

Avodah

ANCIENT POEMS *for* YOM KIPPUR



Michael D. Swartz *and* Joseph Yahalom

AVODAH

The Penn State Library of Jewish Literature

Avodah

An Anthology of Ancient Poetry
for
Yom Kippur

Edited and Translated by

Michael D. Swartz & Joseph Yahalom

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In memory of Aaron Mirsky

איזו היא עבודה שבשמחה ובטוב לבב? הוי אומר זה שירה

(בבלי ערכין יא א)

PREFACE

THIS VOLUME IS the result of our mutual interest in the Avodah piyyutim and our conviction that these compositions are significant not only for the history of Hebrew literature but also for the history of Judaism in late antiquity. In 1996, Joseph Yahalom published the anonymous piyyut *Az be-²En Kol*, an edition of a previously unknown, monumental Avodah composition with an introduction on the history and significance of the genre. During this time, Michael Swartz had begun work on a study of ideas of sacrifice in post-biblical Judaism in which the Avodah piyyutim would play a pivotal role. When we learned of our common research interests, we decided to collaborate on an anthology and translation of early Avodah piyyutim. We decided on a format that would allow readers to understand the intricate network of allusions, biblical phrases, and expressions that characterize this genre. We also decided that the Hebrew texts of the piyyutim should be placed on facing pages with the English translations and that new texts of the piyyutim would be prepared.

We then set about finding a publisher that would be willing to take on the challenge of making this complex volume a reality. We were very fortunate to find enthusiastic advocates of this project at Penn State University Press. Peter Potter, editor-in-chief of the Press, was eager to show us how it could be done and has shepherded the volume to production with intelligence, grace, and extraordinary patience. The editors of the Penn State Library of Jewish Literature, Professors Baruch Halperin and Aminadav Dikman, have also been supportive of this book from the beginning. Special credit also goes to Keith Monley, who as copyeditor contributed immensely by saving us from countless errors and awkward turns of phrase, charging us to be consistent in our discussions and references, and helping us turn this into a readable book. The book was also proofread by M. Novick and Y. Septimus, two Yale University graduate students. Dr. Raphael Posner in Jerusalem, working with Jennifer Norton at Penn State Press, undertook the task of typesetting the Hebrew and English texts and likewise contributed considerably to its accuracy and design. Professors Dick Davis of Ohio State

University, Abraham Holtz of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Norman Bronznick of Rutgers University gave valuable advice on general and specific topics related to this volume, as did Natalie Dohrman at the University of Pennsylvania and Peter Cole in Jerusalem.

This project has also received a great deal of support from institutions and individuals, to whom our gratitude is due. The book was supported by a publication subvention from the Ohio State University College of Humanities as well as research grants from the College of Humanities, the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and the Office of International Studies at the Ohio State University, and a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for research in Israel.

We dedicate this book to the late Professor Aaron Mirsky, who was a pioneer in the field of piyyut, and who published the Avodah piyyutim of the earliest known liturgical poet, Yose ben Yose. He was one of the first scholars to show how the poetic and mythic dimensions of the Avodah piyyutim could contribute to our knowledge of late antique Judaism.

SIGLA

For the English translations:

- [] lacuna in the manuscripts
- [xxx] text restored or emended
- (xxx) text added for clarification
- {xxx} text restored from another manuscripts

For the Hebrew edition:

- <...> lacuna in the manuscripts
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- [xxx] emendation in the manuscript
- {xxx} text struck out in manuscript

INTRODUCTION

EVERY YEAR ON Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, in synagogues around the world, congregations recall the biblical sacrifice of purification and expiation that formed the basis for the original Yom Kippur. This recollection takes the form of a service known as the Avodah, designated by the Hebrew term for sacrificial worship. In this service, the prayer leader describes the sacrifice in detail, but not before recounting the history of the world from creation to the erection of the Tabernacle. The text of the service is a long liturgical poem. Within this poem the leader repeats a confession that, according to the ancient rabbis, was recited by the high priest in the sanctuary. When he does this, he and the congregation prostrate themselves to the floor, reciting a doxology that was to be recited on hearing the name of God.

This service, with its unusual prostrations, its detailed discourse on sacrifice, and its historical sweep, is unique in the liturgy of the synagogue. To modern Jews, it has been the subject of attraction and consternation. The great twentieth-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig seems to have been so moved by the power of the Yom Kippur liturgy that he revoked his decision to convert to Christianity;¹ yet the Reform movement found any mention of the sacrificial system in the synagogue liturgy deeply disturbing and controversial.² Today, messianically oriented sects of Jews pay serious attention to its details, publishing High Holy Day prayer books that emphasize this aspect of the liturgy, illustrated with speculative renderings of the Temple and its service.³

The Avodah service goes back to the early days of the synagogue, to the first few centuries after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It is an integral part of the lost literature of the ancient

1. Nahum N. Glatzer, "Franz Rosenzweig: The Story of a Conversion," *Judaism* 1 (1952): 69–79; see 73.

2. Cf. Abraham Geiger's remarks quoted in Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968), 166–67.

3. *Mahzor ha-Miqdash* (Jerusalem: Temple Institute, 1995–97).

synagogue known as *piyyut*. This complex and fascinating poetry was once sung in synagogues in Palestine during the classical age of the Talmuds and Midrash, from the fourth and seventh centuries.

Although it was often suppressed by generations of rabbis, its ornamental beauty and its deep exploration of sacred stories ensured its popularity for centuries. This literature, which produced dozens of poets and thousands of compositions before the rise of Islam, was barely known to us until the discovery of the Cairo Genizah, a treasury of discarded medieval Jewish manuscripts, at the end of the nineteenth century. It could be argued that the discovery of this literature is in fact second only in importance among discoveries of Hebrew literary texts to that of the Dead Sea Scrolls for our understanding of ancient Judaism, for it preserves linguistic forms, myths, and ways of thinking that we would not have known from Talmudic literature.

In the Middle Ages, this type of liturgical poetry was not always received with enthusiasm. In the Talmudic academies of Babylonia in the eighth and ninth centuries, the rabbinic authorities Yehudai Gaon and Pirqoi ben Baboi attempted to legislate against the inclusion of *piyyut* in the liturgy, arguing that it was forbidden to add one word to the statutory service.⁴ Their efforts, however, met with limited success, and *piyyut* continued to flourish even in the Babylonian Jewish liturgy and its Middle Eastern and European successors. In the modern period as well, *piyyut* was criticized for its length and obscurity, and many *piyyutim* were expunged from daily services in most Western congregations.⁵

The Avodah poems, a complex genre that includes myth, ritual, and biblical exegesis, can teach us much about the ways ancient Jews understood sacrifice, sacred space, and sin. They also yield a rich trove of myths and symbols not found in the conventional rabbinic sources such as the Talmuds and Midrash. They contain details about the ancient Temple known to ancient historians such as Josephus and to authors of the biblical Apocrypha but not to the Talmudic authorities. Moreover, they constitute important evidence for the social and cultural diversity of ancient Palestine, while reflecting the concerns of the priesthood in an age dominated by rabbis. They are also valuable as

4. For an overview, see Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1979), 66–71.

5. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform*, 122, 155, and elsewhere; cf. note 38 below.

coherent statements in the trajectory of biblical interpretation. Above all, these compositions rise to the level of fine literature. They are the products of great literary effort, continue and extend the tradition of biblical parallelism, and give evidence to the aesthetic sensibilities of the Mediterranean in late antiquity.

The historical importance of this genre lies in one of the central problems in the history of Judaism. In biblical and Hellenistic times the Jerusalem Temple was considered to be the locus for the Potent Presence of God, which was said to descend on the holy of holies when invoked by the high priest at Yom Kippur.⁶ It was the attainment of purification and the attraction of this Presence, and not only atonement, that lay at the heart of Yom Kippur. The loss of that Temple therefore meant the absence of that Presence from the world. The rabbis of the first centuries C.E. assured the people that prayer, study of Torah, and performance of the commandments were effective substitutes for Temple sacrifice. But the influence of the Temple and its ritual lived on, in the study of Talmudic tractates relating to sacrificial worship and in poetic evocations of the ancient rites. These were strategies for coping with the loss of the sanctuary in an age when most Greco-Roman communities practiced some form of sacrifice.

The Avodah piyyutim form a central corpus for understanding this problem. These poems, epic in scope, begin with extensive poetic descriptions of the creation of the world and the patriarchs of humanity, and wend their way through Israel's sacred history to the establishment of the sacrificial cult. At that point they describe in lavish detail the process by which the high priest prepares for the sacrifice, dons his ceremonial vestments, and offers up the bull and goat, a sacrifice whose culmination is the triumphant news that Israel has been forgiven.

This volume is an anthology of the Avodah compositions accompanied by a translation. It begins with the simplest, a prose retelling of the rabbinic narration of the sacrifice (*Shiv'at Yamim*) and its poetic preamble, *Atah Barata*, includes several Avodah poems—among them the masterpieces *Az be-ʾEn Kol*, the most comprehensive such composition, and *Azkir Gevurot* by the seminal poet Yose ben Yose—and con-

6. On this concept, see Baruch A. Levine, "The Presence of God in Biblical Religion," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 71–87; idem, *In the Presence of the Lord* (Leiden: Brill, 1974); and idem, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989).

cludes with a lament for Israel's lost sanctuary. In our presentation of this material we shall demonstrate why the Avodah held such fascination for generations of ancient Jews.

AFTER THE TEMPLE

According to ancient Israelite religion, in order for the Presence of God to appear in the Temple, the sanctuary had to be rid of all ritual impurity.⁷ Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, provided the community an opportunity not only to atone for its sins but to cleanse the Temple of physical impurity. On that day only, the high priest, clad in white linen, entered the innermost sanctuary, the holy of holies, with his offer of incense and his prayers on behalf of the nation. It was believed that if the purification and incense rituals were carried out properly and the nation was deserving, the Presence of God would descend on the holy of holies.

In Jewish cultic theology, therefore, the loss of that Temple meant the loss of that Presence to the world. With no sacrifices and no physical sanctuary, the annual appearance of the Divine on earth was no longer to be. That this idea persisted well beyond the first century is attested by a poetic passage in a fifth-century homiletic composition known as *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* describing how the divine presence, the *Shekhinah*, ascended in ten stages when the Temple was destroyed:

From the ark cover to the cherub;
 From the cherub to the threshold of the house;
 From the Temple building to the two cherubim;
 From the two cherubim to the roof of the sanctuary;
 ...

And so on, finally upward.⁸

The tragedy of that destruction and the crisis it created were thus not simply physical but theological. The Babylonian Talmud paints a portrait of groups of first-century ascetics who abstained from meat and wine in mourning for the Temple.⁹ Centuries later, groups known as the

7. Levine, *Presence of the Lord*.

8. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 13:11 (ed. Mandelbaum, pp. 234–35) (= Buber 114b); cf. *Midrash Ekhah* (ed. Buber) *Petihta* 25 (fols. 15a–b); *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A* (ed. Schechter) ch. 34 (p. 102); b. *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

9. B. *Baba Batra* 60b.

Mourners of Zion developed an ascetic regimen on this basis. The apocryphal Book of Baruch reflects the response of apocalyptic communities that saw the cataclysm as a challenge to their eschatological expectations. The centuries following the destruction of the Temple also saw the rise of the leading rabbis, scholars who needed no priestly pedigree but derived their authority from their mastery of Torah. For the rabbis, the proper substitute for sacrifice was not to be found in the concept of sacred space, but in sacred actions. Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, one of the founders of the rabbinic movement, is said to have declared, "We have another means of atonement, effective as Temple sacrifice. It is deeds of loving-kindness."¹⁰ Other statements assert that the study of sacrificial law, enshrined in the Mishnah and related sources, was equivalent to the performance of those sacrifices.¹¹ Prayer in the synagogue was also considered to be a form of sacrifice: A famous rabbinic statement declares prayer to be "the sacrifice in the heart" (*Avodah ba-Lev*).¹² According to the Palestinian Talmud, when a prayer leader was called upon to begin the prayer service, the congregation would call, "Perform our sacrifice."¹³ A Palestinian midrash interprets Hos 14:3, "instead of bulls we will pay [the offering of] our lips," to refer to prayer.¹⁴

THE SYNAGOGUE

As it developed over those centuries in Palestine, the synagogue became a major center of culture whose relationship to the vanished Temple was complex. Because, according to ancient Jewish thought, the synagogue was not inhabited by the divine presence, it was never accorded the same status of sacred space as the Temple.¹⁵ At the same time, the synagogue is known in rabbinic literature as the "small sanctuary" (*miqdash me'at*),

10. Avot de-Rabbi Natan A ch. 4 (ed. Schechter, p. 21), B ch. 8 (ibid., p. 22). For a survey of rabbinic statements on sacrifice and the cult, see Naftali Goldstein, "Avodat ha-Qorbanot be-Hagut Ḥazal she-le-Aḥar Ḥurban Bet ha-Miqdash," *Daat* 8 (1982): 29–51; cf. Yakov Genack, "Mišvat Sukkah ba-Halakhah shel Ḥazal: Ben Bayit le-Miqdash," *Daat* 42 (1999): 283–98.

11. See Goldstein, "Avodat ha-Qorbanot," 31–32, 42–43; Tanḥuma Šav 14; b. Megillah 31b; b. Menahot 110a.

12. Sifre Deut 41 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 88); y. Berakhot 4:1 (7a); Midrash Tannaim Deut 11:13; b. Ta'anit 2a; Midrash Tehillim 66 (157b).

13. Y. Berakhot 4:4 (8b).

14. Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana pisqa 24 (ed. Mandelbaum, 2:377). Cf. also Rashi to b. Yoma 36b.

15. On the relationship of the synagogue to the Temple, see Steven Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue During the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1997); Joan R. Branham, *Sacred Space in Ancient and Early Medieval Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); and idem, "Vicarious Sacrality: Temple Space in

and over several centuries had come to be known as a “holy place” (*atra qadisha*).¹⁶ Furthermore, symbols of the Temple frequently adorned the synagogue’s architectural ornaments and mosaic floors. Archaeological sites excavated in Israel in the last century show that the fifth to seventh centuries were a period of great activity in the building of grand synagogues in basilica form and the development of art for them. These sites include magnificent mosaic floors decorated with models of the Holy Ark, menorahs, incense shovels, and other accouterments.

The newly uncovered mosaic from the town of Sepphoris is a particularly rich example of Temple imagery.¹⁷ Its panels depict a wide array of images from Israel’s myth and ritual, including the binding of Isaac, the zodiac, and especially the range of offerings in the Temple. Rows three and four of the upper portion of the mosaic apparently depict the ceremony of the consecration of Aaron in Exod 29 and the daily sacrifice as described there and in Num 28. Although most of the figure of Aaron has been destroyed, the remaining fragments show that the mosaic portrayed him decked out in his ritual garments, as described in Exod 29. In fact, we can see the bells and “pomegranates” that adorned the hem of his robe. The panel also shows the laver used in the Temple, the bull sacrificed as a sin offering for the consecration ceremony (Exod 29:10–14),¹⁸ and the first lamb for the daily sacrifice (Exod 29:39).¹⁹ The panel below shows the basket of first fruits as ordained in Deut 26 and described in Mishnah Bikkurim 3:5,²⁰ the showbread on its table, and the components of the daily sacrifice (*Tamid*): the oil, the meal, the trumpets blown at the ceremony, and the second sacrificial lamb. All of these

Ancient Synagogues,” in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. Dan Urman and Paul V. M. Flesher (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:319–45.

16. Fine, *This Holy Place*.

17. On the synagogue and its mosaic, see Ze’ev Weiss and Ehud Netzer, *Promise and Redemption: A Synagogue Mosaic from Sepphoris* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1996), where parallels in rabbinic literature are suggested; for another interpretation of the mosaic and its function in the context of the synagogue, see Steven Fine, “Art and the Liturgical Context of the Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic,” in Eric M. Meyers, *Galilee Through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 227–37.

18. Note also that central to Yom Kippur is the sacrifice of a bull as a sin offering; the relationship between the two ceremonies was explored in the Talmuds to chapter 1 of Yoma; cf. also Yisrael Knohl and Shlomo Naeh, “Milu’im ve-Khippurim,” *Tarbiz* 62 (1992): 17–44.

19. This and the second lamb in the lower panel are labeled with quotations from this verse and Exod 29:41 in the mosaic.

20. See Weiss and Netzer, *Promise and Redemption*.

images served to remind the worshipers of the historical reality of the Temple.

The synagogue also served as a focus of cultural productivity. In the synagogue, prayer leaders performed a complex liturgy apparently composed of hymns and petitions improvised around legally determined themes and blessings.²¹ There too people came to hear sermons, and the liturgical poets practiced their art. The center of rabbinic activity was the academy (*bet midrash*), not the synagogue, although the rabbis were deeply concerned about regulating the synagogue, its physical layout, and its liturgy. Synagogue poetry, then, attests to an identifiable cultural mode, distinct from that reflected in rabbinic literature though intimately related to it.²²

We have only a rough idea of the social structure of the ancient synagogue. Among the synagogue personnel known to us are the *ḥazan* a functionary whose duties varied over the centuries, ranging from schoolteacher and custodian in the Talmudic period to cantor and composer in the early Middle Ages, and the prayer leader, *shaliaḥ ṣibbur* who represented the community in public worship. In the ancient synagogue there may also have been places of importance reserved for priests, honored guests, and other classes of people, including rabbis. A clue to how the polity of the synagogue developed over time can be found in a remarkable piyyut from a manuscript of the High Holy Day liturgy copied around 900 C.E. The poem is a *reshut*, an introductory composition preceding a key prayer, in which the author asks permission from the congregation to entreat God on their behalf. In this case, the *reshut* precedes an Avodah piyyut, *Eqra be-Garon* ("I Shall Call Out Loudly with My Throat"), by Pineḥas ha-Kohen be-Rabbi Ya'akov of Kifra, an

21. For the liturgy in Talmudic times, see Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977); for an overview of the structure of the Jewish liturgy, see Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), and Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Liturgy of the Synagogue: History, Structure, and Contents," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. William S. Green (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 4:1–64.

22. No doubt some synagogues were closer to the rabbinic culture than others; an example is the synagogue at Rehov, where the mosaics contain direct parallels to rabbinic literature. On this qualification, see Stuart Miller, "The Rabbis and the Non-Existent Monolithic Synagogue," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine (London: Routledge, 1999), 57–70. However, even at Rehov the quotations have to do with cultic matters such as sabbatical law, tithes, and the priestly courses; on the latter, cf. Hanan Eshel, "Shever Ketovet shel K-D Mishmerot ha-Kohanim mi-Naṣrat?" *Tarbiz* 61 (1991): 159–61.

eighth-century poet from Palestine. The passage is notable for its list of classes that make up the congregation:

I implore the Rock of eternity,
Who has knowledge of the life²³ of the innocent;
As I cast my eyes to the heavens,
I ask permission from the Merciful One.

And so too when I stand before the wise,
Who hear words from the truthful,
Who understand words of law:
I ask permission from the wise.

I look out at the congregation of the noble
And am fearful of the One who humbles and raises;
And of those standing behind me and before me as a fence:
I ask permission from the righteous.

The seed of the faithful,
Believers, sons of believers,
Who explore the law and understand:
I ask permission from priests.

Those who [] goodness on my behalf;
Who are satiated with good teaching and instruction,
For they attend grace and favor:
I open my mouth with the permission of Levites.

Those who honor this day and fast,
and respond, "Holy, holy, holy";
And teach scripture and Mishnah diligently:
I open my mouth with permission of *ḥazanim*

Those who are skilled in the subtleties of books,
Abiding in the shade of the One who dwells in mystery,²⁴
Who sing sweet, pleasant words:
I open my mouth with permission of scribes.

23. Lit., "days."

24. Based on Ps 91:1, interpreted here perhaps as "the Most High dwells in mysteries"; cf. Michael D. Swartz, *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 150.

