלים עח, ח, עמ' 355, הגירסה כמו בדברי הפייטן לפנינו: 'בכור לאיש
 בכור לאשה בכור לבהמה בכור לכל דבר, ואם לא היה בבית בכור היה האפטרופוס (=ראש
 משפחה) מת, שנאמר כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת(שם' יב, ל); אלי קורקסאני מביא שענן הקראי
 הסתמך על דברי הפייטן יניי כאן, שגם בכור לאם נחשב לבכור כמו בכור לאב, אבל העניין הובא גם
 בפסיקתא ובמדרשים אחרים, עי' במבוא למחזור יניי, דודקח, עמ' 44; הרכבי, זכרון לראשונים,
 עמ' קח: רבינוביץ, שם, עמ' 175.
- 47 זעף ... רפוא: השווה לעיל, שר 15.
- 48 חצות ... אוהביך: על הנסים בחצות הלילה ישבחך, על השפטים במצרים ועל הצדקה לישראל.
 השווה פסיקתא דר"כ, שם, עמ' 125: 'חצות לילה אקום להודות לך על משפטי צדקך (תה)
 קיט, סב) ... על משפט צדקך, על המשפטים אשר הבאת על המצרים במצרים, ועל צדקה שעשית
 עם אבותינו במצרים'.
- 49 טכס ... מכות: אצבע אלוהים עשתה תשע מכות — דצ"ך עד"ש בא"ח. טכס: המכות נעשו לפי
 המדרש ב'טכסיס מלכות', השווה פסיקתא דר"כ שם, עמ' 132: 'ר' לוי ... בטכסיס מלכים בא
 עליהם, בתחילה סכר אמת המים שלהם, ואח"כ הביא עליהם קלנים (=הצפרדעים), ואח"כ ירה
 בהם חצים — כינים' וכו'. ידך ... בכורות: יד ה' עשתה מכת בכורות, במכילתא בשלח פ"ו, עמ'
 114 מובא: 'כמה לקו באצבע? — עשר מכות', לדעת הפייטן באצבע היו תשע מכות. במחזור הדרת
 קדש (ויניציא שג"ט) מפרש שיד ה' עשתה תשע מיני מכות בכורות: בכור לאביו, בכור לאמו, בכור
 השפחה וכו', עי' ח"ג ובמחזור יניי לדודקח, שם, הערה 7.
- 50 ימין ... הכל: ימין ה' טבעה את המצרים, לפי שמ' טו, ו: 'ימין ה' תרעץ אויב'. חרוע ... כל:
 זרוע ה' תפדה את ישראל לעתיד לבוא; הפייטן מחלק את הנסים במצרים ולעתיד לאצבע, יד, ימין
 חרוע; עי' רבינוביץ, שם, עמ' 269.

ובכן יהי בחצי הלילה

בְּלֵילָה
הַלֵּילָה
לֵילָה
הַלֵּילָה
לֵילָה
בְּלֵילָה
לֵילָה
לֵילָה
לֵילָה
בְּלֵילָה

ז
אז רוב נסים הפלאה
בכל אשמורות זה
55 גר צדק ניצחנה פנחלק לו
דנה מלך גר בחלום
הפחדה ארמי באמש
וישראל סר אל מלאך ויכול לו
זרע בכורי פתרוס מחצתה בחצי
60 חילחלה מדין וחבריו בצליל לחם בחלום
טיסת נגיד חרושת סיליתה בכוכבי
יעץ מחרף לנופף יד לאיוי והובשה פגרי

ז תוכן הפיוט: הפייטן מונה את כל הנסים שנעשו לישראל בלילה, החל באברהם יצחק ויעקב וכלה בנס פורים. הפיוט מסיים בתפילה לגאולה לאחרית הימים, ליום שבו חשכת הגלות תיפסק ויתגלה מחדש האור הגנוז, אור שבעת הימים. הפיוט נכנס להגדה של פסח ועד גילוי הגניזה היה הפיוט היחיד הידוע של יוני.

53 אז ... בלילה: הרבה נסים נעשו לישראל בלילה, השווה פסיקתא דר"כ יז, בוכר (דף קכט, ב); 'אזכרה גנינתי בלילה (תה' עז, ז). ... בלילות זה לילה, ולילו של פרעה לילה, אותו שכתוב בו יהי בחצי הלילה; בלילה — זה לילה, ולילה של גרען לילה, אותו שכתוב בו יהי בלילה ההוא ואמר אליו ה' קום רד במחנה (שופ' ז, ט); בלילה זה לילה, ולילה של סנחריב לילה, אותו שכתוב בו יהי בלילה ההוא ויצא מלאך ה' (מל"ב יט, לה); בלילה זה לילה, ולילו של המן שכתוב בו בלילה ההוא נדדה שנת המלך (אסתר ו, א); לפי מדרשים שונים היו מקצת הנסים הנזכרים בפיוט בליל הפסח. ע"י איכ"ר יא, א, מהר" בוכר, עמ' 58; בר"ר ע, טו, עמ' 815; חננ' בלק, ח; שמ"ר יח, ב; מדרש פנים אחרים לאסתר, נוסח ב, בוכר, דף לו; תרגום יונתן וירושלמי לשם' יב, מב (בפסיקתא מהדורת מנדלבוים חסר הקטע של לילו של אחשוורוש והמן, אבל נמצא בכת"י אחרים ובמקבילות, ע"י שם בח"נ, עמ' 281).

55 גר ... לילה: אברהם אבינו (=גר צדק) ניצח את המלכים בחצי הלילה, לפי בר' יד, טו: 'ויחלק עליהם לילה'. השווה בר"ר מב (מג): יג, עמ' 417: 'ויחלק עליהם לילה, ר' בנימין בן יפת ... הלילה נחלק מאליו ... אמר הקב"ה, אברהם פעל עמי בחצות, אף אני פועל עם בניו בחצות הלילה, ואימתי? — במצרים, שנאמר יהי בחצי הלילה'.

56 מלך גר: אבימלך, לפי בר' כו.

57 ארמי: לבן, לפי בר' לא, כד.

58 ישראל ... בלילה: יעקב נאבק עם המלאך והתגבר עליו 'עד עלות השחר' לפי בר' לב, כו-ל; הושע יב, ה.

60 חילחלה: זעזעת והבהלת, לפי שופ' ז, ט יג.

61 טיסת ... לילה: מרוצת (=טיסת) חיל סיסרא (=נגיד חרושת, לפי שופ' ד, ב) רמסח (=סלית) בלילה, לפי שופ' ה, כ: 'הכוכבים במסלותם נלחמו עם סיסרא'.

62 יעץ ... בלילה: סנחריב (=מחרף, לפי מל"ב יח, ד) איים (=נופף ידו, לפי יש' י, לב) להחריב את ירושלים (=איווי) והכלמת את גבוריו בלילה, לפי מל"ב יט, לה.

לילה

לילה

בלילה

לילה

בלילה

בלילה

מלילה

לילה

לילה

לילה

הלילה

לילה

כרע כל ומציבו באישון
לאיש חמדות נגלה רז חזות
משפך בכלי קודש נהרג בו
נושע מבור אריות פותר חלומות
שנאה נט[ר]א[ג]י וכתב ספרים
עוררתה נצחך עליו בנדר שנת מלך
פורה תדרוך בשומר מה
צרח בשומר ונם אתא בקר וגם
קרב יום אשר הוא לא יום ולא
רם הודיע כי לך יום וגם לך
שומרים הפקד לעירך כל היום וכל
תאיר כאור יום חשיכת

65

70

75 ובכן

ח פי אין לפניך לילה / והכל לפניך יום / ויום ליום אומר יביע /
ולילה ללילה דעת יודיע / וחושך לא יחשיך ממך / ונהורה שרי

- 63 כרע... לילה: אליל בבל (=כל) ומכוננו (=מציבו) כרעו בלילה; מקור הדברים בסיפור "בל והתנין" שבתרגום השבעים על תחבולות דניאל לנפץ את כל והתנין — אלילי בבל; השווה הספרים החיצוניים, כרך א, מהדורת כהנא, עמ' תקע; בר"ר סח"ג, עמ' 790 בח"נ.
- 64 לאיש... לילה: לדניאל (=איש חמדות, לפי דנ' י,יא) נגלה סוד חלומו של נבוכדנצר בלילה (ב.יט).
- 65 משתכר: בלשאצר (שם ב,ה,ל).
- 66 נושע... לילה: דניאל פתר חלום בלשאצר בלילה (שם ה,ל); ע"י ח"נ.
- 67 א[ג]י: המן.
- 68 עוררתה... בלילה: אסתר ו,א; המן נוצח בלילה כשנודדה שנת המלך אחשורוש. ולפי המדרש היה זה כליל הפסח (מדרש פנים אחרים, שם).
- 69 פורה... מלילה: לפי יש' סג,ג-ד בנבואה על אדום: 'פורה דרכתי לבדי... כי יום נקם בלבי ושנת גאולי באה'.
- 70 צרח... לילה: לפי יש' מב,יג; תפילה שה' (=רם) יודיע (=צרח) עד מתי ימשך הלילה הארוך של הגלות.
- 71-72 קרב... לילה: ע"י לעיל, שר' 32.
- 73 שומרים... הלילה: לפי יש' סב,ו.
- 74 תאיר... לילה: תפילת סיום לקץ חשכת הגלות לפי תה' קלט,יב: 'ולילה כיום יאיר כחשיכה כאורה'.
- ח תוכן הפיוט: גדולת ה' — אור אין סוף שאין החושך שולט בו, וגם מלאכיו קדושים וטהורים חיים לעד ואומרים שירה לפניו.
- 76 כי... יום: ע"י לעיל שר' 32. ויום... יודיע: תה' יט,ג.
- 77 וחושך... ממך: שם קלט,יב. השווה פסיקתא דר"כ שם, עמ' 126. ונהורה... עימך: דנ' ב,כב.

צִיָּמָה / בְּקָרִים יִגִּידוּ חֶסֶדְךָ / וְלֵילֹת יִשְׁגְּנוּ אֲמוֹנֶתְךָ / וְשַׁחַר נוֹגֶה
וּבֹקֶר יוֹם וְצֹהָרִים וְעַרְבִית וְעָרֵב וְנִשְׁף וְלֵילָה וְכָל עַת וְעֵידֶן וְזֶמֶן
נֶגַע יִזְכִּירוּ נִיִּסֵּי פְלֹאֲךָ / וְאוֹתוֹת מוֹפְתֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ / הַמַּחֲרֵשׁ
לְשׁוֹעוֹת וּפֹעֵל נוֹרָאוֹת / הַסּוֹפֵר יָמִים וּמוֹנֶה עֲתִים / וְיוֹמֶךָ אֶלֶף
שָׁנִים / וְשָׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתְמוּ / כִּי הַכֹּל בְּלֶה וְאֶתָּה לֹא בָּלָה / וּבְאֲשֶׁר
אַתָּה הֵם [מְשַׁרְתֶּיךָ / אֶתָּה] חַי וְהֵם חַיִּים / טְהוֹר וְהֵם טְהוֹרִים /
קָדוֹשׁ וְהֵם קָדוֹשִׁים / וְיִקְדְּשֶׁה לְקָדוֹשׁ מִקְדִּישִׁים וּמִשְׁלֵשִׁים כֹּכ וְקָרָא

ט 85 ... לִי [לֹ]ת בְּעִי [תו]תִּיהֶם וּבִזְמַנֵּיהֶם ל
[קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יִי צְבָאוֹת מֶלֶא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ]
[קָדוֹשׁ] מְאַשְׁמוֹרֶת בּוֹקֶר / [קָדוֹשׁ מִמֶּנָּה] צִית הֶלְ[ל]לָה / קָדוֹשׁ מְ[עֲלִיית
[שַׁחַר]

[קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יִי צְבָאוֹת מֶלֶא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ]
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[קָדוֹשׁ] ... לְבָנֶךָ בְּכוֹרֶךָ בְּעֲלִיית [שַׁחַר]
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מִמְקוֹמוֹ הַטְּ[הוֹר] ...
מִמְקוֹמוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ יֵרֵד לְמַעְגֵּינֵנוּ בְּמִקּוֹם ...
95 [מִמְקוֹמוֹ]
פעמים

78 בקרים ... אמונתך: לפי תה' צבג: 'להגיד בבקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות'. ושחר ... פלאיך: יש כאן חלוקת היום לפי המקרא חז"ל, השווה ח"י בורנשטיין, סדרי זמנים והתפתחותם בישראל, התקופה ו. שחר: עמוד השחר. נוגה: כוכב נוגה בבוקר. נשף: זמן המעבר — בין יום ללילה (בורנשטיין שם, עמ' 279).

81 ויומך ... שנים: לפי תה' צד; השווה בר"ר יטח, עמ' 178: 'הריני נותן לו (לאדם הראשון) יום אחד משלי, שהוא אלף שנה'.

82-84 כי ... קדושים: השווה ר"ר יחא, עמ' ת.

Chapter 2: Piyyut in the Holiday Cycle Part I: Rosh Hashanah

In the previous chapter, we looked at how *piyyut* was used to elucidate the weekly Torah portion, and how *payyetanim* like Yannai would integrate rabbinic homiletical material—namely, midrash—into the themes of various rubrics and prayers of the service, serving a new liturgical and pedagogic function. We also saw how this way of writing liturgical poetry could serve as a model for today's liturgists as a guide for writing creative worship today that is tied to both the weekly Torah portion and a particular rubric of the service, and that provides an interpretation of the Torah text through non-analytical means. We are now going to discuss the *piyyut* as it fits into the liturgy for the various holidays.

Most likely, most people will be familiar with *piyyutim* in this context. *Piyyutim* have been preserved in the liturgies of the *Mahzor* even in the Reform movement, and are still recited to this day, often with the participating congregants unaware that this 'fixed liturgy' they hear every year was once a new, exciting and often controversial composition.¹ *Unetaneh Tokeph*, for example, is as fixed a liturgy for the *Yamim Noraim* as is the *Tekiata debe Rav* and, in some Reform contexts, the singing of *All The World Shall Come to Serve Thee* (itself a *piyyut*, *Vaye'etayu khol l'avdekha*, translated by Israel Zangwell) is as established a tradition as rising for the *Shema*.²

We will therefore have to ask different questions of these liturgies than we did of those for Shabbat. This is partly due to the issue of familiarity, but also a whole host of other issues. Unlike Shabbat which, being a weekly occurrence, allows for greater flexibility of

¹ See Lawrence A Hoffman, ed., *Gates of Understanding II* (New York: CCAR Press, 1984) p. 206 (note on p. 293, *Early I will seek You*), and Phillip Birnbaum, ed., *High Holiday Prayer Book*, (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1997), Greenberg, Sidney, ed., *Mahzor Hadash* (New York: The Prayer Book Press, 2001).

² See Hoffman, *Gates of Understanding II* p. 192.

liturgical style and more room for experimentation, the holidays come but once a year, and today tend to attract a different, less frequently attending crowd of worshippers, who will be less familiar with the liturgy and its structure as a whole. Furthermore, the nature of holiday worship is different from that of a regular Shabbat service. Holidays come at occasional times. For a holiday, the liturgy may be quite different from that occurring on a regular Shabbat, either in its form or in its performance. There may be special insertions in the liturgy, such as *Ya'aleh V'Yavo* and a different *Kedushat HaYom*. The music may be significantly different; *Mi Sinai* tunes, singing *Mi Chamocha* to the tune of *Maoz Tzur* during Chanukah, or the use of *Hallel*, immediately alert even the most casual service attendee that something is different. Furthermore, all of these liturgical additions are often quite specific to the holiday to which they pertain: while certainly *ya'aleh v'yavo* is recited for many holidays, its text changes based on the context.

For all these reasons, the *piyyut* cannot function as a model for the kinds of creative liturgies we explored in the previous chapter. People know what holiday it is, and while they are not familiar with many aspects of holiday liturgy as a whole, they know to expect certain pieces and a certain atmosphere (especially for the *Yammim Noraim*) and would probably resist too much deviation to the right or to the left. However, there is still an opportunity for creative worship. Perhaps there is some aspect of the holiday that heretofore has been unexamined by the congregation. Perhaps the service leaders are looking for a way to revitalize a holiday worship that has become staid, trite or meaningless. And just because the congregants are familiar with *mi yimaleil* does not mean they know—or would respond to—*al hanissim*.

To explore the *piyyut* as a model for creative liturgy for the holidays, we will look at five *piyyutim* from the Ashkenazi *Mahzor* pertaining to the holiday of *Rosh Hashanah*. They are all *kerovot* for either the morning or the musaf service, most written by a Byzantine Palestinian *payyetan* named Eleazar birebbe Qallir and his Ashkenazi imitators.

Qallir: His Imitators and Critics

We first met the *payyetan* Eleazar HaQallir in our previous chapter, in a discussion of Yannai's history and background. Like Yannai, Qallir the man is lost to us. While in some traditional circles there have been attempts to associate him with one tanna or another by the name of Eleazar, and some attempts to date him (likely 6th century), we can only know that he comes after Yannai.³

His aesthetic is also somewhat similar to Yannai's, in that it is Byzantine, and he follows the Byzantine rules of verse, rhyme and meter. However, Qallir did make a number of innovations that "became standard practice."⁴ For example, Qallir had no problem creating variations of the poems internal to the *kerovah* employed by Yannai.⁵ Another example: the meter-rhyme system of the Byzantine-period *payyetan* created problems for the poets, in that they were limited by sound to a particular *Wortfeld*, and were therefore limited in vocabulary. Qallir solved this by inventing words that match the particular rhyme scheme.⁶ In addition to all these innovations, one other thing

³ See Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1993), p. 244.

⁴ See T Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, p. 53.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

distinguishes Qallir from his predecessor: Qallir's poetry—especially his *piyyutim* for the holidays—were preserved, and his style imitated, whereas Yannai was nearly lost to us. These innovations—and Qallir's place in the *Mahzor*—were great issues of liturgical debate. Elbogen describes Qallir with great admiration and appreciation, saying that, “no other poet was blessed with such productivity.”⁷ This description of Qallir and his poetry belies the controversy that often accompanied his works. Certainly Qallir's works are found throughout the *Mahzor*; the High Holiday liturgies are full of them. However, not everyone was so enamored with the Byzantine period poet's works. Abraham Ibn Ezra, in his commentary to Ecclesiastes, rails against Qallir's poetry as meaningless, confusing and incomprehensible.⁸ At the same time, poets in Europe—especially Italy and southern France and Germany—were imitating Qallir, using his works as a model for their own innovations.⁹ Pietists like the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* wrote treatises on the importance of Qallir's *piyyutim*; commentaries on their significance, described ways of using those poems for mystical and magical purposes.¹⁰ Thus Qallir the innovative poet was transformed along with his work to authoritative model and fixed liturgical rite.¹¹ Notwithstanding the wrangling between his detractors and his admirers and imitators, the poetry of Qallir (and others) came to be violated by local tradition. Pieces were abridged (as in the case of one of the poems to be analyzed in this chapter), or interrupted by other

⁷ See Elbogen, p. 241.

⁸ See Israel Levin, *Yalkut Ibn Ezra* (New York: Israel Matz Hebrew Classics Ltd., 1985).

⁹ See Leon Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000), p. 47.

¹⁰ See Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering Through the Lattices* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 105ff, 141ff, 168-169.

¹¹ See Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 248.

poems placed at various points in the middle.¹² Despite this fact, Qallir's poetry truly reached the status of fixed liturgy, something that could not be modified at whim.

Qallir had many imitators, and we will look at the works of two of them. One of the poets, an 11th century scholar named Simon ben Isaac of Mainz (sometimes called "The Great"), was a celebrity in his own day, recalled in legends for halting persecutions of his community and being a miracle worker.¹³ His piece *Melekh Elyon* was abridged, rendering his acrostic defective. Another imitator is anonymous; the composer of *le'Eil Orekh Din* is often assumed to be Qallir himself, but we have lost the identity of the actual poet. A final poet we will look at is Yekuthiel b. Moshe, who is discussed in brief below.

The Themes of Rosh Hashanah

Throughout rabbinic literature, the holiday of Rosh Hashanah is understood as *yom hadin*, the Day of Judgment for all mankind.¹⁴ Performatively, the liturgy reflects this understanding, as it moves the worshipper through various penitential stages, building up to the moment of judgment itself in which a final appeal for ultimate mercy is made. Every liturgical piece during Rosh Hashanah reflects this theology, as it moves from the morning acknowledgements of God as Divine Judge Supreme to the afternoon repeal of judgment's severe decree in the form of the *Tekiata debe Rav*, the rubric for the blowing

¹² See Elbogen, pp. 278ff.

¹³ See Elbogen, p. 253.

¹⁴ This is reflected throughout Mishnah Rosh Hashanah and in both its Palestinian and Babylonian talmudic expositions, but especially in Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:2 (See Albeck, p. 311).

of the Shofar with acknowledgements of God's majesty, our ancestors' worth, and Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed in the *Akedah*.¹⁵

Piyyutim for Rosh Hashanah

Just as the standard liturgy can be characterized thusly, so can the creative, ancillary liturgy of the day. The *piyyutim* for Rosh Hashanah draw from rabbinic literature, the day's Torah portion, and the very nature of the holiday to heighten the sense of urgency and the need for mercy in judgment. As mentioned, each of the *piyyutim* to be analyzed are *kerovot*; that is, they are all inserted into the *Amidah* to prepare the penitent for that moment of *din*.

The first *piyyut* we examine is a *reshut*, a *piyyut* that is a *kerovah* used to introduce another *kerovah*. Called *Misod hakhamim*, it is an old, anonymous and standard Byzantine formula for a *reshut*, and can be found in the morning *Amidah* for Rosh Hashanah.¹⁶ It is highly formulaic, a standard *reshut* that can be used to introduce any other *piyyut*: with great humility, the *chazzan* briefly asks permission in the 'council of sages' (*misod hakhamim*) to put forth his prayer. However, to better attune the *piyyut* to the specific holiday, the last two lines have been adapted.¹⁷ Where it would usually read, "I will open my mouth in song and joyful sound / to acknowledge and praise the One who dwells on high", it now reads, "I will open my mouth in prayer and supplication/To

¹⁵ Those themes being, *Malchuyot*, *Zichronot* and *Shofarot*, among others.

¹⁶ See Elbogen, p. 171.

¹⁷ 'For the needs of the *Yamim Noraim*'. See E. Daniel Goldschmidt, ed., *Mahzor leyamim hannora'im*, 2 vol. (Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), editor's notes, p. 60.

entreat and beg favor before [the King of the king of kings, and] Lord of all lords.”¹⁸ Whereas once the *reshut* alluded to the *chazzan*’s singing voice and joyful prayer, here in anticipation of Judgment, the allusion is to mercy and the mood more somber.

Misod hakhamim is usually accompanied by another *reshut* for the morning *Amidah*, called *yareiti biftoti*. It is a longer piece, written specifically for the day by the eleventh-century poet Yekuthiel ben Moshe, who is associated with the city of Speyer.¹⁹ He follows the Byzantine aesthetic by composing a rhyming name acrostic made up of 11 verses, divided into 22 stichs, each containing no more than 4 words; the last syllable (i.e. the rhyming syllable) of each stich is the sound ‘*chil*’, while the first letter of each line spells out the author’s name and the phrase *chazak v’amatz yikhi*.²⁰ As a *reshut*, its nature is similar to *misod hakhamim*: the author/*chazzan* humbly hopes to be worthy enough to pray on behalf of the congregation in this time of judgment. Unlike *misod hakhamim*, this *reshut* is ‘native’, drawing upon—and drawing out—the theological and rabbinic aspects of the day. An example of how this *reshut* draws upon the theme of Rosh Hashanah is stich 13, which alludes to the episode in Exodus 33:22 where Moses is hidden in the cleft of a rock and given the formula of the thirteen attributes to deflect God’s anger. However, rather than referring directly to Moses, the *payyetan* alludes to “the one whom you hid in a cleft of the cave”, which draws out other connotations of the biblical episode.²¹ Another example would be stichs 15-18, which I translate,

My inmost parts boil in your penetrating searches:
And my soul is sick from the fear of judgment.
If the dealings of the heart are like convulsions
The founts of my eyelids flow like a channel.

¹⁸ See my translations below.

¹⁹ See Birnbaum, *High Holiday Prayer Book*, (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1997), p. 211.

²⁰ See Goldschmidt, p. 61.

²¹ See my translation below.

Here, the repeated references to judgment and justice, as well as the merits of Israel's ancestors (*zechut avot*), and God's nature to search out the heart (found biblically, among other places, in Psalm 55:5), emphasize the power of the day, and introduce not only the next *piyyut*, but the theme that will be traced all the way to the blowing of the Shofar in *musaf*.²² As with Yannai's *kerovah* in the previous chapter, the poet draws these elements of judgment and God's omniscience from various biblical sources, most notably psalms, as well as from the rabbinic usages of that material. The prevalence of psalms may be because they lend a personal tone, illustrating the individual's need for repentance.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the *reshut* ends with the phrase "*yista'ar b'qirbi be'eit atchil*," which Birnbaum translates as, "my soul is stirred when I begin to speak."²³ However, this phrase is also a play on words, as it could also be read, "when I begin to recite '*at chil*,'" which is the name of a *piyyut* by Eleazar b. Qallir, the same *piyyut* this *reshut* is 'introducing'.

At chil is a rhyming alphabetical acrostic similar in structure to *yareiti biftsoti*, made up of seven stanzas of 14 verses, each divided into 2 stichs (making 28 stichs total), with four words per stich. The rhyme is internal to each particular stanza; while most of the rhyming syllables end on an "ah" sound, there are exceptions. The versification is broken up by a series of 8 biblical proof texts taken from a variety of sources spread throughout the *Tanakh*, quoted directly from their sources just before the last stanza. As this is a

²² See Goldschmidt, p. 61.

²³ See Birnbaum, p. 212.

Byzantine *kerovah*, indeed a *magein*, we would expect a structure like this, just as we expect the subject to be Abraham, his merits (and the merits of the ancestors in general), and how God is going to shield us even as He shielded our ancestors. However, this is a case where similar is not the same: the number of stanzas and stichs is significantly different from a Yannai-style *kerovah*, while the proof texts come from all over the Bible, including the Pentateuch, rather than exclusively being *petichta* verses used in rabbinic midrash. Furthermore, this *magein* looks not only to the past, but to the future; the last line of the poem points to a time when the Shofar may be blown in a restored Temple, rather than in exile.

The next *piyyut* is also a *piyyut* by Qallir, a *siluk*. Called *le'el orekh din*, it is a litany of God's various attributes of (merciful) justice. An alphabetical acrostic, this *piyyut* is set up metrically so that every first stich of a verse ends with the phrase, "*badin*" and the second stich ends, "*bayom din*", thus establishing a rhyme scheme as well. As a theme, Qallir builds his *siluk* by importing various familiar images of God as merciful judge, scouring biblical and rabbinic literature for his proof texts, including texts that are used liturgically in other contexts. While some images are stereotypical and can be found in multiple sources (God as *oseh chesed*, for example, or as *bochein levvavot*), others are equally common, but have specific sources. The idea of God as "*loveish tz'dakot*" can be found in Isaiah 59:17, while the idea that God is "*shomeir ohavav*" emerges from Psalm 145:20. By drawing from familiar material, Qallir creates a highly entertaining *piyyut*

that not only evokes the nature of the day, but also teaches the congregation midrash and biblical material.²⁴

Qallir's *siluk* is the last of the morning *kerovot* we will look at; the next *piyyut*, meant to be a triple alphabetical acrostic, shows how *piyyutim* have been modified to serve the needs of a given community.

Originally meant to be an exercise in comparison and contrast, *melekh elyon* is supposed to alternate between the qualities of the ultimate King (that is to say, God) and a mortal king, highlighting the might and eternity of the former and the weakness and ephemeral nature of the latter. Each verse dealing with God ends with the phrase, "*la'adei ad yimlokh*"; translated, "The King on High will reign forever and ever." Meanwhile, the verses dealing with the mortal king should end with "*ad matai yimlokh*," or, "How long will he reign?" thus setting up the contrastive.²⁵

However, the acrostic is defective: in the standard texts of the Ashkenazi *Mahzor*, the verses dealing with the mortal king have been removed, so that "only half of the alphabetical acrostic has been retained in the order of א ב ג ד."²⁶ By abridging the *piyyut*, the congregation can focus on God's qualities of Divine Majesty (which is, after all, the purpose of the day). It also means less *piyyut* to recite, finishing the service (relatively) more quickly. However, two of the verses (specifically, the ב and ג verses) dealing with the mortal king reappear as an epilogue to the *piyyut*, thereby allowing some

²⁴ See Goldschmidt, p. 79.

²⁵ See Goldschmidt, p. 167.

²⁶ See Birnbaum, p. 355.

sense of the contrast original to the *piyyut*. *Melekh elyon* is the last *piyyut* before the major *piyyut* of the day: *Unetaneh Tokeph*.

These translations are my own; the Hebrew originals may be found in Goldschmidt's *Mahzor leyamim hannora'im*. For biblical citations, I have used the JPS English translations where possible, with some exceptions.

Piyyutim For Rosh Hashanah: Translations

I.

A. M'sod Hachamim

This is a traditional *reshut*, anonymous in origin, with a simple grammatical rhyme, each verse ending in "חֲזַק-".

1. From among the council of sages and scholars
2. From the learned knowledge of those who have understanding
3. I will open my mouth in prayer and supplication
4. To entreat and beg favor before [the King over the king of kings, and] Lord over all lords.

B. Yareiti Biftsoti

Attached to M'sod Hachamim is this additional *reshut*, composed by Yekuthiel b. Moshe, an 11th-century Ashkenazi poet who lived in Speyer. The *piyyut* is a name acrostic, the first letter of each verse spelling out *יְהוָה חֲזַק וְאִמֵּץ יְהוָה*. It too contains a rhyme, each verse ending with *חֲזַק*.

1. I am fearful as I open my mouth to weave my words,²⁷
2. As I arise to entreat before (You), Awesome and Terrible One,
3. I am lacking in good deeds, therefore I fear²⁸:
4. I lack wisdom, how can I hope?
5. O my Creator, make me understand how to impart (our) heritage²⁹
6. Strengthen me³⁰ and support me against weakness³¹ and trembling³²

²⁷ For "lehaskil", see M. Betsah 5:1: "They may pass down fruit through a pit on a festival day."

²⁸ Job 32:6: "I have but a few years, while you are old; Therefore I was too *awestruck and fearful* to hold forth among you."

²⁹ I.e. how to teach Torah; see Deut. 33:4: "When Moses charged us with Torah, as the *heritage* of the congregation of Jacob."

³⁰ Psalm 88:5: "I am numbered with those who go down to the Pit; I am like a man without *strength*."

7. May my prayer be acceptable as one who offers up myrrh and onyeha (as incense)³³
8. May my words be sweet, like the nectar of honeybees
9. May I find favor in my straightforwardness, not as one dissembles.
10. As I seek expiation and pardon for those who sent me
11. May my cry³⁴ be pleasant and not as one who roars.³⁵
12. Answer those who draw near and are seen to be trembling.
13. Gracious One, as you promised the one whom you hid in a cleft of the cave³⁶
14. Be attentive when I begin my cry.
15. My inmost parts boil from your penetrating³⁷ searches:
16. And my soul is sick from the fear of judgment.
17. If you requite me, my heart (will) tremble³⁸
18. The founts of my eyelids will flow like a channel
19. I hope for righteousness from You, and I trust (in You).
20. Remember the uprightness of my parents, let it plead before You.³⁹
21. My heart is warm as my thoughts burn⁴⁰
22. My innards are agitated as I begin.⁴¹

II. At chil

In many rites, this *piyyut* by Kallir immediately follows. It is a מגן and so deals with Abraham and זכות אבות. An alphabetical acrostic, two stichs per verse, two verses per stanza, seven stanzas in total, with the last stanza separated from the rest of the poem by a series of eight proof-texts. Its rhyme scheme is internal to the stanzas. In the Hebrew, there are only 4 words per stich.

³¹ Jeremiah 47:3: "At the sound of the stamping hoofs of his stallions, at the noise of his chariots, the rumbling of the wheels, Fathers shall not look to their children out of *weakness* of hands."

³² Ex. 15:14: "The people hear, they tremble; *Agony* grips the dwellers in Philistia."