Those who eternally elevate the Living One,
 Who say prayer before Him,
 Who stand before the One who makes mountains:
 I open my mouth with permission of those who recite liturgy.

Those who recite the specific and general,²⁵
 Who sweep behind like water,
 Who recite righteousness and justice:
 I open my mouth with permission of singers.

Those who lend strong voices in melody,
 Let their cry before You be pleasing;
 May You consider the melody of my tongue.
 I open my mouth with permission of the whole people.

O Almighty, as You forgive treachery;
 Listen to my entreaties from above;
 Grant me a pure heart that I may speak without fear or
 treachery:
 I open my mouth with permission of the entire congregation.²⁶

Each two stanzas represent a different category or pair of categories in the synagogue; the first three lines of each describe that category, and the last identifies it explicitly. This poem is also built on a religiously and socially hierarchical structure, with God at the top in the first stanza and the congregation and entire nation in the last two. At the top of the social hierarchy, closest to God, are the sages—the “wise” and “righteous”—who surround the poet like a fence and before whom he trembles. Next come the priests and the Levites, the former being the “believers, sons of believers,” in that their office is hereditary. Scribes and *ḥazanim* come next. The *ḥazan* is associated with the scribes and described as one who “teach[es] scripture and Mishnah,” two subjects that were taught primarily to children. This is an indication that when

25. Referring to the principles by which the Torah is interpreted according to tradition and thus, perhaps, to the midrash embedded in piyyutim.

26. The text appears in facsimile in Joseph Yahalom, *Maḥzor Ereṣ Yisrael: Qodeṣ ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), 71–72. The text is edited in Ezra Fleischer, “‘Iyyunim be-Hashpa’at ha-Yesodot ha-Maqhelatiyim ‘al ‘Iṣuvam ve-Hitpathutam shel Suge ha-Piyyuṭ,” *Yuval* 3 (1974): 46–47 [Hebrew section]. See also Joseph Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Meṣi’ut ba-Zeman ha-‘Atiq* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), 41–42.

this hymn was composed, a significant function of the *ḥazan* was elementary education.²⁷ Next in the social order comes the payetan himself, who “say[s] prayer,” and possibly an accompanying choir of “singers.”²⁸ The poet thus places himself in a humble position, close to the people for whom he is a spokesman.

We also have medieval evidence that an author of piyyut (payetan) and performer (*shaliaḥ ṣibbur* or *ḥazan*) could either be one and the same person or two. In letters found in the Cairo Genizah, cantors write to each other of obtaining written copies of particular piyyutim for performance in the synagogue.²⁹ In the thirteenth century, the Spanish poet and musicologist Judah Al-Ḥarizi satirized a cantor whose liturgical poetry suffered from verses that are “broken and contorted, without rhyme or meter,” and a choir of “four braying asses who think they are singers.”³⁰

After the destruction of the Temple, the main ritual function of the priests was no longer valid. Yet, as we can see from the poem quoted above, they were recognized as a distinct class within the synagogue. What, then, was their status in Palestinian society after 70 C.E.? We know that several rabbis were of priestly descent. Occasionally Talmudic literature, in the course of discussing a matter of cultic law, cites the family memories of individuals whose ancestors served in the Temple.³¹ Rabbinic literature hints at encounters with priestly legislators whose rulings contradicted those of the rabbis.³² More significant, we know of families of priests who migrated to the Galilee and there preserved the clan names and social organization of their preexilic past and claimed the prestige of priestly aristocracy. This fact, as we will see, is significant for understanding the social and cultural context of the Avodah poems.

27. On this function of the *ḥazan* see Hyman I. Sky, *Redevelopment of the Office of Hazzan Through the Talmudic Period* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 30–31.

28. See Fleischer, “Iyyunim.” However, according to Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Mešīʿut*, 41–42, the parallelistic structure of the stanzas, each two standing for one category, makes it less likely that these two stanzas represent separate classes of payetan and chorus.

29. See S. D. Goitein, *Sidre Ḥinukh* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1962), 97–103; cf. idem, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 2:221.

30. Yehudah Al-Ḥarizi, *Tahkemoni*, ed. Y. Toporowski (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1952), ch. 24, pp. 224–25. See Fleischer, “Iyyunim,” 47.

31. See, for example, y. Yoma 5:6 (42b).

32. See Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judean Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 96–109, on priests in rabbinic literature; see 106–7 on the possibility of priestly courts.

POETS AND PRIESTS

Late antiquity saw the rise of a new aesthetic, in which ornamentation was prized over classical proportion and lavish description characterized literary value. Michael Roberts, describing this aesthetic in late Latin poetry, calls this the Jeweled Style.³³ Roberts argues that in that period, the goal of the arts was to dazzle the reader or viewer with the interplay of details rather than to express an elegant whole. As he puts it, "Late antique taste did not tolerate the plain and the unadorned; brilliance of effect, the play of contrasting colors, is all."³⁴ In his view, this aesthetic is not confined to poetry but can be found in the arts and literary criticism. As a result, late Latin poetry abounds in artfully composed lists of distinct parts and what was known as *leptologia*, the lavish description of details in the course of a poem or narrative.

So too, during this period, while synagogues were being adorned with fine mosaic and stonework, the synagogue service itself was being adorned with an increasingly ornamental style of liturgical poetry. This poetry, called *piyyut*, a term derived from the Greek *poiētēs*, sought to impress the listener with its deep knowledge of biblical and midrashic exegesis, its innovative use of language, and its rhythm and assonance.

This genre of poetry began as embellishments to the established liturgical order. The earliest examples stayed relatively close to the themes and language prescribed by the liturgy, lacked rhyme, and used only the simplest rhythm. Neither were the earliest piyyutim characterized by the dense allusiveness, or metonymy, that came to be the hallmark of the genre. In the course of time piyyut developed distinctive forms, each with its own themes and set of structural and prosodic rules. The poems became longer and more complex, eventually adding rhyme and delighting in alliteration, recondite references, and intellectual puzzles. Eventually too the poets began to sign their names to the compositions in acrostics. The first poet known to us by name, Yose ben Yose, is represented in this volume with two important and influential compositions, *Azkir Gevurot Eloah* and *Atah Konanta 'Olam be-Rov Heses*. The classical period of piyyut was reached in the sixth to eighth centuries, when the poets Yannai, Shimeon bar Megas, Eleazar ben Qallir,

33. Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

34. *Ibid.*, 118.

and Pineḥas ha-Kohen wrote hundreds of intricate compositions based on the lectionary cycle and for the daily and seasonal liturgies, festive occasions, and times of personal and national mourning.

The most distinctive feature of piyyut, beginning with the age of Yose ben Yose and especially in the classical period, is the use of metonymy, known in Hebrew as *kinnui*. This technique, which may have its roots in biblical parallelism, involves substituting a word or phrase, usually based on scriptures, for a name or thing. Thus in *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, Moses is referred to as the Stutterer in light of Exod 4:10–11, in which Moses professes a speech impediment. Often, these are based on mid-rashic exegeses and stories known to the poet and audience. Thus in *Az be-ʿEn Kol* the Temple is called “that which is entirely beautiful,” based not only on the Psalm’s designation of Zion as such (Ps 50:2) but on an exegesis of that verse in the Tosefta (t. Kippurim 2:15) that sees the Temple as the place on which is founded the entire world’s beauty.³⁵ So too the term “gauze,” which Yose ben Yose uses for heaven in *Azkir Gevurot*, based on Isa 40:22, is also found in the Babylonian Talmud (b. Shabbat 104a). Sometimes, however, a more direct form of metonymy, not based on scripture, is used. Thus in *Az be-ʿEn Kol* the word “eyelids” stands for “eyes,” and the expression “his ankles came early” stands for “his feet hastened.”³⁶

To modern ears, accustomed to a poetic ideal in which ideas and emotions are expressed through simple eloquence, this technique might seem artificial and forced. Many scholars have noted that a high level of education in biblical and rabbinic literature is required for full comprehension and appreciation of most piyyutim. And indeed, in the Middle Ages, once this technique had developed to a high level of intricacy, the great Spanish Hebrew poets, such as the twelfth-century poet and commentator Abraham ibn Ezra, criticized payetanim such as Eleazar ben Qallir for sacrificing meaning for artifice.³⁷ In modern times even harsher critiques were made.³⁸ Yet there is every indication that piyyut was a popular genre in ancient and early medieval synagogues. If this

35. For a list of *kinnuim* in the poetry of Yose ben Yose, see Aaron Mirsky, *Piyyute Yose ben Yose*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1991), 62–71; see also Joseph Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol: Seder ha-Avodah ha-Ereš-Yisreʿeli ha-Qadum le-Yom ha-Kippurim* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1996), 215–20.

36. *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, lines 760 and 771.

37. See ibn Ezra’s commentary to Eccl 5:1.

38. See Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Mešīʿut*, 10–11, on the attitude of Mendele Mocher Seforim and other modern writers on the language of piyyut.

recondite style was a hallmark of the genre, how could it have been understood by the public?

There is no one definitive answer to this question. S. D. Goitein has suggested that it was the melodies, sung by popular cantors, that attracted the audience.³⁹ However, it is unlikely that these lengthy, complex compositions survived solely for that reason. We should consider that while most Jews in Palestine in late antiquity were not rabbinic scholars, their level of basic education was not necessarily poor. Elementary education in this period, which was available to some, if not all, might include the extensive memorization of passages from the Bible and some extrabiblical traditions such as the Mishnah. Moreover, people from all walks of life would be familiar with stories about biblical figures and other heroes, told in everyday settings and in sermons delivered by popular preachers. Such stories and exegeses would also be embedded in the translations (Targum) that accompanied the weekly reading of the Torah, which were in Aramaic, the daily language of Palestinian Jews and a close relative of Hebrew. Recently, Shelomit Elitzur, analyzing the compositions of the classical poet Yannai, has argued that these poems were structured in such a way as to telegraph the basic outline (or “plot”) by which the poem proceeds while at the same time providing details from the more obscure corners of biblical and rabbinic lore. Thus the educated listener could appreciate the poet’s clever allusions and plays on words, while the less-educated listener could follow the basics of the composition and marvel at the poet’s erudition and skill. In the case of our *Avodah piyyutim*, ancient listeners were at an additional advantage. They had already read chapter 16 of Leviticus, which sets out the ritual procedure, and they would know that the poem would begin with the history of the world and Israel’s heroes and advance to the description of that ritual. In fact, the description of the ritual itself in most *Avodah piyyutim* is relatively straightforward in comparison with the poets’ treatment of other themes. Moreover, it is in the nature of *piyyut* to overwhelm the listener with images from Israel’s culture; just as the programmatic meaning of a frieze or mosaic need not have been clear to every participant in a Greek temple, Byzantine church, or ancient synagogue, so the subtleties of the payetan’s handiwork may not have prevented the ancient Jew from appreciating his craft.

39. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 2:159.

If in technique piyyut formed a kind of verbal counterpart to the art of the synagogue, the same could be said of theme, for many of the themes found throughout the mosaics were important to the payetanim as well. Since the zodiac took a central place in synagogue art, it could also be interpreted and elaborated by the poet.⁴⁰ Therefore we should not be surprised to find the Temple remembered in major genres of synagogue poetry. The Palestinian payetanim, who seem to have settled mostly in the Galilee, devoted a special place in their piyyutim to the priestly settlements in that region. Sepphoris, for example, was both a center for the rabbinic class and for priestly families.⁴¹ In the fifth century, when the synagogue mosaic in Sepphoris was laid, the priests still held on to at least some of their ancient status. In the Temple, the priests had served according to a strict order of rotation. They were divided into twenty-four “watches” (*mishmarot*), each with its own week. After the destruction of the Temple the priests took up residence in the villages of the Galilee according to these watches. In this fashion they preserved not only the name of the watch but also the exact order of rotation, apparently against the day that the Temple service would be restored. Mention of these watches is found mostly in the congregational prayers for the Ninth of Av, alongside mention of the Temple and grief for the destruction of the city. But poets also wrote piyyutim in memory of the watches for each Sabbath.⁴² As late as the eighth century, Pineḥas ha-Kohen, a priest from Kifra, a suburb of Tiberias, was able to write piyyutim for the Sabbath in honor of the priests who would have been making their entrance to the Temple at the end of the Sabbath had the Temple in Jerusalem not been destroyed.⁴³ Along the same lines, a liturgical poet by the name of Hadutahu saw fit to ornament the Sabbath liturgy of his fifth–sixth century community with highly complex, comprehensive priestly compositions.⁴⁴ He, too, was undoubtedly from the Galilee, and probably also a priest. In his piyyutim, Hadutahu expresses

40. See Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Mešī'ut*, 20–24.

41. See Stuart S. Miller, *Studies in the History and Traditions of Sepphoris* (Leiden: Brill, 1984).

42. See Joseph Yahalom, “The Temple and the City in Liturgical Hebrew Poetry,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim period, 638–1099*, ed. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi; New York: New York University Press, 1996), 274–75.

43. See Menahem Zulay, *ʿEretz Yisrael u-Fiyuṭeha: Mehqarim be-Fiyute ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), 154–63.

44. Paul Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1927), 1*–66*, 1–23 [Hebrew numbering].

the wish that the priests merit the restoration of the Temple service. So, for example, in regard to the eleventh watch, he says:

Return those who call out “Restore us” (*tashiv*)
Those who are called from the community of Elyashiv

Through a wordplay on the Hebrew root for “restore,” the poet expresses the desire that the priests of the village of Kfar Kanna, assigned to the Watch of Elyashiv, be returned to Temple service. Another important genre was the lamentations (*qinot*) for the Ninth of Av, the day of remembrance for the destruction of the Temple. Thus Eleazar ben Qallir referred to the priestly orders in his famous *qinot*, which entered the traditional liturgy.⁴⁵

These themes may indicate something about the social position of the poets. We know next to nothing about the lives of the payetanim. Some of them became the focus of legends written down in the early Middle Ages;⁴⁶ some reveal small details about their location or lineage. We do know, however, that several of them were members of priestly families. Sometimes this lineage is preserved in their names, which include the term *kohen*, “priest”: for example, Shimeon ha-Kohen bar Megas (sixth–seventh centuries); Pineḥas ha-Kohen be-Rabbi Ya’akov of Kifra, mentioned above (eighth century); and Yoḥanan ha-Kohen be-Rabbi Yehoshua ha-Kohen (eighth century). Others, like Yose ben Yose, are considered by legend and tradition to have been priests.

We therefore have evidence from several sources that piyyut was a literature imbued with priestly piety and that a social relationship existed between the surviving priestly classes of Palestinian Jewry in the Byzantine period and the composers of liturgical poetry. Given this evidence, the Avodah genre has particular significance as a manifestation of Temple piety as it was expressed in the synagogue.

THE AVODAH

The custom of reciting the procedure of the Yom Kippur sacrifice in the

45. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Seder ha-Qinot le-Tish’ah be-Av* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1968).

46. On medieval legends about payetanim, especially the legend related by Ephraim of Bonn that Yannai was the teacher of Eleazar ben Qallir and murdered him out of jealousy, see Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Meši’ut*, 240–41.

synagogue service goes back well before the flourishing of piyyut. If the account in the Mishnah, the first rabbinic compilation of law, is correct, the high priest read the biblical passages prescribing the ritual for Yom Kippur at the conclusion of the ceremony.⁴⁷

Moreover, the Mishnah tractate Yoma, which describes Yom Kippur in the Temple, is itself conducive to liturgical recitation. Yoma is not a typical Mishnah tractate. Like a few other tractates, especially those that describe Temple ritual, such as Tamid, Parah, and portions of Pesahim, it is distinguished by its narrative style.⁴⁸ These tractates form a genre described by Martin Jaffee as “spare descriptive accounts of the most important institutions in ancient Palestinian Jewish society.”⁴⁹ Each of these tractates follows a key Temple procedure step-by-step, enumerating the ritual and sociopolitical considerations at work in understanding that procedure.

Yoma thus entered the synagogue liturgy soon after its composition. Two sources in the Babylonian Talmud apparently describe a prayer leader who recites his version of the Mishnah before Rava, a fourth-century rabbi, on Yom Kippur.⁵⁰ In each of these cases a detail of that recitation causes controversy about the legal opinion it reflects. From that point, the tractate apparently developed a liturgical status. One surviving version of the tractate adapted for the synagogue is represented in this volume. This composition, called *Shiv'at Yamim*,⁵¹ “Seven days,” for the opening words of Mishnah Yoma, follows the tractate closely, with a few changes: The dissenting opinions of individual sages are left out, and a confession by the high priest is inserted at three

47. According to m. Yoma 7:1, the high priest read Lev 16:1–34 and 23:26–32 from a Torah scroll and recited Num 29:7–11 by heart.

48. On this style, see Martin S. Jaffee, “Writing and Rabbinic Oral Tradition: On Mishnaic Narrative, Lists, and Mnemonics,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 4 (1994): 129–30, and the sources cited there; see in particular J. N. Epstein, *Mevo'ot le-Sifrut ha-Tanna'im* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Tel Aviv: Devir, 1957), 28–29.

49. Jaffee, “Writing,” 129.

50. B. Yoma 36b, 56b. It is unclear whether b. Yoma 36b refers to full recitation of the Mishnah. See Zvi Zohar, “U-Mi Metaher 'Etkhem—'Avikhem Ba-shamayim: Tefilat Seder ha-'Avodah shel Yom ha-Kippurim: Tokhen, Tifqud u-Mashma'ut,” *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 14 (1989): 1–28 [Hebrew section], 4–5.

51. Published in Ismar Elbogen, *Studien zur Geschichte des jüdischen Gottesdienstes* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1907), 103–17; cf. the edition in Zvi Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah” le-Yom ha-Kippurim—'Ofiyah, Toledoteha ve-hitpathuta ba-Shirah ha-'Ivrit* (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1974), 2:127–31.

crucial points.⁵² At some point it became customary for the congregation to prostrate themselves on hearing the report of the priest's confession, with its description of the divine name.

Shiv'at Yamim was apparently introduced by a poem called *Atah Barata* ("You Created"). This is the first Avodah poem known to us to introduce the theme of creation and the history of Israel into the structure of the liturgy. The period following these compositions, perhaps the fourth or fifth century C.E., which we call the preclassical period, saw the beginnings of the classical style, with its poetic treatments of liturgical themes, its network of allusive phrases, and its use of alphabetical acrostics. So too the form of the Avodah genre began to take shape. An early example of this pattern can be seen in the composition *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh* ("You established the world from the beginning"), the earliest extant true Avodah piyyut. This composition is still used in the Sephardic liturgy. Its combination of poetic style and directness stands in contrast to the later Avodah poems.

Other sources contributed directly to the development of the genre. Ben Sira, sage and poet of the second century B.C.E., devotes a pivotal chapter of his book, known as the Wisdom of Ben Sira, or Ecclesiasticus, to a description of the conduct of sacrifices by Simeon the high priest. His account is the only detailed Hebrew description of the Temple ritual surviving from the Second-Temple period written by an eyewitness.⁵³ Although it is a matter of debate whether Ben Sira is describing the Yom Kippur sacrifice or the perpetual daily offering (Tamid), the Book of Ben Sira influenced the Avodah genre deeply. The structure of the book, which prefaces its description of the sacrifice with a lengthy panegyric to Israel's heroes, prefigures that of the Avodah genre.⁵⁴ Indeed, a poem incorporated into the Book of Ben Sira describing the radiance on the face of the high priest as he emerged from the sanctuary found its way in an elaborate version into the Avodah corpus.

The Avodah piyyut is an epic form. The poems customarily begin

52. See J. N. Epstein, *Mavo' le-Nusah ha-Mishnah* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Tel Aviv: Devir, 1964), 971-72.

53. For texts concerning the Temple from the Second-Temple period, see C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996).

54. See Cecil Roth, "Ecclesiasticus in the Synagogue Service," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952): 171-78; cf. Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 29-30; A. Zeidman, "Matbea' Seder ha-Avodah Le-Yom ha-Kippurim," *Sinai* 13 (1944): 173-82, 255-62; and Moshe Zvi Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1976), 42-43 and 243-45.

with an account of creation, then describe each major generation, culminating in the selection of Aaron as priest. After this mythical-historical preamble the service in the Temple is described according to the order in the Mishnah. In these piyyutim, practically every major detail of the Mishnah is treated poetically, from the sequestering of the high priest in the Temple complex seven days before Yom Kippur⁵⁵ to the story of how the other priests used to rush up the ramp to deliver the daily sacrifice on that early morning, leading to violence between them,⁵⁶ to the ten separate times the high priest washes his hands and feet.⁵⁷

This structure is best exemplified in two early masterpieces, *Az be-En Kol*, a massive anonymous piyyut published recently for the first time by Joseph Yahalom, and Yose ben Yose's *Azkir Gevurot Elohah* ("Let me recount the wonders of God"), first published critically in Daniel Goldschmidt's edition of the prayer manual of Saadia Gaon, then published in a full edition with extensive commentary several years ago by Aaron Mirsky.⁵⁸ These compositions form the heart of this volume. *Az be-En Kol* is the largest extant Avodah piyyut and apparently derives from the fourth or fifth century. This anonymous piyyut is remarkable as one of the earliest and most extensive examples of the Avodah genre in its full development. Each theme that it includes, from its praise of God's creation of the heavenly array to its extensive excursus on the priestly vestments, is elaborated at length. The artistry of the poet is also displayed in its careful choice of allusive words, alliteration, and unusual references. The poem is also significant as a source of myths and exegetical ideas known to us from few other sources. The poem *Aromem la-El* ("I will exalt God") follows the text and tradition of *Az be-En Kol* closely. Because the extant fragments of that poem include descriptions of the sacrifice lost to us in the manuscripts of *Az be-En Kol*, we have included excerpts from this composition as well.

Azkir Gevurot is the masterwork of Yose ben Yose, the first liturgical poet known to us by name. This poem, probably written in the fifth century, is particularly striking for its elegant style, which combines the allusions characteristic of classic piyyut with the stately depiction of the

55. Cf. m. Yoma 1:1.

56. Cf. m. Yoma 2:2.

57. Cf. m. Yoma 3:3.

58. I. Davidson, S. Assaf, and B. I. Joel, *Siddur Rav Sa'adiah Ga'on* (Jerusalem: Reuben Mass, 1985), 264–75; Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 127–72.

sacrificial drama. Yose ben Yose also wrote other Avodah compositions, including *Atah Konanta 'Olam be-Rov Heseḏ* and is credited by tradition with *Az be-Da'at Haqar* and the lamentation *En Lanu Kohen Gadol*, “We have no high priest.” We have included *Atah Konanta 'Olam be-Rov Heseḏ* and *En Lanu Kohen Gadol* in this volume. It is likely that *Azkir Gevurot* was written after *Az be-'En Kol* and influenced by it. However, *Azkir Gevurot* proved to be more influential than *Az be-'En Kol* to later generations.

Yose ben Yose and the author of *Az be-'En Kol* lived before the classical period of piyyut, the sixth to eighth centuries. We have no Avodah piyyutim by the celebrated seventh-century poet Eleazar ben Qallir, and probably only one fragmentary Avodah by Yannai. Moreover, the classical age saw the development of new genres of piyyut, such as the *Qerovah*, a piyyut for the Amidah, as well as the *Qedushta* and the *Yoṣer*, genres used for recitation as introductory pieces to versions of the *Qedushah*. Therefore, it would seem that the preclassical period, the fourth to fifth centuries, was the golden age of the Avodah.

Hebrew poets continued to produce Avodah compositions, even if the genre did not achieve the same prominence after the Islamic conquest of Palestine. Saadia Gaon, in some ways the founder of medieval Hebrew letters, composed Avodot in a new style that departed from the intricate wordplay of Eleazar ben Qallir and his school.⁵⁹ Some of the most prominent poets of medieval Spain, such as Solomon ibn Gabirol, Judah Halevy, and Moses ibn Ezra, composed Avodah piyyutim. In the southern Italian, Byzantine, and Franco-German (Ashkenazic) Jewish communities, this genre continued as well. One of these piyyutim, *Amiṣ Koah*, by the tenth-century Italian poet Meshullam ben Kalonymos, entered the standard Ashkenazic liturgy.⁶⁰

The early anonymous composition *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh* (included in this volume) is used by the standard Sephardic liturgy and other Eastern liturgies. In the eighteenth century it was incorporated into the Hasidic liturgy, apparently because of that movement's adoption of the Sephardic rite, and only afterward was it used in other Ashkenazic liturgies.⁶¹ The old French liturgy incorporates a poem by Yose ben Yose,

59. Davidson, Assaf, and Joel, *Siddur Rav Sa'adiah*, 409–12; Malachi, *Ha-"Avodah,"* 1:72–85.

60. See Daniel Goldschmidt, ed., *Maḥazor le-Yamim Nora'im* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1970), 2:435–46.

61. *Ibid.*, 2:xviii–xix.

Eten Tehillah, and the Roman rite a poem by Yoḥanan ha-Kohen, the seventh-century Palestinian poet.⁶²

In modern times, the Avodah has been a controversial genre. The last major poet to compose an Avodah poem was the nineteenth-century Italian scholar Samuel David Luzzatto. Because the Reform movement rejected the idea of the restoration of sacrifices, liturgical versions of the Avodah service called sacrifice into question.⁶³ The Avodah has been the subject of scholarly attention since the beginning of modern liturgical studies, and the literary history of the Avodah has been traced by such scholars as Ismar Elbogen, S. D. Luzzatto, A. Zeidman, Cecil Roth, and Ezra Fleischer.⁶⁴ The most comprehensive study of the genre to date is Zvi Malachi's 1974 dissertation.⁶⁵ In recent years historians of religion and Judaism in late antiquity have recognized its importance for understanding the social and cultural history of Judaism in Byzantine Palestine.⁶⁶

LITERARY TECHNIQUES

Avodah piyyutim follow most of the conventions of piyyut as a whole. The poems are based on an alphabetic acrostic. Occasionally the acrostic goes in reverse order of the alphabet, and often each letter of the alphabet is repeated several times. The lines follow patterns of rhythm and parallelism common to early piyyut and, like others, make liberal use of metonymy and other forms of allusion. However, there are several distinctive formal features to the Avodah piyyutim.

The most prominent feature of the Avodah genre is its overall lit-

62. For a fuller account of the liturgical history of the Avodah, see *ibid.*, 2:xxiii.

63. See *The Union Prayer-Book for Jewish Worship* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1906), 2:228–39; cf. especially Dr. Einhorn's *Olat Tamid: Book of Prayers for Jewish Congregations* (n.p., 1921), 178–208.

64. For summaries of the history of the Avodah, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 174, 217, 238–39, and 249–50; Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor*, 18–25; and Ezra Fleischer, *Shirat ha-Qodesh Ha-Ivrit Be-Yeme ha-Benayim* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 173–77. An important early discussion is found in Elbogen, *Studien*; cf. also Zeidman, “Matbea' Seder ha-Avodah.”

65. Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah.”* See also *idem*, *Be-No'am Siah: Peraqim mi-Toldot Sifrutenu* (Lod: Haberman Institute for Literary Research, 1983), 46–113.

66. See, for example, Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 108–13; Zohar, “U-Mi Metaher 'Etkhem”; Yahalom, *Az be-'En Kol*; *idem*, *Piyyut u-Meši'ut*, 107–36; Michael D. Swartz, “Sage, Priest, and Poet: Typologies of Leadership in the Ancient Synagogue,” in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine (London: Routledge, 1999), 101–17; and *idem*, “Ritual About Myth About Ritual: Toward an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6 (1997): 135–55.

erary structure, particularly the progression from a mythical-historical preamble to the narration of the Yom Kippur sacrifice. The compositions usually begin with words of praise for God. These verses are often expressed in the first person, a feature that is usually facilitated by the acrostic, which begins with the letter aleph, which also begins verbs in the first-person imperfect or cohortative. Thus the poet begins with his declaration to praise God and commences by describing God in his heavenly array. From here the transition to description of God's creation is smooth. At this point the poet may linger on aspects of world and national history that suit the theme of the work, as we show below. A pivotal point is the narration of the selection of the tribe of Levi and the clan of Aaron. This allows the poet to focus on the process by which the high priest is instructed by the sages, officiates in the sacrifices, emerges from the inner sanctuary, and announces triumphantly Israel's redemption. The poems usually conclude with a declaration such as "happy is the eye that has seen these sights." Thus the listener is regaled with a panorama of Israel's history, led vicariously through the Yom Kippur sacrifice, and invited to recall the joy that greeted Israel's atonement upon its successful completion.

Other distinctive features of the Avodah have to do with its liturgical function. In the original Temple ritual commemorated by the Avodah, as by the Mishnah, the Tetragrammaton was pronounced by the high priest during his confession of sins. Description of this pronunciation plays a prominent part in the ritual—indeed, it seems to have been one of the first distinctive features of the liturgical Avodah.⁶⁷ Although Jewish law prevented the prayer leader from reciting the divine name, it became the custom for the synagogue congregation themselves to prostrate themselves as well at the report of the high priest's pronunciation of that name. In the Mishnah, and hence in subsequent Avodot, the priest's confession appears three times, along with the people's response, "Blessed be the name of His Majesty's glory for ever and ever." This liturgical declaration is presumably the people's response to the pronunciation of the divine name.⁶⁸ However, the third confession is the only one in which the Mishnah text says explicitly that the people heard

67. On this feature of the Avodah, see especially Zohar, "U-Mi Metaher 'Etkhem."

68. On such formulae, see Saul Lieberman, "Some Notes on Adjurations in Israel," in *Texts and Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1974), 21–28, and Joseph Heinemann, "Qedushah u-Malkhut be-Qeri'at Shema' de-'Amidah," in *Shai le-Heman: Mehqarim li-Khevod A. M. Haberman* (Jerusalem: Reuben

the divine name and prostrated themselves. In fact, Jacob N. Epstein has suggested that this third passage was not original to the Mishnah but was added from the liturgy.⁶⁹ By contrast, the name and subsequent prostration are a key refrain in the Avodah.

Other techniques common to poetry of late antiquity are used in the Avodah to particular effect. As we have seen, the verbal expression of the “Jeweled Style” relies on the use of words and images in series. Detailed description by means of the patterned repetition of short sentences structured in parallel syntax is thus characteristic of the literature of late antiquity. As the medieval teacher of rhetoric Geoffrey of Vinsauf explained, patterned repetition makes it possible to pay closer attention to the choice of words and changes in meaning.⁷⁰ Biblical poetry had earlier relied on parallel structure to convey poetic meaning and style. Piyyut often extended the biblical tradition of parallelism by emphasizing relationships between hemistichs within lines of verse. Thus the opening of Yose ben Yose’s *Azkir Gevurot* uses syntactic and semantic parallelism between the hemistichs as well as between whole lines. Here the lines are arranged from left to right so as to illustrate this technique:

Let me recount the wonders	of the magnificent God,
Who is unique, there is no other,	self-sufficient and none second
	to Him.
There is none beyond Him in the	none prior to Him in heaven;
universe,	
None preceded Him,	and none can supplant Him.
When the Lord conceived,	when God invented,
He consulted but none could	He spoke and none constrained
prevent Him,	Him.

The first line serves as the introduction to the whole poem and so does not use this form. But each of the following lines repeats a basic syntactical pattern. In most cases the parallelism serves synonymously (unique/self-sufficient, conceived/invented), but in the middle stanza

Mass, 1977), 107–17, repr. in Joseph Heinemann, *Iyyune Tefilah*, ed. Avigdor Shinar (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1981), 12–21.

69. Epstein, *Mavo' le-Nusah ha-Mishnah*, 2:971–72.

70. On this form in piyyut, see further Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Meši'ut*, 152–53.

the parallelism is antithetical (beyond/prior, preceded/supplant). The effect is to emphasize God's absolute sovereignty and eternal presence, before and after creation.

The poets are also capable of using simpler forms of repetition and listing for literary effect. In the *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh*, one of the earliest and most straightforward of the Avodah piyyutim, the anonymous composer details the steps in the Yom Kippur sacrifice in very direct language. The following passage consists of a series of nouns that culminate in verbs only in the fifth stich:

Diadem, robe, and linen breeches,
 breastpiece, ephod, royal headdress, and sash;
 sacrifice of bulls and burnt offerings of sheep
 and the slaughter of goats and the cutting-up of rams;
 the perfumed aroma and the burning of coals
 correct enumeration and the dashing of blood;
 supplication at the incense and true prayer;
 and his holiness, which atones for our sins;
 the measurement of fine linen and the arrangement of jewels—
 he is girded in all of these like a ministering angel.
 You ordained all these for the glory of Aaron;
 You made him for Israel an instrument of atonement.⁷¹

On the face of it, this would seem to be a dry listing of objects and actions. However, there is significance in the list itself. For the audience, it serves as a reminder of the elements of the sacrifice and gives as well a swift overview of the Yom Kippur ceremony. But the list also serves the prosody of the composition; the nouns are arranged by twos according to the four-foot rhythm of the stichs. The last three hemistichs break this pattern. In the second hemistich of the fifth stich—

he is girded in all of these like a ministering angel

—the poet loads both the holy vestments and ritual obligations onto the

71. MS add.: "and You placed the forgiveness of sins in his hand."

person of the high priest, who is likened to an angel. The next stich functions as a transition from the previous passage to the next unit.⁷² This stich, in which the poet turns to the second person—

You ordained all these for the glory of Aaron

—thus functions as a kind of zeugma, a construction used to tie together the objects that preceded it. It reminds the listener of God, who is the source of the sacrificial law and the object of the worship service as well. Thus the poet accomplishes one of the central goals of the Avodah piyyutim—the praise of the high priest and his intimacy with God.

SOURCES

The Avodah offers a good illustration of the range of sources that were available to the payetanim in ornamenting their discourse. At the same time, this genre raises questions for further research. In many cases we can see where the poets drew from the corpus of rabbinic literature, which was evolving in their time, and can detect influences and sources that were generally not used or known in the rabbinic academies.

The single most important source for the Avodah is the Mishnah. The entire genre can be described as a poetic elaboration of Mishnah Yoma. Yet its relationship to the Mishnaic source is not unambiguous. As we shall see, the piyyutim have a strong tendency to ascribe heroic qualities to the high priest. This places it somewhat in opposition to the Mishnah.

A major theme in Mishnah Yoma is the ongoing tension between the Zadokite high priest and the (presumably Pharisaic) sages, who, in the rabbis' telling, are essentially in charge of the sacrifice. In Lev 16, Aaron is the sole human character in the sacrificial drama. By contrast, the Mishnah is remarkable for its depiction of the high priest's passivity. In the opening of the tractate, the active verbs belong mainly to the anonymous priestly sages: They sequester the high priest, prepare a new wife for him in case he is suddenly bereft of a household to atone for, keep him awake while they lecture him, walk him from one chamber to another in the Temple complex, and even pass bulls and sheep before

72. This line, which begins with the letter *ta*ʾ, begins a new reverse acrostic.

him so that he will be familiar with them.⁷³ It is assumed that the high priest is likely to be an ignoramus or heretic, that he may not have the knowledge to expound on scripture on his own, or that he may follow Sadducean procedure in the sacrifice.

This picture is revised in the early *Avodah piyyutim*, which present the priest as an active and willing participant. *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh* is more direct in its language than the later *piyyutim*, and follows the Mishnah closely. Yet the author has certainly lent his editorial and ideological voice to the Mishnaic account. A striking feature of this poem is its emphasis on the volition, piety, and diligence of the priest; nowhere do we find the Mishnah's struggle between the sages and Zadokites. The priest is not lectured by the sages; rather, as the *piyyut* puts it:

For seven days he studied, in our Temple,
the laws of the procedure and the service of the day

To be sure, he is surrounded by the sages and warned of the solemn nature of what he is about to do; but he seems to take the lesson in good faith; he is soon performing specific acts joyously, and reverently:

He performed the commandment in awe and fear
and examined himself for interpositions (during) ablution.⁷⁴

He rejoiced in the commandment to uphold His law
and went down and immersed as he was instructed.⁷⁵

The controversies mentioned in the Mishnah find barely an echo. In the Mishnaic account, the Sadducean priest is warned by the Pharisaic sages to perform the ceremony properly—that is, according to Pharisaic law. Then, according to the Mishnah, “He turned aside and wept, and they turned aside and wept.”⁷⁶ *Atah Konanta* omits this dramatic

73. We would like to acknowledge Kevin Osterloh for emphasizing this contrast in the use of verbs in a seminar paper for Michael Swartz at the Ohio State University.

74. That is, objects that prevent effective purification by their interposition between the water and the body.

75. Lines 7–8 of the second section.

76. M. Yoma 1:5.

moment entirely. This is one of several examples of how the Avodah uses its Mishnaic sources critically.

The relationship of piyyut to Midrash, rabbinic biblical interpretation, is so intimate that scholars in previous generations often argued that piyyut was simply a means to convey the content of rabbinic homilies at a time when they were forbidden.⁷⁷ While subsequent research has discredited this theory, the student of piyyut must be attuned to the complexities of rabbinic Midrash in order to understand piyyut thoroughly. The influence of Midrash on piyyut can be seen in innumerable turns of phrase, poetic figures, and themes expressed in the piyyutim. But there are also instances where a midrashic idea inspires an entire section or motif.

The idea, expressed in the fourth-century Midrash Genesis Rabbah 1:1, that God used Torah as a blueprint for the world forms the basis for a significant passage in *Az be-En Kol*. This section, which unfortunately is fragmentary in the extant manuscript, begins by describing the Torah as the instrument of creation. That is, God created the world

With that which is longer than the earth,
with that which is wider than the sea,
with Your primordial possession,
with that which is the beginning of all action.

(lines 29–30)

In the first line the poet alludes to the esoteric idea, based on Job 11:9, that the Torah was larger than the world itself.⁷⁸ A few lines down, he details how the Torah served as the working plan for creation:

Looking into it, You carved out
the pillars of the heavens
before there was primordial chaos
on which the rafters could rest.⁷⁹

77. On this argument and its sources, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 222–24; cf. especially the editors' notes there.

78. Cf. Tanḥuma Bereshit 1. On the idea of the size of the Torah, see S. H. Kook, "Godel ha-Torah ve-Yahasah le-Godel ha-'Olam," *Iyyunim u-Meḥqarim* (Jerusalem, 1967): 108–19, and Moshe Idel, "Tefisat ha-Torah be-Sifrut ha-Hekhalot ve-Gilguleha ba-Qabbalah," *Meḥqere Yerushalayim be-Maḥshevet Yisrael* (1981–82): 23–84.

79. Heb. *Tohu va-Vohu*, here referring apparently to the primordial waters, on which the rafters of heaven rest.

This myth is based on the exegetical equation of the word “beginning” (*reshit*) of Prov 8:22 with the same word in Gen 1:1. However, this association is found only in rabbinic sources⁸⁰ and obviously served as the inspiration for this passage in *Az be-ʿEn Kol*.

Azkir Gevurot reflects a story, going back at least to the Second-Temple period⁸¹ and preserved in *Genesis Rabbah*,⁸² that the patriarch Abraham deduced monotheism by observing the ways of nature:

When he saw the course
of that which glides and shines,⁸³
eager as a hero when it emerges,
and weak when it sets,

the windows of the sky,
in the east and the west
through which the moon
leaps every day,

the arrows of lightning
the rush of the stars
dashing to and fro—
and not one fails to appear—

the unenlightened became wise
and inferred by himself
saying, “There is a Lord of these—
Him I will follow.”