³³ Goldschmidt compares this verse to Psalm 141:2, "Take my prayer as an offering of incense, my upraised hands as an evening sacrifice." See also Exodus 30:34-35 for specific reference to the "onyeha", the herbs used to compound the incense offering.

³⁴ I.e. my prayer, Psalm 22:2: "My God, my God, why have You abandoned me; why so far from delivering

me and from my anguished *crying*."

³⁵ See b. Ta'anit, 16b, and Jer. 12:8 "My own people acted toward Me like a lion in the forest; she raised her voice against Me—therefore I have rejected her."

³⁶ I.e. Moses, hidden by God upon being asked if he could see God face to face, and being told that, while he could see God's "goodness", he could not gaze upon His face directly and live: Ex. 33:18ff.

³⁷ ד"א אחרי מות ה' לוי פתח (תהלים עה) אמרת: אחרת: 20:2: רבנן: "To wanton men I

say, 'do not be wanton!' to the wicked, 'do not lift up your horns!' also Jastrow, p. 466 (חילול), Even-

Shoshan, p. 772.

³⁸ Ps. 55:5: "My heart is *convulsed* within me; terrors of death assail me."

³⁹ Reference to Ancestors for *zechut avot*.

⁴⁰ Ps. 39:4: "My mind was in a rage, my thoughts were *all aflame*..."

⁴¹ There is a liturgical play on this last word: while it does mean, "I begin", it is also the name (and first word) of the next *piyyut*: את חיל. Thus it is taken to be an introduction of the latter *piyyut*, meaning, "when I begin the *piyyut* at chil."

1. The fearful day of reckoning has arrived.
2. With dread all flesh will be measured in the balance;
3. They draw near to Him, knees bent
4. To purify their thoughts as with a burnt offering.

5. He who created them all contends with each heart,
6. And wealthy and poor are judged in His scales
7. The remembrance of Abraham's plea, "You must not pursue strict justice."
8. May his (Abraham's) esteemed supplication be remembered at the time of judgment.

9. Before all the acts of carving out (the world).
10. He had already planned that rock from which we are hewn.⁴²
11. Between past and future, in the middle he was created
12. To support upon himself all of creation,

13. His portion (Sarah) on this very same day was given youthful strength
14. To send forth a shoot at 90 years.
15. She (Sarah) was set as a sign for the Lily (Israel)
16. Who pass before Him on Rosh Hashanah.

17. Her flowers (children) tremble at the order of the day (the blowing of the Shofar)
18. As they are presented before the Awesome Throne.
19. The sound of their prayers they make heard this day,
20. They gather together to blow (the Shofar), to find redemption.

21. They are supported by she who was remembered.
22. The cry ecstatically, going early to the gates;
23. They are supported by the ashes of the bound lamb.
24. It was in the month of Tishrei that she was remembered:

As it is written: THE ETERNAL took note of Sarah as He had promised, and THE ETERNAL did for Sarah as He had spoken.⁴³

And it is said: Listen to Me, you who pursue justice, you who seek THE ETERNAL: look to the rock you were hewn from, to the quarry you were dug from. Look back to Abraham your father and to Sarah who brought you forth. For he was only one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.⁴⁴

And it is said: You hedge me before and behind; You lay Your hand upon me.⁴⁵

And it is said: He who fashions the hearts of them all, who discerns all their doings.⁴⁶

And it is said: No harm is in sight for Jacob, no woe in view of Israel. THE ETERNAL their God is with them, And their King's acclaim in their midst.⁴⁷

⁴² I.e. Abraham.

⁴³ Gen. 21:1.

⁴⁴ Is. 51:1-2.

⁴⁵ Ps. 139:5.

⁴⁶ Ps. 33:15.

And it is said: They stand this day to [carry out] Your rulings, for all are Your servants.⁴⁸
And it is said: THE ETERNAL is my allotted share and portion; You control my fate.⁴⁹
And it is said: The great of the peoples are gathered together, the retinue of Abraham's God; for the guardians of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.⁵⁰

25. Exalted in judgment, God ascends to Shofar blasts⁵¹
26. To shake the earth and all its inhabitants
27. With the Shofar (on Shabbat: with the remembrance of the Shofar) blasts I appease him,
28. In the shielding of (God's) friends (Israel), in His garden⁵², may I sound the blasts (of the Shofar).

III. Le'Eil Orech Din

An alphabetic acrostic sometimes ascribed to Kallir. It is a call-response poem, each verse alternating between "בדין" and "ביום דין".

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. For the God who arranges ⁵³ | judgment |
| 2. Who examines the heart ⁵⁴ | on the day of judgment |
| 3. Who reveals the hidden things ⁵⁵ | in judgment |
| 4. Who speaks righteously ⁵⁶ | on the day of judgment |
| 5. Who pierces our thoughts ⁵⁷ | in judgment |
| 6. Who is faithful and bestows loving-kindness ⁵⁸ | on the day of judgment |
| 7. Who remembers His covenant ⁵⁹ | in judgment |
| 8. Who is compassionate to His creations ⁶⁰ | on the day of judgment |
| 9. Who purifies those who trust Him | in judgment |
| 10. Who knows our thoughts ⁶¹ | on the day of judgment |

⁴⁷ Num. 23:21.

⁴⁸ Ps. 119:91.

⁴⁹ Ps. 16:5.

⁵⁰ Ps. 47:10.

⁵¹ Psalm 47:10: "The great of the peoples are gathered together, the retinue of Abraham's God; for the guardians of the earth belong to God; He is *greatly exalted*."

⁵² I.e. the Temple, presumably the one to be built in a messianic age.

⁵³ Job 13:18: "See now, I have *prepared a case*; I know that I will win it."

⁵⁴ Literally, "heart". Proverbs 17:3: "For silver—the crucible; for gold—the furnace; and THE ETERNAL tests the mind."

⁵⁵ Job 12:22: "He reveals mysteries out of the darkness and brings obscurities to light."
⁵⁶ Or "commands righteousness". Is. 33:15-16: "He who walks in righteousness, speaks uprightly, spurns profit from fraudulent dealings, waves away a bribe instead of grasping it, stops his ears against listening to infamy, shuts his eyes against looking at evil—Such a one shall dwell in lofty security."

⁵⁷ I Sam. 2:3: "Talk no more with lofty pride, let no arrogance cross your lips! For THE ETERNAL is an all-knowing God; by Him actions are measured."

⁵⁸ Jer. 9:23: "But only in this should one glory: in his earnest devotion to me. For I THE ETERNAL act with kindness, justice and equity in the world; for in these I delight."

⁵⁹ Psalms 111:5: "He gives food to those who fear Him; He is ever mindful of His covenant." Also Exodus 2:24: "God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

⁶⁰ Malachi 3:17: "And on the day that I am preparing, said THE ETERNAL of Hosts, they shall be My treasured possession; I will be tender toward them as a man is tender toward a son who ministers to him."

11. Who restrains His anger	
12. Who is clothed in righteousness ⁶²	in judgment
13. Who pardons iniquities	on the day of judgment
14. Who is awesome in splendor ⁶³	in judgment
15. Who forgives His burdened ones ⁶⁴	on the day of judgment
16. Who answers those who cry out to Him ⁶⁵	in judgment
17. Who acts on His mercies ⁶⁶	on the day of judgment
18. Who sees hidden acts ⁶⁷	in judgment
19. Who redeems His servants ⁶⁸	on the day of judgment
20. Who is merciful to His people	in judgment
21. Who watches over His loved ones ⁶⁹	on the day of judgment
22. Who supports His innocent ones ⁷⁰	in judgment
	on the Day of Judgment.

IV. Melekh Elyon

A *Meshullash*⁷¹, this is an alphabetical acrostic with a grammatical rhyme, internal to each verse only, written in a call/response fashion. In most Ashkenazi traditions, this *piyyut* is defective: with the exception of the first and last verses dealing with the mortal king, the rest are missing.

The King On High	God who dwells on high ⁷² , mighty on high ⁷³ , the strength of His hand prevails. ⁷⁴	He will reign forever
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The Mortal King	decays ⁷⁵ and descends to death, to Sheol and below ⁷⁶ , Weary and restless.	How long will this one reign?
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⁶¹ Psalm 94:11: "THE ETERNAL *knows the designs* of men to be futile."

⁶² Is. 59:17: "He *donned righteousness* like a coat of mail, with a helmet of triumph on His head; He clothed Himself with garments of retribution, wrapped himself in zeal as in a robe."

⁶³ Ex. 15:11: "Who is like You, O ETERNAL, among the celestials; who is like You, majestic in holiness, *awesome in splendor*, working wonders!"

⁶⁴ Is. 46:3: "Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all that are left of the House of Israel *who have been carried* since birth, supported since leaving the womb;"

⁶⁵ Is. 65:24: "Before they pray, *I will answer*; while they are still speaking, I will respond."

⁶⁶ Psalms 74:12: "O God, my King from of old, who *brings deliverance* throughout the land."

⁶⁷ Deut. 29:28: "*Concealed acts* concern THE ETERNAL our God; but with overt acts, it is for us and our children ever to apply all the provisions of this Teaching."

⁶⁸ Is. 11:11: "In that day, THE ETERNAL will apply *His hand again to redeeming* the other part of His people from Assyria—as also from Egypt, Pathros, Nubia, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the coastlands."

⁶⁹ Psalms 145:20: "THE ETERNAL *watches over* all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy."

⁷⁰ Is. 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you, be not frightened, for I am your God; I strengthen you and I help you, *I uphold you with My victorious right hand*."

⁷¹ For description, see Chapter 1.

⁷² Is. 33:16: "*He dwells on high*, with inaccessible cliffs for his stronghold, with his food supplied and his drink assured."

⁷³ Psalm 93:4: "Above the thunder of the mighty waters, more majestic than the breakers of the sea is THE ETERNAL, *majestic on high*."

⁷⁴ Micah 5:8: "*Your hand shall prevail* over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down!"

⁷⁵ Job 13:28: "Man *wastes away* like a rotten thing, like a garment eaten by moths."

⁷⁶ Job 17:13-14: "If I must look forward to Sheol as my home, and make my bed in the dark place, Say to the Pit, 'You are my father,' to the maggots, 'Mother,' 'Sister.'"

The King On High	Mighty in His (celestial) retinue ⁷⁷ , who decrees and fulfills, who reveals hidden things. He will reign forever
The Mortal King	melts away with misery ⁷⁸ . He decrees and passes away. He resembles one who is blind. How long will this one reign?
The King On High	He speaks righteously. ⁷⁹ He is dressed in righteousness. ⁸⁰ He hears the cry of prayer. He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	Desires wickedness ⁸¹ , does wickedness, and is eager to sin How long will this one reign?
The King On High	Remembers our ancestors, ⁸² grants merit to His creatures, and is displeased with His enemies. He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	Thinks and forgets, suffers and is forgotten, is guilty and argues. How long will this one reign?
The King on High	He forever dwells in goodness ⁸³ , His graciousness is eternal, He spreads out the vast and eternal heavens. ⁸⁴ He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	His days are handbreadths long ⁸⁵ ; his days are destined for disappointment, ⁸⁶ he conceives children [sinfully] ⁸⁷ How long will this one reign?
The King on High	Is wrapped in light like a robe ⁸⁸ , (with) all the luminaries! ⁸⁹ He is mighty and resplendent. ⁹⁰ He will reign forever.

⁷⁷ Instead of להקות. A hapax legomenon, appears in I Sam 19:20.

⁷⁸ Lamentations 1:13: "From above He sent a fire down into my bones. He spread a net for my feet, He hurled me backward; He has left me forlorn, in constant misery."

⁷⁹ Is. 63:1: "Who is coming from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah—who is this, majestic in attire, striding in His great might? 'I speak צדקה, Powerful to give triumph.'"

⁸⁰ Is. 59:17: "He donned צדקה like a coat of mail, with a helmet of victory on His head."

⁸¹ Psalm 5:5: "For You are not a God who desires wickedness: evil cannot abide with You."

⁸² Literally: "the rocks [we were quarried from]". Isaiah 51:1-2 refers to Abraham and Sarah in this fashion.

See the *piyyut* "At Chil", for full quote.

⁸³ Is. 57:15: "For thus said He *who high aloft forever dwells*, whose name is holy: I dwell on high, in holiness; yet with the contrite and the lowly in spirit—reviving the spirits of the lowly, reviving the hearts of the contrite."

⁸⁴ Is. 48:13: My own hand founded the earth, *My right hand spread out the skies.*"

⁸⁵ Ps. 39:6: "You have made my life just *handbreadths* long; its span is as nothing in Your sight."

⁸⁶ Job 11:20: "But the eyes of the wicked pine away; escape is cut off from them; *they have only their last breath to look forward to.*"

⁸⁷ Lam. 2:20: "See, O ETERNAL and behold, to whom You have done this! Alas women eat their own fruit, *their newborn babes!* Alas priest and prophet are slain in the Sanctuary of THE ETERNAL."

⁸⁸ Psalms 104:2: "*wrapped in a robe of light*; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth."

⁸⁹ Ez. 32:8: "All the lights that shine in the sky I will darken above you; and I will bring darkness upon your land."

The Mortal King	To the shadowy darkness he descends, he disappears into clods of earth. ⁹¹ He is enwrapped in darkness. How long will this one reign?
The King on High	King forever ⁹² , who uncovers ⁹³ the hidden and makes the mute speak. He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	Wanders by the moment, is troubled with suffering, is abashed with madness. How long will this one reign?
The King On High everyone.	Sustains everything ⁹⁴ , encircles and encompasses all, marks. He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	Passes and is passed over, his eyelids are blind; his dust is piled up. ⁹⁵ How long will this one reign?
The King on High	Beautiful is His strength. ⁹⁶ The work of His right hand is potent. He redeems and shelters He will reign forever.
The Mortal King	His scent reeks. ⁹⁷ He is decked out in dung. Decrepitude is his portion. How long will this one reign?
The King on High	His holy ones are flame. ⁹⁸ He calls upon the waters of Rahav. ⁹⁹ He is near to all who cry out to Him in love. ¹⁰⁰ He will reign forever.
The Mortal king	He is covered with maggots. ¹⁰¹ He is vigorous, then withers, ¹⁰² consumed in water and fire. How long will this one reign?

⁹⁰ Psalm 76:5: "You were *resplendent*, glorious, on the mountains of prey." Also Job 36:5: "See, God is *mighty*; He is not contemptuous; He is mighty in strength and mind."

⁹¹ Job 38:38: "Whereupon the earth melts into a mass, and its clods stick together."

⁹² Psalms 145:13: "Your kingship is an eternal kingship; *Your dominion is for all generations.*"

⁹³ See Even-Shoshan, p. 2120.

⁹⁴ Is. 46:4: "Till you grow old, I will still be the same; when you turn gray, *it is I who will carry.*"

⁹⁵ Hab. 1:10: "Kings they hold in derision, and princes are a joke to them; they laugh at every fortress, *they pile up earth and capture it.*"

⁹⁶ Ps. 96:6: "Glory and majesty are before Him; *strength and splendor* are in His temple."

⁹⁷ Joel 2:20: "I will drive the northerner far from you, I will thrust it into a parched and desolate land—its van to the Eastern Sea and its rear to the Western Sea; and *the stench* of it shall go up, and *the foul smell* rise." For [THE ETERNAL] shall work great deeds."

⁹⁸ Psalms 104:4: "He makes the winds His messengers, *fiery flames* His servants."

⁹⁹ Amos 3:8: "Who made Kimah and K'sil, who turns the morning to deepest darkness and darkens day to night, who summons the waters of the sea and pours them upon the earth? His name is THE ETERNAL." This is a reference to God's power over 'nature', i.e. other deities, among them Rahav, goddess of the deep.

See also Jon Levenson's *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*.

¹⁰⁰ Psalms 145:18: "THE ETERNAL *is near to all who call Him*, to all who call Him with sincerity."

¹⁰¹ Job 7:5: "My flesh is *covered with maggots* and clods of earth; my skin is broken and festering."

¹⁰² Job 5:16: "He *stays fresh* even in the sun; his shoots spring up in his garden."

the 'a' part of the verse.¹⁰⁷ So, while these texts may have become fixed at some point (much to others' chagrin), there seemed to be a sense of flexibility in terms of how the liturgy was recited.

The Question Before Us

As mentioned before, the issues surrounding the holidays—especially the *yammim noraim*—are entirely different from those that surround the average Shabbat evening or morning worship. Issues of worshipper familiarity, text comprehension, service infrequency, and congregational expectations in terms of mood and activity, all weigh upon the liturgist. Add to this the difference in number of worshippers in attendance: even the most active congregations may more than quadruple the number of worshippers in attendance on *Rosh Hashanah*. Furthermore, the length of most holiday services, without insertions, may dissuade liturgists from adding any more to an exhausting day.¹⁰⁸

However, our texts show that there is a long tradition of inserting *piyyutim* on the festivals and holidays, despite service length, issues of attendance and familiarity, etc. While Qallirian *piyyutim* utilize some difficult language, their structure—specifically, the use of acrostic and rhyme—and the use of repetitive primary language allows for greater accessibility for the worshippers. By using terms like “the God on High,” and “the God arrayed for Judgment,” over and over again, or various terms for humility (as we saw in

¹⁰⁷ See Birnbaum, p. 261

¹⁰⁸ As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this discussion pertains to the writing of creative liturgical texts, rather than imagining other creative approaches to the service including—but not limited to—art, seating, space, movement, music, sound, imagery, and lighting. This paper is too limited to discuss these issues and, while these issues are important and should be considered and reflected upon, this should be done in a different context.

the *reshuyot* we looked at), the worshipper is better able to comprehend and process the theme of the day. Meanwhile, the acrostic nature of the poetry and the rhyme means that, like Yannai's poetry, people can try to anticipate the next verse and find a way into participation.

It is this accessibility that should be the key motivator in terms of writing new liturgies for the holidays. Many times, the themes of the holiday, or even particular pieces of liturgy, need elucidation. For example, while any second-grade religious school student may know that the Shofar is blown on Rosh Hashanah, they may not be able to say why. The child may have a loose association with the Torah portion; it is doubtful whether most worshippers will understand the full context or the meaning of the *Tekiata debe Rav*. Many congregants (and rabbis) are uncomfortable with the language of *Unetaneh Tokeph*—itself a *piyyut* turned to fixed liturgy. Indeed, many of the liturgical pieces for *Rosh Hashanah* raise issues with which we, as moderns, truly struggle to make meaningful: issues like sin, repentance, humility, and judgment. While they can be addressed in the form of a sermon, a class before the holiday or an impromptu *iyyun* from the *bimah*, they are sufficiently difficult that they may demand a liturgical response, a response that is as sophisticated as the worshipper and that, rather than providing easy answers or swift comfort, reflects the challenges occasioned by the day and its themes.

There are places where such elucidation can take place within the liturgy, where the liturgy can make complex concepts meaningful: insertions (or substitutions) in the Shofar service and the Torah service could be used to explicate some of the major themes, such

as the connection between *Shofarot* and Isaac's (near) sacrifice. Introductory meditations to the chanting of *Kol Nidre*, *Unetaneh Tokeph*, and *Avinu Malkeinu*, could convey difficult notions of God's justice and God's mercy, our responsibility for our actions, and what it means to make true repentance. Such meditations could be used to clarify other issues: for example, a reading referring to God as "Motherly Father", or some similar transgendered phrase, might explain (or at least reinforce) the mystical notions that *Avinu* represents God's masculinity and *Malkeinu* God's femininity. Such readings (or songs) could challenge people to understand these issues in modern, rather than medieval, language.

So, it is possible to establish criteria for writing creative liturgical texts for the high holidays. They must be theologically specific and refer to specific parts of the liturgy. They must make the service—and the themes of the holiday—more accessible without being trite or maudlin, they cannot interfere with major parts of the service, and they must be brief. This last criterion would appear to be a deviation from the *piyyutim* we have analyzed, but this is not the case. Most of them are fairly short, taking up less than a page, and those that aren't, like *Melekh Elyon*, have been abbreviated.

Are there modern models of such poetry already in existence, poems that could be dropped into a *Rosh Hashanah* service "ready made", rather than having to write new poems? There is very little modern poetry, I have found, that deals with issues as enormous as these. Perhaps Dan Pagis, or Robert Frost, or Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Ruth Brin has written poems for *Kol Nidre*, *Rosh Hashanah* morning, the sounding of the Shofar, *Avinu Malkeinu* and other parts of the High Holiday liturgy.¹⁰⁹ Here is an excerpt from her poem *Al Het*, on the penitential prayer of the same name:

For the sins we have sinned against You and against those we love by the misuse of our capacity to love:

By using others as objects or tools,
And by placing our own status and pride before the needs of others.

By failing to use, with understanding and love, our power as employers and leaders, parents and teachers,
And by failing to accept with respect and love the authority of parents and teachers, employers and leaders,

By failing to perform acts of kindness, and visits to the sick and to mourners,
And by not being sensitive to others who turn to us in their need.

By forming intimate relationships without love as their basis,
And also by failing to deepen love continually throughout marriage.

All these sins, O God of forgiveness, grant us the strength to confront honestly, the wisdom to analyze correctly, and the will to abandon completely, as we return to You and to those we love.¹¹⁰

The poem comes dangerously close to falling flat, to being inadequate to contain all the emotions and thoughts that attend upon such activities. Perhaps that is the point: that language cannot easily contain such things, that we have lost the ability to discuss our responsibilities, our blame, our being judged, without being somehow defensive or hackneyed. As a society, we have grown comfortable finding ways out of guilt, finding different methods of escape; our literature reflects that sense of comfort. Perhaps it is best to go back to the psalms, to the *piyyutim* themselves, and find a way to make them fit again. There is, after all, a reason they are still found in one form or another in many *Mahzorim*.

¹⁰⁹ See Ruth Brin, pp. 138ff

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 157-158

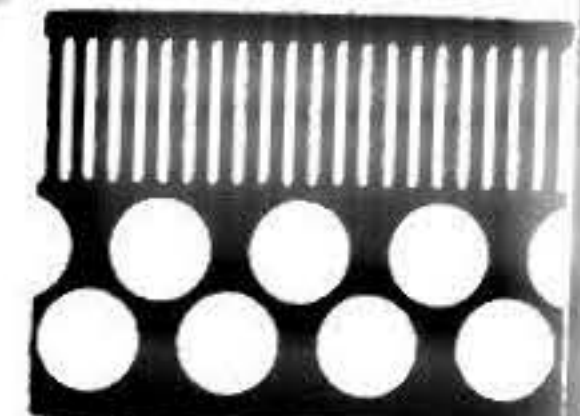
A poem by Rachel comes to mind, a poem that reflects feelings of loss and hope, of guilt and forgiveness:

I have not sung to you, my country,
Nor brought glory to your name
With the great deeds of a hero
Or the spoils a battle yields.
But on the shores of the Jordan
My hands have planted a tree,
And my feet have made a pathway
Through your fields.
Modest are the gifts I bring you.
I know this, mother.
Modest, I know, the offerings
Of your daughter:
Only an outburst of song
On a day when the light flares up,
Only a silent tear for your poverty.¹¹¹

While this poem is clearly about the land of Israel and Rachel's own experiences as a member of the *Yishuv*, it can also be understood as a metaphor for Israel's relationship to God, to Israel's heritage, to the attempts to reconcile modernity with the demands of the past. It is brief, almost a sigh, or a *kinah*, and could be used as a meditation before *Kol Nidre*, or even during the *Malchuyot* section of the *Tekiatat Debbe Rav*, to contrast God's divinity and sovereignty with our own incapability. In truth, the *yammim noraim* may be the most difficult time for creative liturgy; without a doubt they demand a great deal of experimentation, discussion, and reflection before new liturgies are introduced.

¹¹¹ Translated by Robert Friend and Shimon Sandback, Hebrew taken from *העבודה שכלל* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Progressive Movement of Israel, 1992), p. 253

Appendix B: Poetry Translated For Chapter 2



שחרית לראש השנה

רשות
מנהג צרפת

יום ראשון

מגן

יום ו

שחרית לראש השנה

קיומן: א-צ ונחצב: ר' אלעזר ז-כ קליר. צחיס בני 7 טורים. 4 ווליס ככל טור. - א 8533.

קיומן: א-צ ונחצב: ר' אלעזר ז-כ קליר. צחיס בני 7 טורים. 4 ווליס ככל טור. - א 8533.

אָת חיל יום פֿקֿדָה / באַימיו פֿל לָחוּם לְשָׁקֶדָה
נָשִׁים בּו בֶּרֶךְ לִיקוּדָה / דָּעַם לִיִּשְׁר פֿעַל מוֹקֶדָה:

הַיּוֹצֵר יַחַד כֶּסֶל נִשְׁפָּט / וְשׁוֹעַ וְדַל בְּפִלּוּס יִשְׁפָּט
זָכַר לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט / חֵין עָרְכּוּ יִזְכֹּר בְּמִשְׁפָּט:

5 טָרַם כָּל מַפְעֵל חָצַב / יוֹם בְּמַחֲשַׁבֶּת צוּר חָצַב
כְּאַחֹר וְקִדְם בְּתוֹךְ נִחְצַב / לִיָּהֵב עָלָיו כָּל הַמַּחֲצַב:

מִנְתּוֹ כִּהְיוּם כַּח דְּשֻׁנָּה / נִצֵּר לְהַחֲנִיט לְתַשְׁעִים שָׁנָה
סִימָה אוֹת הָיִית לְשׁוֹשְׁנָה / עֲבוּר לִפְנֵי פְּרָאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה:

כִּי־י כמו כיצור לעיל; נוטף קנ' קנ'; אג' (7-14) קנ' (8-14) || 1 באימיו: באימה קנ' 4 יוזכר: יוזכר קנ'.

אָרַעַד וְאַפְחַד בְּאִימָתָה וּפְחַד / בְּבוֹאֵי לְחִלּוֹת פְּנֵי אֵל אֶחָד
נָשִׁיתִי בְּתַחַן פְּנֵי לֹא־יִקַּח שָׁחַד / דָּאָגָה וּרְעָדָה אֲחֻזּוֹנִי כְּאַחָד:
הִגּוֹן כִּי אֵינִי לְבִקֵּשׁ תַּחֲנוּנָה / וּבַעַר אֲנֹכִי מֵאִישׁ וְחֹסֶר בֵּינָה
זַחְלָתִי וְאִירָא מְשׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה / חִלּוֹת פְּנֵיו בַּעַד מִי מָנָה:

5 טָרַפָּה דַּעֲתִי וְנַפְשִׁי נִבְהָלָה / יִרְאָתִי וְחִרְדָּתִי מִפֶּשַׁע וְעוֹלָה
כְּבָדָם בְּזָכְרִי מִלֵּאמִי חִלְחָלָה / לְפִתְחָהּ פֶּה וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מִחִלָּה:
מַעֲרָכִי־לֵב עֲרַכְתִּי בְּרוּחַ נְדִיבָה / נִסְמַכְתִּי וְנִשְׁעַנְתִּי בְּכַח הַתְּשׁוּבָה
סְדוּרָה מֵאִז כְּעֻלָּתָהּ בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה / עֲוֹנוֹת לְמַחֹל לְבַת הַשׁוֹבָבָה:

פְּנִיתִי עוֹד לִיִּשְׁר אֲמָרִים / צְרוּפִים וְנִחְקָקִים בְּכַתָּב וּסְפָרִים
10 קָרְבֵן כְּעַת אֵין וְדָשֵׁן אֲמוּרִים / רַחֵשׁ שְׁפָתֵינוּ שְׁעָה כְּשִׁלּוּם פָּרִים:

שׁוֹב נַחֲרַת בְּסִפְר שִׁירָה / תַּמַּת זְבָחִי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה
מְדַבְּרִי שְׁאוּל בֵּן הָעֶקְרָה / שְׁחִרְתִּי עוֹד לָקַח וּסְבָרָה:

הַחֶפֶץ לִי בְּעוֹלוֹת וּזְבָחִים / בְּעַת יוֹפֵר דְּבָרֵי הַמִּקְרָם לְנִצְחִים
רְצוֹנוֹ עוֹשִׂים הֵם הַמִּשְׁבָּחִים / שְׁמוֹעַ מִזְבֵּחַ טוֹב לְהַקְשִׁיב מַעֲלוֹת מַחִים:

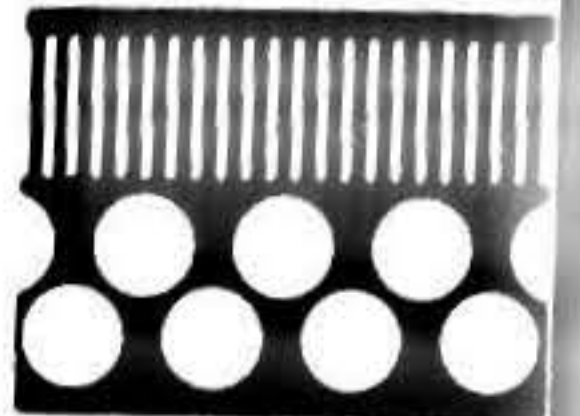
15 מִכָּל אֵלָה בֵּינָה הִבִּינוֹתִי / וּבִכֵּן בָּלֵב נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלִיָּהּ בְּאִמִּי
אָדוֹן אֵל תִּשְׁקָץ עֲנִיתִי / לְעַת אֲבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים בַּעַד עֲדָתִי:

חֲזָקִנִי וְאַמְצָנִי כִי לָהּ אוֹחִיל / וּמִהָר לְסִלְחִי כִי אֶתְחִיל:

כִּי־י פִּטְנָם־סִי־אָסִי || 2 בתחונן ס'ט דאג ורער גנ'ס־ס' | אחוונני: קראונין 3 כיח'ן 4 וחלתי: לכונוס'ן 7 נשענתי
ונסמכתי וְאָסִי 8 לבת: מבח פִּטְנָם־אָסִי 10 שעה חס'ן 14 מעולות: מחלב אס 15 אליך: עדיך סִי־אָס
16 אל: כל פִּטְנָם־אָסִי אבקש: ממך חו'ס־סִי־אָס 17 לסלוח: לסלוח לי אס סלח לי ט

1 ארעד ואפחד באימתה ופחד שמות טו טו. פני לא יקח שחד דבר' י יו. 3 ובער אנכי מאיש משלי ל ב.
וחסר בינה שם. 4 וחלתי ואירא איוב לב ו. בעד מי מנה בער ישראל, ע"ש במד' כג י. 5 ונפשי נבהלה תחלי
ו ד. 6 מלאתי חלחלה ישע' כא ג. 7 מערכי לב ערכתי ע"ש משלי טו א. ברוח נדיבה תחלי נא יד. בכח
התשובה 8 סדורה מאז כעלתה במחשבה שהתשובה נבראה קודם גריאת העולם כמאמר חז"ל ססח' דף נ"ד א' ועוד.
לבת השוכבה ירמ' לא כב. 10 ודשן אימורים חלקי הקרבן הנשרפים. רחש שפתינו שעה כשילום סרים ע"ש
הושע יד ג. 11 שוב נחרת עוד כחוב (מל' חרות על חלוחות, שמות לב טו). בספר שירה בספר תהלים. תומת זבחי
אלהים רוח נשברה תחלי נא יט. 12 מדברי שאול בן העקרת מדברי שמואל שעליו כתוב כי מה' שאלתי, ש"א
א כ. 13 החסץ לה' בעולות וזבחים ש"א טו כב. 14 שמוע מזבח טוב שם. מעולות מחים תחלי טו טו. 15 ובלב
נשבר ונדכה תחלי נא יט. 16 אל תשקץ ענותי ע"ש תחלי כב כה ולא שקץ ענות עני. 17 לסלחי לסלוח לי.

1 את חיל יום סקודה באה חרדת יום הדין. את (=אתא) מי' באה, ע"ש ישע' כא יב אתא בקר. חיל ע"ש שמות
אחור...יום סקודה ע"ש שמות לב לד וביום סקדי...ועי' ילקוט שמעוני ח"ב רמז ס"ח (מורחב מתחומא במד' כ"א = כ"ו
נובר)...יש סקודה לעונות, שנאמר וביום סקדי ומקדתי עליהם את חטאתם. ובפירושו ו 306 מובה ממדרש המלאכים בו
צועקים אתא חילא אתא חיל. יום סקודה. במדרש ושמתי סקודתך שלום (ישע' ס יז) זה ראש השנה. ונגשיך צדקה. זה יוט
עכ"ל. ואינו נמצא במדרשים הידועים. באימיו כל לחום לשקדה באימותיו לייסר כל בשר, לחום ע"ש צטנ'.
דמם בעטר ולחמם כגללים, לסקדה (מל' ארמית) ע"ש חז"ל דבר' ח ה היכמא דמסקד גבר ית בריה ה' אלהך מסקד
מפרשים אותו ע"ש איכה א יד נשקד על פשעי, שפירושו 'נקשר' או (לדעת ראב"ע) נמשך, נמהר; ויש גורסין ל"ה
ימיני, מי' להיות שקד. 2 בדרך ליקודה לכרוע, לי ויקד, ברא' כד כו ועוד. דעם ליישר מחשבותם ליישר. כעל
ע"ש ויק' ו ב, ר"ל כעשן הקטורת שהיתה מחמרת ועולה (תוספתא יומא ב ו ועוד) ישר ואינה פונה לכאן ולכאן.
יחד כסל נשפט ע"ש תחלי לג טו היוצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם, ודרשוהו במשנה (ר"ה א' ב') על יום
(ויק' ג ד. תחלי לח ח ועוד) כנוי ללב. נשפט, ר"ל הקב"ה שהוא יוצר כל לבות נשפט אתם, ע"ש ירמ' כה לא נשפי
בשר, וכדומה. ושווע (מי' עשיר) ודל ע"ש איוב לד יט ולא גכר שווע לפני דל. בסלום יושפט במלס ומאונג מ'
טו יא). 4 זכר לא יעשה משפט זכרון לחטלתו של אברהם (ברא' יח כח) חלילה לך השופט כל הארץ לא יע
שדרשוהו בביר מ"ט ט (ע' 511) אם עולם אתה מבקש אין דין ואם דין תבקש אין עולם. ועי' ג"כ ויקר' י' א' (ע'
ערכו ערך תחנוני, ע"ש איוב מא ג לא אחריש בדיו ודבר נכורות וחין ערכו, ודרשוהו (ב"ר מ"ט י' ע' 512) חן נח
שפתיו בשעה שביקש רחמים על סדומים. 5 טרם כל מפעל חצב מי' יצר, ר"ל טרם ברא הקב"ה את עולמו. יום
צור חוצב יום את אברהם שנאמר בו (יש' נא א) הביטו אל צור חוצבתם... הביטו אל אברהם אביכם (והפייטן שיני
הכתוב בגלל החרו, או שיש לפרש: צור שחוצב ממנו הדור הבא אחריו). כל זה ע"פ דרשת חז"ל ב"ר י"ד ר' (ע'
יהושע יד טו) האדם הגדול בענקים. אדם זה אברהם, ולמה קורא אותו אדם גדול, שהיה ראוי להיכראות קודם אדם הר
אמר הקב"ה שמה יקלל ואין מי שיתקן... כך למח ברא הקב"ה את אברהם באמצע דורות כדי שיסבול דורות שלפניו
עכ"ל. ולפי זה ממשיך הפייטן 6 כאחור וקדם (לשון תחלי' קלט ה, ודרשוהו על בריאת אדם הראשון ב"ר כ"ד ג
ועוד) בתוך נחצב ר"ל נוצר באמצע הדורות. ליהב עליו כל המחצב לשום עליו כל משא הדורות הנ"ל
ליהב, לשון נחיצה, כגון הכה לי בנים, ברא' ל ב, וה"ה בארמית). 7 מנתו אשתו שהיתה לו למנה, וכנראה חורשו.
ע"י הפייטן. כהיום כח דושנה בראש השנה שבה לנערותה, ע"ס דרשת חז"ל (ר"ה דף י' ב') בריה נפקדוה
וחיתה דשנה ורעננה. נצר להחניט להצמיח, ללדת בן. 8 סוימה אות היות לשושנה להיות אות מסוימי
הנקראים שישנה (שה"ש ב א) עבור לסניו בראש השנה שהיו עוברים לסניו לדין (לשון המשנה, ר"ה א'



שחרית לראש השנה

יום ראשון

פִּלְצוּ פִּרְחִיהָ בְּחֶק יוֹם / צִיגְתֶּם פָּנֵי כֶסֶם אֵיִם
10 קוֹל דְּבַבְכֶם יִרְחִישוּ כְּהִיּוֹם / רוֹגְשִׁים לְהַרְיֵעַ לְמִצּוֹא פְּדִיוֹם:

שְׁעוֹנִים עָלֶיהָ בָּהּ לְהַפְקֶדָה / שׁוֹאֲגִים בְּלֶהֱק דְּלָתוֹת לְשִׁקְדָה
תְּמוּכִים בְּדָשֶׁן שֶׁהָ עֵקֶדָה / תֵּשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ נִפְקְדָה:

כְּפָתוּב. וַיִּפְקֶד אֶת־שָׂרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר. וַיַּעַשׂ וַיִּלְשָׁרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: (ברא' כא א)
[וְנֶאֱמַר. שְׁמַעוּ אֵלַי רְדִפִּי צִדִּיק מִבְּקָשִׁי וַיִּי. הַבִּיטוּ אֶל־צוּר חֲצִבְתֶּם וְאֶל מְקַבֵּת בּוֹר גִּקְרָתֶם:
הַבִּיטוּ אֶל־אֲבֹרֹתֶם אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶל־שָׂרָה תַּחֲלָלְכֶם. כִּי־אֶחָד קָרָאתִי וְנֶאֱבְרָהוּ וְאֶבְרָהוּ:
וְנֶאֱמַר. אַחֲרֵי וְנֶקְדָּם צִרְתָּנִי. וְתִשֶׁת עָלֶי כְּפֹכָה: (תהל' קלט ו)
וְנֶאֱמַר. הַיִּצְרֵר יָחַד לָבֶם. הַמִּבְכִּין אֶל־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם: (תהל' לג טו)
[וְנֶאֱמַר. לֹא־הִבִּיט אֶן בְּנֵעֶקֶב וְלֹא־רָאָה עֵמֶל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיִּי אֱלֹהֵיו עֲמֹו וְתִרְעוּת מֶלֶךְ בּוֹ: (במד' כג כא)
וְנֶאֱמַר. לְמַשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עֲמָדוֹ הַיּוֹם. כִּי הִלַּל עֲבָדֶיךָ: (תהל' קיט צא)
[וְנֶאֱמַר. וַיִּמְנַח־חֲלָקִי וְכוּסִּי. אֶתֶּה תוֹמִיךָ גִּזְרִי: (תהל' טו ו)
וְנֶאֱמַר. נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ עִם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרֹתֶם. כִּי לֹא־לֵהִימ מִגִּי אֶרֶץ מֶאֶד נִעְלָה: (תהל' מו י)

נִעְלָה בְּדִין עֲלוֹת בְּתִירוּעָה / גִּיא עִם דְּרִיָּה לְרוּעָה
בְּשׁוּפָר (כִּסְמָה בְּזִקְרוֹן שׁוּפָר) אֶפְתָּנוּ וּבְכֶרֶךְ כְּרִיעָה / בְּמַגְנַת רַעִים בְּגִנּוֹ אֶתְרוּעָה:

8 בזה ראש השנה ומוסר 9 מולצו: פחדו ט בחוק יום: בזה יום וחממ' מ'כ 10 כהיום: היום ק'י. יאני
ולמנוצא בב'ו'הקרג 14 אסתנו: ארצנו סטגלנף אפתנו ארצנו כך בחרך ק'י. כרועה עאטקל'אני במגנת
רעים: במגנת איתן (אחן ק'י. ק'י. יאני) בגנו: בו ק'י. יאני

לשובה כשם ששרת נפקדה. 9 מולצו מרחיה נבעתו (לי' יחלצונו, איוב טו). בחוק יום בתקיעת שופר. וי'ג בזה יום,
ומסחבר. ציגתם בזמן עמידתם (לי' וציגם לפני פרעה, ברא' מו ב). לסני כס איום לפני כסא הקב"ה (כס ע"ש שמוח יו טו)
הנקרא איום ונורא (חבק' א ז). 10 קול דבבם דבורם, מל' דבב, ע"ש דובב שפתי ישנים, שה"ש י. ירחישו בשפתותיהם,
ידברו בלחש, לשון התלמוד ירו' ברכ' ד' א' דף ז' א' רק שפתיה נעות, מכאן שהוא צריך להרחיש בשפתותיו. רוגשים מתאספים,
ע"ש תהל' ב א למה רגשו גוים. להריע לתקוע בשופר. 11 שעונים עליה ר"ל על שרה שבוכותה ייסקדו לטובת. בלהק
בלהקה, ר"ל בקהל (לי' להקת נביאים, ש"א יט כ). דלתות לשקדה ע"ש משלי ח לר לשקוד על דלתות יום יום. 12 תמוכים
ברשן שה עקדה בדשן יצחק, ע"ש מורש עתיק על ברכות העמידה (שבלי הלקט השלם, מהר' בובר, י"ח דף ט' א') כשנעקד
יצחק על גבי המזבח ונעשה דשן והיה אפרו מושלך על הר המוריה מיד חביא עליו הקב"ה טל ותחיה אותו, ע"י שפילג, מאגדות
העקדה, ס' היובל לאלכסנדר מרכס, ג"י חש"י, ע' חפת, והרעיון נתפשט בכמה מדרשים מאוחרים. לפי זה יש לבאר: ישראל
תמוכים הם בדשן יצחק שנראה אפרו כאילו צבור ע"ג המזבח. תשר אשר בו נפקדה בחדש תשרי שבו נפקדה שרה (ר"ח
דף י' ב') (כ"ה בפירוש כ"י 306). ויש מפרשים תשר לי' תשורה, כאילו יצחק היה התשר שבו נפקדה שרה, ואינו מסתבר).
13 נעלה בדין עלות בתרועה ע"ש תהל' מו י מאד נעלה. מו י עלה אלהים בתרועה ח' בקול שופר, ע"ס דרשת חז"ל
ויק'ר כיט ג' (ע' תרעד, ובמקבילים הרשומים שם) כשהקב"ה עולה לישב על כסא חזין בראש השנה בדין (כך גירסת
המייטן, וי'ג לדין) הוא עולה. החד עלה אלהים בתרועה. וכיון שישיראל נוטלין שופרותיהן ותוקעין, מיד יי בקול שופר. מה
הקב"ה עושה. עומד מכסא חזין ויושב על כסא רחמים וכו'. גיא עם דריה לרועעה לרוצץ הארץ ויושכיה. 14 בשופר
אסתנו לפי הדרשה הנ"ל. ובכרך כריעה בכריעה ברך (דוגמת חין ערכי, ע"י לעיל 4). וי'ג כרועה. במגנת רעים
בגנו אתרועעה במגן ישראל, שהם רעים זה לזה, אתחברת בעתיד לבא בבית המקדש הנקרא גנו, ע"ש שה"ש ח א באחי
לגני אחותי כלת, וע"ס מה שדרשו במדרש שם. וחלשון ע"ש משלי יח כד איש רעים לחתרועע. (ויש מפרשים רעים האבות,
כדי לסיים במגן האבות, ורחוק הוא.)

שחרית לראש השנה

יום ראני

זְכַרְנוּ לַחַיִּים (נִיא לַחַיִּים) מֶלֶךְ חֲפִץ בַּחַיִּים. וְכַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים. לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.
מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מִגֵּן אֲבֹרֹתֶם:

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנֵי מַחֲיָה מֵתִים אַתָּה. רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ. [בַּקִּי: מוֹרִיד הַטָּל]
מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד מַחֲיָה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים טוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים וְנִי
אֲמוֹנָתוֹ לִישׁוּעֵי עָפָר. מִי כְמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרָוֹת וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ מֶלֶךְ מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.

מחיה

סינון: השכ"ק. - ת 23.

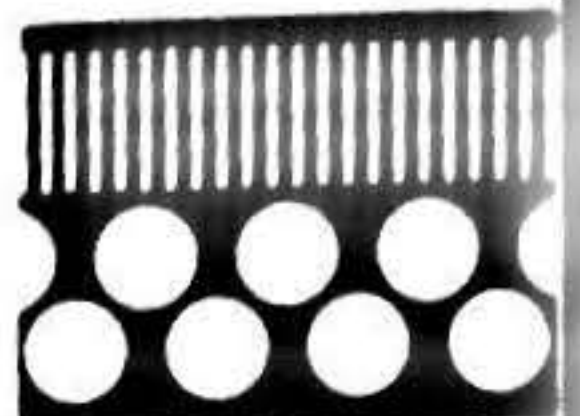
תְּאַלֵּת זוֹ כְּחֶפֶץ לְהַתְעִיל / שׁוֹעַ עֲרוֹךְ לְמַדָּם לְהוֹעִיל
רוֹן הַרְרֵי קָדָם הַמוֹעִיל / קְרוֹא בְּגִרּוֹן מוֹקֵשׁ לְהַגְעִיל:

צִדְקָם לְהַקְפּוֹת בְּנִיב שׁוֹעָה / פְּעֻלָּם בְּקֶרֶב שָׁנִים לְשִׁמְעָה
עַת רָצוֹן וַיּוֹם יְשׁוּעָה / סְבִיכַת קֶרֶן וּבְרִית שְׁבוּעָה:

5 נוֹבְכִים בְּגִישַׁת חוֹתְמוֹת תְּשַׁעָה / מְסַפֵּר שְׁתוֹת וְחוֹתְמֵיהֶן תְּשַׁעָה
לְמַנֵּן פְּלוּל שְׁמוֹת תְּשַׁעָה / כְּחֻנְנָה עֵקֶדָה יְלִדָה שְׁבַעָה:

כ"הנ"ל: נוסף ק"י (רק 14-13) || 1 שווע ק"י 3 צחק ק"י 5 בגישת: בהגשת ט | וחוחמותיהם ק"י. יאני 6 וילדה מ'נ

1 תאלת זו כחפץ להתעיל כשחפץ ה' לחת רפואות תעלה (ע"ש ירמ' ל יג) לחטאה (לתאלחה, ע"ש איכה ג סה ח:
להם) של עם זו (ע"ש שמוח טו טו). שווע ערוך (ע"ש איוב לו יט היערוך שוועך לא בצר) למדם להועיל ע"ש ישיע'
אני ה' אלהיך מלמדך להועיל, ר"ל לימד את ישראל לערוך תפלתם. 2 רון הררי קדם ע"ש דבר' לג טו ומראש הררי
וממגד גבעות עולם, פ"י תפלת האבות, ע"ס דרשת חז"ל ספרי דברים שניג מלמד שאבות ואמהות קרוים הרים וגבעות,
(שה"ש ד ו) אלך לי אל הר המור ואל גבעת הלבונה. קרוא בגרון ישיע' נח א, ר"ל לקרוא בקול. מוקש להגעיל לה:
אח היצר הרע, ע"ש איוב יא י שורו עבר ולא יגעיל, או לפי שמוש המלה בלשון חז"ל שמירושה להעביר במים רוחותם,
במשנה, ע"ז ה' י"ב. 3 צדקם להקסות להעלות, לגלות (חלשון לקוח מהעלאת דבר כדי שיצוף על פני ו:
כגון שבת דף כ"א א' כורכן פחילה על גבי אגוז... להקפות), וע"י להלן במוסף, משלש 11, כסא להקפות, פ"י
אח המולד. בניב שוועה ע"ש ישיע' נז יט ניב שפתים, לי' דבור. פעלם בקרב שנים לשמענה ע"ש חבר
פעלך... בקרב שנים תודיע, ר"ל להשמיע את מעשיהם ולהנציח את זכרם. 4 עת רצון ויום ישועה ע"ש ישיע'
ח בעת רצון עניתיך ובוים ישועה עזרתך..., ר"ל להשמיע את עת רצון. סביכת קרן שבו נאחו האיל בסבך ב
(ברא' כב יג) וברית שבוועה ושנשבע ה' לאברהם (שם טו) כי ברך אברכך וכו'. 5 נוֹבְכִים בגישת חותמות ת:
/ מספר שתות וחוחמיהם תשענה פיסקא זו עדיין לא נתבארה כהוגן, והמפרשים נתנו לה פירושים דו
(כגון ג' אבות וד' אמהות וב' השפחות לפירוש שתות וחוחמיהם), וגם פירוש ר"ח שראה בתוספת 'מספר שתות וחור
תשעה' ביאור למלים הקודמות, אינו מתקבל על הדעת. כנראה רוצה הפייטן לומר נוֹבְכִים פ"י מדברים, מתפללים... מה
שתות וחוחמיהם תשעה תשע ברכות שבעמדה למוסף של ר"ה (שתות לי' יסוד, ע"ס תהל' יא ג, כנראה לסימון גוף הב
וחוחמיהם, כלשון המשנה תענ' ב' ג', לסימון החחמיות). מה שהקדים הפייטן פחות ברור, וייתכן שהוא רמוז במלים ב'
חותמות תשעה למצוות הנקראות 'וחוס' (כגון מילה ע"ס שמוח רבה י"ט ה', קריאת שמע וחלפין ע"ס שה"ש י'
שבוכות קיומן ניגשים. ברם לא מצאתי כאן רמז למספר תשעה. למנין פלול שמות תשעה / כחננה עקדה י'
שבעה למנין ט' אוכרות השם שבחפלת חנה שנאמר בח (ש"א ב ה) עד עקרה ילדה שבעה, וע"י בפסיקא רבתי מ"ג דף



שחרית לראש השנה

יום ראשון

10 יוֹרְשֵׁי יִקְרָה	יִישִׁירוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
כְּבִירֵי כֹחַ	יִכְתִּירוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
לְבוּשֵׁי לְהַבּוֹת	יִלְבְּבוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
מְנַעֲמֵי מֶלֶל	יִמְלְלוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
נוֹצְצֵי נֶגֶה	יִנְצְחוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
15 שְׂרָפִים סוֹבְבִים	יִסְלְסְלוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
עוֹרְכֵי עוֹ	יַעֲנוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
פְּחוּדֵי פִלְאָה	יִפְצְחוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
צָבָאוֹת צֶאֱנָה	יִצְלְצְלוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
קְהֵלוֹת קֹדֶשׁ	יִקְדִּישׁוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
20 רִבְבוֹת רִבְבָה	יִרְנְנוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
שְׂבִיבֵי שְׁלֵהָבוֹת	יִשְׁנְנוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
תּוֹמְכֵי תְהֵלוֹת	יִתְמִידוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
תּוֹקְפֵי תַפְאֲרֶתָךְ	יִתְמִימוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.
תְּמִימֵי תַעֲוֶדָה	יִתְנוּ בְּקוֹל.	יִי מְלֶךְ.

טוהר אגני קני' 20. ספסרי טסח אב' הור' ויחזק: טכוסטי טהר ט | יטופפו קני' 20. 12-10 חס' אג' 10 יודעי | ייחזו קני' 20. 11 יכובדו קני' 12 לבושי להבות (להבה ו'): לוהטי להבות קני' 14. 20 למודי להט ט 13 מלאכי מרום קני' אג' מלך מלכים קני' 20. ימליכו קני' 14 ינצחו: ינצחו ר' נעמי קני' 14. 20 שרטי קדש ג שרטי טערה קני' 14. סובלי שיח קני' 20. 16 עומסי ענות קני' עדות עירי קני' 17 פוצחי טאר קני' 20. פוצחי טלאך קני' 20. פלאי טנים אג' פלאי טלאך ט סקורי פלאך | יפצחו רוב קני' יפארו קני' 20. 18 צבאות צדיקים קני' 20. צבא צבאות קני' 19 קהלות קדושים טטגלק קדושי קהל קני' 20. 14. 20 יקראו קני' 20 רבי רבבות החף קני' רבבות רוגשים קני' 20. רבבות רגנות ט 21 שחילי שלשה ט שנאני שוק קני' יסבחו קני' ישלשו קני' 20. 22 חומכי תהלותיך טאס חומכי תעודה קני' תמימי תעודה קני' 20. 22 אחר 23 טס 24-23 חס' אב' הור' ח קר' מ' א' קני' 14. 20. 23 חוקפי תפארתך יתמימו: חוקפי תמימותיך יתמידו (יתמימו אס) טאס חופסי חורה יתפארו ג תהלות תמימותיך יתנו ח 24 חוקף תשועתך ט ח: חוקף תפארתך אס | יתמימו ט: יתנו אס

יהללוהו כישר. 11 כבירי כח המלאכים. לבושי להבות מלאכי להב (שופט) יג כ ויעל מלאך ה' בלהב המזבח. 12 לבבו ע"ש שה"ש ד ט לבבתיני אחותי כלה (שמשמעותו לא ברורה, והספייטנים חופסים מלה זו במובנים שונים. כנראה ר"ל כאן: ישימו לב או מלבבים, פי' מחזקים איש את אחיו). 13 מנעמי מלל ישראל, ע"ש ש"ב כג א ונעים זמירות ישראל. 14 נוצצי נגה המלאכים, ע"ש יחזק' א ז ונוצצים כעין נחושת קלל, ושם א ד ונגה לו סכיב. ינצחו ינגנו על הכלים (דוגמת לנצח, דח"א טו כא). 15 יסלסלו ע"ש תהלי סח ה סולו לרוכב בערבות. 16 עורכי עוז ישראל עורכי חמורה חנקאת עוז (תהלי כט יא). 17 סחודי פלאיך המפחדים מפני גמלאותיך. יסצחו (וי"ג יסצחו) ע"ש ישע' מט יג יסצחו חרים רגה. 18 צבאות צאנך ע"ש יחזק' לד לא ואחן צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם. יצלצלו בצלצלי שמע וכו', תהלי קנ ה. 20 רבבות רבבה ע"ש במד' י לו שובה ח' רבבות אלמי ישראל. 21 שביבי שלהבות המלאכים, ע"ש דני' ז ט שביבין דינור. 22 תומכי תהלות המחזיקים בתהלות (ע"ש משלי ג יח ותומכי מאושר), ועי' לעיל (אוסן, 11) חסן בתומכי ברוך. 23 חוקפי תפארתך המדגישים בחוקף תפארתך. יתמימו מתנים בתמימות. 24 תמימי תעודה החמימים בחורה (ועי' ישע' ח כ לחורה ולתעודה).

שחרית לראש השנה

יום רא

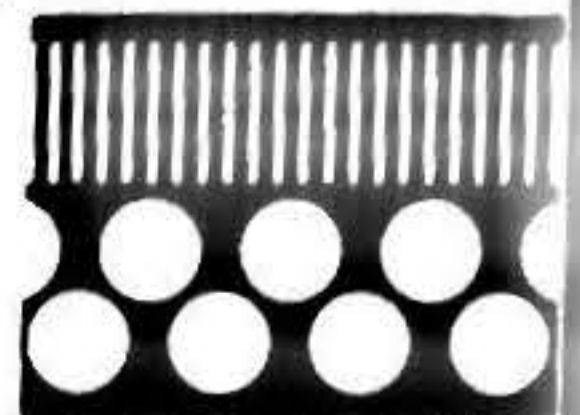
סיון: ח-ז-ל 216.

ובכן לך תכל יכתירו (ג"א ובכן דין אמת אמה)

לאל עורך	דין	לבוהן לבבות	ביום דין
לגולה עמקות	בדין	לדובר מישרים	ביום דין
להוגה דעות	בדין	לנתיק ועושה חסד	ביום דין
לזוכר בריתו	בדין	לחומל מעשיו	ביום דין
5 לטהר חוסיו	בדין	ליודע מחשבות	ביום דין
לכובש כעסו	בדין	ללובש צדקות	ביום דין
למוחל עונות	בדין	לנורא תהלות	ביום דין
לסולח לעמוסיו	בדין	לעונה לקוראיו	ביום דין
לפועל רחמיו	בדין	לצופה נסתרות	ביום דין
10 לקונה עבדיו	בדין	לרחם עמו	ביום דין
לשומר אהביו	בדין	לתומך תמימיו	ביום דין

נותרת אין כנמה כ"י כגון ב' ווח כמ' | ובכן לך הכל יעריצו ג ולך כל יכתירו אג' התהלה והתפארת ג 3 להוגה תעלומה עושה כ 4 לזוכר חסדים... לחומל חוסיו | על מעשיו אג' 5 לטהר ומטהר חוסיו (חוסיו בו ט חס' ג) סטג לטהר עמו למטה טלאיו | לידע נסתרות ח 6 כעס אג' | צדקה סא-אג' 7 למוחח משעים ט 8 לעמוסיו: ומוחל | משע: לקוראיו: לעמו סל קוראיו אג' עמוסיו ח 9 רחמיו: פלאות סל ח 10 לקונה עבדיו: לקרוב לקוראיו סח | לרו: לרחם רחמיו אלף | לרחום ומרחם עמוסיו (עמו ג) סטג

ובכן לך הכל יכתירו, ומצורף לו: לאל עורך דין ר"ל עורך משפט, ע"ש איוב יג יח הנה גא ערכתי משפט. י לבבות ע"ש משלי יז ג ובוהן לבות ה'. 2 לגולה עמוקות ע"ש משלי יב יג מגלה עמוקות מני חשך, ודני' ב כב גלי: ומסתרתא. לדובר מישרים ע"ש ישע' לג טו. 3 להוגה דעות ע"ש ש"א ב ג כי אל דעות ה'. לנתיק פי' רצינ ועושה חסד ירמ' ט כג ועוד. 4 לזוכר בריתו ע"ש תהלי קיא ח יזכר לעולם בריתו. לחומל מעשיו ע"ש מל וחמלתי עליהם. 5 לטהר חוסיו במקום 'למטהר' החוסים בו (וייתכן שהוא בא בניקוד טהר, ר"ל מטהר, ועי' אה כ"י הצרפתיים) ויש שפירש אותו על דוגמת קהל' ד ב ושבח אני את המתים... שמות י ד כי אם מאן אחת לשלח, א. מסתבר שזה מתאים לסגנון הסיט העתיק. לידע מחשבות ע"ש תהלי צד יא ה' יודע מחשבות אדם. 6 לכובש עי' לעיל (אאסיד, 6) לכובש כל כעסים. ללובש צדקות ע"ש ישע' נט יז וילבש צדקה כשרין. 7 לנורא תהלור טו יא. 8 לסולח לעמוסיו לישראל העמוסים מני בטן (ישע' מו ג). לעונה לקוראיו ע"ש ישע' סח כד והיה טר ואני אענה וכו'. 9 לסועל רחמיו דוגמת סועל ישועות, תהלי עד יב. לצופה נסתרות ע"ש דבר' כט כח הנסחו אלהינו. 10 לקונה עבדיו ע"ש ישע' יא א יוסיף ה' שנית ידו לקנות את שאר עמו. לרחם עמו למרחם ע"ש לעיל על 5 לטהר. 11 לשומר אוהביו ע"ש תהלי קמה כ שומר ה' את כל אוהביו. לתומך תמימיו ע"ש ישע' ג חמכתי בימין צדיק.



לעת יבקריו פועלי שקר / להשפט בוכים אף וחקר
יסכר פי דוברי שקר:

אם לא למענו

25 ישר מתהלך לפניו באמת / איך אחרי הדברים והאמת
חשב פועלו אלהים אמת:

ידיד אשר לפניו ואחריו / לא קם כמוהו בבחירתו
ואחרי כל זאת דקדק אחריו:

יבינו כל יצורי ארץ / אם כן במצוקי ארץ
מה יעשו רשעי ארץ:

אל אמונה

ראה יראו יערי שיחים / אם אש אחזה בלחים
אז ינועו יבשים כסוחים:

ראה כי אין איש / להפגיע בעד בני איש
ואתה אל ולא איש:

30 רשום בכתב אמת אשננה / מעשה כל ימות השנה
לרצותה בשופר (בשנה בוקרן שופר) בזה ראש השנה: אם לא למענו

24 עם חס' אס' | ודים: רודים ע 25 אלהים מעלו מיד 27 אם כן: אם כך בהור' רל 28 או ינועו: מה יעשו בטגלד
30 ימות כל השנה אם

אחד נזק לבית הועד אמר להם במה אתם עוסקים. אמרו לו בהור הקרב יומת (במדי' א נא) אמר להם חקכיה מלך ואני מלך.
גאה למלך לשמש לפני מלך ולהקטיר לפני מלך וכו' – ר"ל שנשפט על אי-ידיעת דין זר שפטול להקטרה. 23 לעת תמוט
רגל ודים להיכ דברי לב לה אשר באו להיכל מזידים ע"ש תהלי' עט א. ישפטו במכניע עם ודים לשון ברכת
המינים. 24 לעת יבוקרו סועלי שקר ע"ש משלי כא ופעל אוצרות בלשון שקר. יסכר סי דוברי שקר להיכ תהלי'
סג יח. 25 ישר מתהלך לסניו באמת חוקיה מלך יהודה שאמר (מ"ב כ ג) זכר נא את אשר התהלכתי לפניך באמת ובלבב
שלם. אחרי הדברים והאמת להיכ דהיב לב א. חשב סעלו שהתגאה בפני מלאכי בכל והראם את האוצרות (ישע'
לט ב) ועוד שטח את הארון והראה להם את הלוחות ואמר בזה אנו עושין מלחמה ונוצחין (פרקי ר"א נ"ח) ונתבשר (ישע' לט ו)
הנה ימים באים ונשא כל אשר בביתך... בכל... ומבניך... יקחו והיו טריסים בהיכל מלך בכל. ע"י ג"כ טנח' דף ק"ד א'. אלהים
אמת ירמ' יי. 26 ידיד אשר לפניו ואחריו לא קם כמוהו בבחירתו ואשיותו מלך יהודה, ע"ש מ"ב כג כה. ואחרי
כל זאת דקדק אחריו ונפל במלחמה (דח"ב לה כג) על שלא התיעץ עם ירמיהו הנביא, כדאיתא בבבלי תענ' דף כ"ב ב'
ובאיכה רבה א' י"ח (מ"ו א' בובר). 27 יבינו כל יצורי ארץ אם כן במצוקי ארץ ש"א ב ח. מה יעשו רשעי
ארץ תהלי' עה ט. 28 יערי שיחים יערי אילנות, והפייטן מקיש אדם לעץ חסד. אם אש אחזה בלחים בעלי זכויות.
או ינועו יבשים כסוחים הרשעים, ע"ש ישע' לג יב. 29 ראה כי אין איש (להיכ שמות ב יב) להפגיע בעד בני
איש להחמלל בעדנו (להפגיע ע"ש איוב לו לב ויצו עליה במסגית, לפי דרשת חז"ל תענית דף ו' ב' אין פגיעה אלא חסלה), ועי'
מה שדרשו חז"ל יומא דף א' על הפסוק אם יחטא איש לאיש (ש"א ב כה) אם יחטא איש ולאיש ומללו אלהים ימחל לו, ואם לא
יחטא איש מי יחמלל בעדו תשובה ומעשים טובים. כי אתה אל ולא איש ע"ש חושע יא ט. 30 רשום בכתב אמת להיכ
דני' י כא. אשננה אסתר (לי דברי' ו ו) היינו מעשי בני אדם הרשומים בספר (אבות ב' א').

ובכן נמליכך מלך עליון (כ"א ויהי בישורן מלך)

קיומן: ח-3 וסולט. בתים בכי ג' טורים. – מ 1653.

נוהגין לדלג על כל חרזי מלך אביון.

מלך עליון. אל דר במרום. אדיר במרום. אמץ ידו תרם. לעדי-עד י'
מלך אביון. בלה ורד שחת. בשאול ובתחת. בלאות בלי נחת
מלך עליון. גבור להקים. גוזר ומקים. גולה עמקים.
מלך אביון. דנה כדבר. דובר ועובר. דומה לעור.

5 מלך עליון. המדבר בצדקה. הלובש צדקה. המאזין צעקה.
מלך אביון. וחסץ ברשע. ועושה רשע. ומוכן לפשע.

מלך עליון. זוכר צורים. זכות יצורים. זועם צורים.
מלך אביון. חושב ושוכח. חש ומשכח. חב ומחנכח.