(lines 81–84)

Once again, the entire episode is dependent on an exegetical tradition. *Az be-ʿEn Kol* describes God’s guidance of Abraham in this way:

You leapt toward him
like a lover his companion

80. Cf., however, Philo, *On the Virtues* 62 and *On Drunkenness* 30–31.

81. See *Apocalypse of Abraham* ch. 7 (James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983], 1:692).

82. *Gen Rabbah* 38:28 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, pp. 361–64). Note that the version in the piyyut is closer to the *Apocalypse*’s version than to *Genesis Rabbah*’s.

83. The sun.

and by the power of Your light⁸⁴
he took his steps.

(lines 460–61)

At this point the piyyut quotes Isa 41:2, “Who has roused a victor from the East ... ?” The idea that God’s light guided Abraham is also found in Genesis Rabbah,⁸⁵ which interprets the same verse with regard to Abraham: “He who lives eternally would illuminate any place where he walked.”⁸⁶ Here, as in innumerable instances, the meaning of the piyyut is dependent on a midrashic idea.

A more surprising feature of the Avodah piyyutim is the degree to which they preserve details and motifs found not in rabbinic literature but in Apocrypha and other Second-Temple texts. *Az be-²En Kol* is a particularly striking example of this tendency. As Louis Ginzberg and Gary A. Anderson have shown, opinions in antiquity differed about whether Adam and Eve were celibate before their expulsion.⁸⁷ Rabbinic Midrash presupposes that they did engage in sexual relations before their disobedience of God—indeed, according to one story in Genesis Rabbah, they had just had sexual relations, and Adam had fallen asleep, when Eve spoke to the serpent.⁸⁸ But some texts from the Second-Temple period and the early centuries of the Common Era, as well as the Church Fathers, asserted that Adam and Eve had no sexual relations in the Garden. Jubilees, for example, sees to it that Adam and Eve have sexual relations before their entry into the garden but not after they have arrived, thus avoiding pollution of the sacred realm of Eden.⁸⁹ The *Syriac Apocalypse* of Baruch (2 *Baruch*), a Jewish text from the early second century, states that only after Adam’s transgression did conception of children come into the world (56:6). *Az be-²En Kol* reflects

84. Reading *nghk* for *nhgk*; see Yahalom, *Az be-²En Kol*, 116.

85. Gen Rabbah 42:15 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 418).

86. Playing on the sound of the word *me’ir*, “arouse,” and the word *me’ir*, “illuminate.” See Nahum M. Bronznick, review of *Az be-²En Kol*, by Yahalom, *Lešonenu* 62 (1999): 152.

87. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909–38), 5:134 n. 4; Gary A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989): 121–48.

88. Gen Rabbah 19:3, on which, see Anderson, “Celibacy,” 124.

89. Jubilees 3.2–5a, 6; see Anderson, “Celibacy,” 128.

an opinion similar to that of the apocryphal literature. Describing the moment when God first brought forth Eve from Adam, the poet states:

He set her opposite him
and balanced his value with hers
but still her desire for her husband
had not been set.

(lines 260–61)

Thus does he clearly reflect the opinion that sexual desire was one of the things brought on by the Fall of the first couple, and diverge from the rabbinic opinion that fertility and sexuality existed in Eden.

Elsewhere, the author seems to respond to sectarian sources polemically. In Jubilees (50:8), sexual intercourse is specifically prohibited on the Sabbath. The rabbis, on the other hand, considered marital relations to be praiseworthy on the Sabbath.⁹⁰ So too *Az be-ʿEn Kol* states:

Tasting of the household table⁹¹
were not prohibited on it
for the inheritance of those who are blessed by Him
is the reward of the fruit of His hosts.

The fortress of the belly
is not closed up on it,
for He who opens the womb
does not delay its time.

(lines 218–21)

Thus, according to the author, God intended marital relations (“tasting of the table”) and birth itself to occur on the Sabbath. There is evidence that Jubilees was known in late antiquity, sometimes under the name *Little Genesis*. The pointed nature of this statement may be an indication that the prohibition of sex on the Sabbath may still have been an issue in fourth-to-fifth-century Palestine.

There is also evidence that the *Avodah* literature influenced midrashic texts themselves. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is a narrative midrashic

90. See Anderson, “Celibacy,” 131.

91. That is, the body.

composition, probably written in eighth- or ninth-century Palestine by a single author. Judging from its form and content, its context seems to be the synagogue. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, which by no means is a normative, conventional collection of rabbinic opinions, does have substantial affinities with *Az be-ʿEn Kol* in structure, linguistic tendencies, and themes.⁹² Since by its date it could not have preceded *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, it is likely that the poem or others influenced by it formed one source from which the midrashic composition's author drew.⁹³ This is a further demonstration that the Avodah piyyutim cannot be ignored in writing the cultural history of Judaism in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

THEMES

Because of its unique function, the Avodah service can be seen as a series of systematic statements on the meaning of the ancient sacrificial cult and its place in the universe. Each of the components of the compositions—the historical preamble, the description of the Yom Kippur sacrifice, and its treatment of the Mishnah—attest to a priestly ideology in which the Temple is at the heart of Jewish religion.

A major theme in the poems is that creation itself took place for the sake of the cult. This notion complements the rabbinic idea, formulated most famously in *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 1:1, that the world was created by the preexistent Torah and humankind was in turn created for the Torah's sake. This theme is manifest in subtle ways throughout the historical prelude, from the establishment of the heavenly prototype of the Temple to the election of the sons of Amram. For example, in *Azkir Gevurot*, the creation of vegetation and animals is depicted as the creation of food, a cultic notion:

There grew out of the earth
horned animals for slaughter
edible beasts,
both cattle and those that crawl.

92. See Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 46–53.

93. For a summary of arguments for the standard dating of the text, see Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. and ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 329.

He pastured the Behemoth
 with the produce of a thousand mountains,
 for on the day when it is slaughtered,
 He⁹⁴ will put His sword to it.

(lines 31–32)

That is, God will slaughter the Behemoth to be used as food for the righteous in the world to come. This section therefore signals a teleological view of creation, one not self-evident in the Genesis narrative; each created thing has a future purpose in history and eschatology. This will serve the listener later on, when the history climaxes in the institution of God's Tabernacle. The poem continues:

The Creator exulted
 and rejoiced in His deeds,
 when He saw
 that his work was good:

 grasses for rest
 and food of choice;
 the table was set,
 but there was no one to relish it.

He said to Himself,
 "Who will approach
 for the butchered animals
 and blended wine?"

(lines 33–35)

The purpose of the creation of humanity is the enjoyment of the food that God has created. The table is set, but there is no one to partake of it.

In another *Avodah piyyut* by Yose ben Yose, this teleological focus is even more pronounced. In his poem *Atah Konanta 'Olam be-Rov Hased*⁹⁵ creation of food is explicitly connected with God's intention in the details of creation:

94. That is, God himself.

95. On early discussion and publication of this piyyut, see Samuel David Luzatto, *Mavo*

You made, as a sign for those who know You,⁹⁶
 those who are clad with scales,⁹⁷
 and a fleeing serpent⁹⁸
 for the meal in eternity.

Did you not make out of the earth
 in great abundance
 cattle and crawling creatures
 and the beasts of the earth?⁹⁹

You set signs to be known
 of edibility and purity
 and for the company of the righteous
 you made the Behemoth fit to eat.¹⁰⁰

And when the world was built,
 in wisdom,
 and when the table was set,
 and its bounty,

You resolved¹⁰¹
 to invite a guest
 and to feed him
 your choice food.

(lines 18–22)

Here too, all creation is arranged for human consumption. Creation is also associated in this composition with eschatology. Employing a common legend that the serpent and Behemoth will serve as meals for the righteous in the world to come, the poet portrays their creation as

le-Mahazor Bene Roma, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1966), 24 and n. 29. The piyyut itself is published in Goldschmidt, *Maḥazor*, 2:465–78, and in Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 178–203. Mirsky's edition is used here. On this poem, see Elbogen, *Studien*, 79–81, and Malachi, *Ha-"Avodah,"* 2:20–22.

96. That is, for Israel.

97. Fish that are ritually pure.

98. See Isa 27:1. Here the poet is referring to the Leviathan; see below.

99. The rhetorical question is placed here for the sake of the acrostic; the first line in the stanza (line 19) begins *Ha-lo'*.

100. Heb. *hikhsharta*; that is, "You made the Behemoth kosher."

101. Heb. *va-tishqod*.

having taken place for that purpose.¹⁰² More than this, humankind is created for the purpose of praising God. In *Aromem la-ʿEl*, a piyyut influenced by *Az be-ʿEn Kol* and *Azkir Gevurot*, we read:

This One¹⁰³ surveyed,
and looked out at the world
as a city without inhabitants,
as an army without a commander.

He considered this,
and said, “What have I accomplished?
I created and achieved,
but who will recount My praises?”¹⁰⁴

The idea that the creation of humankind has a cultic purpose is developed further, perhaps under the influence of our piyyutim, in Palestinian midrashim of late antiquity. In chapter 6 of *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, the great size and glorious appearance lead the creatures of the world erroneously to worship Adam. In response Adam proposes: “Let us both go and clothe [God] in glory and might and enthrone the One who created us. For if there is no people to praise the King, will the King praise Himself?” This mythic idea, that God in fact needs creation to be God, is stated most boldly in an earlier Palestinian midrashic source. The midrash is based on the word order of Gen 1:1, which, following the

102. On the idea of the monsters as meal for the righteous, see 1 *Enoch* 60:24, 2 *Baruch* 29:4, and 4 *Ezra* 6:49 (on which, see Michael E. Stone, *A Commentary on the Fourth Book of Ezra* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 186–87); and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen 1:21, Num Rabbah 21:18, and Tanḥuma Shemini 7. Cf. especially Lev Rabbah 1:2, where it is explicitly stated that the intention to prepare a meal for the righteous in the world to come is built into creation. In contrast to those legends, note the following midrash on Isa 27:1 in b. Baba Batra 74b: “Everything that the Holy One, blessed be He, created, he created male and female; even the Leviathans He created male and female [Isa 27:1]; and if they had mated [*nizqaqin zeh la-zeh*], they would have destroyed the whole world. What did he do? The Holy One, blessed be He, castrated the male and killed the female and salted her for the righteous in the time to come [ibid.] and also the Behemoth.” Note here that the use of the monsters as food for the righteous is a consequence of God’s struggle with them and not the immediate objective of their creation. Our piyyut would thus be another comparatively early Jewish source for this idea; see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:43. On this idea, see further Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:43–49, and Jefim Schirmann, “The Battle Between Behemoth and Leviathan According to an Ancient Hebrew Piyyut,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4 (1969–70): 327–69.

103. God.

104. *Aromem la-ʿEl*, lines 125–28, in Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 165.

usual order of subject and verb in biblical Hebrew, says literally, “In the beginning created God heaven and earth”: “‘In the beginning God created ...’ Fools say, God created the beginning. But it is not so. Why? God said: ‘The owner of a ship is not called so unless he has a ship.’ Thus I cannot be called God unless I have created a world for Myself. Thus, ‘In the beginning created,’ and then, ‘God.’”¹⁰⁵

That is, God could only become God through the fact of creation. Here then we can see the full development of an idea essential to the Avodah piyyutim, that the world and humankind were created for the sake of God’s praise and that this function was essential to God’s divinity.

One of the most significant features of the Avodah piyyutim is their systematic and elaborate glorification of the priest. This characteristic is consistent with their cultic nature in general but has wider implications. In stark contrast to the Mishnah, the Avodah endeavors to portray the high priest as a virtuous and heroic man, graced with piety, wisdom, and physical strength. We have already seen that whereas the Mishnah portrays the high priest as passive, ignorant, or heretical, the Avodah presents him as a pious man eager to perform the commandments and humble in his consciousness of the gravity of his office.

More than this, the high priest is portrayed in the Avodah as an extraordinary physical specimen. Building on rabbinic interpretations of Lev 21:10 that say the priest should be “greater than his brothers” in physical as well as moral virtues,¹⁰⁶ the poems emphasize the strength and stamina it takes to perform the sacrifice. Thus *Az be-ʿEn Kol* marvels how

[h]is stature
rose to the height of a cedar
when he was fit with embroidered garments
to ornament his body.

(lines 551–52)

So too Yose ben Yose describes the moment when the high priest enters the holy of holies through the curtains:

He displayed his great strength
and pushed aside the curtain

105. See Ephraim Urbach, “Seride Tanḥuma-Yelamedenu,” *Qoveṣ ʿal Yad*, n.s., 6 (1966): 12.

106. T. Kippurim 1:6; y. Yoma 1:3.

and entered without stepping
between the two rods.¹⁰⁷

Elsewhere in that poem the priest is described in almost mythic terms:

Wrapped in a blue robe,
as bright as the firmament,
His rounded arms
filled the sleeves.

Az be-ʿEn Kol and the piyyutim of Yose ben Yose contain extensive excursuses on the special vestments of the high priest.¹⁰⁸ These passages are remarkable for their elaborate imagery and symbolism. The following couplets from Yose's *Azkir Gevurot* exemplify the approach these sections take:

His strong body
filled his tunic,
doubled and woven
as far as the sleeves.

The sin of the house of Jacob
was atoned by this—
those who sold the righteous one¹⁰⁹
over a sleeved tunic.

(lines 159–60)

These excursuses, based on Exodus chapters 28 and 39, lavish detail on the exact design of the clothes, the breastpiece and the ephod and the rings and cords that connect them. At the same time, they work out an intricate system of interpretation of the sacred garments by which each detail plays a specific role in atonement.

Az be-ʿEn Kol takes the role of the vestments further. According to this poem, it is the duty of the garments not just to represent Israel but to arouse God's compassion for his people on the Day of Judgment so

107. Yose ben Yose, *Azkir Gevurot*, lines 229–30.

108. *Az Be-ʿEn Kol*, lines 547–664; *Azkir Gevurot*, lines 151–84.

109. Joseph.

that He will dispel the malevolent forces. Thus the author says of the bells:

He set golden bells
and wove them into his hem
to recall (God's) love
of (the one of whom it is said): "How beautiful are your steps."
(Song 7:2)
(lines 559–60)

In *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, the active properties of the vestments extend to their role in dispelling the hostile forces preventing purification. Returning to the bells on the robe, the poem makes it clear that their function is not limited to atonement but that they also announce, noisily, the presence of the priest. As he steps into the sanctuary,

When his soles moved
they gave voice
like him who called in the wilderness
to make a path straight.¹¹⁰

The servants of the Shekhinah
were fearful of him
for the robe is named
after the One who wears justice.¹¹¹
(lines 567–68)

That is, the hostile angels in the sanctuary—who are essentially bodyguards fending off intruders in the sacred precinct—are frightened by the sound of the bells, which carries with it divine authorization. Here, the high priest, like the travelers to the divine throne in early Jewish mysticism and Moses according to rabbinic legends, does battle with the angels.¹¹² In that same section, the priestly headdress is said to repel an

110. Cf. Isa 40:3 and Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 32, where this passage is related to Aaron's intervention in Num 17.

111. Isa 59:17.

112. On this motif and its antecedents, see further Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 17–18.

angelic personage called *za'af*, meaning rage, perhaps signifying a fierce angel named *Za'afiel*:

Rage, when he saw it,
could not open his mouth
for on the day of vengeance
he will be swallowed up.

(lines 647–48)

So too:

And the supernal demigods
made room for him
lest their eyes be filled with (the sight of him)
and grow dim.

(lines 655–56)

Elsewhere in the *piyyutim*, the high priest himself is likened to an angel. Following a tradition that begins with Mal 2:7, the poems relate the priest's appearance and function to that of the angels on high serving God.¹¹³ After its description of the high priest's garments and ritual actions quoted above, *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh* declares, "he is girded in all of these like a ministering angel." Likewise *Az be-'En Kol* says of the high priest:

You raised his stature
from all the people of []
[for there is none so] great;
he serves like an angel.

(lines 540–41)

The theological significance of this correspondence of priest with angel is worth exploring. A long tradition in Jewish liturgy seeks to show that human and angelic rituals are equivalent before God. This tradition extends from the Dead Sea community at Qumran, whose members

113. Cf. also the Scroll of Blessings (*Serekh ha-Berakhot*) at Qumran: 25:5 (*Megilat ha-Serakhim* p. 284–85); Rule of Benedictions (1Q28b) 4/25–26.

composed hymns for the Sabbath in which they depicted angels offering sacrifices in the seven heavens, to the statutory Qedushah of the rabbinic liturgy, which describes the human community offering its praise while the angels offer theirs.¹¹⁴ The Avodah, following an ancient tradition of identification of angel and priest, goes further by making the high priest superior to the angel in his ability to ward off angelic guardians of the divine presence. Sometime during this period or later, authors of the Hekhalot texts described journeys undertaken by rabbis through the heavenly palaces, in which they were to ward off malevolent angels guarding the divine throne, the Merkavah.¹¹⁵ But whereas the Hekhalot texts described journeys undertaken for the sake of the vision of the Divine or perhaps the acquisition of divine secrets, the Avodah describes the high priest's journey into the divine presence to obtain forgiveness and well-being for all of Israel.

We have shown that in its structure and themes the Avodah genre strives to glorify the priesthood, to place the priest at the center of Judaism, and indeed to accord him a central place in the cosmic scheme of things. This pattern corresponds to what we have learned about the prominence of the priesthood in the social and cultural life of the synagogue. We have seen evidence that the social structure of the ancient Palestinian synagogue recognized the priestly caste as an important sector of its leadership. If this was so, the Avodah, coming as it did in a climactic moment at Yom Kippur, the most dramatic occasion in the liturgical calendar, was the priesthood's moment of glory. At the same

114. On the Qumran Sabbath Songs, see Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); and Esther Eshel, Hanan Eshel, Carol Newsom, Bilhah Nitzan, Eileen Schuller, and Ada Yardeni, *Qumran Cave 4.vi: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part i*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 11 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). On this idea in the liturgical Qedushah, see, for example, Moshe Weinfeld, "Iqvot shel Qedushat ha-Yoser u-Fesuge de-Zimra bi-Megilot Midbar Yehudah u-ve-Sefer Ben Sirah," *Tarbiz* 45 (1976): 15–26. Cf. also Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 41 on the idea that the entire generation that received revelation at Sinai became like the angels; on this source, see Yehalom, *Az be-'En Kol*, 139.

115. On the equivalence of angelic prayer with human prayer, see Swartz, *Mystical Prayer*. On the relationship of the Hekhalot literature to the Temple and priesthood, see Johann Maier, *Vom Kultus zum Gnosis: Bundeslade, Gottesthron und Märkabh* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1964); Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ithamar Gruenwald, "Meqoman shel Mesorot Kohanot be-Yesiratah shel ha-Mistiqah shel ha-Merkavah ve-shel Shi'ur Qomah," *Mehqere Yerushalayim be-Mahshevet Yisra'el* 6 (1987): 65–120; Rachel Eilior, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Song in the Hekhalot Literature and Its Relation to Temple Traditions," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997): 217–67.

time, this liturgy strives to create a sense of identification with the high priest. Listeners to the Avodah would then follow the priest as he prepared for the sacrifice, dressed and undressed behind a sheet, slaughtered the bulls and goats for himself, his household, and Israel, entered the holy of holies, and would repeat the confessions with him. The Avodah, then, manages to exalt the high priest to the post of supreme emissary of Israel while at the same time allowing each congregant to participate in a kind of vicarious sacrifice.

THIS VOLUME

The purpose of this volume is to make the major early Avodah piyyutim available to readers of English. At the same time, we hope through our text, notes, and commentary to shed light on some long-standing questions of interpretation and meaning regarding this genre. Each of the translators has done research in a separate sphere in which the Avodah plays a key part. The results of this research are also reflected in this anthology.

We have not strived to produce a purely poetic translation. That is, where scholarly accuracy conflicts with grace of expression or where a turn of phrase may have changed the meaning of a line while making it more beautiful, we have usually opted for the more precise and less poetic. Nevertheless, we have endeavored to pay close attention to the poetic nature of the text—to the rhythms, assonance, and layers of meaning in the symbolic language of the poem. Thus the reader will notice alliteration, formal expressions or shifts in diction, and echoes of biblical phrases that reflect such tendencies in the Hebrew.