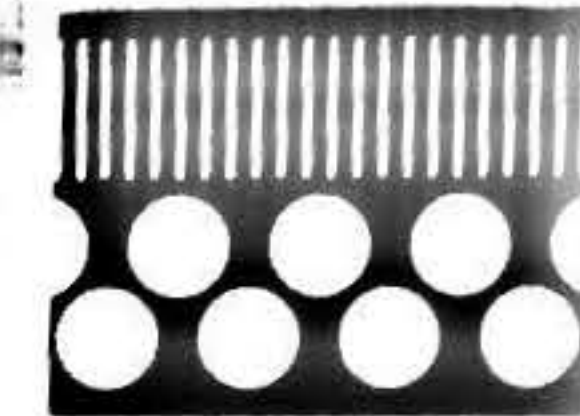
מלך עליון. טוב שוכן עד. טובו לעד. טפח שמי עד.
מלך אביון. ימיו טפחות. יומו למפחות. יחום טפחות.

10 מלך עליון. כשלמה עוטה אור. כל מאורי אור. כביר ונאור.
מלך אביון. לצלמות ישפל. לרגב יאפל. לאשמן יקפל.

ברוב כ"י נשמרורק חרזי 'מלך עליון'; חרזי 'מלך אביון' לפי תזרז המקורי רק במחזור אוניון (א') ובקטעי הגניזות א"נ ק
ביחאחרי 21: בשלמותם רק כ; 22.4.2 נד; 22.18.6.4.2 מ || כותרת ובכן נמליכך מלך עליון לכ; ובכן ויהי בישורן מלך ו
שניהם כ; ובכן יי ימלך לעולם ועד ג ובכן אנדיל מלך עליון ואזיל מלך אביון קנ"א 1 במרום: מרום דאניקני'
בשחת כ | בליאות... בשאול ובתחתית מ בלי ליאות א"י 3 גוזר... גולה... גבור להקים א"י 4 דובר:
5 המאזין: השומע קנ"א | צעקה: נאקח א"י 6 ברשע: רשע קנ"א 7 זוכר יצורים (ליצורים
זכות צורים (הורים א"י) סלמנדא"י א"י קנ"א: זכות צורים זוכר יצורים כ 8 ושכח כ 9 שמי עו
10 ימיו טפחות / יהומיו למפחות / יחום טפחות כאניקני' 12 יקופל... יואפל א"י לאשמן: לאשמו כ

ובכן נמליכך מלך עליון וזה כנראה הכותרת המקורית (בקצת מקורות: נמליך מלך עליון ונשפיל מלך אביון)
1 אל דר במרום ישע' לג טו הוא מרומים ישכון. אדיר במרום תהלי' צג ד. אמץ ידו תרם ע"ש מיכה י
ידך על צריך. והפייטן לא דקדק לכתוב 'ירום' אלא כתב 'תרום' לפי 'ידו'. 2 בלה ע"ש איוב יג כה והוא כרקב יג
שחת בשאול ותחת ע"י איוב יז יג-יד. בליאות בטורה.

3 גבור להקים (במקום להקות, לי לחקת הנביאים, ש"א יט כ) ר"ל גבור בצבאות קדושים. גוזר ומקים ומקי'
עמוקים איוב יב כב מגלה עמוקות מני חושך. 4 דנה כדבר איכה א יג כל היום דנה. 5 המדבר בצדקה יי
הלובש צדקה ישע' נט יז וילבש צדקה כשרין. 6 וחסץ ברשע ע"ש תהלי' ה ה כי לא אל חסץ רשע אהה. ועוש
מלאכי ג טו עושי רשעה. 7 זוכר צורים זוכר זכות אבות, ע"ש הביטו אל צור חוצבתם, ישע' נא א. זכות יצו
לזכותם. זועם צורים ע"ש תהלי' ז יב ואל זועם בכל יום. 8 חש ומשתכח ממהר להשתכח. חב חוטא, מתחייב.
9 טוב שוכן עד ישע' נז טו. טיסח שמי עד ע"ש ישע' מח יג וימיני טפוח שמים. 10 ימיו טפחות ע"ש ה
הנה טפחות נתת ימי. יומו למפחות ר"ל לאכזבה, ע"ש איוב יא כ ותקחם מפח גפש. יחום טפחות בן מטופח י'
תהלי' נא ז ובחטא יחמתני אמי. טפחות ע"ש איכה ב כ עוללי טפוחים. 11 כשלמה עוטה אור תהלי' קד ב. כ
אור יחוק לב ח. כביר ע"ש איוב לו ה הן אל כביר. ונאור תהלי' עו ה. 12 לרגב יואפל לצרור אדמה שיו
לאשמן לחשך ואפילה (במשמעות זו אצל הפייטנים, ע"י מלון בן יהודה א', 424).



מוסף לראש השנה

יום ראשון

מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים. מַפְעֵנֶנֶח נְעֻלָּמִים. מְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹמִים. לַעֲצִי:
 מֶלֶךְ אֲבִיּוֹן נָע לְרַנְעִים. נָחָפוּ מַפְנְעִים. נִבְהָל בְּשֹׁנְעִים. עֲמִי:
 15 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. סוֹבֵל כָּל. סָב וּמִבִּלָּה כָּל. סוֹקֵר כָּל. לַעֲצִי:
 מֶלֶךְ אֲבִיּוֹן עוֹבֵר וּמִתְעַבֵּר. עֲפַעְפִּיז מַעֲרָר. עֲפָרוֹ צוֹבֵר. עֲמִי:
 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. פָּאָרוֹ עֹז. פָּעַל יְמִינוֹ תַעֲזוּ. פּוֹדֶה וּמַעֲזוֹ. לַעֲצִי:
 מֶלֶךְ אֲבִיּוֹן צַחֲנָה תִבְאִישֶׁנּוּ. צוֹאָה תִלְבִּישֶׁנּוּ. צִיָּה תִירָשֶׁנּוּ. עֲמִי:
 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. קְדוֹשִׁי לְהַב. קוֹרָא מִי רַהֵב. קְרוֹב לְקוֹרְאָיו בְּאַהֵב. לַעֲצִי:
 20 מֶלֶךְ אֲבִיּוֹן רַמָּה לּוֹבֵשׁ. רָטֹב וְיִבֵּשׁ. רְשׁוֹף בְּמִים וּבְאֵשׁ. עֲמִי:
 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. שָׁנָה אֵין לְפָנָיו. שָׁקֵט בְּפָנָיו. שָׁבַח טוֹב בְּמַצְפּוֹנָיו. לַעֲצִי:
 ס

במנהג פולין אומרים כאן שורה 2 ואחריה 22 ומקדימין למלך עליון ב-אָבֵל

מֶלֶךְ אֲבִיּוֹן תְּנוּמָה תַעֲפֹפֶנּוּ. תִרְדָּמָה תַעֲפֹפֶנּוּ. תוֹהוּ וַשׁוּפָנּוּ. עֲמִי:
 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן. תִקְפּוֹ לַעֲדָה. תִפְאָרְתּוֹ עֲדִי-עַד. תִהְלֶתּוֹ עוֹמֶדֶת לַעֲדָה. לַעֲצִי:

13 מלך לעולמים קניי מפענח... מלך... ה' | משיח: מפענח א"קניי. 14 מרגין אני | נע: נבחן אני | נבהל... נחפז קניי 20
 מפענח: במפניעים כ 15 סובל כל: סובל בכל א" סובל הכל דסוטים | סוקר... סב... א" סוקר בכל אב' הוחטקרכמ
 אניקניי 14: סוקר הכל שאר כי 17 פורח... פעל... סל א" 18 צחנת... צואחא אני | תבישנו מקניי 14 20 אני
 תיכשנו כ 19 קדוש קדושו להב ס | למי רחב סטאט, ונוסח קניי יקרא באהב | קדושים יאהב...; נוסח קניי קדוש
 בחסר איתו | קרוב לאיומחו | קדושו איתו 20 רטוב א": רטוט כ, ונוסח קניי רעד אחוזתו | רעדה בכחו | רימה שיכלתה
 21 שבת: שם קניי | טוב חס' אניקניי שבת טוב במצונו | שלום במעונו | שינה אין לפניו א" 22 תרדמת... תנומה... |
 ותוהו כך, ונוסח קניי תפוכות בלבו | חולעה בקרבו | תאכלנו לארכו ולרחבו | אחר 22 חוקף גדולות | חוכן עלילות |
 תמים יושב תהלות הוס' ג 23 תקפו לעד: תקפו עדי עד ג

13 מלך עולמים ע"ש תהלי קמה יג מלכותך מלכות כל עולמים. מפענח נעלמים. משיח אלמים שניהם נמצאים בתחלת
 נשמת כל חי, לפי נוסח ספרד ורומניא. מפענח, פי' פוחר, מגלה, ועי' צובין, ס. 444.
 14 נחפז נטרד (נבהלו נחפזו תהלי מח' ו). נבהל תהלי שם. בשנועים בשנונות. 15 סובל כל. סב ומבלה כל ע"ש
 ישע' מו ד ועד זקנה אני הוא ועד שיבה אני אסבל. סב לי זקנה, ומבלה הכל עי' ויקר' ד' ח' (ע' 13) נפש זו סובלת את הגוף
 והקביה סובל את עולמו... סוקר בכל רואה ומביט (מלה רגילה אצל הפייטנים, מלי ומשקרות עינים, ישע' ג טו).
 16 עובר ומתעבר זמנו עובר ומתעבר (שני בטויים מקבילים). עפרו צובר ע"ש חבוק א י ויצבר עפר.
 17 פארו עוז ע"ש תחלי צו ו עוז וחפארת במקדשו. פטיח כי תפארת עוזמו אתה. פועל ימינו תעוז ע"ש תחלי פטי יד תעוז
 ידך תרום ימינך (והפייטן כותב תעוז במקום יעוז) לפי ימינו. פודה ומעוז תהלי כו א ח' מעוז חיי, וכדומה. 18 צחנה
 תבאישנו ע"ש יואל ב כ ועלה באשו ותעל צחנתו, פי' הטרחון, ר"ל החטא. ויג תבישנו, ומסתבר. ציה יובש.
 19 קדושו להב ע"ש תהלי קד ד משרתיו אש לוהט. קורא מי רהב קורא מי חים (ע"ש עמוס ה ח) ורהב (גיאות) שמו
 של שר הים (ב"ב דף ע"ד ב'). קרוב לקוראיו באהב תהלי קמה יח. באהב - באהבה. 20 רמה לובש איוב ז ה לבש
 בשרי רמה. רטוב ויבש ע"ש איוב ח טו רטוב הוא לפני שמש, ושם יח יג ולפני כל חציר ייבש. רשוף במים ובאש נשרף
 (לי רשפי אש' שה"ש ח ו. בני רשף, איוב ח ז) לשון נוסח רק על אש, והפייטן מביאו במשמעות 'טבוע', ועי' וולאי, ידעיות
 המכון ד' עמ' רי.
 21 שינה אין לסניו תהלי קחד הנח לא ינום ולא יישן, ולשון הפייטן כלשון המשנה (כגון אבות ד' כ"ט שאין לסניו לא עולה
 ולא שכחה...) שקט בסניו במלאכיו חמששים בסניו ונבנסים למנאי ולפנים (כנראה למי דרשת חז"ל על חסוק משלי ג טו

מוסף לראש השנה

יום ראש

סלוק

יבכנו לך תעלה קדשה. פי אתה אלהינו מלך:

כלי קינן ומכח. - 451.

ונתנה תקף קדשת היום / פי הוא נורא ואים
 ובו תנשא מלכותך / ויכון בחסד כסאך
 ותשב עליו באמת / אמת פי אתה הוא דין
 ומוכיח ויודע ועד / וכותב וחותרם (וסופר ומונה)
 5 ותזכר כל הנשכחות / ותפתח ספר הזכרונות
 ומאליו יקרא / וחותרם יד כל אדם בו
 ובשופר גדול יתקע / וקול דממה [דקה] ישמע
 ומלאכים יחפזון / וחיל ורעדה יאחזון
 ויאמרו הנה יום-הדין / לפקוד על-צבא-מרום בדין
 10 פי-לא-יזכו בעיניך בדין / וכל-באי-עולם יעברון לפניך כבני-מרון

כ"י אצמ"ר וקטעי הגניזה לג (1-21). קני' (3-27) || 1 ונתנה חוקף קדושת היום: כנגד שלש תקיעות היום הוס' לג | כי
 יום הוס' לגאנצ' (שמה זה עיקר) 2 ובר: ובס | לג | חתנשא לג' 3 אמת כי אחת הוא דין: כי אחת הוא דין אמת ל
 (שמה זה עיקר): אמת חס' ס: הוא חס' אדהור' וחקנטל 4 מוכיח ויודע ועד אחר 5 וחוכר כל הנשכחות לג' | ו
 חס'ע: וביד כל אדם יחתום הוס' לג | וסופר ומונה חס' 7 ומונה וסופר חס' 8 זכרונות בדוחרקנכ' 7 וסופר טגאפ
 דקה לג: חס' רוב כי 9 יום הדין לג' סע: יום דין רוב כי 10 באי העולם לג' | יעברון אבו' וחקמ' ס: עוברי

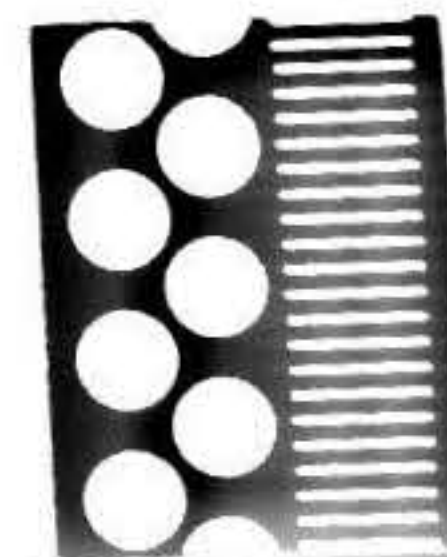
ונתנה חוקף. לפי הרורה מוסב החלק הראשון על יום הדין שלעתיד לבא (עי' שם), ומהפסקא 'וכל באי עולם' עובר ה:
 לר"ה של כל השנה, מה שאינו מתקבל על הדעת. ויותר נראה שהוא מתאר את סדר ר"ה של כל השנה בשמים בחמנות יום
 הסופי שבמקרא, בלי שיש מקור לזה באגדה ידועה.

1 ונתנה חוקף קדושת היום, ר"ל נספר קדושת ר"ה. ובקטע הגניזה הוא ממשיך: כנגד שלש תקיעות היום, לפי הו
 הידוע (עי' לעיל שחרית, סלוק 80). כי הוא ר"ל היום. נורא ואיום לי' חבוק א ז. 2 ובו תנשא מלכותך במד'
 ויכון בחסד כסאך 3 ותשב עליו באמת ע"ש ישע' טו ה והוכן בחסד כסא וישב עליו באמת. אמת כי אתה
 דיין ומוכיח ויודע ועד כמאמר חז"ל (אבות ד' כ"ב) לידע להודיע ולתורע שהוא... הוא הדין והוא עד הוא בעל דין
 5 ותזכר כל הנשכחות ע"פ נוסח הברכה הנשנית במשנה (תענית ב' ד') וזכר הנשכחות. ותפתח את ספר הזכר
 (ל' אסתר ו א) ע"פ מאמר חז"ל ירו' ר"ה א' ג' דף נ"ו א' שלש פינקסיות הם... 6 ומאליו יקרא מעצמו נקרא. וחותרם יד
 אדם בו ע"ש איוב לו ז ודרשת חז"ל (ספרי דברים ש"ו, ועוד) שהחוטא בעצמו חותרם (בשעת פטירתו מן העולם, והפי'
 העבירו כלל זה לר"ה) על מעשיו. 7 ובשופר גדול יתקע ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול, ישע' כו יג. ו

יקרה היא מפנינים: מכהן גדול הנכנס לפני ולפנים, הוריות דף י"ג א' ועוד). שבת טוב במצפוניו שבת טוב צפון לצ:
 (תהלי לא כ) במצפוניו, במקום שהוא גונז את טובו, דוגמת עובד' א ו.

22 תנומה תעופנו (כנראה משחק הפייטן בשתי משמעויות חמלה 'עוף') תאפיל לו (תעופה, איוב יא יז), או תעוף מסבי
 תרדמות תעופסנו חסוב אוחי. תוהו יושפנו ע"ש איוב ט יז אשר בשערה יושפני. 23 תקפו לעד חס' | חס' |
 תפארתו עדי עד ע"ש תהלי עא ח כל חיום תפארתך. תהלתו עומדת לעד תהלי קיא י.

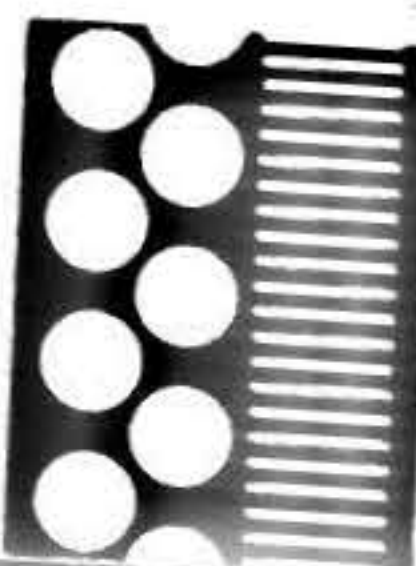
Chapter 3: Piyyut in the Holiday Cycle Part II: the Sephardi Poets



The Ashkenazi Mahzor and its antecedents, the work of the Byzantine *payyetanim*, provide a particular aesthetic and polemical perspective on creative liturgy. Heavily reliant upon the imagery of the midrash, poets like Yannai, Kallir and their imitators wrote *piyyutim* that interwove the homiletical material, the theme of the holiday portion or Sabbath *sidra*, together with the theme of a particular prayer or rubric. In so doing they created, not an amalgam of different sources, but a new poetic whole designed to engage the worshipper in ways other liturgy or study might not have. Thus, a *kedushta* for the High Holidays might knit the theme of God's holiness to the image of God sitting on His throne of Judgment, and move toward a supplication to God on His throne of Mercy, possibly by reminding God of Isaac's (near) sacrifice, all by citing a variety of rabbinic material that can be found in *Pesikta DeRav Kahana* or the *Bavli* or *Midrash Rabbah*.

This was, of course, presented in a particular style: acrostics (either alphabetical or appellative), "a strictly observed strophic structure, a permanent rhythm based on a fixed number of words in each line, and obligatory rhyme."¹ These rhyme schemes were managed through the complex invention of words, ellipses, and other modifications. While this system itself was fixed, there was room for flexibility and ingenuity within this structure: just as Kallir adapted the poetic style of Yannai, so did his imitators reimagine the Byzantine style, making it their own. By using different kinds of proof-texts, more complicated language and meter, they found ways to accentuate their virtuosity while still creating meaningful liturgical poetry. And it was not only the poets who took possession of—and adapted—the poetry to their own needs: congregations and prayer-book publishers would alter *piyyutim* to fit their needs; throughout the Ashkenazi

¹ See T. Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), p. 61.



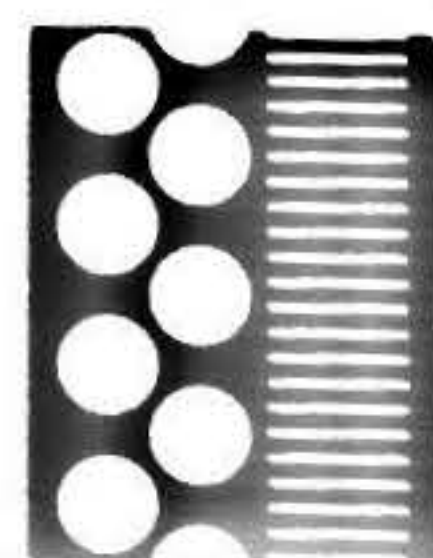
Mahzor, we see the conservation of space, elimination of passages that could have brought the wrath of the authorities upon the community, or simply the removal or modification of those sections that no longer 'spoke' to the congregation and the inclusion of new material that reflected their own understanding.

With that as our background, we turn to the development of the Sephardi *piyyut*, which followed a different aesthetic, and served a somewhat different function.

While we know very little about the Byzantine *payyotanim* and the inheritors of their tradition, we know much more about their Spanish counterparts. Many scholars have written about the lives and backgrounds of the various Sephardi poets and their genres of verse, both liturgical and non-liturgical. While there is some discussion as to whether the Byzantine *piyyut* emerged from—or was influenced by—the surrounding culture of the Eastern Empire², a great deal has been published on the relationship between Muslim and Jewish aesthetics in Iberia. While Sephardi poets also utilized rhyme and acrostics, their meter and use of language were often wholly different. Based on Arabic systems of poetics, theirs was a system of long and short syllables, repeated throughout a line of poetry.³ Furthermore the Spanish poets did not rely on rabbinic interpretations of their texts or language to the same degree as their Byzantine counterparts. Rather, the Spanish *payyotanim* relied upon and elevated the biblical text and biblical Hebrew.

² Ibid., p. 62.

³ Ibid, p. 63.



This chapter will examine some of the liturgical poetry of the Spanish poets: specifically, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Judah HaLevi, and Moses Ibn Ezra. Described as “three outstanding figures”⁴, these poets are considered significant in the development of the Spanish *piyyut*. Their poetry is peppered throughout the liturgy, and even made inroads into Ashkenazic *minhag*. We will be comparing and contrasting their aesthetic perspective and liturgical understanding with the poets of the previous two chapters, asking not only basic comparative questions, but also how the respective works would shape the liturgical experience of the worshipper. Furthermore, we will try to isolate those elements that could be applied to modern creative liturgy, and attempt to identify modern equivalents already in use.

In this analysis, there is a need for caution: unlike the Byzantine *piyyutim*, which were often vilified by the liturgists of the Reform movement, the Spanish *piyyut* was readily used and held up as a model for the creation of new liturgy.⁵ Comparatively short, with clear Hebrew and rhyme schemes, and evoking a storied, mythological past of intellectual growth in the sciences and the arts, the Spanish *piyyutim* were viewed by many reformers as a reflection of their own endeavors. These biases continue to have a powerful influence today: the poetry of Moses Ibn Ezra and Solomon Ibn Gabirol both appear in prominent places in *Gates of Repentance*, while Kallir makes but one appearance, in the Yom Kippur afternoon service.⁶ Therefore, we must maintain an awareness of these influences and (mis-)readings in our study. While Spanish *piyyutim* may be more familiar

⁴ Ibid, pp. 24-25.

⁵ See Jakob Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; (reprint, Cincinnati: HUC Press, 2000), pp. 138ff.

⁶ See Lawrence Hoffman, ed., *Gates of Understanding II*, pp. 51, 127, 138 and 152.

to the average Reform Jewish congregant and have a certain advantage, that should not unduly influence our search for meaningful models of creative liturgy.

The Spanish Payyetanim

Solomon b. Judah Ibn Gabirol is the first of these poets both in age and in development. He is credited historically with bringing "the sacred poetry of the Jews of Spain toward its perfection."⁷ Known mostly through his own writings and the works of the following generation, especially Moses Ibn Ezra, he lived a brief life in the eleventh century, by most accounts dying in his late thirties. He regarded Magara as his native city, and acquired his education in Saragossa. Orphaned at an early age, he devoted most of his life to poetry and philosophy, and found sustenance under the patronage of a number of individuals, including Yekuthiel b. Isaac Ibn Chasan. His life was mythologized long after his death, with legends about his ability to make golems, his relationship with Shmuel Ha-Nagid and Nissim b. Jacob Ibn Shahin, and his death at the hands of an Arab.⁸ Despite this, he is described as "physically weak," and as "a social misfit."⁹ Many of the liturgical pieces attributed to him are still used today, such as *Shachar Avakeshcha*. He wrote liturgy for Yom Kippur, "the three pilgrimage festivals, Purim, Hanukah, the Ninth of Av and other fast days."¹⁰ Taking a great interest in Hebrew grammar (completing "a long didactic poem" on the subject in his late teens), he modeled the

⁷ See Ismar Elbogen, p. 266.

⁸ See Shlomo Pines, "Gabirol, Solomon Ben Judah Ibn", in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing 1972), pp. 235-245.

⁹ See Raymond Scheindlin, *Wine, Women and Death* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), p. 12.

¹⁰ See Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 265.

usage of Arabic poetics and biblical modes of poetry that was begun by the poet Dunash b. Labrat.¹¹

Moses Ibn Ezra is the next poet of the "three stars" in the firmament of Neo-Hebrew poetry in Spain.¹² He was born in Granada between 1055-1060 to a prominent and wealthy family. He mastered Bible and Talmud, Hebrew grammar, as well as Arabic language and rhetoric, Arab and Greek philosophy, and possibly Latin. He fled Granada when it fell to the Almoravides in 1090 to Castile, after losing all his possessions and losing connection with much of his family, which he left behind. He appears to have lived the rest of his life somewhat destitute, living off of handouts from friends and relatives, wandering from place to place. He was still writing in 1138, though he seems to have died shortly thereafter.¹³

Finally, we will look at Judah Ha-Levi. Best known for the creation of an entire genre of "Zion poems," and for his philosophical treatise *HaKuzari*, Ha-Levi left an indelible mark on Jewish literature. "Judah HaLevi can only be called an embodiment of the religious genius and the most splendid flowering of the Jewish Spirit."¹⁴ Born around 1075 in northern or central Iberia, possibly Castile, he studied in Granada and made a living as a physician. He died in 1141 while either en route to or from Israel, probably in Egypt.¹⁵ Pietistic and sensing a "heightening of religious fanaticism" brought about by

¹¹ See Carmi, p. 27; Elbogen, p. 266.

¹² See Solomon Solis-Cohen, and Heinrich Brody, *Selected Poems of Moses Ibn Ezra* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), p. xxiii.

¹³ Ibid, p. pp. xxvff; See also Scheindlin, p. 12.

¹⁴ See Elbogen, p. 268.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 270, and Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1980), pp. 387ff.

the Crusades in the east and the Almoravide conquest in the west, he became an advocate for the end of exile, the return to Zion, and the triumph of Judaism above not only other faiths, but reason as well.¹⁶ His poetry was not only known among Spanish circles, but in the Ashkenazic world as well, and was used in the liturgies of central Europe.¹⁷

These men, while described as outstanding poets of their generations, could also be viewed as archetypes of a particular circle of Jewish elite in Muslim Spain. They were "thoroughly educated in Arabic language and literature, skilled in professions, and [held] positions of responsibility and power in public life," while also being, "pious, learned, and fiercely loyal to Jewish interests."¹⁸ While the Ashkenazi *payyetanim* exclusively wrote religious poetry, the Spanish poets wrote secular poems as well, applying the same literary techniques to both genres of poetry. As we shall soon see, both kinds of poems would use biblical verses and meters used originally for Arabic poems; the difference was what they did with those verses.¹⁹ While the liturgical poetry evoked the nature of the holiday with so-called 'foreign' elements, the secular poetry often described something as mundane as a visit to the garden, or something as bawdy as an illicit sexual union.²⁰ How they were able to utilize holy writ for such purposes should be the subject of another paper. Nevertheless, the very fact that these poets could blur such boundaries between 'sacred' and 'profane' and thereby be able to use non-Jewish poetic forms, or apply Scripture to describe a sexual encounter, speaks volumes about the nature of these

¹⁶ See Seltzer, pp. 387ff.

¹⁷ See Yonah Fraenkel, ed., *Mahzor leregalim: Pesach lefi minhagei benei ashkenaz*. (Jerusalem: Koren, 1993), pp. 474-475.

¹⁸ See Scheindlin, p. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 14ff.

²⁰ See Ibn Ezra's "*Ta'vat l'vavi*" and "*y'iruni s'ipai*", both in Carmi, p. 325 and 330, respectively.

poets and how they understood their enterprise. "The Judaism they lived was cosmopolitan in nature, unafraid of the challenges of contemporary morality, philosophy, and literary modes."²¹ We will return to this issue in our discussion of contemporary applications

The Piyyutim

The *piyyutim* of the aforementioned three poets selected for translation mostly come from the liturgy for the weekdays of the Passover. Both Ha-Levi's and Ibn Gabirol's *piyyutim* are read on the 7th day; Ha-Levi's, however, appears in both Ashkenazi and Sephardi *Mahzorim*. The theme of these poems is celebratory. In many traditions, Song of Songs is recited on this day²² and, according to tradition, it is on the seventh day that Israel crossed the Sea of Reeds, that episode serving as the day's Torah portion.²³ It should not surprise us then that, much like their Ashkenazi counterparts, these *payyetanim* will try to incorporate these elements into their poems. Especially auspicious is the nature of the rubric, the *geulah*, placing this *piyyut* immediately following the singing of *Mi Chamocha*, which tries to capture some of the power of the splitting of the Sea in Exodus 14 by reading—and therefore reenacting—the song that commemorates the event. As this day is the anniversary of the event itself, it lends greater power to the performative nature of the rubric: of all the days of the year, this day, on which Israel was led out of Egypt through the split Sea, a prayer for redemption has the best chance of being heard by God. Thus, the *piyyutim* make good use of the imagery of *Shirat HaYam*, Chapter 15 of

²¹ See Scheindlin, p. 14.

²² See Elbogen, p. 115.

²³ Specifically, Exodus 13:17-15:26. See Klein, Isaac, *A Guide to Jewish Practice*, (New York: KTAV publishing, 1979), p. 139.

Exodus. In addition, the poets either use the imagery of—or lift whole verses from—other poems of the Bible, most notably Psalms, Job and Isaiah.

In contrast to the festive nature of these poems for *Pesach*, Moses Ibn Ezra's poem, possibly the *rahit* part of a *ma'amad*, or a *pizmon*, reflects the triumphal and humble nature of Yom Kippur.²⁴ A day of fasting, penitence, and a reminder of God's majesty, this day culminates the ten days of awe. The poem's language, however, is quite similar to that of the other two; and uses many of the same Biblical proof-texts. Moses Ibn Ezra is most famous for his penitential poetry, to the extent that he is called *Selichah*, the penitential poet.²⁵ Elbogen writes,

The call to repentance and humility, the thought of the Day of the Lord, of the perishability of all material things, the picture of the day of death and the last judgment all echo in his *selichot*. He did not limit these merely to general meditations and admonishment for the community, but always kept the "I" at the focal point of his poetry.²⁶

Ibn Ezra's personalization of the day's theme, his sense of mortality, and his desire to glorify God are congruent with the nature of the fast day whose core ritual is the *Avodah*, the reenactment of the prostration and supplication of the High Priest in the Holy of Holies.

Wholly lacking from these poems are any references to rabbinic homiletical material; not a single midrash is cited. Instead, each poem develops an interpretation of the liturgical rubric and the festival by stringing together appropriate biblical texts. This is, of course, due to the emphasis that the Sephardi poets placed on biblical Hebrew, regarding it much

²⁴ See Solis-Cohen, and Brody, pp. 381ff.

²⁵ See Elbogen, p. 267.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 267.

as the Muslims of Spain regarded Arabic, as the high language of literature and rhetoric. Even as Hebrew was fit to adapted Arabic meter and rhyme, Jews “developed a rhetorical style for official correspondence, pioneered the study of Hebrew grammar, and bestowed upon the Bible, in addition to its traditional role as the source of religious authority, the new role of literary classic.”²⁷ One could argue that, in the process of associating one biblical verse to another, the poem is doing the work of midrash without explanation. We shall come back to this conjecture in our discussion of performative issues.

In terms of aesthetics, the *piyyutim* are all fairly similar. All three poems contain name acrostics. They all use similar biblical imagery and texts—notably Psalms, Job, Isaiah and Exodus 15. All three use what Carmi calls “quantitative meter”, that is, based on “a pattern of long and short syllables throughout a line repeated in all lines of the poem.”²⁸ As discussed, this kind of counting was ‘foreign’ to Hebrew, originally intended for Arabic verse.²⁹ While Ibn Ezra’s meter is the least regular and seems ‘defective’, it too seems to have a fixed number of long and short syllables. All have fairly similar rhyme schemes, maintaining a rhyme internal to the verse or stanza, and one that is maintained throughout the poem itself.

Unlike previous chapters, these poems come from a variety of sources, and are cited below. These translations are, for the most part, my own, including any error. The exceptions are those places where Scripture is cited, in which case I use the most recent Jewish Publication Society translation.