Early piyyut is most often written in a kind of basic rhythm, usually of four feet. It is not strict enough to be called meter, but it does create a sense of regularity. This rhythm also no doubt made piyyut conducive to singing. Listen, for example, to the sound of these lines from the beginning of *Azkir Gevurot* in the Hebrew, noting that in Hebrew the stress is usually placed on the last syllable of a word, and compare it to our translation:

omer ve-‘oseh
 yo‘eš u-meqayem
 amiš la-set
 ve-gibbor lis-bol

He speaks and fulfills,
 decrees and enacts,
 He is strong enough to support it,
 Heroic enough to bear it.

This stanza divides neatly into two pairs of hemistichs that are perfectly parallel. The first pair consists of two pairs of two-syllable verbs (*omer/’oseh*) linked with conjunctions (*ve-/u-*). The second pair consists of adjectives (*’amiš/gibbor*) linked with infinitives (*la-set/lis-bol*), likewise of two syllables each. In our translation, we can duplicate the number of verbs, adjectives, and infinitives, but not the number of syllables. Furthermore, without the adverb “enough,” the second half of the stanza makes no sense. Therefore, we have paid attention to stress rather than numbers of syllables. Often the need to fill in the syntax or make an allusion comprehensible prevailed over our wish to preserve a generally consistent rhythm. We have also not hesitated to reverse subject-verb order.

To the reader familiar with poetry translation, these comments should give the impression not that we have taken many liberties but rather the opposite—that we have been especially concerned to convey as much of the original as possible rather than let our poetic imaginations take flight. That impression would not be far from the truth. But we do so because of the nature of this literature. Early piyyut manages to combine a sparseness of expression—as seen in the terse succession of verbs and adjectives in the stanza just quoted—with an elaborateness of ornamentation. It does so by its dense allusive quality, whereby no major noun or verb is allowed to stand for itself but is instead represented by a biblical figure or synonym (*kinnui*).

We have therefore worked to devise a special format appropriate for this complex allusive genre of poetry. In this edition the Hebrew and English are printed on facing pages. Most of the Hebrew texts have been reprinted from the standard editions. However, in certain cases, such as *Az be-’En Kol* and *Azkir Gevurot*, we are making new manuscripts available to the public for the first time. At the same time, we hope through the translation to provide a means for nonspecialists to understand the biblical and rabbinic allusions, without compromising the poetic integrity of the composition. The glosses are printed in a column to the side

of the page. Just as the ancient listener would hear the poem chanted in the synagogue and recall the biblical references and legends based on them, the modern reader will read the body of the poem and be able to consult the references without being distracted by footnotes. Further explanations and scholarly details, however, are provided in endnotes. Since the poems follow a prescribed order following biblical narrative (especially Genesis and Leviticus 16) and Mishnah Yoma, it may be helpful for the reader to have the appropriate texts at hand.

In a few cases we have left Hebrew terms untranslated, especially for specific sacrifices and sacrificial elements such as *Tamid*, the daily sacrifice, and *Minḥah* the grain offering. We define those in a brief glossary in the back, as well as a few uncommon English terms and translations of specific objects and places in the Temple system.

We have selected the following compositions for inclusion in this volume. This selection, we believe, conveys something of the history and variety of the Avodah as a genre in its early stages:

1. *Atah Barata*, “You Created,” the first extant poetic expression of the Avodah and a preamble to *Shiv’at Yamim*;
2. *Shiv’at Yamim*, “Seven Days,” the earliest Avodah liturgy, which restates the sacrificial procedure in language closely following the Mishnah;
3. *Atah Konanta ‘Olam Me-Rosh*, “You Established the World from the Beginning,” the first fully poetic example of the Avodah;
4. *Az be-’En Kol*, “When All Was Not,” a massive anonymous composition distinguished by its extensive poetic treatment of cosmological and historical themes;
5. Selections from *Aromem la-’El*, “Let Me Exalt God,” an anonymous composition in the tradition of *Az be-’En Kol*, which supplies details about the ritual not extant in *Az be-’En Kol*;
6. *Azkir Gevurot Eloah*, “Let Me Recount the Wonders of God,” by Yose ben Yose, the first Avodah piyyut by a named author and a composition of particular elegance;
7. *Atah Konanta ‘Olam be-Rov Ḥesed* “You Established the World in Great Mercy,” another composition by Yose ben Yose;
8. *Emet Mah Nehedar*, “Truly, How Beautiful,” a description of the radiance of the priest on his emergence from the sanctuary, based on a passage in the Book of Ben Sira;

9. *En Lanu Kohen Gadol*, “We Have No High Priest,” a poignant lament by Yose ben Yose detailing the consequences of the destruction of the Temple.

1. Atah Barata

“You Created”

A *tah Barata* is perhaps the earliest poetic treatment of the themes of the Avodah. It is an introduction to the Avodah service and therefore ends not with a comprehensive description of the sacrifice but with the statement that God “informed [Aaron’s sons] so that they might serve before [Him].” This leads naturally into the description of the sacrifice, which presumably takes place in a separate composition. In two manuscripts *Atah Barata* is used as the introduction to *Shi’vat Yamim*, indicating a close relationship.¹ However, it is difficult to know if they were composed together. The main evidence for its antiquity is its literary style: like the earliest stage of piyyut, it employs lines composed of four feet, and it uses unrhymed acrostic. Unlike later piyyut, which is usually dense with allusions, this poem uses them more sparingly.² Despite its brevity, however, *Atah Barata* is not without interest. For example, the poem tells that the angels protested to God when he commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, contrasting God’s promise to Abraham with his command to kill his son. Although in Midrash Genesis Rabbah the angels are said to have wept when Abraham attempted to slaughter Isaac, their specific protest does not appear in that text. This is then an early attestation to the motif of the angels’ protest to God.³ Another interesting feature is the author’s concentration on the genealogy of Aaron in his tracing of Israel’s history, even to the exclusion of Moses.

This translation is based on Zvi Malachi’s edition (*Ha-“Avodah,”* 2:125–26).

1. The known manuscripts of *Atah Barata* are TS H.5^A.6, TS H.10.122, and NS 156.172. Our thanks to Professor Ezra Fleischer for this information. According to Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah,”* 2:125, the composition serves as the introduction to *Shi’vat* in MSS TS NS 156² and TS H5A¹⁹.

2. Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah,”* 1:13–15.

3. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:281 and 5:251 n. 242.

You created
the entire world;
with great intelligence You established it
in love and mercy.

In wisdom and intelligence
You made the heavens
and spread out the earth
with understanding and knowledge.

Also from it
You formed Adam
and You caused his descendants to thrive
like the sands of the sea.

The generation of Nephilim
rejected Your word;
they also said to You,
“Go away from us.”

You showed them
the magnitude of Your anger
and by **that which they vilified You** water
You dealt with them.⁴

Then there arose among them
a small remnant:
this is Noah
whom You called “righteous.”

From his descendants You produced
a pure and upright man:
Abraham, who loved You
with all his heart.

4. That is, the generation said, “We have our own water and we don’t need God.” Therefore, God punished them with water. See Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 139, note to line 73 of *Azkir Gevurot*, citing Sifre Deut ‘Ekev 43:16.

אֶתָּה בָּרָאתָ
אֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלֵו
בְּרוֹב שְׂכָל כּוֹנְנָתוֹ
בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים

בְּחֶכְמָה וְהַשְׂכָּל
שְׁמַיִם עָשִׂיתָ
וְרַקְעַת אָרֶץ
בְּתַבּוּנָה וּבִדְעַת

גַּם מְמָנָה
אָדָם יִצְרָתָהּ
וְצִאָצְאָיו הַרְבִּיתָהּ
כְּחוֹל הַיָּם

דּוֹר הַנִּפְלִיִּים
מֵאֲסוּ דְבָרֶיךָ
וְגַם אָמְרוּ לָךְ
סוּר מִמֶּנּוּ

הִרְאִיתָה אוֹתָם
אֶת רוֹב כְּעֶסְיֶךָ
וּבִמָּה שְׁחִירָפוֹךָ
בָּהֶם דִּנְתָם

וְעַמִּד מֵהֶם
שָׁרִיד כְּמַעַט
זֶה נָח
שֶׁקָּרָאתָ צִדִּיק

זֶה וַיָּשֶׁר
מִצִּאֲצִאִיו הוֹצֵאתָה
זֶה אֲבָרָהֶם שְׂאֵהֲבֹךְ
בְּכָל לִבָּבוֹ

מים

You announced Your devotion
to all who come into the world
and at one hundred years You gave him
the fruit of the womb.

Before he grew up
You tested him
when You said to him, "Offer him
before Me as a burnt offering."

Isaac
Abraham

Your angels became agitated
when they saw him bound;
when he arose to slaughter him,
they all cried out:

" 'So shall your descendants be'⁵
is how You blessed his father,
and if this one is slaughtered
how can it be a blessing?"

So You decided
to spare him from the fire
and from the knife
You saved his offspring.

From him You produced
a beloved from the womb:
this is Jacob
whom You called firstborn.

You found comfort
in his children
so You created
what You created for their sake.⁶

5. Gen 15:5. The angels argue that God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and that God would break his promise if Isaac were to be sacrificed.

יצחק
אברהם

חִיבְתָּךְ הוֹדַעְתָּ
לְכָל בָּאֵי חֶלֶד
וּלְמֵאָה שָׁנָה נִתְּתָה לוֹ
פְּרִי בֶטֶן

טָרַם יִגְדֵּל
אוֹתוֹ נְסִיתָה
בְּאֶמְרֶךָ לוֹ הֶעֱלִיחוּ
לִפְנֵי לְעוֹלָה

יְדוּדוֹן מִלְאָכֶיךָ
בְּרֹאוֹתֶם אוֹתוֹ נַעֲקֹד
וּבְקוֹמוֹ לְשַׁחֲטוֹ
כָּלֶם צַעֲקוּ

כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ
לְאֲבִיו בִּרְכָתָךְ
וְאִם זֶה נִשְׁחַט
אֵיכֵן הִיא בְּרַכָּה

לָכֵן רָצִיתָה
לְמַלְטוֹ מִן הָאֵשׁ
וּמִן הַמֵּאֲכָלֶת
לְנִינוֹ הַצֹּלֶתָה

מִמָּוֶה הוֹצֵאתָ
יָדִיד מִבֶּטֶן
זֶה יַעֲקֹב
שֶׁקָּרָאתוֹ בְּכוֹר

נַחַת רוּחַ
מִבְּנֵי מִצְרָאֵתָה
לָכֵן מָה שֶׁבִּרְאָתָךְ
כִּנְגָדִים בְּרָאֲתָה

You distinguished a treasure
from among his children:
this is Levi,
the third from the womb.

You looked favorably
on those who came forth from his loins:
this is Aaron,
the first holy man.

You specified to him with what⁷
he should enter the shrine
and informed him of what he should do
before You on the Day of Pardoning.

You clothed him in righteousness
in garments white as snow
and added **four** **garments**
more than his brothers'.

You sanctified him
as You sanctified Your seraphim
for he appeases (You for)
the sins of Your people.

You made him a chief
for the descendants of the **father of a multitude** **Abraham**
and an officer
for **the third seed**.⁸ **Levi**

The names of Your tribes
You placed on his two shoulders
so that when he entered before You
they could be remembered for good.

7. Heb. *be-'ezeh*; cf. Lev 16:3, which specifies the conditions under which the high priest is to enter the holy of holies.

סְגוּלָה הַבְּדִלְתָּהּ
מִבֵּין בָּנָיו
זֶה לִּי
שְׁלִישִׁי לַבֶּטֶן

עֵינֶיךָ שִׁמְתָה
בְּיוֹצְאֵי יְרִיכֹו
זֶה אֶהְרֹן
רֹאשׁ קְדוֹשֶׁיךָ

פָּרַשְׁתָּ לוֹ בְּאַיִזָּה
יָבֹוא אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ
וְהוֹדַעְתּוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ
מִה יַעֲשֶׂה בַיּוֹם הַסְּלִיחָה

צָדֵק הִלְבִּשְׁתּוֹ
בְּגָדָיו כְּשָׁלֵג
וְלִיסוֹף אַרְבָּעָה
יֵתֵר מֵאַחֲרָיו

קִדַּשְׁתּוֹ
כְּקֹדֶשֶׁת שְׂרָפִיָּה
כִּי הוּא מְרַצָּה
עוֹנוֹת עַמָּךְ

רֹאשׁ עָשִׂיתוֹ
לְצִאֲצֵאֵי אֵב הַמּוֹן
וְקָצִין
לְשֵׁלֶשׁ זֶרְעוֹ

שְׁמוֹת שְׁבָטֶיךָ
עַל שְׁתֵּי כִתְפָיו שִׁמְתָה
שְׁבָכְנִיסְתּוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ
יִזְכְּרוּ לְטוֹבָה

בגדים

אברהם

לוי

8. Levi is the third son. Heb. *le-shalesh*; alternatively, one might emend to *le-shamesh* (to serve).

As a substitute for atonement
you informed his sons
so that they might serve before you
following his example.

תְּמוֹרֶת כְּפָרָה
לְבָנָיו הוֹדְעָתָה
שִׁיעֲשׂוּ לְפָנֶיךָ
כִּי־צֵא בּוֹ

2. Shiv'at Yamim

“Seven Days”

This text is the earliest extant version of the Avodah service. It does not take the form of poetry but is rather a liturgical reworking of Mishnah Yoma. It gives us a reasonable picture of what kind of recitation of the Mishnah the Talmud might be describing.¹ The text is one of those Avodah services mentioned in the ninth-century rabbinic prayer manual of Rav Amram Gaon.²

Although *Shiv'at Yamim* follows the Mishnah closely, it omits much and introduces some changes. Most significantly, it omits minority opinions of individual sages and much legal detail. It also adds details found in the Tosefta and the Palestinian Talmud, as well as a section adapted from Mishnah Tamid. The text also features a full text of the confessions of the high priest. Some details and transitional phrases, however, seem to be original to this text.³

Shiv'at Yamim was first published by Ismar Elbogen in 1907.⁴ This translation is based on an improved version of Zvi Malachi's edition.⁵ Text included in *Shiv'at Yamim* that does not derive from the Mishnah is set in boldface type.

1. B. Yoma 36b, 56b; see the Introduction, above.

2. *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1971), § 127, p. 168.

3. See Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah,”* 1:12–14, and Menahem H. Schmeltzer, “How Was the High Priest Kept Awake on the Night of Yom ha-Kippurim?” in *Saul Lieberman (1898–1983), Talmudic Scholar*, ed. Meir Lubetski (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2002), 59–70.

4. Elbogen, *Studien*.

5. Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah,”* 2:127–31. We have also consulted the translations of Mishnah Yoma by Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933; repr., 1974), and Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), in our translation.

[1:1] Seven days before Yom Kippur they would remove the high priest from his house to the Councilors' Chamber, and prepare another priest in his place in case something happened to disqualify him. **The elders of the court handed him over to the elders of the priesthood**, and they read to him from the order of the day.⁶

[1:3] All those seven days **he would slaughter and** toss the blood, offer the incense, and repair the lamps and sacrifice the head and hind leg. Then they said to him: "Sir High Priest: Read, yourself," lest he forgot or did not learn.⁷ On the eve of Yom Kippur, at dawn, they stood him at the eastern gate and passed bulls, rams, and sheep before him so that he could become familiar and accustomed to the sacrifice, **and so that he would know which to sacrifice first and which to sacrifice last**. All those seven days they would not forbid him food and drink.

The elders of the court then handed him to the elders of the priesthood **and led him** to the upper chamber of the house of Avtinas. Then they adjured him and departed and went their own way. **And they said to him:** "Sir High Priest: We are emissaries of the court, and you are our emissary and the emissary of the court, **and you are the messenger of the community**."⁸ We adjure you by Him who caused His name to dwell in this house that you change nothing of all we have told you, **so that you do not sacrifice the first [animal] last and the last first, and that you do not burn the incense outside and bring it inside, and not do as the Sadducees, but do the first first and the last last, as we have adjured you to do and demonstrated it before you.** **He would** turn aside and weep, and they turned aside and wept.

If he was a sage, he would lecture. If not, they would lecture before him. If he was accustomed to reading, he would read. If not, they read before him from Job, Ezra, and Chronicles. **And if he was an ignoramus,**⁹ **they would engage him with discourse about kings and discourse about the early pious men.**

6. The ritual procedure for Yom Kippur.

7. Mishnah: "lest you forgot or did not learn."

[א, א] שבעת ימים קודם ליום הכפורים מפרישין כהן גדול מביתו
ללשכת פלהדרין ומתקנין לו כהן אחר תחתיו שמא יארע בו פסול.
מסרוהו זקני בית דין לזקני כהונה וקורין לפניו בסדר היום ומלמדים
אתו סדר יום הכפורים.

[א, ג] כל שבעת הימים **הוא שוחט** והוא זורק את הדם ומקטיר
את הקטרת ומטיב את הנרות ומקריב את הראש ואת הרגל. ואומרים
לו אישי כהן גדול קרא אתה בפך שמא שכח ושמא לא למד. ערב יום
הכפורים בשחרית מעמידין אותו בשער המזרח ומעבירין לפניו פרים
ואלים וכבשים כדי שיהא מכיר ורגיל בעבודה **וכדי שיהא מכיר איזה**
מקריב ראשון ואיזה מקריב אחרון. כל שבעת הימים לא היו מונעין
ממנו מאכל ומשתה.

מסרוהו זקני בית דין לזקני כהונה **והוליכוהו לעליית בית**
אבטינס והשביעוהו ונפטרו והלכו להם. **ואומרים לו אישי כהן גדול**,
אנו שלוחי בית דין, ואתה שלוחנו ושלוח בית דין **ושלוח צבור אתה**.
משביעין אנו עליך במי ששיכן את שמו בבית הזה, שלא תשנה דבר
מכל שאמרנו לך **ושלא תחליף ותקריב ראשון אחרון ואחרון ראשון**
ולא תקטיר מבחוץ ותכניס לפנים ולא תעשה כמעשה הצידוקים אלא
ראשון ראשון ואחרון אחרון כמה שהשבענוך ועבדנו לפניך. היה פורש
ובוכה והן פורשין ובוכין.

אם היה חכם דורש ואם לאו תלמידי חכמים דורשין לפניו. אם
רגיל לקרות קורא ואם לאו קוראים לפניו באיוב ובעזרא ובדברי
הימים. **ואם עם הארץ הוא, משיחין לפניו שיחת מלכים שיחת**
חסידיהם הראשונים.

8. Heb. *sheliaḥ ṣibbur*, a term also used for the prayer leader in the synagogue; see the Introduction.

9. Heb. *ʿAm ha-ʿAres*.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, toward nightfall, they would not let him eat too much, **so that he would not become drowsy or fall asleep and become impure and disqualified, and so his eyes would not see sleep and drowsiness.**¹⁰ If he wanted to doze, young Levites¹¹ would make a noise with the middle finger. **And this is what they would say to him: “A song of ascents, by Solomon: Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain on it.”** (Ps 127:1): Then they would say to him: “Sir High Priest: Stand up and walk around the pavement, **so that you do not incur invalidation, for the purity of Israel is dependent on you.**” And all the Jerusalemites would engage him **all night, group by group**, until the time came for the sacrifice. **When the time came for the sacrifice, he went to the place of immersion.**

They spread out a linen sheet between him and the people. He undressed, went down, immersed, went up, and dried himself. They brought him golden garments, and he put them on and washed his hands and feet. They brought him the **lamb** for the daily sacrifice (Tamid), **and dragged it and led it to the slaughtering place, and they gave it water to drink from a golden cup. Although it had been inspected the previous evening, they inspected it by the light of torches.**¹² They brought him the knife, he made an incision, and someone else finished the slaughtering. He collected the blood and tossed it, went to burn the incense¹³ and repair the lamps, **as it is written, “On it Aaron shall burn the aromatic incense; he shall burn it every morning when he tends the lamps.”** (Exod 30:7)—and to sacrifice the head, the limbs, the cakes, and the wine, [went] **to the ramp, and ascended the ramp. The prefect extended his hand and led him up with him to the altar, took the limbs in order and arranged them on the pile of wood. He began to offer the wine libation, and the Levites would sing. The priests would blow trumpets—they would blow a *teru'ah*,¹⁴ *teqi'ah*,¹⁵ and *teru'ah*. Then the people would bow down after each break in the trumpeting and would bow down after each *teqi'ah*. This was the order of the Tamid.**¹⁶

ערב יום הכפור' עם חשכה לא היו מניחין אותו לאכול הרבה כדי שלא ינום ולא יישן ולא יטמא ולא יפסל ולא תראינה עיניו שינה ותנומה. בקש להתנמנם פרחי לוי'ה מכין לפניו באצבע צרדה. וכן היו אומרים שיר המעלות לשלמה: אם יי לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו. ואומרים לו אישי כהן גדול עמוד והפוך אחת על הרצפה כדי שלא תבוא לידי פסול מפני טהרת ישראל תלוי'ה בך. וכל אנשי ירושלם היו מעסיקין אותו כל הלילה חבורה בחבורה עד שמגיע זמן שחיטה. כיון שהגיע זמן שחיטה בא לו לבית הטבילה.

פרסו לו סדין של בוך בינו לבין העם. פשט ירד וטבל עלה ונסתפג. הביאו לו בגדי זהב ולבש, וקידש ידיו ורגליו. הביאו לו את הכבש התמיד ומשכו והוליכו לבית המטבחים והשקהו מים בכוס של זהב. ואף על פי שמבוקר מבערב מבקרים אותו לאור האבוקות. הביאו לו את הסכין קרצו ומירק אחר שחיטה על ידו. קבל את הדם וזרקו, נכנס להקטיר את הקטורת ולהטיב את הנרות ככתוב: והקטיר עליו אהרן קטרת סמים בבקר בבקר בהטיבו את הנרות יקטירנה, ולהקריב את הראש ואת האברין ואת החבתים ואת היין לכבש ועלה לכבש. הושיט לו הסגן את ידו והעלהו עמו על גבי המזבח נטל את האברין כסדרן וסידרן על גבי מערכה. התחיל לנסך את היין והלויים מדברים בשיר. והכהנים תוקעים בחצוצרות הריעו תקעו והריעו. והשתחוו העם על כל פרק ופרק תקיעה ועל כל תקיעה השתחויה. זה סדר התמיד.

10. If he fell asleep, there would be a danger of a seminal emission, which would render him impure.

11. Mishnah: priests.

12. Cf. m. Tamid 3:3-4.

13. Mishnah has here "of the morning."

14. Probably a tremolo of a series of staccato notes.

15. A long sound rising at the end.

16. Cf. m. Tamid 7:3.

After he finished (sacrificing) the lamb for the Tamid, they brought him to the chamber of Parvah, which was in the holy place. They spread out **for him** a linen sheet between him and the people. He washed his hands and feet and undressed, went down and immersed, went up and dried himself. They brought him linen garments, and he put them on and washed his hands and his feet.

They brought him a bull and a ram and two goats for the sin offering and a ram for the burnt offering from public property and the Temple treasury, as it is written, “With this shall Aaron enter [the Shrine: with a bull of the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering]” (Lev 16:3), and it is written: “And from the Israelite community [he shall take two he-goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering]. (Lev 16:5)”¹⁷ **He led the bull and stood it between the porch and the altar, then led the goats, and stood them in the north. Then he approached his bull, which was standing between the porch and the altar, its head to the south and its face to the west. The priest was standing in the east with his face to the west. Then he laid his two hands on it and confessed.**

Thus he would say: “O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household. O, by the Lord,¹⁸ forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against You, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day [atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev 16:30)]

And **when** the priests and the people standing in the court **and serving in the sanctuary heard the** explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest **in holiness**, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.”

17. Cf. Sifra Aḥare Mot 2 (ed. Weiss, fol. 80d).

לאחר שסיים את הכבש התמיד הביאוהו לבית הפרוה ובקדש
 היתה. פרסו לו סדין של בוך בינו לבין העם. קדש ידיו ורגליו
 ופשט ירד וטבל עלה ונסתפג. הביאו לו בגדי לבן ולבש וקידש ידיו
 ורגליו.

הביאו לו פר ואיל ושני שעירים לחטאת ואיל לעולה מנכסי
צבור ותרומת הלשכה, ככ' בזאת יבא אהרן וג' וככתוב: ומאת עדת
בני יש' וגו'. משך את הפר והעמידו בין האולם למזבח ומשך את
השעירים והעמידן בצפון. ואחר כך בא לו אצל פרו ופרו היה עומד
בין האולם ולמזבח, ראשו לדרום ופניו למערב, והכהן עומד במזרח
ופניו במערב. וסומך שתי ידיו עליו ומתודה.

וכך היה אומר: אנא השם חטאתי עויתי פשעתי לפניך אני
 וביתי. אנא בשם כפר נא על החטאים ועל העונות ועל הפשעים
 שחטאתי שעויתי שפשעתי לפניך אני וביתי, ככ' בתורת מש'
 עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם
 לפני יהוה.

והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה והמשרתים בהיכל בזמן
ששמעו את השם המפורש שהוא יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדושה
היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלים על פניהם ואומרים ברוך שם
כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

He would also aim to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”

He approached the east of the court north of the altar, the prefect at his right and the head of the priestly division at his left. There were two goats there, and the urn was there. He shook the urn and took up two lots. On one was written “for the Lord” and on one was written “for Azazel.” If the one for the Lord came up in his right hand, the prefect said, “Sir High Priest, raise your right hand,” and if it came up in his left, the head of the priestly division said, “Sir High Priest, raise your left hand.” Then he placed them on the two goats. And he would say, “This is the ḥatta’t for the Lord,” **as it is written, “And Aaron shall take the two he-goats and let them stand before the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; and he shall place lots upon the goats, [one marked for the Lord and the other marked for Azazel.] Aaron shall bring forward the goat designated by lot for the Lord, which he is to offer as a sin offering (Lev 16:7-9). And he left the goat designated for Azazel standing, as it is written, “while the goat which is designated for Azazel shall be left standing alive before the Lord, to make expiation with it and to send it off to the wilderness for Azazel” (Lev 16:10), to an inaccessible region, a desolate wilderness, it is written, “Thus the goat shall carry all their iniquities [to an inaccessible region]” (Lev 16:22).**

He tied a thread of crimson wool to the head of the scapegoat and stood it opposite the place where it was to be sent, and the one to be slaughtered toward the place of slaughter.

Afterward, he approached his second bull, **laid** his hands on it, and confessed.

Thus he would say: “O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. O Lord,¹⁹ forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against You, I and my household and the children

19. Heb. *ha-Shem*.

אף הוא מתכוון לגמור את השם כנגד המברכים ואומר להם תטהרו.⁷

בא לו למזרח העזרה בצפון המזבח הסגן מימינו וראש בית אב משמאלו. ושם שני שעירים וקלפי היתה שם. טרף בקלפי והעלה שני גורלות, אחד כתוב עליו של שם, ואחד כתוב עליו לעזאזל. אם של שם עלה בימינו הסגן אומר לו אישי כהן גדול הגבה ימינך ואם בשמאלו עלה ראש בית אב אומר לו אישי כהן גדול הגבה שמאלך. ונתנן על שני השעירים ואומר לה' חטאת, ככ' ולקח את שני השעירים והעמיד אותם לפני יי פתח אהל מועד, ונתן אהרן על שני השעירים גורלות וג', והקריב אהרן את השעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל ליי ועשהו חטאת. ושל עזאזל יעמידנו, ככ' והשעיר אשר עלה וג', לשלח אתו המדברה, לארץ גזירה למדבר שומם, ככ' ונשא השעיר עליו את כל עונ' וגו'.

קשר לשון של זהורית בראש שעיר המשתלח העמידו כנגד בית שלוחו ולנשחט כנגד בית שחיטתו.

ואחר כן בא לו אצל פרו שניה, סומך שתי ידיו עליו ומתודה,

וכך היה אומר אנא השם חטאתי עויתי פשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרן עם קדושיך. אנא בשם כפר נא על החטאים ועל העונות ועל הפשעים שחטאתי שעויתי שפשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני

of Aaron, Your holy people, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day [atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev 16:30)

And **when** the priests and the people standing in the court **and serving in the sanctuary heard the** explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest **in holiness**, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.”]

He slaughtered it and collected its blood in a basin, and gave it to the one who would stir it, on the fourth terrace in the sanctuary, so that it would not curdle. He took the fire-pan and went up to the top of the altar and cleared [some of the coals inside], and went down and put it on the fourth terrace of the court.

They brought out the ladle and the fire-pan; he took a handful and put it into the ladle. **As it is written, “He shall take a panful”** (Lev 16:12) each according to the size (of his hand).²⁰ [He placed the fire-pan in his right hand and the ladle in his left, **and** walked in the sanctuary until he came between the two curtains that divide the holy place from the holy of holies. There was a cubit between them. **When he went in between the curtains**—the outer one was fastened from the south and the inner one from the north—he walked between them until he got to the north. When he got to the north, he turned, facing the south. **He faced** the curtain until he arrived at the ark. When he arrived at the altar, he placed the fire-pan between the two rods of the ark. He piled up the incense **and placed it** on the coals, and the house was filled with smoke. He came out the way he had gone in, and said a short prayer in the outer chamber. He would not extend his prayer, so as not to frighten Israel.

20. Lit., “the large according to his large size, and the small according to his small size.”

אהרן, ככ' בתורת מש' עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני יהוה

והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה והמשרתים **בהיכל בזמן ששמעו את השם המפורש שהוא יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדושה** היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלים על פניהם ואומרים ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

שחטו וקבל במזרק את דמו ונותנו למי שהוא ממרס בו על הרובד הרביעי שבהיכל, כדי שלא יקרוש. נטל את המחתה ועלה לראש המזבח, וחתה מן המעוכלות הפנימיות וירד והניחה על הרובד הרביעי שבעזרה.

הוציאו לו את הכף ואת המחתה וחפן מלא חפניו ונתן לתוך הכף, **ככ' ולקח מלא המחתה**, הגדול לפי גודלו והקטן לפי קוטנו. נטל את המחתה בימינו ואת הכף בשמאלו ומהלך בהיכל עד שמגיע לבין שתי הפרכות המבדילות בין הקדש ובין קדש הקדשים וביניהם אמה. **כיון שהגיע לבין שתי הפרכות** החיצונה פרופה מן הדרום והפנימית מן הצפון מהלך ביניהן עד שמגיע לצפון. הגיע לצפון הפך פניו לדרום. **הפך פניו** עם הפרוכת עד שמגיע לארון. הגיע לארון נתן את המחתה בין שני בדי ארון. צבר את הקטורת ו**נתן** על גבי גחלים נתמלא הבית עשן. יצא לו ובא לו דרך בית כניסתו ומתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון. ולא היה מאריך בתפלתו כדי שלא להבעית את ישראל.

This is what he would pray: May it be Your will, that this year be a year [of abundance],²¹ and let not the prayers of travelers²² enter before You.²³

Afterward, he went out and took the blood from the one who was stirring it. He went in [to the place where he went in] and stood at the place where he stood, and sprinkled some of it, once up and seven times down. He did not aim to sprinkle either up or down, but as if he were whipping. And this is how he would count: “one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven.” He went out and set it down on the golden stand in the sanctuary.

They brought him the goat, he slaughtered it and collected its blood in a basin, **as it is written, “He shall slaughter the people's goat of sin offering, bring its blood [behind the curtain, and do with its blood as he had done with the blood of the bull]”** (Lev 16:15). He went in [to the place where he went in] and stood at the place where he stood, and sprinkled some of it, once up and seven times down. He did not aim to sprinkle either up or down, but as if he were whipping. And this is how he would count: “one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven.” He went out and set it down on the second stand in the sanctuary.

He set down the blood of the goat and took up the blood of the bull and sprinkled some of it on the curtain opposite the ark, once up and seven times down. He did not aim to sprinkle either up or down, but as if he were whipping.

He took the blood of the goat and set down the blood of the bull and sprinkled some of it on the curtain opposite the ark from outside, once up and seven times down. He did aim to sprinkle up or down, but as if he were whipping. And this is how he would count: “one, one and two,” etc. He poured the blood of the bull into the blood of the goat and he transferred (the contents of) the full (vessel) into the empty one.

21. The manuscript has only the letter *shin* or *sin*, which, judging from the parallels, could stand either for *shehunah* (heat) or for *sova* (abundance). Cf. y. Yoma 5:3 (42c).

וכך היה מתפלל: יהי רצון מלפניך שתהא השנה הזאת שנת שובע וכו' ולא תכנס לפניך תפלת עוברי דרכים

אחר כך יצא ונטל את הדם ממי שהוא ממריס בו. נכנס למקום שנכנס ועמד במקום שעמד והזה ממנו אחת למעלה ושבע למטה. ולא היה מתכוין להזות לא למעלה ולא למטה אלא כמצליף. וכך היה מונה אחת אחת ושתיים, א' וג', א' וד', א' וה', א' וו', אחת ושבע. יצא והניחו על כן זהב שבהיכל.

הביאו לו את השעיר, שחטו וקבל במזרק את דמו, **ככ' ושחט את שעיר החטאת אשר לעם והביא א' דמו אל וג'.** ונכנס למקום שנכנס ועמד במקום שעמד, והזה ממנו אחת למעלה ושבע למטה. ולא היה מתכוין להזות לא למעלה ולא למטה אלא כמצליף. וכך היה מונה אחת, א' וא' וכ' יצא והניחו על כן השני שהיה בהיכל.

הניח דם השעיר ונטל דם הפר והזה ממנו על הפרוכת שכנגד הארון מבחוץ אחת למעלה ושבע למטה, ולא היה מתכוין להזות לא למעלה ולא למטה אלא כמצליף.

נטל דם השעיר והניח דם הפר והזה ממנו על הפרוכת כנגד הארון מבחוץ אחת למעלה וש' למטה ולא היה מתכוין להזות לא למעלה ולא למטה אלא כמצליף. וכך היה כו'. עירה דם הפר לתוך דם השעיר ונתן את המלא בריקן.

22. Who pray that it not rain.

23. Cf. y. Yoma 5:3 (42c); t. Kippurim 2:1; b. Yoma 53b.

He then went to the altar that was before the Lord **and purged it**—this is the golden altar, **as it is written: He shall go out to the altar** (Lev 16:18). He began to purge the altar from sin²⁴ (and continue). And from where would he begin? From the northeastern horn (of the altar), the northwestern, the southwestern, to the southeastern. The places where he would begin purging the outer altar were where he would finish on the inner altar.

He sprinkled on the top of the altar seven times. Then he poured [the rest of the blood] on the western base of the outside altar, and poured [the rest of the blood] from the outside altar on the southern base.

Afterward, he approached the scapegoat **and said a confession over it for the guilt of the community**. He laid his hands on it **and confessed**.

Thus he would say: “O Lord, **they have sinned, they have done wrong, they have transgressed** before You, Your people, the house of Israel. O by the Lord,²⁵ forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against You, I, my household, and the sons of Aaron, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be pure before the Lord.’” (Lev 16:30)

And **when** the priests and the people standing in the court **and serving in the sanctuary heard the** explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest **in holiness**, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.”

Thus it is written: Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions [of the Israelites] (Lev 16:21).

24. Heb. *meḥatṭe*, “purged [the altar] from sin,” as opposed to *mekhapper*, “purged,” above in the same paragraph.

ויצא אל המזבח אשר לפני ה' **וכפר עליו** זה מזבח הזהב, **ככ'**
ויצא אל המזבח וג'. התחיל מחטא ויורד. מאיכן הוא מתחיל, מקרן
 מזרחית צפונית מערבית דרומית דרומית מזרחית.
 מקום שהוא מתחיל בחטאת על מזבח החיצון שם הוא גומר על
 מזבח הפנימי.

הזה על טהרו של המזבח שבע פעמים ושירי הדם היה שופך
 על יסוד מערבי של מזבח החיצון, ושל מזבח החיצון היה שופך על
 יסוד דרומי.

ואחר כך בא לו אצל שעיר המשתלח **והתודה עליו אשמת**
קהילה. סומך שתי ידיו עליו **נתודה**.

וכך היה אומר אנא השם **חטאו עוו פשעו** לפניך עמך בית
 ישראל. אנא השם כפר נא על **החטאים ועל העונות ועל**
הפשעים שחטאו שעוו שפשעו לפניך עמך בית ישראל ככתוב
 בתורת משה עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל
 חטאתיכם לפני יהוה

והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה **בזמן** ששמעו את השם המפורש
 שהוא יוצא מפי כהן גדול **בקדושה** היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלים
 על פניהם ואומרים ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

וכך כת' **וסמך אהרן את שתי ידיו על ראש השעיר החי והתודה עליו**
את כל עונת [...]

3. Atah Konanta ‘Olam Me-Rosh

“You Established the World from the Beginning”

This anonymous composition is the earliest true Avodah piyyut extant. It contains all the elements that became characteristic of the genre: the historical preamble, selection of Aaron, praise of the priesthood, and the reworking of Mishnah Yoma into a poetic narrative. It is popular in the Sephardic and Middle Eastern liturgies, but not Ashkenaz and France. In the eighteenth century the Hasidic liturgy, which was based in part on the Sephardic liturgy, took it up. The piyyut is printed in Daniel Goldschmidt’s edition of the *Maḥzor* and in the liturgical handbook of Saadia Gaon.¹ This translation is based on Goldschmidt’s edition.

The poem is in the form of an acrostic, forward and then backward. In keeping with the style of preclassical piyyut, each line consists of four feet. The language, however, is fairly straightforward; it lacks the constant circumlocutions and substitutions that begin with the early classical piyyutim we shall see in the following texts. Yet the poem does not lack artfulness, and there is certainly editorial and ideological treatment of the Mishnaic account. One example of this is the poem’s emphasis on the volition, piety, and diligence of the priest, in contrast to the Mishnah’s portrayal of him as a passive recipient of the sages’ instructions.²

1. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor*, 2:19–23 [Hebrew numbering]; Davidson, Assaf, and Joel, *Siddur Rav Sa’adiah*, 275–80. A prose translation appears in *Ḥazon Yehezkel: A Prayerbook for Yom Kippur According to the Oriental Sephardic Rite*, ed. and trans. Earl Klein (Los Angeles: Kahal Joseph Sephardic Congregation, 1994), 435–51.

2. See the Introduction, above.

You established
the world from the beginning;
You founded the earth
and formed creatures.

When You surveyed the world
of chaos and confusion
You banished gloom
and put light in place.

You formed from the earth
a lump of soil in Your image
and commanded him
concerning the tree of life.

He forsook Your word
and he was forsaken from Eden
but You did not destroy him
for the sake of the work of Your hands.³

You increased his fruit
and blessed his seed
and let them flourish in Your goodness
and let them live in quiet.

But they broke the yoke
and said to God, "Go away,"⁴
then You took away Your hand
and they withered⁵ instantly like grass.

You remembered Your covenant
with **the one who was blameless in his generation** Noah
and as a reward You made him
a remnant forever.

You made a permanent covenant
of the rainbow for his sake
and in Your love for his fragrant offering
You blessed his children.

3. Heb. *yegia' kappekha*; cf. Job 10:3, where Job asks God, "Does it benefit You ... to despise the work of Your hands?"