²⁷ See Scheindlin, pp. 5-6

²⁸ See Carmi, pp. 63-64

²⁹ See Scheindlin, p. 15

Piyyutim: Translations:

I. Yom L'yabasha³⁰

A name acrostic by Judah Ha-Levi, this poem appears in both Sephardi and Ashkenazi liturgies, though the latter presents it in an altered form, wherein every verse ends with the refrain: "The redeemed sang a new song."³¹ It is 12 verses long: the first two verses are comprised of two stichs each, with four long and one short syllable. Verses 3 through 11 constitute the name acrostic, and are comprised of four stichs, each with five open and three short syllables. There is both an internal and external rhyme: the last syllable of the first three stichs rhyme with each other, while the last syllable of the last stich rhymes with its counterpart in the next verse. The final verse is the Chatimah, and invokes God's ability to redeem, while tying the poem back into the liturgy (in this case, the *geulah* and *Mi Chamocha*).

1. On the day when the depths of the sea became dry
2. The redeemed sang a new song.
3. ' On the day when You were glorified through your enemies,³² while to me, You displayed Your love, and You founded Your strength from the mouths of babes.³³
4. 7 You drowned with cunning the feet of the daughters of Egypt,³⁴ while the footsteps of Shulamit, were lovely in sandals.³⁵
5. 1 All the witnesses of Jeshurun in that moment sang Your praises: There is none like the God of Jeshurun!³⁶ Our enemies must admit it.³⁷
6. 7 Raise my banner³⁸ over the remnant, and You will gather the scattered, like one who gathers in the sheaves.³⁹

³⁰ Yonah Fraenkel (ed.), *Mahzor leregalim: Pesach lefi minhagei benei ashkenaz*. (Jerusalem: Koren, 1993), pp. 474-475

³¹ Philip Birnbaum, *Prayer Book for The Three Festivals*, (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1995), p. 148

³² Exodus 14:4, "Then I will stiffen Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them, that I may gain glory through Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am THE-ETERNAL." And they did so."

³³ Psalm 8:3, "From the mouths of infants and sucklings You have founded strength on account of your foes."

³⁴ עַמְנִית, see Genesis 10:13-14: "And Mizraim begot the *Ludim*, the *Anamim*, the *Lehabim*, the *Naphtuhim*, the *Pathrusim*, the *Casluhim*, and the *Caphtorim*, whence the Philistines came forth."

³⁵ Song of Songs 7:2, "How lovely are your feet in sandals, O daughter of nobles! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master's hand."

³⁶ Deut. 33:26, "O Jeshurun, there is none like God, riding through the heavens to help you, through the skies in His majesty."

³⁷ Deut. 32:31, "For their rock is not like our Rock in our enemies' own estimation."

³⁸ Literally, "my", but clearly meant as a second person possessive, "your". This seems to have been a convention of the poets, as Moses Ibn Ezra does this quite often.

³⁹ Isaiah 17:5, "After being like standing grain harvested by the reaper—who reaps ears by the armful—He shall be like the ears that are gleaned in the Valley of Rephaim."

7. ה They go with You displaying the sign of Your covenant⁴⁰, from the womb they are circumcised to Your name.
8. ה They displayed their signs to all who saw them, and on the corners of their garments,⁴¹ they made fringes.
9. ה Whose mark is this? Examine, please, the truth of the matter: whose seal, and whose cord?⁴²
10. ו Then return a second time to sanctify⁴³ her, do not further banish her, cause the light of her sun to shine, drive off the shadows.⁴⁴
11. ו The beloved ones⁴⁵ praised You, with song⁴⁶ they came before You. Who is like you, Yah, among the gods?⁴⁷
12. For the sake of the fathers, save the children, and bring redemption to their children's children. Blessed is THE ETERNAL, Redeemer of Israel.⁴⁸

II. Mi Chamocha Amukot Goleh⁴⁹

This poem by Ibn Gabirol, is also based on *Mi Chamocha*, and meant for Passover. A partial name acrostic, the first letter of every couplet spells out *Shlomo* in Hebrew. 10 verses long, the verses are grouped in two-line stanzas with an internal rhyme. Each verse is broken into two stichs, each written in 8 long syllables.

1. Who is like You, revealer of the depths?⁵⁰ Who can be compared to You, who casts down and raises up?⁵¹
2. To the one who cries out in his captivity,⁵² show your faithfulness; Awesome in splendor, working wonders!⁵³

⁴⁰ "Your Seal"; i.e., *Berit Milah*, the circumcision.

⁴¹ Deut. 22:12, "You shall make tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself."

⁴² Gen. 38:25, "And as she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, 'I am with child by the man to whom these belong.' And she added, 'Examine these; whose seal and cord and staff are these?'"

⁴³ i.e. to wed her; a reference to *kiddushin*, and the imagery of Israel and God in a sanctified relationship like unto marriage.

⁴⁴ Song of Songs 2:17, "When the day blows gently and the shadows flee, set out my beloved, swift as a gazelle or a young stag, for the hills of spices!"

⁴⁵ i.e. Israel, Psalm 60:7, "That those whom You love might be rescued, deliver with Your right hand and answer me."

⁴⁶ Psalm 68:26, "First come singers, then musicians, amidst maidens playing timbrels."

⁴⁷ Exodus 15:11, "Who is like You, O LORD, among the celestials; Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in splendor, working wonders!"

⁴⁸ It is important to note the radical theology expressed in this poem, see below.

⁴⁹ Dov Jarden, *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol* (Jerusalem: no publisher listed, 1979).

⁵⁰ Job 12:22, "He draws mysteries out of the darkness, and brings obscurities to light."

⁵¹ I Samuel 2:6, "The lord deals death and gives life, Casts down into Sheol and raises up."

⁵² Ps. 17:7, "Display Your faithfulness in wondrous deeds, You who deliver with Your right hand those who seek refuge from assailants."

⁵³ See note 36 on Exodus 15:11.

3. װ Your beloved ones sang a new song⁵⁴ when the presumptuous Egyptians drowned,⁵⁵
4. And the wheels of their chariots were weighted down⁵⁶, His Glory was proclaimed in His faithful congregation.
5. ל Your band of precious ones,⁵⁷ storm-tossed⁵⁸ in their weeping when the ocean bore their suffering,
6. You brought [them] to the place they desired;⁵⁹ while the sea covered their enemies.⁶⁰
7. ׀ All Pharaoh's chariots and his army He cast into the sea, it covered them⁶¹
8. But His people He brought across through its depths;⁶² He rebuked the sea and dried it up.⁶³
9. ׀ Be a support and helper for Zion, and rise up to bestow grace upon her, for the appointed time has come,⁶⁴
10. May we come together to sing to You, as before: THE ETERNAL will reign forever and ever!⁶⁵

III. Mi El Nistar Mipnai⁶⁶

⁵⁴ Ex. 15:4. "Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; and the pick of his officers are drowning in the Sea of Reeds." "Beloved Ones"; i.e. Israel.

⁵⁵ לודים: See note 20 on Gen 10:13-14. Presumptuous, see Ex. 18:10-11, "'Blessed be the LORD,' Jethro said, 'who delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that THE LORD is greater than all gods, yes by the result of their very schemes against the people.'" Also Nehemiah 9:10, "You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all the people of his land, for You knew that they acted *presumptuously* toward them."

⁵⁶ Ex. 14:25, "He locked the wheels of their chariots so that they moved forward with difficulty."

⁵⁷ I Sam. 19:20, "and Saul sent messengers to seize David. They saw a band of prophets speaking in ecstasy, with Samuel standing by as their leader; and the spirit of God came upon Saul's messengers and they too began to speak in ecstasy."

⁵⁸ Is. 54:11, "Unhappy, storm-tossed one, uncomfited! I will lay carbuncles as your building stones and make your foundations of sapphires."

⁵⁹ Psalm 107:30, "They rejoiced when all was quiet, and He brought them to the port they desired."

⁶⁰ Psalm 78:53, "He led them (i.e. comforted them) in safety; they were unafraid; as for their enemies, the sea covered them." Also Ps. 140:9, "O LORD, do not grant the desires of the wicked; do not let their plan succeed, else they be exalted. *Selah*."

⁶¹ See previous note on Exodus 15:4.

⁶² i.e. in the shadow of the cloud. Or, the liturgical image of "in the shadow of God's wings".

⁶³ Nahum 1:4, "He rebukes the sea and dries it up, and He makes all rivers fail; Bashan and Carmel languish, and the blossoms of Lebanon wither."

⁶⁴ Psalms 102:14, "You will surely arise and take pity on Zion, for it is time to be gracious to her; the appointed time has come."

⁶⁵ Direct quote of Exodus 15:18, "THE LORD will reign forever and ever!"

⁶⁶ See Solis-Cohen, and Brody, pp. 134-136.

This poem by Moses Ibn Ezra was written for Yom Kippur. The first two verses comprise a refrain that will be repeated throughout the poem. 38 verses in total, each verse (beginning with verse three) is made up of two stichs, and three verses to a stanza. The first stich of each verse begins with the word "מי", "who". While there is no specific meter based on short/long syllables, there is a fixed rhyme both internal to each stanza and external to the poem as a whole. Furthermore, the poem contains a name acrostic: the first letter of the second word of each first stich is repeated in each line, and they spell out **אני משה אבן עזרה**.

1. א Who is God hidden from my sight, who appears to my thoughts?⁶⁷
2. Who but THE LORD⁶⁸ is God?⁶⁹
3. ך Who is concealed in the mysteries of faith? The One hidden from my sight.
4. ך Who is girded with righteous spirit?⁷⁰ The One who appears to my thoughts.
5. ך Who gives the mind understanding??⁷¹ Who but THE LORD is God?
6. ך Who established the earth upon the void?⁷² The One hidden from my sight.
7. ך Who elevates it with His spirit of discretion? The One who appears to my thoughts.
8. ך Who can give an account of the heavens with wisdom?⁷³ Who but THE LORD is God?
9. ך Who measured by the breadth of his hands? The One hidden from my sight.
10. ך Who closes the sea behind doors?⁷⁴ The One who appears to my thoughts.
11. ך Who measured the waters with his palm?⁷⁵ Who but THE LORD is God?

⁶⁷ Deut. 7:20.

⁶⁸ A note on translation: throughout, I've attempted to translate the Tetragrammaton consistently as THE ETERNAL. The only exception is when I am quoting a source that uses the term THE LORD (such as the JPS translation of Tanakh). In this case, I translate the word THE LORD because the Tetragrammaton is not used: the actual word "Adonai" is used instead. Therefore, I translate it literally.

⁶⁹ Psalm 18:32, "Truly, who is God except THE LORD, who is a rock but our God?"

⁷⁰ Psalm 51:12, "Fashion a pure heart for me, O God; create in me a steadfast spirit."

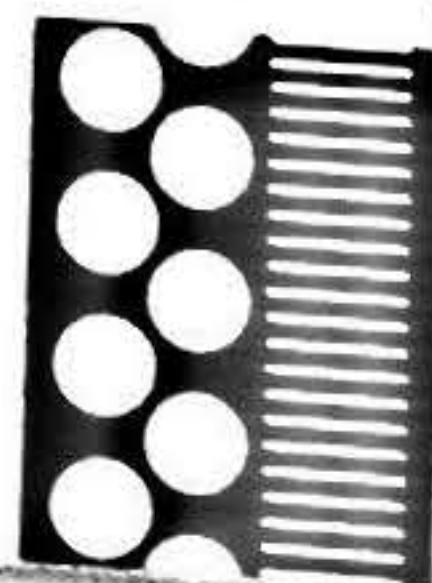
⁷¹ Job 38:36, "Who put wisdom in the hidden parts? Who gave understanding to the mind?"

⁷² Job 26:7, "He it is who stretched out Zaphon over chaos, who suspended the earth over emptiness."

⁷³ Job 38:37, "Who is wise enough to give an account of the heavens? Who can tilt the bottles of the sky?"

⁷⁴ Job 38:8, "Who closed the sea behind doors when it gushed forth out of the womb?"

⁷⁵ Isaiah 40:12, "Who measured the waters with the hollow of His hand, and gauged the skies with a span, and meted earth's dust with a measure, and weighed the mountains with a scale and the hills with a balance?"



12. ׀ Who formed the body and breathed life into its nostrils?⁷⁶ The One hidden from my sight.
13. ׀ Who housed in it the wise soul? The One who appears to my thoughts.
14. ׀ Who put wisdom in the hidden parts?⁷⁷ Who but THE LORD is God?
15. ׀ Who feeds his creations regularly, and leads them?⁷⁸ The One hidden from my sight.
16. ׀ Who provides for them eternally?⁷⁹ The One who appears to my thoughts.
17. ׀ Who ever challenged Him and came out whole?⁸⁰ Who but THE LORD is God?
18. ׀ Who spoke without taking counsel, and [the world] came into being? The One hidden from my sight.
19. ׀ Who turns His ear to the voice of the poor and the wanderer? The One who appears to my thoughts.
20. ׀ Who are you that you would call to the King? Who but THE LORD is God?
21. ׀ Who hewed forth the lights in his Heavenly Home?⁸¹ The One hidden from my sight.
22. ׀ Who illumines with them⁸² the extremities of his⁸³ palace? The One who appears to my thoughts.
23. ׀ Who in the skies can equal THE LORD?⁸⁴ Who but THE LORD is God?
24. ׀ Who spread out the skies like tent-curtains?⁸⁵ The One hidden from my sight.
25. ׀ Who planted mountains upon the earth?⁸⁶ The One who appears to my thoughts.

⁷⁶ Gen. 2:7, "THE LORD formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."

⁷⁷ See previous note on Job 38:36

⁷⁸ Proverbs 30:8, "Keep lies and falsehoods away from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but provide me with my daily bread."

⁷⁹ Deut. 15:14, "Furnish him out of the flock, threshing floor, and vat, with which THE LORD your God has blessed you."

⁸⁰ Job 9:4, "Wise of heart and mighty in power—who ever challenged Him and came out whole?"

⁸¹ Isaiah 58:8, "Then shall your light burst through like the dawn and your healing spring up quickly; your Vindicator shall march before you, The presence of THE LORD shall be your rear guard."

⁸² Daniel 11:45, "He will pitch his royal pavilion between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain, and he will meet his doom with no one to help him."

⁸³ Literally, "my"; see note 26 or the inversion of pronominal possessives.

⁸⁴ Psalms 89:7, "For who in the skies can equal THE LORD, can compare with THE LORD among the divine beings, a God greatly dreaded in the council of holy beings, held in awe by all around Him?"

⁸⁵ Psalm 104:1-2, "Bless THE LORD, O my soul; O LORD, my God, You are very great; You are clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in a robe of light; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth."

26. ¶ Who stretched out upon it the measuring line?⁸⁷ Who but THE LORD is God?
27. ¶ Who makes the earth shake when He stands to judge?⁸⁸ The One hidden from my sight.
28. ¶ Who designated the vaults of snow and hail?⁸⁹ The One who appears to my thoughts.
29. ¶ Who has ascended to Heaven, and come down [again]?⁹⁰ Who but THE LORD is God?
30. ¶ Who provides set portions for his children? The One hidden from my sight.
31. ¶ Who remembers his faithful children for blessings? The One who appears to my thoughts.
32. ¶ Who is the man that reveres THE LORD? Who but THE LORD is God?
33. ¶ Who humbles nations⁹¹ beneath me, that they are abashed?⁹² The One hidden from my sight.
34. ¶ Who pities the captive on the day of quaking? The One who appears to my thoughts.
35. ¶ Who has seen anything such as this?⁹³ Who but THE LORD is God?
36. ¶ Who understands the wonders of the Creator? The One hidden from my sight.
37. ¶ Who comprehends that he [i.e., man] is an accident in the universe?⁹⁴ The One who appears to my thoughts.
38. ¶ Who is the man that reveres [Him]?⁹⁵ Who but THE LORD is God?

⁸⁶ Job 38:18, "Have you surveyed the expanses of the earth? If you know of these—tell Me."

⁸⁷ Job 38:5, "Do you know who fixed its dimensions or who measured it with a line?"

⁸⁸ Hab. 3:6, "When He stands, He makes the earth shake; When He glances, He makes nations tremble. The age-old mountains are shattered, the primeval hills sink low. His are ancient routes." Also Job 38:5 (see note 71).

⁸⁹ Job 38:22, "Have you penetrated the vaults of snow, seen the vaults of hail?"

⁹⁰ Proverbs 30:4, "Who has ascended heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hand? Who has wrapped the waters in his garment? Who has established all the extremities of the earth? What is his name or his son's name, if you know it?"

⁹¹ Psalm 144:2, "my faithful one, my fortress, my haven and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take shelter, who makes peoples subject to me."

⁹² Esther 1:17, "For the queen's behavior will make all wives despise their husbands, as they reflect that King Ahasuerus himself ordered Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come."

⁹³ Isaiah 66:8, "Who ever witnessed such events? Can a land pass through travail in a single day? Or is a nation born all at once? Yet Zion travailed and at once bore her children!"

⁹⁴ "Accident" in the philosophical sense, i.e. that man is mortal and his real essence is not his seen in mortal form.

⁹⁵ Deut. 20:8, "The officials shall go on addressing the troops and say, 'is there anyone afraid and disheartened? Let him go back to his home, lest the courage of his comrades flag like his.'"

Performative Issues:

These liturgical poems, as with other *piyyutim*, would have been sung. The Ha-Levi and Ibn Gabirol pieces especially lend themselves to singing, as they are placed in the *geulah*, right after the singing of *Mi-Chamocha*. How they were sung, however, is a different issue. If we are willing to engage in speculation, one can imagine the *chazzan* making the musical transition from *geulah* to *piyyut*, engaging the congregation in a festive fashion. By restricting himself to citing poetic verses from Scripture—often lifting them with almost no (or certainly very little) emendation—the *payyetan* was able to engage the congregation in a similar fashion as Yannai could in the seventh poem of his *kerovah*.⁹⁶ Not only could the poet show off his virtuosity, but the congregation could also attempt (with a fair knowledge of biblical verse, and knowing the rhyme and meter) to anticipate the next verse. For the congregant lacking such knowledge of *Tanakh*, the *piyyut* might sound familiar on a subconscious level; having heard biblical verse before in the daily and Sabbath liturgy, the poetry might play off of a worshipper's vague, visceral familiarity with the material, thus allowing new liturgy to be embraced as comfortably as old.

There is another level at work in the use of familiar biblical texts, especially in Ha-Levi's poem. Ha-Levi uses these texts in an unanticipated—and theologically daring—fashion. Ha-Levi implies that redemption is not a gift of God's mercy; rather, it is a reward and expectation. This emerges out of the biblical texts themselves. Ha-Levi uses circumcision and the verses describing Tamar's signs—Judah's cord, seal and staff—to remind God of

⁹⁶ "And So It Came To Pass At Midnight", See Chapter One.

His obligations to us. The circumcision is to remind God of Israel's faithfulness throughout the ages. The use of the Tamar passage challenges God, as if to say, "We have kept our side of the covenant, don't you owe us something?"⁹⁷ That audacity—to challenge God on His "home turf", so to speak—may be an outgrowth of the apparent flexibility of Spanish Jewish culture: just as secular and sacred could be woven together into the structure of the poem, that blurring of boundaries could be applied to the content of the poem as well. Did the congregation performing the liturgy expect this kind of theological daring, or was it an aspect of the artistry of the poet? Or, was it all part of some game, the *payyetan* pushing to see who noticed? While we cannot answer those questions, they should influence our discussion.

Neither familiarity nor poetic brilliance relieved the poems from the possibility of congregational improvisation, however. As mentioned before, Ha-Levi's *piyyut* was adapted in the Ashkenazi Mahzor, so that each verse ended with *Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim*, "The redeemed sang a new song". What need did this new element serve, and was it successful? Did it serve as a refrain, to ease congregational participation? Was this an attempt to draw a more direct correlation between the *piyyut* and the Torah portion? Why wasn't it adopted in Sephardi tradition as well? Most likely, this refrain emerged as a way for one culture to deal with another culture's aesthetics. Just as Sephardi poetry was written to Arabic meter, it was also intended for Arabic musical styles. The Ashkenazi Jews who adopted the poem would have been unfamiliar with Arabic music, and so modify the poem to fit their own sense of melody. Certainly,

⁹⁷ See Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; (reprint, Cincinnati: HUC Press, 2000), pp. 63ff.

the poetry did not lack the polemical tone of a Qallirian *piyyut*. Without resorting to midrash, both Ibn Gabirol and Ha-Levi are able to contrast the defeat and gory death of the Egyptians with the joyous salvation of Israel as easily as Simon ben Isaac contrasts the lowly mortal despot with the ultimate sovereign, God.

Both Ibn Gabirol and Ha-Levi capture the sense of *Shirat HaYam*. As we saw in the translation, Ibn Ezra's *piyyut* was certainly written with a refrain in mind, and at least one translation has attempted to indicate how the parts for the *Shaliach Tzibbur* and the congregation may have been divided.⁹⁸

As mentioned above, all three poets used very similar language, similar methods of proof-texting, use similar rhyme and meter. One can begin to imagine the power Arabic poetics held over these poets only when reading them alongside each other and find such deep connections, despite differences in generation, locale and even subject.

Equally striking as their similarities is the differences between the three *piyyutim*. Ha-Levi's is a song specifically of God's triumph over Egypt and of His power to redeem Israel a second time. Ibn Gabirol, on the other hand, exalts the splitting of the Sea as one of many miracles wrought by the Creator of all. In some ways, his poem is closer in theme to Ibn Ezra's: both enumerate God's wonders and miracles, including the works of creation. However, that comparison stops short due to the divergent nature of the two poets and the two holy days: Ibn Gabirol, like Ha-Levi, ends his poem with a plea for redemption and return from exile. Ibn Ezra's his poem culminates with a reminder of

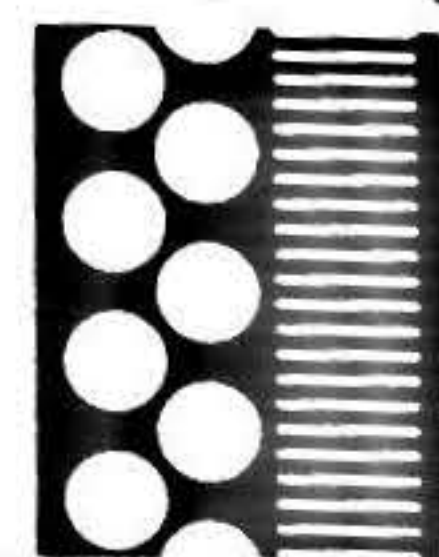
⁹⁸ See Solis-Cohen, and Brody, pp. 134-136

God's supremacy, in contrast to Man who is "but an accident in the universe." For Ibn Ezra, one can 'see' God, in the sense that one can perceive God in nature. For Ibn Gabirol, it is the opposite understanding.

The Question Before Us

One can see why Sephardi *piyyutim* have been popular both as liturgy and as models for modern Hebrew verse. These poems are brief and to the point; there are few allusions—in the three poems translated, we saw only two, both alternate biblical names of Egypt. Their use of 'easier' language makes it simpler to use them in translation. Poets like Yehuda Amichai and Leah Goldberg have all felt the influence of the Spanish poets in their use of biblical verse, while their own poetics have caused them to use such verses differently (such as Amichai's ironic use of biblical verses).

Perhaps, then, it is the Sephardi *piyyut* that offers the best model for Hebrew creative liturgy. Unlike the Byzantine poems, which commanded a profound grasp of the homiletical material, a Sephardi *piyyut* focuses on the Bible, albeit often in a surprising or challenging fashion. A poet could, in like fashion, string together verses lifted from Torah, the Psalter, etc., thus composing a song that is easy to follow and even teaches some Bible along the way. And there are some models for this already in place: many liberal prayer-books contain verse by Leah Goldberg, Yehuda Amichai, Zelda, H.N. Bialik, and other modern Hebrew poets who use the language of *Tanakh* throughout their



poems. The Reconstructionist *Kol Haneshama*, for example, contains poems by each of these writers.⁹⁹ Both *Gates of Prayer* and the test-copy of the Reform Movement's new *Mishkan Tefillah* also contains some verse by these modern poets. In both cases, translations are provided.¹⁰⁰

The difficulty here, originating in the nature of Hebrew poetry itself, is that this style of poetry requires a significant number of worshipers to be either biblically or Hebraically literate in order to understand what is said and to begin to relate to the verses themselves, instead of just to the tune. While Bialik's "Shabbat HaMalka" is beautiful and fits nicely with the themes of *Kabbalat Shabbat*, the average congregant probably doesn't understand (without considerable explanation) what is going on liturgically or poetically, and while teaching the congregation can be lovely for their understanding of the Friday night service, it may be jarring for their *kavannah*. Prayer must communicate and convey meaning to the person on a subconscious level. While this certainly includes music and movement, it also involves language. If the worshipper has no idea what he or she is saying, has no way of understanding what he or she is saying, then the message imbedded in the poetry—on the nature of the festival, on the Torah portion, on the rubric of the service, or on our own modern experiences—is lost. If the worshipper doesn't understand, he or she might as well be chanting a *niggun* or mantra: wordless recitations that may be moving and powerful but lack inherent meaning.

⁹⁹ David Teutsch (ed.), *Kol Haneshama* (Philadelphia: Reconstructionist Press, 1994), pp. 731ff.

¹⁰⁰ Elyse Frishman, *Mishkan T'fillah* (Pilot Liturgy), (New York: CCAR Press, 2002).

It is for this reason that I agree with Lawrence Hoffman's assessment that more English-language creative liturgy is necessary: "Vernacular prayer is not a fallback position for Hebrew illiterates. It is a response to the recognition that [modern] people think most productively and best in their native tongues."¹⁰¹ This is not to say that *niggun* and mantra don't have their place in worship: for example, creating a mood, or refocusing people from one activity to another. Nor is it to say that Hebrew liturgy is not important, regardless of who understands it: there is a certain mystery inherent in the recitation of poetry written in a language that is not entirely understood, but is felt by the worshipper to be part of his or her heritage. However, a basic understanding of this thesis is that liturgy ought to mean something, to convey something beyond the visceral; this means that people need to be able to understand what they are reading and singing.

This does not mean that there is no room for biblical verse in English creative liturgy. There has been a growing movement to combine Hebrew and English in the same poetic piece. Probably growing out of the desire to smooth over gender issues in the text, many services—and prayer books—combine English and Hebrew in their prayers. Sometimes this is done by simply leaving translation in abeyance: reading "*Adonai*" rather than "Lord" or "Eternal", or saying "*Avinu Malkeinu*" instead of "Our Father Our King." In some cases, especially so-called "camp liturgies", the combination of languages is to allow for interpretive translation. Debbie Friedman's Healing Prayer ("*Mi Sheberach*") is an example of this: While the phrase "*Mi Sheberach Avoteinu, M'kor HaBracha l'Imoteinu*" (itself an attempt to balance the genders within the traditional blessing) is never translated literally, its meaning is conveyed in a reinterpretation, presented in the

¹⁰¹ Lawrence Hoffman, "Re-imagining Jewish Worship," in *CCAR Journal* 69 (2002), p. 82.

English verse: "May the source of strength who blessed the ones before us help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing."¹⁰² Other liturgists of the same camp/folk background have borrowed this method as well, usually to create new versions of already extant prayers: Neal Katz, for example, has written a version of the mini-*piyyut Or Chadash* (which comes at the end of the *yotzeir* benediction) that follows this pattern:

Or Chadash: a new light will shine
Al Tsion Ta'ir: on Jerusalem
 Bringing us home to the land of our people
Or Chadash: and a new light will shine.¹⁰³

In many respects, this is similar to the Spanish poet's use of Arabic versification and meter to write Hebrew poetry. The principle is the same, the adoption and assimilation of certain aspects of the surrounding culture to create meaningful poetry. This is also something that is common in Yemeni and North African *piyyutim*; wherein Hebrew verses are combined with Arabic and Judeo-Arabic verses. Something like this, combining Hebrew verses from the Bible and English verses translating/interpreting them, could be an effective creative liturgy, especially in conveying a new value for a particular festival. Thus far, it has been used in a camp mode, but that doesn't mean it couldn't be used in a more sophisticated fashion, combining familiar biblical/liturgical verses in Hebrew/transliteration and modern poetic understandings of the rubric and the holiday/Torah portion. Indeed, there is no reason why it couldn't be used as Ha-Levi used biblical verses for his poem: to challenge the worshipper's theological notions while still maintaining a sense of familiarity and liturgical efficacy.

¹⁰² See Frishman, p. 104

¹⁰³ Neal Katz, *Who Am I?* (Cincinnati: Z-TAK Music, 2002)

Perhaps, however, greater overt complexity is not necessary. What makes the Spanish *piyyutim* shine is their ability to convey powerful images and theological concepts (God as redeemer of Israel; hope in miraculous salvation) in a relatively accessible fashion. For a holiday like Passover, where much of the home liturgy (specifically, the *Haggadah*) is quite approachable, it may make more sense to create a worship experience that encapsulates the explosive joy of the holiday in easily digested pieces. For many Jews today, joy is expressed in participatory, simple music and lyrics that belie the profound themes just under the surface, poetry written in the finest tradition of Bob Dylan and Jack Kerouac:

and I shambled after as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me,
because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live,
mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones
who never yawn but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles
exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue
centerlight pop and everybody goes 'Aww!' ¹⁰⁴

Thus, there may be a place for something akin to camp liturgy after all, but a camp liturgy elevated from its pop roots to convey a deeper message, still authentic in its nature and approachable, but written for adults, rather than children and teens just discovering their love of Judaism, a liturgy that can convey the themes—not just the behavior patterns—of the holiday with well-known, simple Hebrew and profound English. What might that liturgy look like? Perhaps something like this:

Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim
A New Song of Redemption, O God, Every Day a New song!

We sang to You with the love of the immigrant,
We sang to You with the love of new hope
Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim
Over the crashing waves, we sang to You:
A New Song of Redemption, O God, Every Day a New song!

¹⁰⁴ Jack Kerouac, *On The Road* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), p. 8.

We sang through our tears, bitter from yearning,
We sang from our hearts, softened by joy.
Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim
At the shores of the Sea, we sang to You:
A New Song of Redemption, O God, Every Day a New Song!

We sang the song all generations sing,
We danced the way all generations dance:
The song of freedom for our children,
The dance of a bride flushed with love
Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim
At the shores of the Sea, we sang to You:
A New Song of Redemption, O God, Every Day a New Song!

Have you seen the one I love--
Who makes the voice tremble with Song?¹⁰⁵
Who is like You, God of might?
Who is like You, majestic in holiness?¹⁰⁶

Shirah Chadasha Shibchu Geulim
A New Song of Redemption, O God, Every Day a New Song!¹⁰⁷

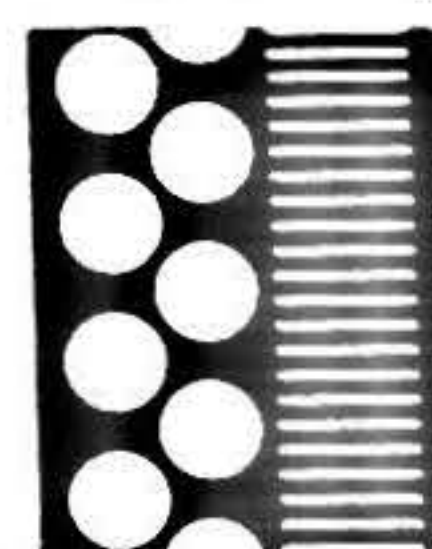
This poem contains many of the elements so far discussed in this chapter. Within it, we find references to the Passover Seder ("...their tears, bitter from yearning"), the hardening of Pharaoh's heart ("...from their hearts, softened by joy), and Miriam's dance with the women (fourth stanza), as well as Song of Songs (fifth stanza), the song *Adir Hu* (also fifth stanza) and a *highly* elliptical reference to Moses' speech impediment ("Who makes the voice tremble with song"). There is Shabbat imagery in the dancing bride, as well as imagery that could be associated with the Jewish experience of the twentieth century (immigration to America, Holocaust, founding of Israel). The refrain is from the liturgical recitation of *Mi Chamocha*, and a direct quote from *Shirat HaYam* appears in the fifth stanza. Finally, the verse from Song of Songs is reinterpreted from its biblical context. There the verse refers to the frantic search for the lover, liturgically parallel to

¹⁰⁵ Song of Songs 3:3, "I met the watchmen who patrol the town. 'Have you seen the one I love?'"