אַתָּה כּוֹנֵן
עוֹלָם מֵרֵאשׁ
יִסְדֵּת תִּבְל
וּבְרִיּוֹת יִצְרֵת

בְּשׁוֹרָה עוֹלָם
תִּהְיוּ וְבָהּ
גִּרְשֵׁת אֶפֶל
וְהִצַּבְתָּ נֶגֶה

גֶּלֶם תִּבְנִיתָהּ
מִן הָאָדָמָה יִצְרֵת
וְעַל עֵץ הַדַּעַת
אוֹתוֹ הִפְקַדְתָּ

דְּבַרְהָ זָנַח
וְנִזְנַח מֵעֵדֶן
וְלֹא כָלִיתָ
לְמַעַן יִגִּיעַ כְּפִיָּה

הַגְדַּלְתָּ פְּרִי
וּבִרְכַּת זֶרְעוֹ
וְהַפְּרִיתָם בְּטוֹבָה
וְהוֹשַׁבְתָּם שֶׁקֶט

וַיִּפְרְקוּ עַל
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹאֵל סוֹר
וְהִסִּירוֹת יָד
כָּרַגְעוּ אֶמְלָלוּ כְּחֻצִּיר

זָכַרְתָּ בְּרִית
לְתַמִּים בְּדוֹרוֹ
וּבִשְׁכָרוֹ שִׁמְתָּ
לְעוֹלָם שְׁאֵרִית

חֹק בְּרִית קִשַּׁת
לְמַעַנֵּנוּ כָּרַתָּ
וּבִאֲהַבְתָּ נִיחּוּחַ
בְּנֵי בִרְכַּתָּ

נוח

4. The generation of the flood rejected God, thus "breaking the yoke" of God's commandments.

5. Following Klein's translation in *Hazon Yehezkel*.

They erred in their wealth
and built a tower
and said, "Let us split the firmament
and fight against Him."

The **father of a multitude**
shined forth like a star,
suddenly, from Ur of the Chaldees,
to illuminate in darkness.

Abraham

You deferred Your anger
when You surveyed his deeds
and when he was old
You looked into his heart.

You brought forth from him
a fair garland,⁶
a pure lamb
from a choice sheep.

Isaac

From his root
you brought forth **a perfect man**⁷
sealed with Your covenant
when he was taken from the womb.⁸

Jacob

You gave him
twelve tribes,
beloved by the Most High,
they were called from the womb.

You placed a fair garland
of favor upon Levi,
and of all his brothers
You placed a **crown** on him.

the priesthood

6. See Prov 1:9.

7. The Hebrew word *tam*, applied to Jacob in Gen 25:27, can mean "simple" or "perfect." On the implication of his "perfection," see the following note.

	טָעוּ בְּעֶשְׂרֵם וּבְנוּ מִגְדָּל וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִבְקִיעַ הָרָקִיעַ לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ
אברהם	יְחִיד אֲבִי הַמּוֹן פֶּתְאוֹם כְּכּוֹכֵב זֶרַח מְאוֹר כְּשִׂדִּים לְהָאִיר בַּחֲשָׁךְ כַּעֲסָה הַפֶּתַת בְּשׁוֹרֶךְ פְּעָלוֹ וּלְעֵת שִׁבְתּוֹ לִבּוֹ חֲקֵרֶת
יצחק	לִוֵּית חֵן מִמְּנוֹ הוֹצֵאתָ טָלָה טְהוֹר מִכְבֵּשׁ נִבְחָר
יעקב	מִגְזָעוֹ אִישׁ תָּם הוֹצֵאתָ חֵתֶם בְּבְרִיתְךָ מִרְחֹם לִקְחָה נִתַּתָּ לוֹ שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר שְׁבָטִים אֶהוּבֵי עֲלִיוֹן מִבְּטֶן נִקְרָאוּ שְׁמָתָ עַל לְוִי לִוֵּית חֵן וְחֶסֶד וּמִכָּל אֶחָיו כָּתָר לוֹ עֲטֹרֶתָ
הכהונה	

8. Alluding to a legend that Jacob was born circumcised and therefore complete ("perfect"). See Avot de-Rabbi Natan A ch. 2 (ed. Schechter, p. 12); cf. the other sources cited in Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:273 n. 26.

Amram was chosen
from the seed of Levi;
Aaron, holy to the Lord,
You sanctified from his stock.⁹

You adorned him
in woven garments,
and by his sacrifices
he annulled Your anger.

Diadem, robe,
and linen breeches,
breastpiece, ephod,
royal headdress, and sash;

sacrifice of bulls
and burnt offerings of sheep
and the slaughter of goats
and the cutting-up of rams;

the perfumed aroma
and the burning of coals
correct enumeration¹⁰
and the dashing of blood;

supplication at the incense
and true prayer;¹¹
and his holiness,
which atones for our sins;

the measurement of fine linen
and the arrangement of jewels—
he is girded in all of these
like a ministering angel.

You ordained all these
for the glory of Aaron;
You made him for Israel
an instrument of atonement.

9. Cf. Klein's translation in *Hazon Yehezkel*.

10. Of the times the blood is sprinkled.

עֲמָרֶם נִבְחַר
מִזֶּרַע לֹוִי
אֶהְרֹן קָדוֹשׁ יי
מִשְׁרָשׁוֹ קִדְשָׁתָּהּ

פִּאֲרָתוֹ
בְּבִגְדֵי שָׂרָד
וּבְקַרְבָּנוֹתָיו
הִפְרָ כַּעֲסָהּ

צִיץ וּמַעִיל
כְּתָנֶת וּמִכְנָסֵי בֶד
חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּד
מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט

קַרְבָּנוֹת פָּרִים
וְעוֹלוֹת כִּבְשִׁים
וְשִׁחִיטַת עֲתוּדִים
וְנִתּוּחַ אֱלִים

רֵיחַ מִרְקַחַת
וּבַעוֹר גָּחָלִים
וּסְפִירַת יֶשָׁר
וְזִרְקַת דָּם

שׁוֹעֵת קִטְרֶת
וּתְפִלַּת אֲמַת
וּקְדָשָׁתוֹ
מִכַּפֶּרֶת עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ

תִּכְּן בּוֹץ
וְעָרִיכַת אָבֶן
מַחְגֵּר בְּכָלֶם
כְּמִלְאָהּ מִשְׁרַת

תִּכְנֶנָּה כָּל אֵלֶּה
לְכָבוֹד אֶהְרֹן
כְּלֵי כִפָּרָה
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמָתוֹ

11. See m. Yoma 5:1.

In Aaron's place
stood one of his clan
to serve before You
on the day of forgiveness.

For seven days
he studied in our Temple,
the laws of the procedure
and the service of the day.

For the elders of his people
and the sages of his brothers
perpetually surrounded him
until the day arrived.

"See before whom
you are entering,
to a place of fire,
a burning flame.

Our community's congregation
relies on you
and by your hands
will be our forgiveness."

They commanded him and taught
him until the tenth day
so that he would be accustomed
to the order of the Avodah.

They spread out for him a sheet
when he slaughtered the sheep
to make a separation
between him and the people.

He performed the commandment
in awe and fear
and examined himself
for interpositions (during) ablution.¹²

12. That is, for objects that prevent effective purification by their interposition between the water and the body.

תַּחַת אֲהַרֹן
מִגִּזְעוֹ יַעֲמֵד
לְשֶׁרֶת לִפְנֶיהָ
בְּיוֹם הַסְּלִיחָה

תּוֹרַת מַעֲשֶׂה
וְעִבּוּדַת הַיּוֹם
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
בְּזִבּוּלָנוּ יִלְמַד

שְׁזַקְנֵי עָם
וְחֻכְמֵי אֶחָיו
תִּמְדִּי יִסּוּבְבוּהוּ
עַד בּוֹא הַיּוֹם

"רְאֵה לִפְנֵי מִי
אֶתָּה נִכְנָס
לְמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
לְהִבֵּת שְׁלֵהֲבֵת

קָהַל עֲדַתְנוּ
עָלֶיהָ יִסְמְכוּ
וְעַל יָדָהּ
תִּהְיֶה סְלִיחַתְנוּ"

צֹוֶהוּ וְלִמְדוּהוּ
עַד יוֹם הָעָשׂוֹר
כְּדִי שִׁיְהֶא מְרַגֵּל
בְּסִדְרֵי עֲבוּדָה

פָּרְשׁוּ לוֹ סְדִין
בָּעֵת שְׁחִיטַת כֶּבֶשׂ
לַעֲשׂוֹת מַחֲיֻצָּה
בֵּינוּ לְבֵין הָעָם

עוֹשֶׂה מְצֻוָּה
בְּאַיְמָהּ וּבִירְאָהָ
וּבּוֹדֵק עֲצָמוֹ
מִחוּצָצִי טְבִילָה

He rejoiced in the commandment
to uphold His law
and went down and immersed
as he was instructed.

They gave him
golden garments,
and he put them on and washed
his hands and his feet.

Immediately he received
the sheep for the Tamid
and performed it as required,
as for the whole year.

Inside he entered
to offer the incense
and to repair the lamps
and to sacrifice limbs.

As commanded every day
he made cakes¹³
and offered the wine libation
in all proper vessels.

He came at once
to the house of Parvah,
and they spread for him
a sheet as before.

Before he took off
his golden garments,
he washed clean
his hands and his feet.

He began to take off
his golden garments
and went down and immersed
as he had immersed.

13. Heb. *ḥavitin*, referring to the griddle cakes baked for the daily offering. See Lev 6:13 (on

שֶׁשׁ עַל מִצְוָה

לְקִים דָּתוֹ

וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל

כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִזְהִיר

נִתְּנָה לוֹ

בְּגָדֵי זָהָב

וְלִבָּשׁ וְקִדָּשׁ

יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

מִיַּד יִקְבֹּל

אֶת כְּבֹשׁ הַתְּמִיד

וַעֲשֹׂאֻ כְּהִלָּכָתוֹ

כָּכָל הַשָּׁנָה כָּלָה

לִפְנֵים יָפִנֵס

לְהַקְטִיר אֶת הַקְטֹרֶת

וּלְהַטִּיב אֶת הַנְּרוֹת

וּלְהַקְרִיב הָאֲבִירִים

כְּמִצְוֹתָן בְּכָל יוֹם

יַעֲשֶׂה חֲבֻתִין

וַיִּנְסֹף אֶת הַיֵּין

בְּכָל כְּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

יָבוֹא מִיַּד

לְבֵית הַפָּרוֹחַ

וַיִּפְרְשׂוּ לוֹ

סֻדִּין כְּבָרָאשׁוֹנָה

טָרָם יִפְשֹׁט

בְּגָדֵי זָהָב

מִקְדָּשׁ בְּנִקְיוֹת

יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

חָל וּפָשֹׁט

בְּגָדֵי זָהָב

וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל

כְּמוֹ שֶׁטָבַל

which, see Levine, *Leviticus*, 38–39); Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. *ḥavitin*.

He set aside the gold
and put on white,
for the service of the day is
to be performed in white garments.

He hurried and washed
his hands and his feet
and first approached
toward his bull.

He stood in awe
before the Most High
and said over it
words of confession.

Then he placed his hands on it and confessed. Thus he would say: [“O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household. O Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against you, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’”. And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”]

He spoke; then they brought him
two goats,
and over them he cast
two lots.

The right lot,
which was for the Lord,
he placed on the goat
and made it a sin offering.

זְהוּבִים מַעֲבִיר
וּלְבָנִים לֹבֵשׁ
שְׁעֲבוֹדַת הַיּוֹם
בְּבִגְדֵי לָבָן

וּמַהֲרָ וְקִדָּשׁ
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו
וּבֵא לוֹ תַחֲלָה
אֶצֶּל פֶּרוֹ

הוא עומד בְּאִמָּה
לפני עֲלִיוֹן
ואומר עָלָיו
דְּבָרֵי נְדוּיָה

וְסִמְנָה שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְהִתְנַדָּה. וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר. <אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם. חֲטָאתִי, עֲוִיתִי,
פָּשַׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵי וְבֵיתִי: אֲנִי בָשָׁם, כִּפֹּר נָא לַחֲטָאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְּשָׁעִים.
שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשַׁעֲוִיתִי וְשָׁפַשְׁעִתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵי וְבֵיתִי. כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְךָ מִפִּי
כְבוֹדְךָ. כִּי בְיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חֲטָאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ
יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטַהֲרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם
וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאַף הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֶגֶד
הַמְּבָרְכִים לְגִמּוֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם, וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ>

דָּבָר וְהִבִּיאוּ לוֹ
שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירִים
וְהִגְרִיל עֲלֵיהֶם
שְׁנֵי גֹרְלוֹת

גֹּרֶל יָמִין
שֶׁהוּא שְׁלֹשָׁם
יִתְּנָהוּ עַל הַשְּׁעִיר
וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ חֲטָאת

He tied a crimson thread
on the goat for Azazel
and stood it opposite
the place where it was to be sent.

Then the goat
that was for the Lord
he placed opposite
the house of slaughter.

Then he approached his bull
a second time
and said over it the confession
of his brothers.

Then he placed his hands on it and confessed. And thus he would say: [O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. O Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against You, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: 'For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—'"] (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: "Blessed is the name of His Majesty's glory for ever and ever." He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, "You shall be pure."]

After the confession
he was very diligent
in performing his sin offering
and the sin offering of the people.

He examined the knife
and slaughtered his bull
and collected the blood
in the pure basin.

בשעיר עזאזל
לשון זהרית יקשר
ויעמידהו כנגד
בית שלוחו

אף שעיר
שהוא שלשם
יעמידהו כנגד
בית שחיטתו
ובא לו שניה
אצל פרו
ואומר עליו
ודוי אחיו

וסמך שתי ידיו עליו והתודה. וכך היה אומר. <אנא השם. חטאתי, עויתי,
פשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרן עם קדושה: אנא בשם, כפר נא לחטאים
ולעונות ולפשעים. שחטאתי ושעויתי ושפשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרן עם
קדושה. ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך מפי כבודך. כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר
אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני יהוה (וי' טז, ל): והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה
כשהיו שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא מפדש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדשה
ובטהרה היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלים על פניהם ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד
מלכותו לעולם ועד: ואף הוא היה מתכונן כנגד המברכים לגמור את השם, ואומר
להם תטהרו>

אחר ודוי
שקד בחזקה
לעשות חטאתו
וחטאת העם

בדק סכין
ושחט פרו
וקבל דמו
במזרק טהור

He also gave it
to his colleague¹⁴ at once
to stir its blood
so that it would not curdle.

He laid the blood of his bull
on the terrace
and took the golden (fire-pan)
and went up to the head of the altar.

He took it down
filled with fiery coals
and laid it down
on the terrace in the court.

Then he added a handful (of incense)
of an everyday measure,
in his right hand the fire-pan
and in his left the shovel.

He fortified himself
and went into the holy (shrine)
and laid down the fire-pan
between the poles of the ark.

He took a handful
and placed it on the coals,
and because of it the house
was filled with smoke.

He closed his eyes
and turned back around
and said a short prayer
in the sanctuary.

He went out and took
the blood of the bull
and sprinkled it on the curtain
opposite the ark.

14. The assisting priest.

גַּם לַחֲבֵרוֹ
מִדַּי יִתְּנֶהוּ
לְמַרְס בְּדָמוֹ
שְׁלֹא יִקְרַשׁ

דָּם פָּרוֹ
הִנִּיחַ עַל הָרוּבֹד
וְנָטַל זְהוּבָה
וְעָלָה לְרֹאשׁ הַמַּזְבֵּחַ

הוֹרִידָה מְלֶאכָה
גַּחְלֵי אֵשׁ
וְהִנִּיחָהּ
עַל הָרוּבֹד שְׁבַעֲזָרָה

וּמוֹסִיף מְלֶאכָה חֲפָנָיו
עַל מִדַּת כָּל יוֹם
בִּימֵינוּ מַחֲתָה
וּבִשְׁמָאלוֹ כַּף

זֶרֶז עֲצָמוֹ
וְנִכְנַס לִקְדָּשׁ
וְהִנִּיחַ מַחֲתָה
בֵּין בְּדֵי הָאָרוֹן

חָפֹן וְנָתַן
עַל הַגָּחָלִים
וּמִמֶּנָּה נִתְמַלֵּא
הַבַּיִת עֵשֶׂן

טַמְטֵם עֵינָיו
וְשָׁב לְאַחֲרָיו
וּמִתְפַּלֵּל בְּהִיכָל
תִּפְלָה קִצְרָה

יֵצֵא וְנָטַל
אֶת דָּם הַפָּר
וְהִזָּה עַל הַפְּרָכֶת
כִּנְגַד הָאָרוֹן

Like a bereaved bear¹⁵
he brought the goat for the sin offering;
he slaughtered it and collected
its blood in a basin.

He went inside
to sprinkle some of its blood
in the order in which he sprinkled
the blood of the bull.

He hurried and took
the blood of the bull
and sprinkled opposite
the ark from outside.

He urgently laid
the blood of the bull down
and took the blood of the goat
and sprinkled some of it.

Gladly he poured out
the blood of the bull into the blood of the goat
and approached and stood
over the golden altar.

He put [the blood] in order
on the four horns (of the altar)
and on its top
he dashed it seven times.

He strode and went
outside the portico
and poured the remainder
on the western foundation.

He commanded, and they brought him
the goat to be sent out,
and he confessed over it
the guilt of the community.

15. Fiercely; see 2 Sam 17:8.

כֶּדֶב שְׂכּוֹל
שְׁעִיר חֲטָאת יָבִיא
שְׁחָטוּ וְקָבַל
דָּמוֹ בַּמִּזְרָק

לִפְנֵים יִכָּנֵס
לְהִזּוֹת מִדָּמוֹ
כִּסְדֹּר שֶׁהִזָּה
דָּם הַפֶּר

מִהֵר וְנָטַל
דָּם הַפֶּר
וְהִזָּה כְּנֶגֶד
הָאָרוֹן מִבַּחוּץ

נֶחֱץ וְהִנִּיחַ
דָּם הַפֶּר
וְנָטַל דָּם הַשְּׁעִיר
וְהִזָּה מִמֶּנּוּ

שֵׁשׁ וְעֹרָה
דָּם הַפֶּר לְתוֹךְ דָּם הַשְּׁעִיר
וּבֹא וְעָמַד
עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הַזֶּהָב

עַל אַרְבַּע קַרְנוֹתָיו
יִתֵּן כִּסְדֹּרוֹ
וְעַל טְהָרוֹ יִזָּה
שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים

פָּסַע וַיֵּצֵא
חוּץ לְאוֹלָם
וְשִׁפָּה אֶת הַשִּׁירִים
אֶל יְסוֹד מַעְרְבִי

צִוָּה וְהִבִּיאוּ לוֹ
אֶת הַשְּׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח
לְהִתְנַדֹּת עָלָיו
אֲשַׁמֶּת קֹהֵלָה

Then he placed his hands on it and confessed. Thus he would say: [“O Lord, they have sinned, they have done wrong, they have transgressed before You, Your people, the house of Israel. O Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that they have committed against you, Your people, the house of Israel, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”]

He called to one
of the priests
to lead it to an inaccessible land,
to a desolate wilderness.

He ran to the bull
and the goat that were to be burned
and tore them up and placed them
in a bowl to be sent up in smoke.¹⁶

He returned to read
from **the Priestly Teaching**
from the portion “**after the death of Aaron**”¹⁷
and also from “**on the tenth day.**”

Leviticus

Lev 16

Num 29:7

He directed his steps
to the place of immersion
and went down and immersed
and went up and dried himself.