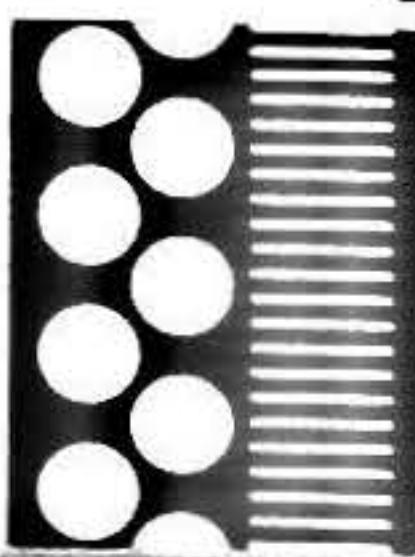
¹⁰⁶ Exodus 15:11.

¹⁰⁷ Yair Robinson, "Geulah" (original work, copyright 2002).

Israel's search for God. In this context, it is parallel to the joyous verse from *Shirat HaYam*, making it a verse of happy comparison. While the quality of the piece is questionable, it shows one way the model presented in this chapter could work, one way to derive inspiration from the Sephardi *payyetanim*.



Appendix C: Poetry Translated For
Chapter 3



שחרירית לשביעי של פסח

[illegible][illegible]

בחר יכירדן ב'את| כעו: עת ג'ת'א' ב'ית ב'א'ט'צ'ימ'| ה'ר ג'ט'ימ', ה'ר ג'ט'י| י'שורדן ב'א'ט'צ'י 4 ו'נל
ב'חר ג'ט'צ'ט'צ'מ'ז'ג'ג'א'| ו'חלקוט ב'רר 5 א'סכ 6 ע'מך: כ'שמך ב'א' 7 ה'ם ש'ת'א' ב'חר| נ'מל
6 ה'ר'א: ה'ר'א ב'א'ט'צ'ימ'| ד'ר'א ג'ט'צ'ימ', ו'לכ'פ' כ'נ| ע'ש ג'ס'סכ 7 ה'ר'ש'מ'ט ב'ט'ט'| ו'כ'ט:
ג'א'ג'ג'ג' ב'חר ו'ט'ת' ג'ט' 3 ו'ח'מ'ט'ל'ט ב'א'ט'צ'ימ' ב'חר ו'ח'ק'ל'ט ג'ט' 8 ו'ש' ג'ט' 1 ש'ת'ה ת'א ש'כ'נ'ה ג'ט' 1 ל'ק'ד'ש ג'ט'ג' 2
1 ל'ג'ש'ה: ל'ג'ש'ה ת'א ל'ר'ש'ו ג'ט' 1 א'ר ח'ט ג'ט' 1 ש'מ'ש'ג'ט'ג'ת'א 9 ו'ר'ש'מ'ט ג' 1 ו'כ'ש'ר'ה ג'
ו'א'מ'ר מ'ר מ'ל'ט' א'מ'ר מ'ר ג'ט' ש'ר'ד'ט מ'ר ב'א' י'ה מ'ר ס'כ'ס ו'כ'י ת'א| י' ח'ט ב'א'

ואחריו פירשו 'ותוהו' לשון חכמה תעומה, לפי דרשה מבי' שידה'ו, עמ' 137 שדרשו 'נערטמו מיט' נחת ערמה למה הוצי' נלחו בהם' ואינו נראה. ענבית כינע למצרים ע"ש 'ענבים' סביב מצרים (בר' יג). ומעמי שולמית ובר' ע"ש שיה"ש ז' ב, ונר על יצאת מצרים וההליכה במדבר כמורכב מדרוש שיה"ש (מהדורות גרנהוט מד ע"א). 3 רואי מבין אומות העולם. ישורון ו' ישירן, ובה' לפי הדרוש 'שור' כמו הכתיב לשור' בש"א יח ו' (אמר שם דר"ק: יתחב בריז' וקר' בריז' והם שני בנינים והם אחרי' תתיך עד בראבי"ע לאוב לג' כז ובשאר שורשים כאלה, כתי': 'תחול' משרש 'חיל', לית' משרש 'ליק', 'תחוב' וידוב' משרש יריב', ישוים' ישומי' רשומי' משרש 'ישים'), אמנם כבי' סא גורם 'ישירן' (וכן קצב בדר"ד) אך נראה שהוא 'תיקין'. ישור' 4 ויאז. אין כאל ישורון ר"ל ג' כו. ואריבנו מלילים ר"ל לב לא, כלומר הם מחדים כזה (עיי' בראבי"ע לפסוק). 5 כן חרים ר"ל כך — כבשעת קריעת ים סוף — תפוסם את גורלי ורשומתי (עיי' במלך ב"י על משפעות זאת של ל' להרים ר' בן חכמי הלשון בספרד). כמלקט שבולים יש"ע ז' ה. 5 תחתוך מליצה כמשמע 'מילה' וכן הוא בתפילה (כברכות המי והמנון). המה גמולים ע"ש בר' לד כב. 6 אורתתם מילה ורצית' רע'ל כפיני וכר' ע"ש ר"י כב יב (כטור האחרון חס חתערה). 7 נרשמה ר"ל נחבש לזכותה. ופר' נא...למי החתומה ובר' ע"ש בר' לח כה, תוך שיני' המשמעות. דבר' אר' ע"ש קה' יב' (ואולי רומס גם לסאמר החלמודי' ניכרין דבר' אמר', בבלי סוטה ס' ע"ב). 8 לקדשה ר"ל לקחתה לך לאס' וגמסו הצלילים שיה"ש ר"ז (רעוד). 9 וידקים כינע לישראל ע"ש חוה' ס' ג. כשיצאה קידמונ' ע"ש חוה' סח כר' קידמו שרין' מי' כמורכב ובר' ע"ש שם' טו' יא (לכאורה חטרה חתעה כטור השלישי, רעין ברח"ל לפי זה אליה יש לגדוס ייה מי' כמורכב').

שחרית לשבועי ושמירי של פסח

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

בקי"ק מנהג פולין אומרים 'נאלה' כשביעי של פסח.

סימן: יהודה הלוי. בתים בני ארבעה טורים שקולים בהמש ותנועות (שואוים אינם נחשבים). חריזה פנימית לכל בית וחרוז מבריא לכל הפיוט. מחזורות עם חריזה מסורגת בראש הפיוט. ערערה"ב חלק א' עמ' 66, בער, סדר עבודת ישראל עמ' 645; ברודי, כרך ג, עמ' 62. — 1814

יזם לִיבִּיטְשֵׁה / גִּיטְפִיבִּיטְשֵׁה / שְׂפִיטְשֵׁה / שְׂפִיטְשֵׁה / שְׂפִיטְשֵׁה :

[illegible]

יחי: ב'ג' (ילביצי ש'סס ולפישא ויזשע"ט"ט (לאחר יום ח' וכתב אחר) מ' (לשבת שידח); ג' (קדש) גמ'ג' (ג-ו בלח) סאטמבערג;

[illegible]

ותחת: יום כותנתו גם לשעה שבה ישראל עלו מן הים וגם לכל שביעתי של פסח לחהבא. לרשעה הנמכר ע"ש חתי; טו' הנפ"ס כש"ה". 1 בצר נכבדך ע"ש שם; די' דאנכבדה כפרעה". ואלו נחמדות הראת לי מעשה אוכה, בנך ינחית בחסוד עם וו ולך עוז וכי ע"ש חתי; ח' וחדש מבי' (שירה א, עמ' 120-121) שהעלילים אמור שירה ביס והוא הע"ח ולח' (שם; טו' ג). 2 בתמנית ע"ש יסוס ודוככו רמה ביס" (שם; טו' א). יש שפירשו רבנל' תמנית של מנצרים יסד הקב"ה לעצמו כאותה שעה.

הפיל צור פקדו
יורד ליי חסדו

וגאל ישראל עבדו
ונפלאותיו לבגי אדם

קיא

ומי דומה לך מוריד ומעלה
נורא תהלות עושה פלא

הצת טבעו לודים וזדים
תהלתו בקהל חסידים

הצת נשאו נהרות דגים
נאת אויביהם פסה הים

יזה בים ויכסהו

מי כמוך עמקות גולה
לצוץ בשביו חסדיה הפלה

שירה תרשה שרו ירדים
ואופגי מרבותם כבדים

להקת ירדים סוברים בבכים
וינחם אל מחוז מאוים

מרבות פרעה וכל מחנהו

קיא מי כמוך סימן : שלמה.

3 ירדים — בני ישראל. העת — בעת. לודים וזדים — המצ. וז.

אשר לא נברא. למן היום אשר ברא אלהים אדם — דברים ד לב. 67א על פי דברי
חימים א יד יו : וי נתן פחדו על כל הגוים. 67ב על פי ישעיה מח כ : גאל יי עבדו יעקב.
68 תהלים קז ה.

קיא 1 מי כמוך — שמות טו יא. מי כמוך... ומי דומה לך — על פי תפלת שמונה עשרה :
גולה — מלשון ואין גולה את אזני... ואין חולה מכס עליו וגולה את אזני, שמואל א
כב ח : גולה סוד חולך רכיל, משלי כ יט. מוריד ומעלה — על פי שמואל א ב ו : יי...
מוריד שאול ויעל. 2 חסדיך חפלה — על פי תהלים יו ז : הפלה חסדיך. 22 שמות
טו יא. 3 על פי תפלת עזרת אבותינו : וזדים טבעת וידידים העברת... שירה חדשה
שבחו גאולים לשמך על שפת הים, שמות טו ד : ומבחר שלישו טבעו בים סוף. ידידים —
על פי מנחות נג : ידידים אלן ישראל וכן לחלן 5 : לחקת ידידים. העת — וכן לחלן
5 ; שובב כלילי 4. לודים — על פי בראשית י יג : ומצרים ילד את לודים. וזדים — על פי
שמות יח יא : ברוך יי אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים... עתה ידעתי כי גדול יי מכל
האלהים כי בדבר אשר ודו עליהם ; נחמיה ט י : ותתן אותות ומופתים בפרעה ובכל
עבדיו ובכל עם ארצו כי ידעת כי הוידו עליהם. 4א על פי שמות יד כה : ויסר את אופן
מרכבותיו וינהגהו בכבדות. 4ב תהלים קמט א. 5 לחקת ידידים — על דרך לחקת
הנביאים, שמואל א יט כ. ידידים — וכן לעיל 3. סוערים — מלשון עניח סערה, ישעיה
נד יא. 5ב העת — וכן לעיל 3. נשאו נהרות דכים — תהלים צג ג. 6 על פי תהלים
קז ל : וינחם אל מחוז חפצם, תהלים עח נג : וינחם לבטח ולא פחדו ואת אויביהם
כסה תים. מאוים — מלשון אל תתן יי מאווי רשע, תהלים קמ ט. 7 על פי שמות טו ד :
מרכבות פרעה וחילו ירה בים... תחומות יכסיומו, מלכים ב ה טו : וכל מחנהו,
שמות יד כה : ויכסו את הרכב... לכל חיל פרעה, יהושע כד ז : ויבא עליו (על מצרים)

ויעמו העביר במקצלהו
בוצר בים ויפשהו

היה נא לציון סומך וסועד
10 ולשיר במאזו לך נועד
ותקים לחננה פי בא מועד
יי ימלך לעולם ועד

קיב

שחרים אקראה עזרה כבודי
לזכרו אצמאח מחם יקודי
לכש את פגי מלפי ורודי
מאומה אין לבד לפי וסודי
וכעגור אצפצף מנודי
היש לערף לך גואלי וסודי
ונוילתי שפתי אין בדי
ואיך אוכל ובעפר יסודי

קיב רשות לנשמת לימים אחרונים של פסח. סימן : שלמה. משקל : חמרוכה (מפז)

1 שחרים — בשחר. עזרה כבודי — עזרי נפשי. 2 לזכרו — מדי זכרי אותה. אצמאח
אצמא ואשתוקק אליו. מחם יקודי — מחם אש אחבתי אליו חלוחטת בקרבי. מנוד
מלבוטי ומחבוטי בבקשי את האלהים. 3 אין — אין בדי. וסודי — סוד אחבתי
האלהים. 4 חיש לערף לך — הן מחובתי להתפלל אליך. 5 בסודי — בקחלי כשליח

את חים ויכסחו ; תפלת עזרת אבותינו : ויכסו מים צריהם. 8 ועמו העביר — עי
תפלת עזרת אבותינו : וידידים העברת. 8ב נחום א ד. 9 על פי תהלים קב יד :
תקום תרחם ציון כי עת לחננה כי בא מועד. 10ב שמות טו יח.
קיב 1א על פי תהלים נז ט : עזרה כבודי... אעירה שחר. שחרים אקראה — השוה
כד 1 : שחר אבקשך. כבודי — מלשון בסודם אל תבוא נפשי בקהלם אל תחד כ
בראשית מט ו. 1ב על פי תהלים כו ח : לך אמר לבי בקשו פני את פניך יי אב
שיר השירים ג ב : אבקשה את שאהבה נפשי. 2 לזכרו אצמאח — על פי ישעיה כו
לשמך ולזכרך תאות נפש, תהלים מב ג : צמאה נפשי לאלהים, תהלים סג ב : צמאו
נפשי ; והשוה לחלן, שחרתיך 2 : לך אחמה בלב צמא. מחם יקודי — על פי תו
לט ד : חם לבי בקרבי בהגיגי תבער אש, ישעיה י טו : יקד יקוד כיקוד אש. ו
אצפצף — על פי ישעיה לח יד : כסוס עגור כן אצפצף ; והשוה לחלן, שזופה נוזפר
תצפצף כעגור. 3-4 השוה לחלן, ששוני רב 2 : לך חסד ויש עלי להודות ואין
לבד חגיון לשוני ; שחר קמתי להודות 6 : ואין לי לבד מלתי ועולתי תפלתי, לעיל יו
הכמוני יחללך ובמה ; שחר אבקשך 3 : מה זה אשר יוכל הלב והלשון לעשות. 3 מ
אין... אין בדי — על פי שופטים יד ו : ומאומה אין בידו, שמואל א ט : ומה נ
ותשורה אין להביא לאיש האלהים מה אתנו. וסודי — מלשון הפר מחשבות באין
ג'נאח, ספר השרשים, סוד : בלי עצח) וברב יועצים תקום, משלי טו כב. וזולת
מלשון וזולתי כלב בן יפנה, דברים א לו. 4 חיש — למובן הן יש השוה חנגלח נני
שמואל א ב כו, רד"ק : המפרשים פרשו ח"א לאמת הדבר. לערף לך — על פי תו
ח ד : בקר אערך לך ואצפה ; והשוה לחלן, שחר אבקשך 1 : אערך לפניך. גואלי וסוד
על פי ירמיה לא י : כי פדה יי את יעקב וגאלו מיד חזק ממנו. ואין אוכל — על פי ד
ז יו : איכה אוכל ; אסתר ח ו : איככה אוכל... ואיככה אוכל. ובעפר יסודי — על פי איוב ד

WHO BUT THE LORD IS GOD

*Who is the God from sight concealed,
To thought revealed?
Who but the Lord is God!*

*Who dwelleth hidden in the veils of faith?
He from sight concealed.
Who is with steadfastness of spirit girt?
He to thought revealed.
Who giveth understanding to the mind?
Who but the Lord is God!*

*Who formed the world and poised it upon naught?
He from sight concealed.
Who by His wisdom doth sustain it ever?
He to thought revealed.
Who wisely rules the mustering of the clouds?
Who but the Lord is God!*

*Who stretched out all the vast expanse of space?
He from sight concealed.
Who stayed the sea and shut it in with doors?
He to thought revealed.
Who metes the waters in His hollowed hand?
Who but the Lord is God!*

מי אל נסתר מפני

מי אל נסתר מפני נראה לרעיוני,

מי אלוה מבצעדי אדני?

מי נעלם בסתרי אמונה נסתר מפני,

מי נאזר ברוח נכונה נראה לרעיוני,

מי נתן לשכוי בינה - מי אלוה מבצעדי אדני?

מי יסד תבל על-פלימה נסתר מפני,

מי ישאנה ברוח מזמה נראה לרעיוני,

מי יספר שחקים בקמה - מי אלוה מבצעדי אדני?

מי מודד רחבי ידים נסתר מפני,

מי מוסך בצד-ים דלתים נראה לרעיוני,

מי מודד בשעלו מים - מי אלוה מבצעדי אדני?

Who formed the body — gave it breath of life?
He from sight concealed.
 Who housed therein the soul that maketh wise?
He to thought revealed.
 Who hath put wisdom in the inner parts?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who guides His creatures, gives them daily bread?
He from sight concealed.
 Who lades them ever with His bounteous gifts?
He to thought revealed.
 Who may rebel against His will and thrive?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who spake—nor counsel took—and there was light?
He from sight concealed.
 Who hears the voice of need, the wanderer's cry?
He to thought revealed.
 Who art thou, that thou hast dared to call unto the
 King?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who in His heavenly dwelling set great lights?
He from sight concealed.
 Who, with their rays, illumines furthest space?
He to thought revealed.
 Who is there like the Lord in earth or heaven?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who spread the skies as curtains of His tent?
He from sight concealed.
 Who planted mountains on the face of earth?
He to thought revealed.
 Who stretched upon His work the measuring line?
Who but the Lord is God!

מי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה הַגּוּף וְנִפְחָ בְּאַפּוֹ נְשָׁמָה
 נִסְתָּר מִפְּנֵי
 מי שֶׁכֵּן בּוֹ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַחַכְמָה
 נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי
 מי שֶׁתִּבְטַחוֹת חֻכָּמָה —
 מי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי אֲדֹנָיִי

15 מי הַטְרִיף חֹק יְצוּרִים וְנִהְלָם
 נִסְתָּר מִפְּנֵי
 מי הַעֲנִיֵּק לָהֶם כָּל־יְמֵי עוֹלָם
 נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי
 מי הַקָּשָׁה אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁלָם —
 מי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי אֲדֹנָיִי

מי אָמַר וַיְהִי בְּלִי לְהַמְלִיךָ
 נִסְתָּר מִפְּנֵי
 מי אֵזֶן הַטָּה לְקוֹל עֲנִי וְהִלָּךְ
 נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי
 20 מי אַתָּה קָרָאתָ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ —
 מי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי אֲדֹנָיִי

מי בִּקְעַת מְאוּרִים בְּשָׁמַי מַעוֹנִי
 נִסְתָּר מִפְּנֵי
 מי בָּהֶם הָאֵיר קִצְוֵי אִפְדָּנִי
 נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי
 מי בִּשְׁחָק יַעֲרֹךְ לֹאדָנִי —
 מי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי אֲדֹנָיִי

מי נָטָה כִּירִיעָה שְׁחָקוֹ
 נִסְתָּר מִפְּנֵי
 25 מי נָטַע עַל־פְּנֵי אֶרֶץ יִצְחָקוֹ
 נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי
 מי נָטָה עָלֶיהָ קוֹ —
 מי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי אֲדֹנָיִי

Who makes earth tremble when He stands to judge?
He from sight concealed.

Who stores in treasures the hail and snow?
He to thought revealed.

Who mounts unto the heavens, and descends?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who, for His children, provides portions due?
He from sight concealed.

Who to the child of faithful ones, shows grace?
He to thought revealed.

Whoe'er man be, let him revere the Lord —
Who but the Lord is God!

Who humbles nations and subdues their pride?
He from sight concealed.

Who pities captives on the day of wrath?
He to thought revealed.

Who hath beheld a thing like unto this?
Who but the Lord is God!

Who understands the Creator's wondrous works?
God is from sight concealed.

Who knows himself an accident in the world?
To thought is this revealed.

Who that knows God is with him, can fear man?
Who but the Lord is God!

מִי עֹמֵד לְמַד אֶרֶץ וְחָרָד
נִסְתָּר מִפָּנָי,
מִי עֹמֵד אֶצְרוֹת שְׁלֵג וּבָרָד
נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי,
מִי עֹלֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיֵרֵד —
מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי אֲדֹנָי

מִי זֶמֶן חֹק טָרַפִּי לְבָנָי³⁰
נִסְתָּר מִפָּנָי,
מִי זָכָר לְטוֹב יְלִידֵי אֱמוּנָי
נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי,
מִי זֶה, הָאִישׁ יִרְאֵה אֲדֹנָי, —
מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי אֲדֹנָי

מִי יֵרֵד עַמִּים תַּחְתִּי לְהַבִּיט
נִסְתָּר מִפָּנָי,
מִי רַחֵם אֲסִיר יוֹם רַגְזוֹת
נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי,
מִי יֵרֵד עַמִּים תַּחְתִּי לְהַבִּיט³⁵
מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי אֲדֹנָי

מִי הִבִּין נִפְלְאוֹת הַבּוֹרָא
נִסְתָּר מִפָּנָי,
מִי הִשְׁכִּיל כִּי הוּא בְּעוֹלָם מְקַרֵּה
נִרְאָה לְרַעְיוֹנִי,
מִי, הָאִישׁ הַיָּרֵא,
מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי אֲדֹנָי

Chapter 4 *Piyyutim* and Pietism: The *Hasidei Ashkenaz*

While we have looked at and reflected on the way *piyyut* was used by the Ashkenazi community in a general way, we have refrained from looking at specific communities. This is, of course, due to the limited scope of this paper, and its goal in analyzing *piyyut*: to search for models of creative liturgy for our own day, rather than an account of how different communities' prayer forms changed over time and place. Nevertheless, there is one distinct community in Ashkenaz that is worth differentiating from the rest, for reasons that will be discussed below: the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, a pietistic movement of the 12th and 13th centuries that was very much a product of, and response to, the cultural shifts within and without Judaism at the time.

This period of time in Ashkenaz was one of radical transformation, especially in the realm of religious thought. Halakhic creativity blossomed in the Tosafist movement, such that "every line of the Talmud became potentially problematic, and the men of the time accepted the challenge of detecting every latent contradiction in the vast corpus and suggesting a resolution. Within two generations the Talmud had been rewritten."¹ Talmud was not only something to be mastered, but something to be striven with, challenged, something open to numerous possible interpretations. Soloveitchik describes this period as a "heroic age of Torah,"² and the development of the *hiddush* as "a heady brew...for many who first tasted of it."³

This was in contrast with the previous several generations of scholarship, where the priority was the mastery and preservation of earlier interpretation, "the Talmud was to be

¹ Haym Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in Sefer Hasidim," *AJS Review* 1 (1976), p. 343.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 342.

conserved, explained and applied."⁴ Creativity was expressed in one of two forms. The first was commentary, both of the aggadic and legal varieties, and included codification, and "even these fields were reserved for the great."⁵ Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* and Rashi's interpretation of both Tanakh and Talmud fall into this category. The second was prayer and religious poetry, which were "reverently cultivated."⁶ As we have seen already in our previous discussion of *piyyut* in Ashkenaz, *piyyutim* were written in the Byzantine style, especially imitating Qallir. Such liturgical creativity took place all over Central (and later, Eastern) Europe, spread by the Kalonymos family from Italy up through the Rhineland, Northern France and the rest of Germany.⁷ Also, as noted earlier, writing in the Byzantine style required a deep knowledge of Bible and Midrash, as often the *payyetaṇ* would use the homiletical commentary on a particular verse of the weekly *sidra* to draw out a particular meaning and liturgical theme.

The *Hasidei Ashkenaz* were both a continuation of what Soloveitchik calls the "Old Ashkenazic" expression, as well as a reflection of the new. Unlike the Tosafists, they did not set about writing a new Talmud; they wrote their commentaries anonymously, their *piyyutim*, and their commentaries on *piyyut*. However, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* were also responding to new challenges in ways not anticipated in the halakhic literature. "In the first fresh look at human nature since the Midrash, the Pietists uncovered a creature who...possessed infinite resourcefulness, restless energy, and was capable of heroic

⁴ Ibid, p. 342.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 345.

⁷ T. Carmi, *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 62.

exertion in achieving his own ends, and they insisted that religion demand of man the equivalent mobilization of his abilities for the Divine service."⁸

This pietistic movement, championed by the old elite of Ashkenaz,⁹ was chiefly concerned with fulfilling the will of God, and was convinced that the Oral and Written Law only scraped its surface. God's more expansive will was called the *retzon ha-borei*, the hidden Will of the creator, and was held to be in contrast with God's revealed majesty, or the *Kavod*. The *borei* is not to be confused with later kabbalistic notions of *Ayin* or *Ein Sof*. This is not *deus incognito*, the unknown, unknowable deity. Rather, this Will is perceivable only from "hints and signs strewn by Him throughout nature if they are but viewed in the proper light...God reveals Himself, in two manifestations: in the Holy Scripture and in the Book of Nature."¹⁰ In addition, they understood themselves to be the inheritors and preservers of an esoteric tradition. This *torat hasod* conveyed "the mysteries of the Godhead, the structure of the soul, and the esoteric meanings encoded in prayer."¹¹

This was not a rejection of the law—the pietistic movement was not antinomian. Rather, it was an attempt to bring two different spheres of one's life—the personal, spiritual sphere, and the public, legal sphere—both under the same influence. Whereas before the Halakhah dealt with a man's practical needs, and the Aggadah his spiritual needs, both creating a "cultural matrix" for Jewry, "the larger will of *Hasidei Ashkenaz* was an

⁸ Soloveitchik, p. 317.

⁹ Ibid, p. 350.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 315-316.

¹¹ Haym Soloveitchik, "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: *Sefer Hasidim I* and the Influence of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*", *Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol. XCII (2002), p. 467-468.

assertion that man...was in need of unremitting guidance which the traditional corpus of Halakha and Aggadah could not provide." Like the Tosafists, the Pietists had reached the limits of the old Torah. Unlike the Tosafists, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* would not find their solution in the release of pent-up scholastic creativity, but in placing further restrictions and obligations upon the human soul.

Thus, they created "a new world of ritual, a fresh religious sensibility...a new morality, and [made] a bold claim to Divine sanction."¹² Their book, *Sefer Hasidim*, conveyed these new practices and beliefs, a second revelation that had to be more demanding to fit the needs of this new individual and his realities. It focused on the understanding and 'decoding' of the larger Will of God, which, in turn, was comprised of "traditions, principles and beliefs elevated to normative status, and, as such, precludes unitary definition."¹³ Much of this "formed an easy alliance with the superstitions of the age," and can easily be confused with magic.¹⁴ New restrictions sprung up surrounding holy writ—including *mezuzot* and *tefillin*. The Pietists also focused on lineage, ancestral merit, and on maintaining a sense of family purity. Elaborate rules were developed surrounding the Sabbath, charity, Torah-study, *kashrut*, communing with the world of ghosts, and especially prayer. Humility was central to the *hasid's* behavior, as well as honesty. The *Hasidei Ashkenaz* focused on the motives behind various activities, the thoughts and feelings that directed the *hasid*. "It was in the immolation of desire, the contravention of instinct, that they located the significance of the religious act."¹⁵ While this focus gave

¹² Soloveitchik, "Three Themes", p. 312.

¹³ Ibid, p. 319.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 324.

greater primacy to the motivations behind the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, it did not circumscribe the act itself. Rather, it was an attempt to elevate the inner workings leading up to the performance of the act to the same fundamental level as that of the act itself. It is this focus on humility and personal motivation—as well as the influence of medieval Christendom—that helped shape their notion of repentance, which in turn resonated throughout Ashkenaz. The *Sefer ha-Yirah* suggests fasting one full day a month, and many penitential handbooks and the *Sefer Hasidim* itself “detailed the penance that must be done for a lengthy list of sins.”¹⁶

It is their doctrines concerning prayer that are the interest of this chapter, and they were of great interest to both the Pietist as well as the non-*hasid*. *Kavanah*, one's intention and direction, was of chief importance during worship. Prayer should not be performed in a rote fashion, but rather with deep, heart-felt emotion. Each word—indeed, each letter—had to be recited with the same attention and intensity. “They demand full spiritual concentration in prayer, and the direction of all the thoughts of the heart to heaven.”¹⁷ The worshipper must apply him- or herself fully, even if it should take him the whole day to recite the *Amidah*. Their manner in the synagogue was one that could alienate other worshipers, if not antagonize them, leading the *Hasidim* to be regarded “as saintly pests, or worse yet, as reprehensible snobs.”¹⁸ Soloveitchik describes their rigorous behaviors as follows:

Only the truly righteous, the *Hasidim* claimed, should be called up to the Torah, given honors in the services, or be a *sandak* at a circumcision. The most vigorous action must be taken to prevent an unrighteous man from being the cantor, for his functioning in this capacity literally endangers the whole community, since his prayers will necessarily be

¹⁶ Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism”, pp. 468, 479.

¹⁷ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 289.

¹⁸ Haym Soloveitchik, “Three Themes in *Sefer Hasidim*”, p. 330.

rejected. Any religious act performed by an unworthy...should be discounted and repeated by the *hasid* himself...the unworthy should not be allowed into the synagogue, for their sight stirs evil thoughts in the hearts of the worshipper. Hymns written by sinners should not be recited, and prayerbooks copied by them should not be used.¹⁹

In addition, *psukei d'zimra*, the morning songs of praise, should be recited at "great, indeed, interminable, length,"²⁰ and the Pietist was to wear a special, and highly distinct, *tallit*.

This almost hostile behavior emerged from an imperative of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* that, just as the fulfillment of the *retzon ha-borei* should be rewarded, so too should sinfulness be chastised in the public sphere, and with great vigor. The destruction of seeming innocents could be caused simply by not taking a public stand against wickedness; thus, such wickedness must be rooted out at all cost. "The incorrigible sinner is to be systematically sacrificed to the common good, and conversely...they counsel...performing minor sins to prevent major trespassing by the public."²¹

Of course, who was 'wicked' was a matter of subjective understanding, and many were regarded as such. "'Wicked' to the *Hasidic* mind meant...not only men violent and immoral, but even scholars, poets, and men of quality who took less time in reciting the Psalms than the *Hasidim* deemed appropriate, or in any way fell short of their novel and exacting standards."²² Indeed, it is doubtful that the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, or their book of better living, *Sefer Hasidim*, had any real influence or effect over their contemporaries.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, p. 326

²² Ibid, p. 333

Their pietistic struggles are as much about the loss of communal power as about the elevation of the spirit and the determination of God's actual Will, in prayer as in action.

The *Piyyut* of the *Hasid*: Poets and Themes

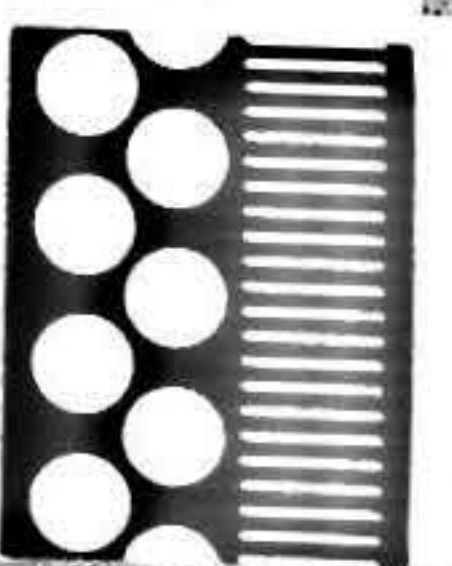
At first glance, there is no difference in writing technique between the *payyetanim* of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* and their non-pietistic counterparts. However, one discovers that, while the general structure of the poetry is quite similar, the language of the poetry, and the motivations and perspective of the poets is quite different. The *Hasidim* as a movement did not tend to generate too many poets or new poems; the *Sefer Hasidim* does not present new compositions. They focused more on writing long, elaborate commentaries to classic *piyyutim*, especially those by Qallir.²³ For the Pietist, *piyyutim* were sacred literature no less than the fixed liturgy, and the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* would delve into them to determine the hidden Will of the Creator. Mystical and esoteric wisdoms were believed to permeate the poetry, and could only be understood through careful study and analysis.²⁴

While this did not differ dramatically from the "Old Ashkenazic" frame of reference, wherein the composition of, and commentary on, *piyyut* was central to being a good student, the focus on *piyyut* in the greater German community begins to waver as the focus on reinterpreting the halakhic texts increases.²⁵ As we have noted above, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* were interested in preserving the earlier cultivation of "Talmudic

²³ Ephraim Karnarfogel, *Peering Through the Lattices* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 26, 65, 105-106, 168.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 143.

²⁵ Soloveitchik, "Three Themes", p. 352.



scholarship, poetry, prayer, Biblical exegesis, and Midrashic interest...a wide range of human facilities."²⁶ They maintained this older idea because they felt it created equilibrium between scholarship and piety, between intellect and morality. Theirs was "simply a reassertion of certain truths which may have been overlooked in the intellectual enthusiasm of the late twelfth century."²⁷ While a greater emphasis was placed on the esoteric understanding of the *piyyut* (the *torat ha-sod*), theirs was a maintenance of the same kind of scholarship in which Rashi and his generation—and generations before him—participated.

As humility was of great importance to the *Hasid*, it became necessary to justify the role of name acrostics and other methods of inserting the poet's name, central to the Qallirian/Byzantine aesthetic. The Pietists understood this as a way to distinguish saintly *payyetanim* from those who would be considered 'wicked':

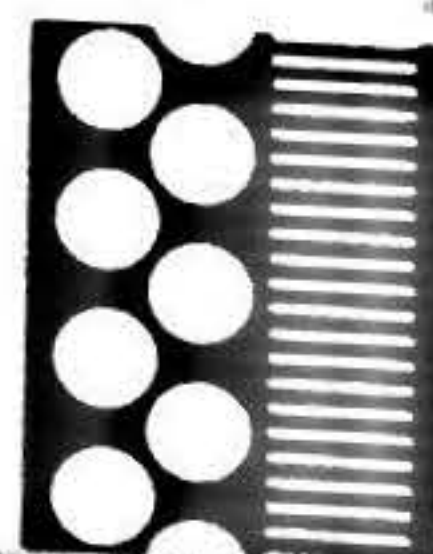
Initially the *payetanim* did not incorporate their names in the poems' acrostics...for they did not compose [these poems] to perpetuate their names...Once the wicked began to compose *piyyutim*, one should have recite[d] no *piyyut* whatsoever, for is it conceivable that the *piyyut* of the wicked will be heard?...To prevent people from [mistakenly] saying "the wicked composed these poems[and so we should refrain from saying them]," the righteous [began to] incorporate their names in their *piyyutim*.²⁸

Those of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* who wrote *piyyutim* tended to write in the Ashkenazic mode of 'difficult' poetry, falling generally into the category of Qallir's imitators. However, their thematic approach was quite different from their non-pietistic peers, using code words of the *Hasidim* to convey very specific ideas. God is often referred to as the *retzon ha-borei*; humility, God's secret Will, and the sustenance of the scholar are

²⁶ Ibid p. 346.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 347.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 331 (citing *Sefer Hasidim, Hochmat Ha-Nefesh* fol. 23a).



emphasized. There is an emphasis on the time to come, when those who are righteous will be granted a greater portion and their enemies will be stricken. There are also hymns to the Kavod—such as *Shir HaKavod—An'iim Zemirot*.

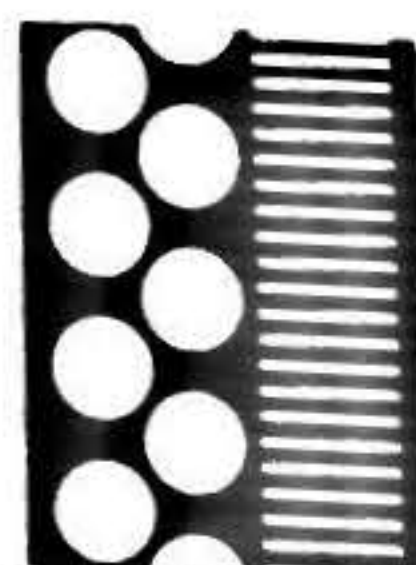
This paper will look at two such poems, one by Rabbi Judah b. Kalonymos of Speyer, another by Rabbi Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, also known by the title of his handbook on proper behavior, the *Rokeah*. Judah b. Kalonymos died in either 1196 or 1199. A tax collector by trade and a member of the Kalonymos family, he was a communal leader, author of the Talmudic lexicon *Seder tannaim ve-amoraim*, and student of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, especially Judah Ha-Hasid, and was the teacher of the *Rokeah*.²⁹ The *Rokeah* himself was born in 1165 and died around 1230. Considered the last major scholar of the pietistic movement, he was also a member of the Kalonymos family, and wrote many theological, halakhic and kabbalistic works, and many *piyyutim*.³⁰

Both poems are *qinot*, poems of mourning and wailing. We have not yet looked at *qinot* as a genre within *piyyutim* as a whole. Unlike the *kerovah*, which can be applied to any holiday—or even Shabbat—liturgy, *qinot* are a specific liturgical insertion for the Ninth of Av or other fast days. Songs of mourning, they became associated with the recitation of Lamentations and the wailing for the destruction of Jerusalem. As Elbogen describes them, it becomes clear why such a genre would appeal to the Pietistic *payyotanim*:

The themes appropriate for the *qinot* are mourning for the destruction of the Temple, the priests, and the cult; the desecration of the sanctuary by the enemy; the destruction of the two kingdoms of Judea and Israel; and the contrast between oppression in exile and the happiness of the people in its land. But like the *selicha*, the *qina* reflects also on the cause

²⁹ Israel Moses Ta-Shma, "Judah b. Kalonymos b. Meir," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 10 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing 1972), pp 346ff.

³⁰ Joseph Dan, "Eleazar b. Judah of Worms," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 6, pp. 591ff.



of the suffering and the sins of the fathers, their disobedience to the prophets' rebukes, the mercies of God throughout the course of history, and Israel's ingratitude. These subjects are reworked...and the poems turn into a crushing indictment of the people's sin and a complete justification of God's decree. Despite all the suffering, there is no doubt about God's righteousness and love. Thus, the *qinot*, like the prophetic rebukes, conclude with a call for repentance, promises of consolation, and descriptions of the future salvation.³¹

The *hasid* would be drawn to such liturgy: the voice of mourning could be used polemically, conveying the pietistic notions of repentance, extreme moral rectitude, and the importance of knowing the *retzon ha-borei*. Without these, the Jew would remain in exile, and continue inadvertently to bring ill upon the community.

Indeed, the *qinah* would be expanded beyond the Ninth of Av, and become a much more flexible poetic form. One of the *qinot* that we will look at was recited on the 29th of Adar, the other in the reading cycle of the book of Genesis. Clearly, *qinot* could be employed by the pietistic *payyetan* for whatever occasion was appropriate. R. Judah b. Kalonymos' *piyyut* is a dialogue, detailing an attempted forced conversion/mass slaughter at the hands of Christians that occurred on the 29th of Adar. Clearly a polemic, it may have been written not only to mourn those who died that day, but to encourage young members of the movement to take heart against such assaults. The *Rokeah*'s lamentation, on the other hand, is more personal: he writes a variation on Proverbs 31:10-31 as an elegy for his wife. Liturgically known as *Eshet Chayil*, these verses from Proverbs are recited by the husband in praise of his wife on the Sabbath eve, thus making a heartfelt tribute.

R. Judah's poem is 44 stanzas long, broken up into 3 stichs. The poem contains three complex acrostics. The first is alphabetical, created with the first letter of the first 22

³¹ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 184

stanzas. The second uses the first letter of the second stich of the first 22 verses, spelling out the poet's name. The third is also alphabetical, comprised of every other first letter of the next 22 stanzas, alternating between the beginning of the alphabet and the middle (א. ל. ב. ד), thus completing the alphabet. The rhyme scheme is internal to each stanza, as we have seen in Ashkenazic *piyyutim* before. Also consistent with Ashkenazic *piyyut* is the use of multiple verses from the Bible; most of the citations are found in the last stich of each stanza, and each third stich is a biblical citation. The poem is written in the so-called 'difficult' style of Qallirian imitations, and thus there are many invented and refashioned words.

The *Rokeah's* poem is actually the first part of a series of poems dedicated to the memory of his wife, who was buried on the 22nd of Kislev, on the Sabbath of *Parashat Vayeshev*. It is also an alphabetical acrostic, made up of 23 stanzas broken up into two stichs each. Rhyme is also internal to each stanza. The language is 'easier' than that of Judah b. Kalonymous, as is the acrostic. There are fewer references or direct citations from *Tanakh*: most of those that appear are from *Eishet Chayil*. This follows from the poem's construction as a variation on that scriptural/liturgical passage; thus it follows a similar pattern. The texts are found in A.M. Habermann's *Sefer Gezerot ashkenaz vetsarfat*, pages 155-158, and 164-166. As before, these translations are my own, including any errors. The exceptions are those places where Scripture is cited, in which case I use the most recent Jewish Publication Society translation.

Piyyutim: Translations

I. El Eivel Ekrah

⌘ For mourning and lamentation I cry out
⌘ My eyes spill forth tears that descend
Evening and morn, they never cease their weeping³²

⌘ I will surely weep, in dust I will cover myself
⌘ I will bind myself to the mourner: I will seek
Everyone whose spirit is bitter.³³

⌘ Let the keeners waken Leviathan
⌘ Call the lamenters and wise women that they may come
Also the ostrich.³⁴

⌘ Do not give relent or fall silent
⌘ Let your eyes cry and you wail
We are weary, and anguish grips us.³⁵

⌘ Strike hand to hand in grief
⌘ Howl from broken-heartedness in speech
Elders, and those advanced in age.³⁶

⌘ Let young men and maidens join together
⌘ To lament, sway and mourn
Pain seizes us, agony like a woman in childbirth.³⁷

⌘ Increase the cries and sighs and groans
⌘ Multiply wails and shrieks
Gird on sackcloth for this (matter).³⁸

⌘ The nations joined together in single company
⌘ To utterly destroy the House of Israel,

³² Jeremiah 14:17: "And do you speak to them thus: let my eyes run with tears, day and night let them not cease, for my hapless people has suffered a grievous injury, a very painful wound."

³³ I Samuel 22:2: "Everyone who was in straits and everyone who was in debt and everyone who was desperate joined him, and he became their leader; there were about four hundred men with him."

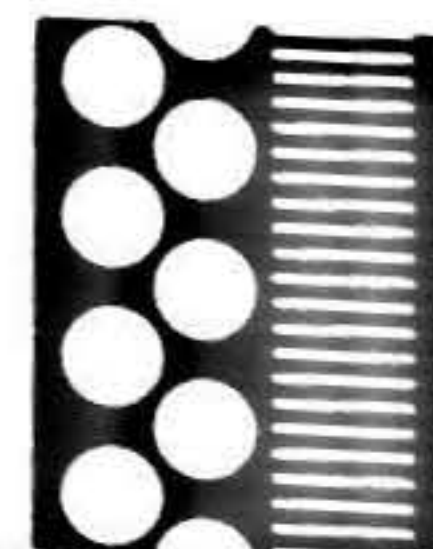
³⁴ Leviticus 11:16/Deuteronomy 14:15: "The ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull and the hawk of every variety."

³⁵ II Samuel 17:2: "I will come upon him when he is weary and disheartened, and I will throw him into a panic; and when all the troops with him flee, I will kill the king alone."

³⁶ Jeremiah 6:11: "But I am filled with the wrath of THE LORD, I cannot hold it in. Pour it on the infant in the street, and on the company of youths gathered together! Yes, men and women alike shall be captured, Elders and those of advanced years."

³⁷ Jeremiah 6:24: "We have heard the report of them, our hands fail; pain seizes us, agony like a woman in childbirth."

³⁸ Jeremiah 4:8: "For this, put on sackcloth, mourn and wail; for the blazing anger of the LORD has not turned away from us."



They were one of tongue and of speech³⁹

ו They captured and burned all the way to the sea
י They made their "head" an abhorrent offspring sprout⁴⁰
their idol of Baal⁴¹

י Together they were gathered like a single person
ק To take my life and give me to extermination
To kill and destroy all the Jews⁴²

כ They resolved to slay, to destroy and drive out
ל The name of Israel would not be remembered
We will destroy even the remnant heir⁴³

ל To increase pitfalls, death and confusion
ו And to dismay, to root out and annihilate
The remnant from the face of the earth⁴⁴

מ The speaker opened his mouth and made his voice heard:
נ "Choose my path after the chaos
To do His work—strange is His work!"⁴⁵

נ We will give great portion
י Precious wealth as a gift for you⁴⁶
And if that were not enough, I would give you twice as much more.⁴⁷

ס To follow after my carved idol
מ A support of reed to lean upon
Are the idols and molten gods."⁴⁸

³⁹ Genesis 11:1: "Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words."

⁴⁰ The word נצר is possibly a pun on the Hebrew word for Christianity, נצרות.

⁴¹ II Kings 3:2: "He did what was displeasing to THE LORD, yet not like his father and mother, for he removed the pillars of Baal that his father had made."

⁴² Esther 3:13: "Accordingly, written instructions were dispatched by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, the month of Adar—and to plunder their possessions."

⁴³ II Samuel 14:7: "Then the whole clan confronted your maidservant and said, 'hand over the one who killed his brother, that we may put him to death for the slaying of his brother, even though we wipe out the heir.' Thus they would quench the last ember remaining in me, and leave my husband without name or remnant upon the earth."

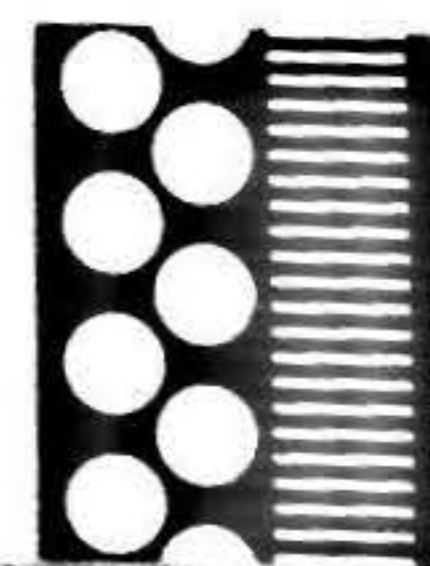
⁴⁴ II Samuel 14:7, see previous note for full citation.

⁴⁵ Isaiah 28:21: "For THE LORD will arise As on the Hill of Perazim, He will rouse Himself as in the vale of Gibeon, to do His work—Strange is His work! And to perform His task—astounding is His task!"

⁴⁶ Proverbs 12:27: "A negligent man never has game to roast; a diligent man has precious wealth."

⁴⁷ II Samuel 12:8: "I gave you your master's house and possession of your master's wives; and I gave you the House of Israel and Judah; and if that were not enough, I would give you twice as much more."

⁴⁸ Leviticus 19:4: "Do not turn to idols or make molten gods for yourselves: I the LORD am your God."



ו I answered this to my tormentors,
י "And who is this he said to trust in?
A bastard shall not enter the congregation of God!"⁴⁹

פ Your molten Idol is dead in his grave
פ Your zealous idol is a rotting carcass
For a hanged man is cursed by God.⁵⁰

ש His corpse is pierced and hung on the tree
How shall I worship someone thrown in a pit?
That would be alien worship!⁵¹

פ Buried and closed up, derided and hated
Moldering in his bones is the one who was destroyed in anger
My God forbid me from doing such a thing [i.e. from serving such a god].⁵²

י My breath and bowels and heart compel me
To serve my God as He commanded me.
I will maintain my integrity⁵³

ש I will eternally acknowledge the Unity of His holy name
Thus with life and strength I will forever hold it dear
He is God, there is none else beside him!⁵⁴

נ I wait for him always in the days of my strength
To Him, my exclusive God do I cling
For He has given me an eternal covenant⁵⁵

א If you kill me and gouge my back⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 23:3: "No one misbegotten shall be admitted into the congregation of the LORD; none of his descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall be admitted into the congregation of THE LORD." The contextual use of this verse refers to the medieval anti-Christian polemic that Jesus was a bastard.

⁵⁰ Deuteronomy 21:23: "you must not let his corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury him the same day. For an impaled body is an affront to God: you shall not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess."

⁵¹ Isaiah 28:21, see above.

⁵² II Samuel 23:17: "For he said, 'THE LORD forbid that I should do this! Can [I drink] the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?' So he would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three warriors."

⁵³ Job 27:5: "Far be it from me to say that you are right; until I die I will maintain my integrity."

⁵⁴ Deuteronomy 4:35: "It has been clearly demonstrated to you that the LORD alone is God; there is none beside Him." See also Deuteronomy 4:39: "Know therefore this day and keep in mind that the LORD alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other."

⁵⁵ II Samuel 23:5: "Is not my House established before God? For He has granted me an eternal pact, drawn up in full and secured. Will He not cause all my success and every desire to blossom?"

⁵⁶ As in the story of the martyrdom of Rabbi Akiva

I will always serve the God of my fathers
As long as my breath is within me⁵⁷

ל I trust in Him, though they kill me⁵⁸
I have calculated my paths and my thoughts answer me⁵⁹
There is but One and no second!⁶⁰

א When they hear this, they increase the misery,⁶¹
They knavishly plan against me to give me as tribute
The sanctuary surrendered, the heavenly hosts trampled⁶²

ב They surge over me to make me join them
They finished me, smashed me to ruin and devastation
The blow was very great.⁶³

ג They smote and they killed my goodly ones, my pure ones
The righteous of the generation were slain by my tormentors⁶⁴
The Young and the old, maidens and youths⁶⁵

ד Their blood is spilt; they are laid waste in a snare
They declared Your unity as they were cast to ruin
Babes and sucklings in the squares of the city.⁶⁶

ה They utterly burned my people to destroy them
Flames consumed and destroyed their foundations
Towns lie waste without inhabitants, homes without people.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Job 27:3: "As long as there is life in me, and God's breath is in my nostrils."

⁵⁸ Job 13:15: "He may well slay me; I may have no hope; Yet I will argue my case before Him."

⁵⁹ Job 20:2: "In truth, my thoughts urge me to answer (it is because of my feelings)."

⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 4:8: "There is one who is alone, with no companion, who has neither son nor brother; yet he amasses wealth without limit, and his eye is never sated with riches. For whom, now, is he amassing it while denying himself enjoyment? That too is a futility and an unhappy business."

⁶¹ Job 6:4: "For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit absorbs their poison; God's terrors are arrayed against me."

⁶² Daniel 8:13: "Then I heard a holy being speaking, and another holy being said to whoever it was who was speaking, 'how long will the vision last, the *tamid* offering be forsaken because of transgression; the sanctuary be surrendered and the heavenly host be trampled?'"

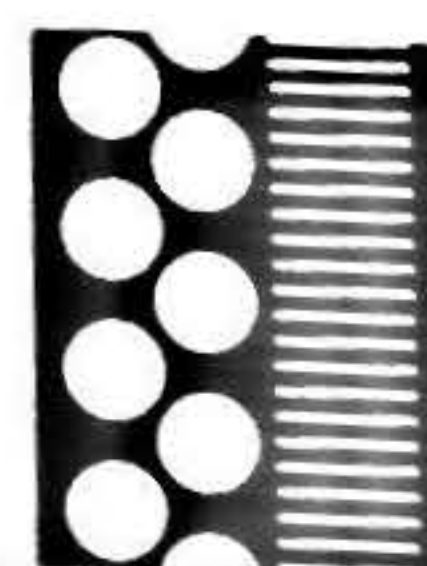
⁶³ 1 Samuel 4:10: "The Philistines fought; Israel was routed, and they all fled to their homes. The defeat was very great, thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell there."

⁶⁴ עָכַר as "to cause trouble" c.f. Josh 7:25: "And Joshua said, 'what calamity you have brought upon us! The LORD will bring calamity upon you this day.' And all Israel pelted him with stones. They put them to the fire and stoned them."

⁶⁵ Lamentations 2:21: "Prostrate in the streets lie both young and old. My maidens and youths are fallen by the sword."

⁶⁶ Lamentations 2:11: "My eyes are spent with tears, my heart is in tumult, my being melts away over the ruin of my poor people, as babes and sucklings languish in the squares of the city."

⁶⁷ Isaiah 6:11: "I asked, 'how long, my LORD?' and He replied: 'till towns lie waste without inhabitants and houses without people, and the ground lies waste and desolate.'"



ו They plotted, to make our memory vanish⁶⁸
And on the 29th our light was darkened
In the twelfth month, the month of Adar⁶⁹

ז The blood not covered, remains exposed
Many drops are counted in your purple coat⁷⁰
The life-blood of the innocent poor⁷¹

ח Take note of them, these bound offerings
Rise against the wrath of my enemies to terrify them⁷²
May they fall among the falling at the time when you punish them⁷³

ט My spirit is disquieted, and my soul disturbed
Enemies and adversaries lay waste in rage
The palace and the homes of the people⁷⁴

י The glory of your Torah, its curled locks⁷⁵
They made into tatters to be trampled in the streets⁷⁶
Like dust of the earth, like dirt of the street⁷⁷

יא Remember all these, O Eternal, against this contemptuous enemy
See and behold Your servants
O Avenging king, on this day⁷⁸

יב May [the bloodshed] be set upon on the bare rock⁷⁹

⁶⁸ Psalm 83:4: "They plot craftily against Your people, take counsel against Your treasured ones."

⁶⁹ Esther 24:7: "In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, *pur*—which means 'the lot'—was cast before Haman concerning every day and month until the 12th month, that is, the month of Adar."

⁷⁰ I.e. stained purple with the blood of martyrs

⁷¹ Jeremiah 2:34-35: "Moreover, on your garments is found the lifeblood of the innocent poor—you did not catch them breaking in, yet despite all these things, You say, 'I have been acquitted; Surely, His anger has turned away from me.' Lo, I will bring you in judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.'"

⁷² Psalm 7:7: "Rise, O LORD, in Your anger; assert Yourself against the fury of my foes; bestir Yourself on my behalf; You have ordained judgment."

⁷³ Jeremiah 6:15: "They have acted shamefully; they have done abhorrent things—yet they do not feel shame, and they cannot be made to blush. Assuredly, they shall fall among the falling, they shall stumble at the time when I punish them—said THE LORD."

⁷⁴ Jeremiah 39:8: "The Chaldeans burned down the king's palace and the houses of the people by fire, and they tore down the walls of Jerusalem."

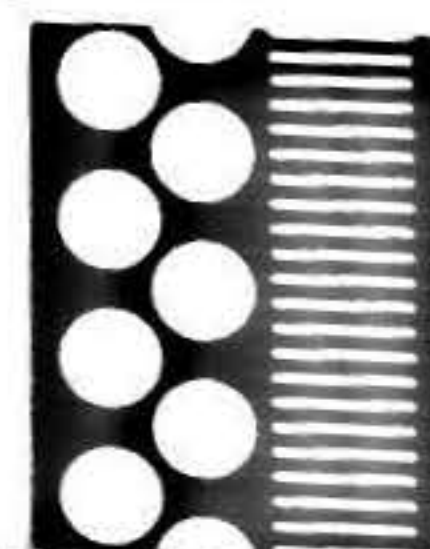
⁷⁵ Song of Songs 5:11: "His head is finest gold, his locks are curled and black as a raven."

⁷⁶ Ned. 9b: "ענינים ושוב ראי וקוצותי סדורות לו תלתלים פעם אחת בא אדם אחד נזיר מן הדורם וראיתיו שהוא יפה"

⁷⁷ II Samuel 22:43: "I pounded them like dust of the earth, stamped, crusted them like dirt of the streets."

⁷⁸ II Samuel 4:8: "They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David in Hebron. 'Here,' they said to the King, 'is the head of your enemy, Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, who sought your life. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king upon Saul and his offspring.'"

⁷⁹ Ezekiel 24:7-8: "For the blood she shed is still in her; she set it upon a bare rock; she did not pour it out on the ground to cover it with earth. She set her blood upon the bare rock, so that it was not covered, so that it may stir up [My] fury to take vengeance."



May land uncover those beaten down.⁸⁰
And the earth will reveal its blood.⁸¹

𐤓 Gird on in anger overwhelming vengeance
Take note of the deeds of the enemy with Your sharp sword
And kill alike men and women.⁸²

𐤑 Arise, Eternal, against those who enrage me!
Spill out your rage and take on those who rise up against me.⁸³
Contend with those who contend with me; fight with those who fight with me.⁸⁴

𐤅 Increase great slaughter, my God
Let him see his calamity, my slanderer and bereaver⁸⁵
Act severely against them, just as you have acted severely against me⁸⁶

𐤒 Let fly a torrent of judgment, avenge now!
Cause pain to the enemy, exterminate the tormentors
Thus He will tear down and not build back up⁸⁷

𐤔 Bring the day of tumult against them
O Rock, let me see Your vengeance against them
In the moment You set Your anger upon them⁸⁸

𐤖 O Judge of the earth, judge with rebuke
The blood of the innocent and those dead from the slaughter
Take note of them, Eternal, God of all living⁸⁹

𐤗 For oppressed ones in exile, afflicted and imprisoned
Declare that this will be the year of release when they will be freed
Place the lowly and the darkened ones upon high.⁹⁰

⁸⁰ Isaiah 28:1: "Ah, the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is but wilted flowers on the heads of men bloated with rich food, who are overcome by wine."

⁸¹ Isaiah 26:21: "For lo! The LORD shall come forth from His place to punish the dwellers of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth shall disclose its bloodshed and shall no longer conceal its slain."

⁸² I Samuel 15:3: "Now go, attack Amalek, and proscribe all that belongs to him. Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses."

⁸³ Psalm 79:6: "Pour out Your fury on the nations that do not know you, upon the kingdoms that do not invoke Your name."

⁸⁴ Psalm 35:1: "O LORD, strive with my adversaries, give battle to my foes,"

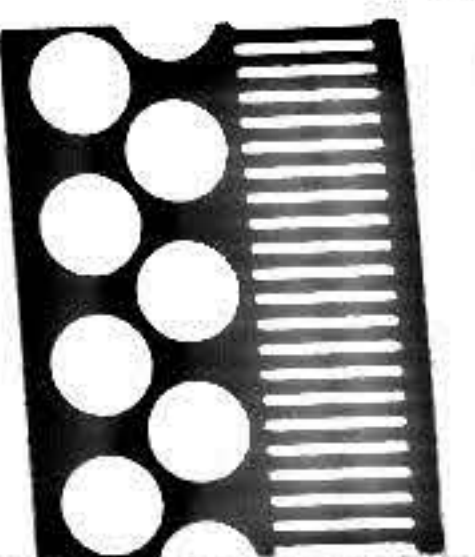
⁸⁵ Job 21:20: "Let his eyes see his ruin, and let him drink the wrath of Shaddai!"

⁸⁶ Lamentations 1:22: "Let all their wrongdoing come before You, and deal with them as You have dealt with me for all my transgressions."

⁸⁷ Job 12:14: "Whatever He tears down cannot be rebuilt; whomever He imprisons cannot be set free."

⁸⁸ Jeremiah 18:23: "O LORD, You know all their plots to kill me. Do not pardon their iniquity, do not blot out their guilt from Your presence. Let them be made to stumble before You—act against them in Your wrath!"

⁸⁹ Numbers 27:16: "Let the LORD, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community."



נ Renew our days as of old; restore me⁹¹
Eternal of Hosts, I acknowledge You, my Maker.
You raged against me: turn away Your anger and comfort me!⁹²

II. Eishet Chayil, Mi Yimtza

- א A woman of valor, who can find⁹³
one like my wife the pious lady Dolca?
- א A woman of valor, crown of her husband, daughter of devoted ones
A God-fearing woman whose good deeds speak her praise
- ב Her husband put his confidence in her; she fed him, and clothed him with honor⁹⁴
So that he could sit with the elders of the land to bestow Torah and good deeds
- ג She did well for him, and never evil all the days she was with him⁹⁵
She made him books from her toil, and a good name for herself
- ד She looked for white wool for fringes, her hands spun with a will⁹⁶
All her thoughts were to perform mitzvot; everyone who saw her spoke her praises
- ה She was like a merchant fleet, to feed her husband and keep him occupied in Torah⁹⁷
The women saw her, and approved her, for her occupation was good.
- ו She fed her household, gave bread to the youths⁹⁸
Thus her hands struck spindle to spin thread for books
- ז She was diligent in her spinning of threads for *t'fillin*, scrolls and books⁹⁹
She was fast as a deer to cook for the boys, to do the will of the scholars.
- ח She girded her loins with strength to sew up almost forty Torah scrolls¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ Job 5:11: "Who raises the lowly up high, so that the dejected are secure in victory."

⁹¹ Lamentations 5:21: "Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself, and let us come back; renew our days as of old!"

⁹² Isaiah 12:1: "In that day, you shall say: 'I give thanks to You, O LORD! Although You were wroth with me, Your wrath has turned back and You comfort me.'"

⁹³ Proverbs 31:10: "What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies."

⁹⁴ Proverbs 31:11: "Her husband puts his confidence in her, and lacks no good thing."

⁹⁵ Proverbs 31:12: "She is good to him, never bad, all the days of her life."

⁹⁶ Proverbs 31:13: "She looks for wool and flax, and sets her hand to them with a will."

⁹⁷ Proverbs 31:14: "She is like a merchant fleet, bringing her food from afar." Also Proverbs 31:23: "Her husband is prominent in the gates, as he sits among the elders of the land."

⁹⁸ Proverbs 31:15: "She rises while it is still night, and supplies provisions for her household, the daily fare of her maids."

⁹⁹ Proverbs 31:15, see previous note.

- She prepared her meal, she set her table, for all her company
- ו She tasted goodness in decking out brides and bringing them honorably in¹⁰¹
Lovely she was as she bathed the dead, sewing shrouds for them.
 - י Her hands sewed clothes for students and [fixed] torn books
From her labor donations were made to Torah scholars
 - ז Her hands extended to the poor, and she fed her children and husband
She did the Will of her Creator with pleasure day and night
 - ח Her light would not be dimmed at night as she made wicks
For the small sanctuary and the study halls, all the while reciting psalms
 - ט She sang hymns and prayers and recited her supplications
And her deeds every day were devoted to every living thing and all the faithful¹⁰²
 - י She recited "*Pitom haketoret*" and the 10 Commandments¹⁰³
In every locale she taught women and sang hymns
 - יא [She recited] the order of prayer in the morning and at night
And [went] to the synagogue early and late
 - יב She stood every *Yom Kippur*, sang and lit the lights
On the Sabbath and the holidays, she honored those busy with Torah-study
 - יג Her mouth spoke with wisdom, she knew prohibited from permitted¹⁰⁴
She would sit on the Sabbath, listening to her husband's expositions
 - יד Modest above all, wise and thoughtful, blessed is her counsel
Diligent in observing all the *mitzvot*, pious and graceful
 - טו She bought milk for scholars, and would pay the salaries of teachers of the young out of
her labor
She was well known and thoughtful and served her Creator joyfully.
 - טז Her legs ran to visit the sick and perform the commandments of her Creator
She fed her children, pressing them to study and served the Blessed One with
awe.

¹⁰⁰ Proverbs 31:17: "She girds herself with strength, and performs her tasks with vigor."

¹⁰¹ To the *huppah*.

¹⁰² This is a pun, referencing various liturgical pieces, *mishnat kol hai* and *kol hama'aminim*.

¹⁰³ *Pitom haketoret* is the section from b. keritot 6a-b recited liturgically in the daily morning service as part of the *korbanot*, dealing with the incense offerings of the Temple. This corresponds to Proverbs 31:26: "Her mouth is full of wisdom, her tongue with kindly teaching."

¹⁰⁴ Proverbs 31:26, see previous note.

ו She was happy to do the will of her husband, and never troubled him
Her deeds were pleasant, May the Eternal Rock remember them to her credit!

נ May her soul be gathered into the bonds of everlasting life luxurious
May she receive the fruit of her hands in Paradise!¹⁰⁵

Performative Issues

At first glance, it is hard to see any similarity between these two *piyyutim*. Despite the fact that both of the poems before us are *qinot*, one would assume they would appear in vastly dissimilar settings and function quite distinctly from one another. While they both describe tragedies and might be read to commemorate the sadness they elegize—the Kalonymous poem on the 29th of Adar, the *Rokeah* piece on the 22nd of Kislev—the similarity seems to stop there. The former is a poem of communal anguish and slaughter, and the agenda of the poem comes out very strongly. While the *Rokeah* poem does deal more explicitly with violence in later sections, it begins by speaking of personal loss, and would be the kind of poem read at the funeral—and perhaps on the *Yahrzeit*—of the deceased.. Despite these surface differences, they could both be used for the same function, albeit in different ways.

The Kalonymos piece is a polemic; it is meant not only to mourn the loss of life in the massacre that it commemorates and vent the anger of the community, but to raise up those who died as martyrs, and build enthusiasm within the community for the Pietistic program. These poems were directed to anyone who was at risk of despairing over the state of the Jews, and therefore considering conversion. The poem itself alternates

¹⁰⁵ From the prayer *Eil Malei Rachamim*, recited at funeral and memorial services: "...may her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life." Hyman Goldin, *HaMadrikh* (New York: 1939) P. 129.

between deep sorrow and defiance and finally burning wrath: you can feel the pent-up emotion burst forth as the poet calls on God to smite the enemies of His people, just as His people has been smitten, arousing the emotions of everyone present in the synagogue. Every possible "archetype" is mentioned in the poem: from old men and women to youths to schoolchildren, all die pronouncing the Oneness of God and their loyalty to Torah. That said, there is particular focus given to the deaths of children—special attention is given to using proof-texts that graphically describe babies lying in pain in the streets. That the death of innocents is graphic and horrifying is part of the design; it is meant to shock the listeners into the desired emotion. Similar is the function of the primary speaker's rebuke, describing Jesus as a rotten corpse cursed by God. Citing particularly defiant biblical verses was also designed to attract the listeners' attention: "The martyr defiantly reviled Christianity in graphic, even vulgar terms, which must have made an equally strong impression on adolescent minds."¹⁰⁶

The poem of the *Rokeah* is also a polemic: not as thunderous or angry, perhaps, but a poem with an agendum nonetheless, an agendum quite similar to the one in the previous poem. In mourning his wife, the poet also concretizes the values and behaviors he thinks are appropriate—if not ideal—in the wife of a *Hasid*. Strong emphasis is given not only to providing for the family and deferring to her husband, but to providing for the scholars, the *talmidei hachamim*. The wife takes care of them: bringing them food, paying the salaries of the teachers of the young, and sewing their clothes—even stitching up their books—and keeping her husband occupied in Torah study so he doesn't have to

¹⁰⁶ Susan Einbinder, "Trial By Fire: Burning Jewish Books," in *Medieval Institute Publications* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2000), p. 4.

work. She is also knowledgeable and pious: she recites psalms, composes *techines*, studies Scripture, and sings her prayers. She listens intently to her husband's lectures on the Sabbath, and even teaches the women. She knows how to differentiate forbidden from permitted (a reference to the talmudic maxim), and even gives her husband counsel. Her piety extends beyond her knowledge as well: she is eager to do the Will of her Creator, a code word for the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, and the poem lists the many *mitzvot* she performs. In short, this poem describes the Pietistic ideal, a role-model for *Hasidim*. That she receives the fruit of Paradise in the end would be a great motivator for a frustrated Pietist. Both of these poems, therefore, would be used to strengthen the listener in the agenda of the poet; one simply does it more overtly and the other more subtly.

The Question Before Us

Most liberal Jews (if they think about the liturgy at all) most likely do not think of their liturgy as being polemical per se. To their minds, it is about the personal relationship of Israel (or the individual Jew) and God. Perhaps there is an encouragement to observe the *mitzvot* and teach our children, but ours is a religion of choice, and we may elect how we understand the *mitzvot*, which commandments will be fulfilled and in what fashion. If there is any venue to put forth a particular perspective on an issue, it is in the sermon; but increasingly, that is the place to discuss personal practice, be it Shabbat or social action. Indeed, we do not have many political songs or liturgies: what we have needed, say, for civil rights, anti-war or pro-Israel movements, we have adopted from African Americans, the 'peaceniks', and Israeli folk music.

That said, ideological material does appear in our liturgies. Holocaust material—in the form of poetry, partisan songs, and even artwork—appears in everything from prayer-books to *haggadot*. For example, much of the liturgy of the Yom Kippur afternoon service found in *Gates of Repentance* deals with Holocaust themes.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Zionist and pro-Israel liturgies abound, including rituals for *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, *Yom Yerushalayim*, and other Israel-centered days.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, there is polemic in our *siddur*. One example that has been carried over from *Union Prayerbook* to *Gates of Prayer* is the reading for the *Aleinu*, which describes a kind of messianic age free of superstition and discrimination: "May the time not be distant, O Lord, when your name will be worshipped upon the earth..."¹⁰⁹ Other, even more political examples abound, especially in *Gates of Prayer*, where thematic services provide poetry (albeit not necessarily Jewish in nature or authorship) that conveys particular agenda.¹¹⁰ We find earlier examples as well, such as John L. Lewis' Coal Miner's Prayer of the *Union Prayer Book*.¹¹¹ While this liturgical piece from *Gates of Prayer* is more political, we have seen that polemic may be used to heighten awareness of a spiritual or religious ideal. This is starting to be accomplished in our texts through *kavvanot*, marginalia designed to give a particular focus to the readers when they enter a rubric or prayer. Liberal prayer-books from *Kol Hanesama* to *Mishkan T'fillah* all use these 'spiritual footnotes', and while not part of the recited liturgy, they are becoming as much a part of the worship experience as the *Amidah* and closing song.

¹⁰⁷ Chaim Stern, *Gates of Repentance* (New York: CCAR Press, 1978), pp 435-441.

¹⁰⁸ Chaim Stern, *Gates of Prayer* (New York: CCAR Press, 1975), pp. 590ff.

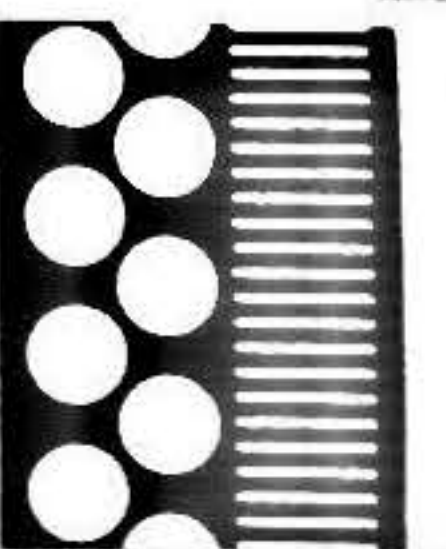
¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 617.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 651ff.

¹¹¹ Various, *Union Prayer Book* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis: 1961) p. 45.

All of these point toward a key part of the liturgies of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, the use of personal, deeply visceral language to move the individual worshipper to greater piety. We see this with Kalonymos' poem and his use of powerful, nearly pornographic descriptions of martyrdom and Christian folly to get a point across. Similarly, much Holocaust poetry depicts unmarked graves, ashes, gas chambers, crematoria, and other graphic reminders of the horrors of the *Shoah*. On the other end of the spectrum, marginal notes attempt to speak personally to the worshipper, to connect with the individual in an individualized fashion.

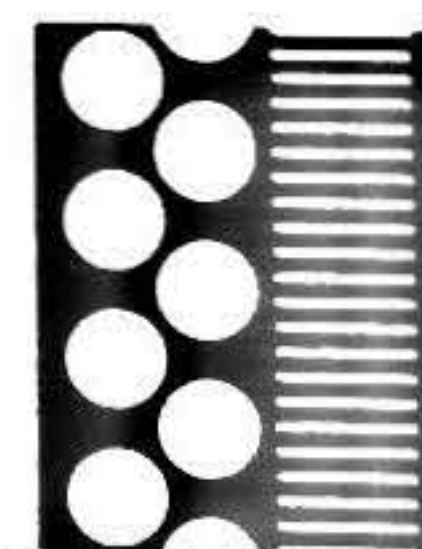
The question, then, is whether such personal, graphic imagery, such polemical poetry, has a place in liberal creative liturgy? It seems doubtful that such liturgies could find much acceptance in today's increasingly diverse liberal congregation. The kind of thunderous polemic used by Kalonymos seems antithetical to liberal religious values; that kind of 'shock therapy' is simply not a part of the prayer-vocabulary of a society based on individuality; when recited, it sounds coercive, emotionally manipulative. Even the gentler poetry of the *Rokeah*, putting forth an ideal, could be a hard sell in our post-modern world. Congregants might see the idealization of certain archetypes as a kind of coercion, or worse, a kind of discrimination. The Jew who is unmarried, who does not know Hebrew, who is agnostic, who is culturally conservative—who does not embody the ideal—will look suspiciously at any such attempts.



Is there a way, then, to convey a message, an ideal, without alienating a large segment of the congregation? And if so, will it carry any weight? Part of the power of the polemic is the authority it carries. What happens to that authority when it is turned into a 'suggestion'? This, of course, is part of the debate going on now in the testing of *Mishkan T'fillah*: much of the new poetry and the retooled translations of fixed pieces such as the *V'ahavta* are theologically immanent, comfortable, even homey. The translation of the *V'ahavta* reads more like Anna Quindlen than Judah b. Kalonymos. One must look long and hard for a God of smoke and fire, a God who demands justice and commands *mitzvot*; instead, one finds a God who sits with you at the kitchen table and unfurrows heavy brows as you worry about what to do next. Is such non-transcendence enough for the worshipper?

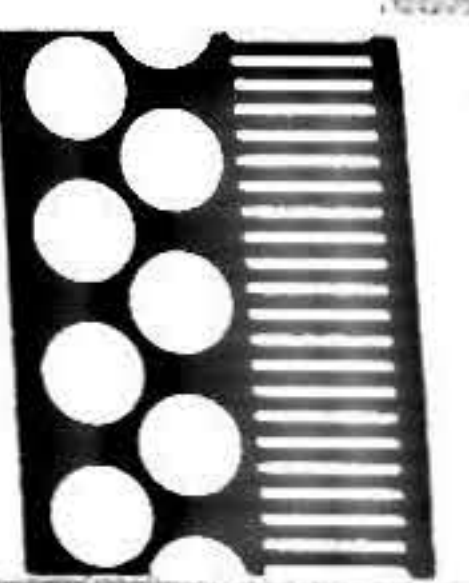
This does not mean that prayer must be without conviction: it does mean that the source of that conviction (i.e. the authors) must know their congregational dynamics very well. Whether *Mishkan T'fillah* reflects a continuing trend in creative liturgy or a recent mode that belonged to a particular generation and is now becoming 'canonized' cannot be decided here. Regardless, polemic can still be used to energize, encourage, and teach congregants: to reaffirm convictions or challenge old assumptions and confirm clear values.

One place where such language may be appropriate is in times of communal trauma. The responses to the destruction of the World Trade Center in September, 2001, and the destruction of the Space Shuttle Columbia in February, 2003, point to a need on the part



of individuals to share their sense of loss communally. In such instances, liturgy of a personal nature may provide comfort in a time of mourning, rather than cheap theatrics. The use of H.N. Bialik's *Acharei Moti* in the memorial service for the Columbia astronauts is an example of a successful use of poetry in this manner. However, this usage of poetry worked inversely to the intent of the liturgy of the Pietists. Unlike the poetry of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, wherein memorialized individuals served as representations for communal mourning, the Bialik poem presented an archetype—envisioned a century before, in a totally different experience—that could be applied to a particular circumstance far removed from the author's intent. While this is often done with liturgy, the choice in such circumstances could be quite powerful, assuming the poetry is chosen carefully and with sensitivity to communal and congregational need.

Another example might be to creatively reintroduce some part of the liturgy that has been 'gentrified'. Returning to the *V'ahavta* once more, one could interweave poetry around Deuteronomy 11:13-21, not in order to mitigate it, but to push the reader/listener to think about what he or she believes, to confront the Jew with this aspect of the tradition. What does this mean about our relationship with God, about our freedom of choice, about accepting the *ol malkhut shamayim*? Is there a 'right' and 'wrong' way to be Jewish? The recitation of such a poem could be quite powerful, especially in relation to a liturgical piece that assumes the reader knows the *mitzvot* well enough to teach them to their children. Such a poem could force the reader to think, "Do I really know Judaism well enough; do I really understand what I am reading?" In this fashion, traditional texts are not merely placed in front of the congregant, but are given a context. The same could be



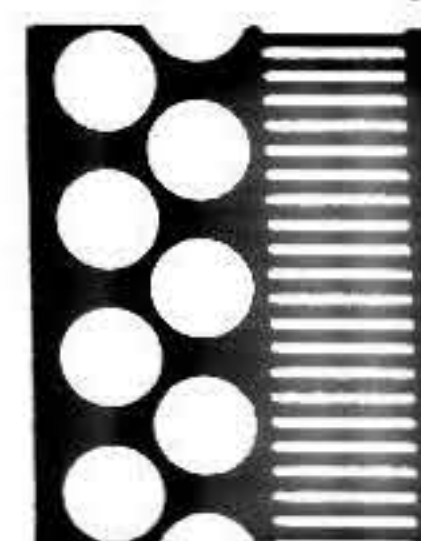
done with any piece of fixed liturgy, including those that have not been altered significantly: a poem on *Ahavat Olam* could talk about what it means to love *conditionally*, i.e. within the parameters of a covenant, and what that demands of us as partners in that relationship. An example of this, already done occasionally, is to precede the *Amidah* with the following prayer by Nahman of Bratzlav:

Do not think that the words of prayer
as you say them
go up to God.
It is not the words themselves that ascend;
it is rather the burning desire of your heart
that rises like smoke toward heaven.
If your prayer consists only of words and letters,
and does not contain your heart's desire—
how can it rise up to God?¹¹²

In this fashion, this poem (or another like it) may focus the congregant and present a model of ideal worship: one of emotional, meaningful prayer, rather than the rote recitation of barely understood Hebrew. The reader may not even be fully aware of the effect the poem has; he or she may simply go on to the *Amidah* without really processing what was just read, but with a desire to be more attentive to the meaning of the prayer, or more focused on being in the moment.

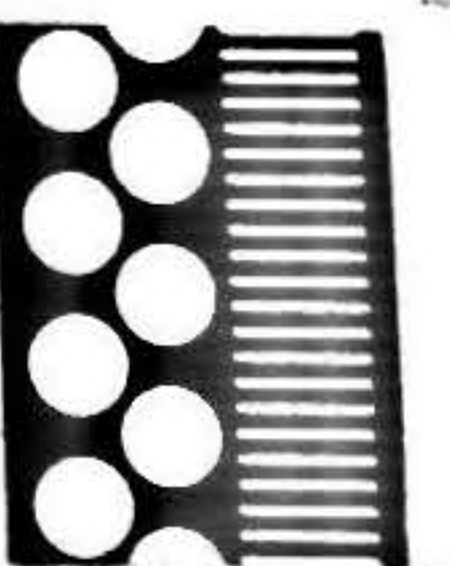
While these suggested liturgies are not polemical per se, they are perhaps the closest one can come, considering today's sensitivities. They serve a similar function as the polemic, and in some sense continue the values of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, such as devotion in prayer and dealing with communal trauma. At the same time, they allow the worshipper to engage those values and their liturgies for themselves; rather than be told what the

¹¹² *Kol Haneshamah*, p. 746

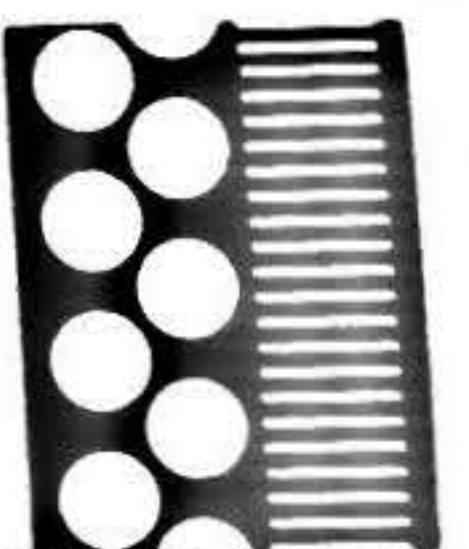


ideal is, they can develop their own sense, their own meaning—perhaps not what Judah

b. Kalonymos had in mind, but certainly an option for the creative liturgist with a message.



Appendix D: Poetry Translated For
Chapter 4



פאשטוי תבטורח מחרת הוצא

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היהודים בעיני המלך. יהי שם יי סבורך מעתה ועד עולם ויהפארו זכר
לנצח נצחים, כי לא בצדקותינו נסלנו כל זאת, כי אם לפסען שסור
הגדול הסבורך לערד ער. ביום ב' דיבר שדום ליהודים: כל הנוגע ביהודי
ועשה לו חבורה, ידו חקצאן, והחורג יהרג. והנהגונים החריסו כל אשר
ישלח ידו ביהודים לאבדו, ודרך חרפותו לא יעזיבו. ולשירות חותם
בכתב וכעצמה, צשסור היהודים ככתב עינים, ויהרסוהו ששעשו בראשונה.
חכר הוא בכסף סלא. והנריכ ר' משה הכהן רכב עם המלך וכתב חותם
בירו להשלים עם היהודים.

יצאנו מסויצבבורק כ"ז בניסן, וכאשר הלכנו פרסיה וחצי כארצותנו
לסאות בחנוכה ויהם וברגליתם והכו על הענלות. והצילנו השם.

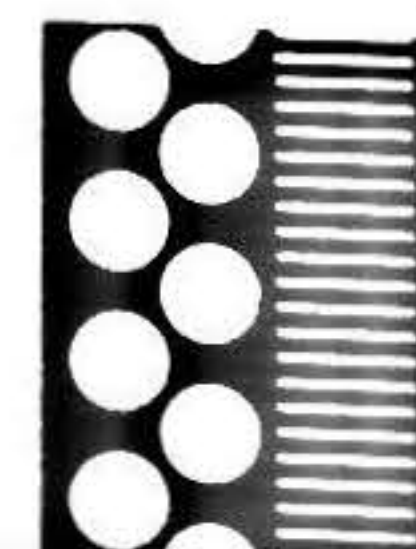
בתחנת

צפת, כ"ב כסליו, לאחר שפירשתי אני אלעזר הקטן
והעלול אח פראש יושב יעקב, צבטח והייתי יושב
ער שלחני, באו עזינו שנים מסוטנים והוציאו חרכם והכו אשתי
החסידה סור דולצא, ובחי בלש הנדולה בקעו ראשה, ובחי חנה בקעו
בראשה וסחו. ופצעו בני יעקב מנוכה ראשו ער חצי צחי ברקח.
ופצעו בראשי וכירי, כשסאל, ופצעו חסידיו וסלסר שצי. וסיר עסרה
החסידה ויצא אח סבית החורק וצעקה, שהרגו אותנו. ויצאו הסחוקים
והכוה בראשה ער הנרגרת וככתף, וסן הכתף ער החמורה וברוח כר
הגב וכבשנים, ונפלה הצדקה סח. ואני סנרתי הפחת וצעקנו, ער שאר
לנו עור ססרם. וצעקתי ער החסידה לבקש נקמה, וכן עשו. גם לאחר
שכוע הפסו הרוצח, שהרגה והרג שתי בנותי ופצעני וכני, והרגותו.
ונשארתי בחוסר כל וכעוני גדול וכיסורים גדולים.

וקורם הריגתה קנחה קלפים לכחוכ ספרים. והיא היחה ספרנסת אותי
וכני ובנותי סכסף אחרים. ובעונותי הנדולים נהרגה היא ובנותי.
נאסן ערי הדיין, כי היא היחה פורחת כרי סאלסור אני וכני. ואני צי
עציתן. כמה דסים נשפכו, והיא גוססת לעיני. מסקים יראנו נקסטן
וירחם ער נשסתן, וירחם ער פליטת הנשארת וער בני ועל כל ישראל

עסן, אסן.

Conclusion: Toward a Poetics of Creative Liturgy



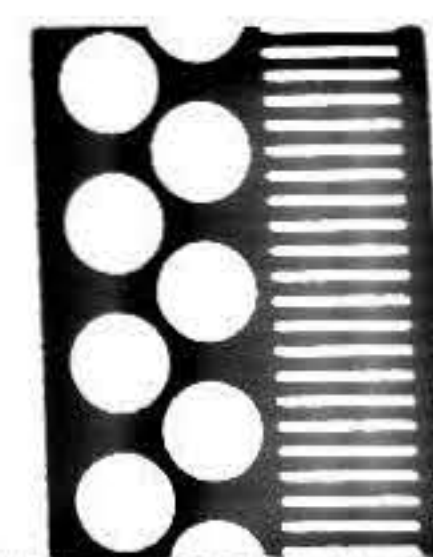
Throughout this thesis, we have looked to the *piyyut* in order to determine whether and how it could serve as a model for the writing of modern creative liturgical texts. To that end, we have explored four genres of *piyyut*: the classical *kerovah* for the regular Sabbath *sedarim* of Yannai; the *piyyutim* in the Ashkenazi Mahzor, written by Qallir and his imitators; the Arabic-style poetry of the Spaniards; and the polemical songs of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. There are many other genres of *piyyut* to which we could have turned: the poems of the Italian peninsula, for example, or *piyyut* as occasional poetry (*b'nei mitzvah*, weddings, etc.), and these genres should be explored further in another setting. Suffice it to say, the scope of this work imposes a limit on the genres analyzed, and I have chosen those *piyyutim* that are particular to synagogue worship and would be more familiar to the educated liberal Jew in America.

What, then, have we learned from looking at these four genres? Can any guidelines or rules be distilled from looking at these poems? At the conclusion of each chapter, we explored the modern implications of such poetry, and began to develop a picture of what an informed, thoughtful, creative liturgy might look like. The picture that emerged seems beholden to the following three theses:

1. *The liturgies that grow out of—and relate to—Torah, especially the reading for a particular Sabbath or Festival, can be powerful:* In each genre we looked at, whether the poem was written for holiday or regular Sabbath, we saw Scripture used as the source material for the *piyyut*. The poetic use of biblical verses, often connecting the weekly or special reading to a particular rubric or prayer, created a

resonance with listeners such that they processed the Torah reading and homily differently than they might otherwise have. Often (though not always), the biblical material was enhanced with appropriate midrashic material: we saw, for example, that the classical *payyetanim* wrote their poems as liturgical equivalents to the homiletical *petichta*, delivering the weekly homily (which would be given in a left-brain, didactic, and objective fashion) in an artistic, right-brain, subjective form. Similarly for the holidays, the *piyyutim* were used to emphasize and draw out specific themes of the specific occasions. Even those poems that did not utilize rabbinic material or were not specific to a particular day still drew from Torah, the Haftarah, and the Writings to create poetry that was simultaneously both familiar and ingenious.

The use of Scriptures in the liturgy can be a powerful tool, educationally and spiritually. The use of the weekly *parasha* or the holiday reading as the theme for the service, associating those verses both to the specific liturgical rubric and to the theme of the Sabbath in general, can make for an excellent passive teaching tool, a way to engage the congregant, to have him or her participate in the liturgy and understand something new about the Torah text. Congregants unable to access a frontal sermon, or even an interactive *d'var torah*, may relate very differently to a poem, and therefore process the material embedded within that poem better than the *drashah*.



The 'co-texts' used do not even have to be those with which the congregation is unfamiliar: a poem that employs a haiku format and utilizes commonly known texts—a pithy quote from *Pirkei Avot*, a line from Ralph Waldo Emerson—could provide for powerful interpretation and allow the congregant to engage the tradition while utilizing familiar cultural landmarks.

Furthermore, by anchoring the liturgy to the weekly *parasha*, a framework is created. The creative liturgy now has a theme and a direction; it is not selected (or written) based on the whim of the service leader, but to draw out particular understandings of both the liturgical and Torah texts. This could potentially expand to other, non-textual aspects of the liturgy; such a thematic approach could influence musical selection, seating, lighting, leadership style, etc. More research should be done to determine whether this approach would prove to be effective.

2. *Creative liturgy should be accessible.* In this sense, the camp liturgists had the right idea. Even the most difficult Qallirian poems were written in an "accessible" structure, with acrostics, rhyme, and repeated primary language, allowing for greater accessibility for the worshipper, and such accessibility should be considered by the creative liturgist. This is not an issue of 'dumbing down'; indeed, the liturgy can become a vehicle for explicating difficult concepts in the traditional liturgy and making those concepts meaningful and relevant to the worshipper. Nor does it mean the elimination of metaphorical language. It does

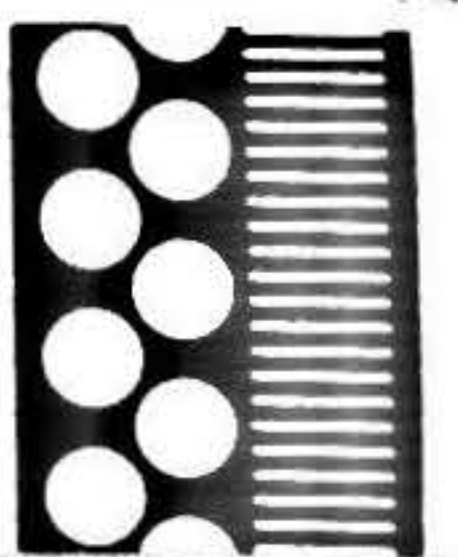
mean, however, that the language needs to be clear, and that the metaphors cannot be trite or maudlin. This has strong implications: there may be some parts of the liturgy that cannot be contained and re-imagined in modern, creative form. We may have lost the connection with the culture that created that piece of liturgy, or we may simply lack language as evocative as what was written 'originally'.

Regardless, this rule reminds us that what we bring to replace or supplement must be as good, as powerful, as the original, and must resonate with the worshippers.

In other words, as the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

This is not to preclude the use of difficult or profound metaphors, complex structures, or the use of Hebrew in the text itself; just because the poem is accessible doesn't mean it's easy. There are many examples, especially from camp liturgies, of the use of mixed Hebrew and English to convey an understanding of the text or a particular festival. Such examples could be adapted and 'elevated' for use in the synagogue (rather than using them 'as is' or disposing of them altogether). Familiar, understandable Hebrew (perhaps in the form of a refrain) and meaningful English that utilizes commonly known imagery and repeated primary language may be combined to fashion an effective creative liturgy, one that is quite approachable and communicates the emotions and ideas encapsulated therein on multiple levels.

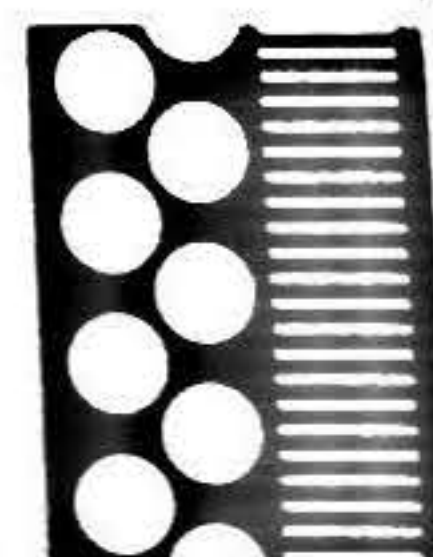
3. *The poetry must mean—and do—something.* At the beginning of this thesis, we discussed how certain ideas in liturgy seem self-evident, or even 'natural'. One



may assume the above assertion as falling into just such a category. However, this should not be taken for granted, especially when considering the use of already extant poetry. Very often, those writing creative services will insert a litany of verse or other literatures for a variety of reasons: they have aesthetic beauty, the use of the word "God" in them (and their seeming theological value), or demonstrate lexical similarity to a prayer, etc., without giving much thought to the enterprise. Thus, the creative service becomes a semi-organized anthology of poetry rather than a text for worship. Liturgical poetry cannot be all sound and fury signifying nothing. Liturgy is about function: one does not perform it unless it is, in some way, efficacious (even if that efficacy is 'only' psychological).¹ This, of course, contradicts the proclamation that the poem must 'simply be', but poetry in a liturgical context is not the same as verse found at a poetry recital. It is recited to make something happen. Whether that something is to coax rain from the heavens or alleviate the pain of mourning, it makes no difference; the function is the same. The prayer must have a message, a purpose, to its existence. That purpose could be to provoke, to challenge worshippers, to make them think differently, to suggest a new frame of mind. It could be to introduce some aspect or understanding of Jewish tradition unknown to the worshippers. It could even be wholly visceral: to create an image that causes a purely emotional response in the worshipper.

This is also not to say that the writer must try to anticipate the response of the congregation; the participants will inevitably understand and interpret (possibly

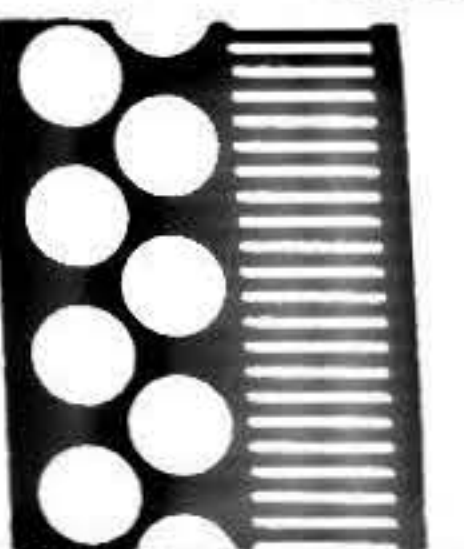
¹ Indeed, the notion of liturgy as literature is a complex issue better left to another study.



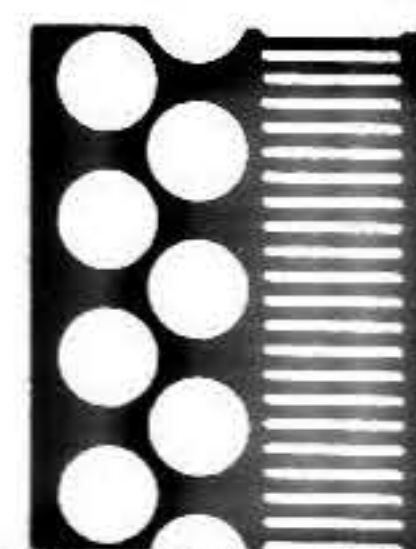
misinterpret) the liturgy in their own fashion. Perhaps it would be better for the creative liturgist to know that his or her texts will not necessarily be understood in the same way by each individual worshipper, or by the same worshipper over time. Nevertheless, the liturgist must understand that poetry as prayer does not simply exist; it acts upon the worshipper, and the author must be aware of his or her intent when the liturgy is chosen.

A Word of Caution

These three theses should not be read as rules. By following them as a formula, one could perhaps produce the 'perfect' creative liturgy. However, not all *piyyutim*—or all creative liturgies, for that matter—are successful, nor do all successful creative liturgies follow this structure. Any Structuralist reader of literature can point out how the use of structures can be unsuccessful as well as successful. The reasons liturgies 'work' for any worshippers are complex, and many of the hypotheses debatable. As we pointed out throughout this thesis, a community's *kavannah* is based on a myriad of factors, many of which cannot be fully anticipated by any construct. Thus, the above theses are not to be taken as a way of insulating the writer from all concern about intent, listener/readership, or communication. On the contrary: the purpose of these theses is to serve as guidelines for the would-be creative liturgist, to remind him or her that meaning emerges out of the congregation's own discourse. Prayer is powerful: as a form of communication, as literature, as the enacting of myth. Like anything powerful, it should be treated with care, and experimented upon with great caution. However, when it is treated appropriately, when it is experimented with successfully, it can give worshippers a new voice, a new expression of their needs, desires, and ideas. It is my hope that this thesis and its



conclusions will provide a framework to assist the liturgist in creating new liturgies for liberal Judaism, and that would-be writers of prayer will turn to the *piyyutim*—be they classical, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, or from other places and times in history—as their inspiration and their model.



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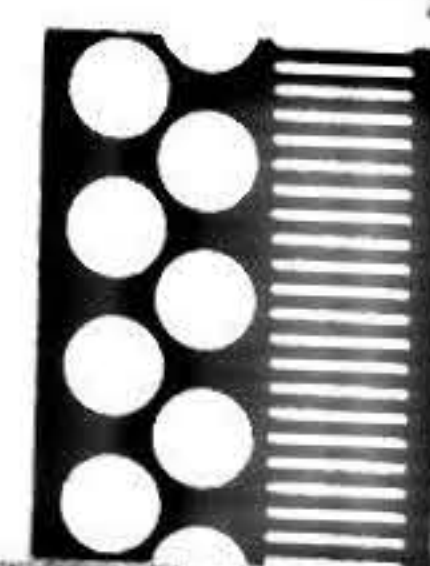
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