16. See m. Yoma 6:7.

וּסְמַךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְהִתְנַדָּה. וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר. אֲנִי הֵשֵׁם. חֲטָאוּ <עוֹ.ו. >פִּי שְׁעוֹ
 לִפְנֵיהֶם עֲמָךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: אֲנִי בִשְׁם. כִּפֹּר נָא עַל הַחֲטָאִים עַל הָעוֹ' עַל הַפְּשָׁעִים.
 שְׁחַטָּאוּ שְׁעוֹ >וּשְׁפָשְׁעוּ לִפְנֵיהֶם עֲמָךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְךָ מִפִּי
 כְּבוֹדְךָ. כִּי בְיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חֲטָאֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
 וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ
 יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקֹדֶשׁ וּבְטַהֲרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם
 וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאָף הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֹגֵד
 הַמְּבַרְכִּים לְגֹמֵר אֶת הַשֵּׁם וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ. וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבְךָ מְעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסוֹלֵחַ
 לַעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל <

קָרָא לְאַחַד

מִן הַכֹּהֲנִים

לְהוֹלִיכוֹ אֶל אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה

לְמַדְבַּר שָׁמַם

רָץ לוֹ אֲצֵל הַפָּר

וְהַשְׁעִיר הַנִּשְׂרָפִים

וְקָרְעוּ וּנְתָנָם

בְּמַגֵּס לְהַקְטִירָם

שָׁב לְקְרֹא

בְּתוֹרַת כֹּהֲנִים

בְּפָרֶשֶׁת אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

וּבַבֹּאֶן בְּעֶשׂוֹר

תִּכְּנוּ צִעְדֵּי

לְבֵית הַטְּבִילָה

וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל

וַעֲלָה וְנִסְתַּפַּג

ספר ויקרא

ויקרא טז

במדבר כט, ז

17. This and the following line list the designated Torah portions for Yom Kippur.

Then they brought him
golden garments,
and he dressed and washed
his hands and his feet.

Then he went out and sacrificed his ram
and the ram of the people
and the bull for the sin offering
and the bull for the burnt offering.

When he was finished
doing all of these,
he went again
to the place of immersion.

And he washed his hands and his feet
and undressed
and went down and immersed,
went up and dried himself.

And they brought him
white garments,
and he dressed
and washed his hands and his feet.

He entered
to take out the shovel
and the fire-pan,
which he had put in in the morning,

and he went again
to the place of immersion
and undressed and and immersed,
and went up and dried himself,

and they brought him
golden garments,
and he dressed and washed
his hands and his feet.

He entered to offer
the incense

הביאו לו
בגדי זהב
ולבש וקדש
ידיו ורגליו

ויצא ועשה את אילו
ואת איל העם
ואת פר החטאת
ואת פר העלה

אחר כלותו
מעשות כל אלה
ועוד בא לו
לבית הטבילה

וקדש ידיו ורגליו
ופשט
וירד וטבל
ועלה ונסתפג

הביאו לו
בגדי לבן
ולבש וקדש
ידיו ורגליו

נכנס להוציא
את הכף
ואת המחתה
שהכניס בשחרית

ועוד בא לו
לבית הטבילה
ופשט וטבל
ועלה ונסתפג

הביאו לו
בגדי זהב
ולבש וקדש
ידיו ורגליו

נכנס להקטיר
את הקטרת

of the afternoon
and to repair the lamps.

Then he went again
to the place of immersion
and undressed and immersed,
and went up and dried himself.

They brought him
his own clothes,
and he put them on;
then they accompanied him to his house.

Then he celebrated the holiday
for **those who love him**
when he went out safely
from the holy [shrine].

his family

Happy is the people
who have it so;
happy is the people
whose God is the Lord.¹⁸

18. Ps 144:15.

וְלִהְטִיב אֶת הַנְּרוֹת
שֶׁל בֵּין הָעָרְבִים

וְעוֹד בָּא לוֹ
לְבֵית הַטְּבִילָה
וּפָשֵׁט וְטָבַל
וְעָלָה וְנִסְתַּפַּג

הִבִּיאוּ לוֹ
בְּגָדֵי עֲצָמוֹ
וּלְבָשׁוֹן
וּמְלוֹיִן אוֹתוֹ עַד בֵּיתוֹ

וְיוֹם טוֹב
הָיָה עוֹשֶׂה לְאוֹהֲבָיו
בְּצִאָתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם
מִן הַקֹּדֶשׁ

אֲשֶׁרִי הָעָם
שֶׁכָּכָה לוֹ
אֲשֶׁרִי הָעָם
שֵׁי אֱלֹהֵיוֹ

משפחתו

4. Az be-²En Kol

“When All Was Not”

This massive composition is one of the most comprehensive of the extant ancient Avodah piyyutim. It is distinguished for its thorough treatment of every major theme in the Avodah, for its extensive use of poetic figures such as metonymy, alliteration, and parallelism, for its use of mythology in its retelling of the history of the world, and above all for its ingeniousness in formulating poetic figures and forms. As described in our Introduction, above, this composition abounds in legends and details known to us from Apocrypha and other nonrabbinic sources. Unlike most of the other Avodah piyyutim, *Az be-²En Kol* deals with all of the major episodes in Israel’s early history, and not just those most relevant to the Temple cult. For example, a remarkable amount of esoteric cosmological and angelological lore is embedded in the opening sections praising God and his work of creation. The composition also uses unusual poetic forms in its portrayal of individual episodes, such as its description of the agency of the Torah in creating the world and in its listing of auspicious events that may occur on the Sabbath.

Although mentioned in at least two liturgical sources,¹ this composition did not enter any of the standard liturgies of the last several centuries and so remained undiscovered until recently. Fragments were published by Zvi Malachi in 1974.² In 1998, Joseph Yahalom reconstructed the composition from Genizah fragments and published it in an annotated edition.³ Still, not all of the poem has been found, and several portions remain fragmentary. Although the poem has been attributed erroneously to Yose ben Yose and Eleazar ben Qallir, its author is unknown. It may have preceded and influenced Yose ben Yose’s *Azkir Gevurot*. It is also notable for its affinities with the eighth- or ninth-

1. See Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 245; A. M. Haberman, “*Sefer Qerovah*,” *Yedi’ot ha-Makhon le-Mada’e ha-Yahadut* 3 (1927): 104; Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah*,” 34.

2. Malachi, *Ha-“Avodah*,” 2:15–35.

3. Yahalom, *Az be-²En Kol*.

century midrash Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer and may have influenced that composition.

This translation and edition are based on Yahalom's, with the addition of newly discovered fragments.⁴ Text that has been restored from parallel manuscripts appears in braces { }. Restorations from context or from biblical citations are placed in brackets []. Explanatory phrases are placed in parentheses ().

The extant fragments end at line 792. However, since there is much more of the ceremony to go, it is obvious that the poem went on extensively. Following the extant text of *Az be-En Kol*, we have appended portions of another piyyut, possibly *Aromem la-El*, which is apparently a reworking of *Az be-En Kol*. The text is based on a newly discovered fragment, ms Firkovitch, Heb. iiA 897, and Joseph Yahalom's edition in *Az be-En Kol*, 186–88, lines 439–60. We translate from the portion that completes some of what is missing at the end of *Az be-En Kol*.

When all was not,
You were all that was,
{and when You prepared all}
You filled all.

When You [] all,
You are ever renewing,
for in the beginning You were aged,
and in the end youthful.

5 No eye can behold
the place of Your desired dwelling
For You have dwelt
above **the mighty** since ancient times. **water or angels**

Or perhaps some rooster⁵
might search out Your dwelling place;
You have snatched up a fire consuming fire
from the fiery waters.⁶

4. MS TS NS 324.86; Firkovitch, Heb. iiA 897. Both manuscripts were referred to us by Mr. B. Löffler of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, to whom we are indebted.

<אֶז בְּאֵין כָּל>
 <אֶתָה כָּל הָיִיתָה
 וּבְחִינָה כָּל>
 <אֶתָה כָּל נִמְלֵאתָה

<א... ..ךָ כָּל>
 אֶתָה חֲדָשׁ לְחֲדָשׁוֹ
 כִּי יִשׁוּשִׁיךָ בְּרֵאשִׁית
 וּבְחֻרֹתֶיךָ בְּאַחֲרִית

אֵין עֵין לְשׁוֹר 5

אֵין חֲנִיָּתָךְ
 כִּי עַל אֲדִירִים
 אֶז מִקְדָּם חֲנִיתָה

אִוְּ אֵיזָה שְׁכֻנִּי
 יַחְקוֹר מְקוֹם שְׁכֻנָּה
 וְאֵשׁ אוֹכְלָה אֵשׁ
 בְּלִבָּת מִיָּם הַחֲתִיתָה

המים או המלאכים

5. Said to be the wisest bird, since it distinguishes between day and night.

6. That is, Your dwelling place is above the river of fire (cf. Dan 7:9-10).

Only those who are seized
with fear can serve You. the angels
For in a contrite heart
and a humble spirit You can be found.

They have no father,
and no mother bore them;⁷
{they were conceived from fire,
and they were born of the snow.

You carved Erelim⁸ a class of angels
from flames of fire;
You engendered the Creatures⁹
out of the River of the Chariot.¹⁰

They are enveloped in fear,
encircled with awe,
belted with writing cases;¹¹
their loins are girded with sighing.

They are the image of fire;
their bodies are like the streams of Rahab;¹²
Their eyes are like lightning;
their roar is like the rush of waves.

You caused their heads
to flash like sapphire;¹³
the radiance at their feet
flashes incandescently.¹⁴

“Amen” is their vocation.
“Blessed” is their labor.¹⁵
Their utterance is “Righteousness.”
“Holiness” is their proclamation.

7. The text in braces that follows is from MS TS NS 324.86.

8. Cf. Isa 33:7.

9. The *Hayyot* of Ezek 1.

10. Cf. the river of fire, Dan 7:10; cf. also the Hekhalot text 3 *Enoch* in Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), §§ 50 and 916.

11. See Ezek 9:2.

המלאכים

אֲחוּזֵי אֵימָה
 הֵם לְבַד יִשְׁמְשׁוּךָ
 כִּי בִלְבַד דָּפָא
 וּבִשְׁפֹל רוּחַ תִּמְצָא

אָב אֵין לְמוֹ
 אִם לֹא יִלְדָתֶם
 הוֹרְתֶם אֵשׁ
 וַיּוֹלְדֶם שָׁלֵג

קבוצת מלאכים

אֲרָאִים חֲצַבְתָּה
 מְלַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ
 וְחוֹלְלֵתָה חַיּוֹת
 מִנְהַר מְרֻכָּב־ת־

אֲפֻדִים פָּחַד
 אֲזוּרִים יִרְאָה
 חֲגוּרִים קֶסֶת
 וּמֵת־נ־יִם אֲנוּחִים

אִישִׁים דְּמוּתָן
 גּוֹי־תֶם <כְּפִלְגֵי רֶהַב
 עַפְעָפִם כְּ>ב־רָק
 שְׁאֵגִם כְּהִמּוֹן

אָבֹן סִפִּיר
 הִקְדַּחְתָּה מְרֹאשׁוֹתֶם
 זִיו מְרֻגְלוֹתֶם
 נוֹצְצִים כְּקִלֵּל

אָמֵן מְלֹאכְתֶם
 בְּרוּךְ עֲבוֹדָתֶם
 צֶדֶק הִגִּי־תֶם <
 קְדוֹשׁ קְרִיאָתֶם

12. Cf. Job 9:13, 26.

13. Cf. Isa 54:12.

14. Cf. Ezek 1:7, Dan 10:6.

15. The angels say the doxology “Blessed is the presence of the Lord from His place”; see Ezek 3:12.

They serve their Leader
and do not behold Him;
they cannot turn their heads,¹⁶
and they all acclaim Him.

Vast power and station,
the demigods of Senir
disperse to all remote places
and say, "Here we are."

Mount Hermon

Thousands upon thousands
and myriads of holy ones
are transformed into wind,
turned into fire.

They do not mourn,
and grieving does not seize them,
for they will not give birth
nor will they die.

There is no enmity among them,
nor are they convulsed by hatred;
they know nothing of antagonism,
for their camp is tranquil.

They do not scrape for food,
nor do they imbibe drink.
They are supplied with abundance
and radiant with goodwill.

Scarlet does not stain them,
nor does white¹⁷ affect them.

**blood
semen**

Flux cannot pollute them;
they are not whitened with any blemish.¹⁸

16. Lit., "necks."

17. The idea that the angels do not suffer menstrual and seminal pollution is attested in several

הר חרמון

אֶלּוּפִם יִשְׁרְתּוּ
וּבּוֹ לֹא יִשּׁוּרוּ
וְעוֹדֶרֶךְ אֶל יִפְּנוּ
וּבּוֹ כָּלֶם <עוֹנֶם>

אֶמְיָצִי כַח וּמַעֲמֵד
אֵלֵי שְׁנֵי רִי
מְשׁוֹטְטִים בְּכָל קְצוֹת
וְאוֹמְרִים לֵךְ "הִנֵּנוּ"

אֶלְפִי שְׁנֵי אֶן
וְרַבּוֹת קְדוּשִׁים
מִתְמַרְיִם לְרוּחַ
וּמוֹחֲלִים לְאֵשׁ

אֵיבֵל אֵין לָמוּ
אוֹנָן לֹא יִשְׁיֵן
כִּי לֹא יוֹלִידוּ
אֶף לֹא יָמוּתוּ

אֵיבָה אֵין בִּינִימוּ
בְּשֵׁנֶי אָהָ בַּל יִשְׁטוּמוּ
וְרִיב בַּל יִדְעוּ
כִּי שְׁקֵט מַחֲנֵם

אוֹכֵל בַּל יוֹגֵרְדוּ
שֹׂאֵב בַּל יִמּוּצוּ
כִּי אֶסּוּמֵי טוֹב
וּמַפִּיקִים רְצוֹן

דם
זרע

אוֹדֵם אֶל יִגְעֵלֶם
לוֹבֵן אֶל יִקְרֵם
זֶב לֹא יִגְדֵם
נֹגַע לֹא יִבְהַקֵּם

midrashim and esoteric sources. See Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 166–69.

18. Heb. *nega'*, referring to impurity of the skin.

- 15 Their tent is pure;¹⁹
 their place is holiness—
 their ritual bath is a river of fire,
 and they immerse in flames.²⁰

The mighty of the world are Your confidants, the angels
 yet You did not consult them
 when You made up Your mind²¹
 to create the world.

The fear of Your []
 fell upon them,
 for no servant
 can tell his master what to do.

God [],
 and no one delayed,
 for [there is no one] besides You
 and no other god [].

No god coerced You.
 No companion advised You.
 No master [taught You].
 No sage [instructed You].²²

- 25 As it is written: Who has plumbed [the mind of God?] (Isa 40:13);
 and it is said: Whom did he consult? (Isa 40:14).

[GOD USED TORAH TO CREATE THE UNIVERSE]

You relied on Your knowledge;
 You trusted Your discernment;
 in Your power You were revealed;
 and on Your strength You depended.

19. The angels are not affected by “tent-impurity,” a type of corpse impurity derived from Num 19:14 and described in the Mishnah tractate *Ahelot*.

20. Cf. Seder Rabbah de-Bereshit (Schäfer, *Synopse*, § 181), in which the angels who go down to

המלאכים

15 אוֹהֶלֶם טְהָרָה
מְקוֹמָם קְדוּשָׁה
מְקוֹמָם נְהַר אֵשׁ
וְ[טְבִילָתָם לַהֵט]

[אֵילִי] אֶרֶץ סוּדָּה
וְבָם לֹא נִמְלְכָתָה
בְּנוֹשְׁאָהּ לְבָד
לְבָרְוֹת עוֹלָם

«אִימַת ..» מֶךְ
עָלִיהֶם נִפְלָה
שְׁאִין עָבָד
אוֹמֵר לְקוֹנוֹ מַה תַּעֲשֶׂה

[אֵל] «... ..» תֵּה
וְאַחֵר לֹא אֵיחֵר
כִּי «...» אַחֵר
וְאֵל זֶר «... בֶּרֶךְ»

אֵל לֹא אֲנִסָּה
רִיעַ לֹא יַעֲצֶה
רַב לֹא «לִימָדָה»
סוֹפֵר לֹא «הוֹדִיעָה»

25 כֹּכ' מִי תִיכֵן (יֵשׁ' מ, יג)
וְנ' אֶת מִי נוֹעִין «שֵׁם יד»

[וְאֵהִי אֶצְלוֹ אִמּוֹן]

בְּדַעְתָּהּ נִשְׁעֲנָתָה
בְּבִינָתָהּ בְּטַחְתָּהּ
בְּעֻזָּהּ נִגְלִי תָהּ
בְּכַחְתָּהּ [נִסְמְכָתָה]

earth purify themselves in the river of fire; see note 17 above. Cf. Zvi M. Rabbinowitz, *Mahazor Piyyute Rabbi Yannai le-Torah u-Mo'adim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1985), 459.

21. Lit., "lifted up Your heart."

22. That is, a court administrator.

With that which is longer than the earth,²³
 with that which is wider than the sea,
 with Your primordial possession,
 with that which is the beginning of all action,

Torah

with the measuring line of judgment,
 and with the scales of mercy,
 with the right hand of life,
 with riches and honor;²⁴

It was hidden in Your heart
 and brought forth from Your mouth.

By Your hand []
 as [by the hand of a] craftsman.

- 35 Looking into it, You carved out
 the pillars of the heavens
 before there was primordial chaos
 on which the rafters could rest.²⁵

By²⁶ [its] weaving
 loops and twisted chains
 until You were to []
 to build Your Tent.²⁷

By []
 rings of the earth²⁸
 before Your winds
 were to refine [].

You [clothed Yourself]
 with light as a garment²⁹
 before You made
 a sweet delight to the eyes.

light

23. Job 11:9, here referring to the Torah. This section refers to the idea, found in rabbinic literature, that God used the Torah as the blueprint for the world; see page 26 in the Introduction. On the idea of the size of the Torah, see Kook, "Godel ha-Torah."

24. Prov 3:16.

25. Heb. *tohu va-Vohu*, here referring apparently to the primordial waters, which support the rafters of heaven.

התורה

בְּאַרְוֶכָּה מֵאֶרֶץ
בְּרַחֲבָה מִנִּי יָם
בְּקִנְיֵי קָדֶם
בְּרֵאשִׁית [לְכָל פֹּעֵל]

בְּקוֹ צְדָקָה
<ו> מְשַׁקֵּלֶת חֶסֶד
בִּימֵי חַיִּים
בְּעֹשֶׁר וְכָבוֹד

בְּלִבָּהּ הוֹצֵפָנָה
וּמְפִיָּהּ הוֹנֵבָעָה
בִּידָהּ ה...<ב>תָּה
כְּבִיד... חֶרֶשׁ

<בְּמֶרְאִיָּה חֲצִבְתָּהּ> 35
עֲמוּדֵי שְׁחָקִים
עַד לֹא תִהְיֶה <וְבִהּ>
לְקִרְוֹת עֲלִיּוֹת

ב...<..> תָּה טוֹי
לֹאֲלוֹת <וְשִׁשְׁרוֹת>
עַד לֹא <...>
<..> לִבְנוֹת אוֹהֶלֶךְ

<ב...> ..<תָּה>
טְבַעוֹת נְשִׁיָּה
עַד לֹא ר...<חִיָּה>
מִצָּרֶף צ...<ה>

<ב...> ...
אוֹר פְּשִׁלְמָה
עַד לֹא הִמְתַּקְתָּהּ
טוֹב לְעֵינַיִם

אור

26. The preposition *b-* beginning each stanza is translated in this section as “by” or “with,” according to the structure described in the Introduction above; see page 26–27.

27. B. Shabbat 99a: The clasps in the loops looked like stars in the sky. The reference is to the loops that held the curtains of the Tabernacle to each other. This may be expressing the idea that the earthly Tabernacle that was to be built had a primordial supernal counterpart.

28. Heb. *neshiyah*; in the Bible, “oblivion”; here, “the earth.”

29. See Ps 104:2

[]
 light above
 before You hid
 primordial chaos in the depths.

45 []
 snow and smoke³⁰
 until You kept them ready
 for the day of war and battle.³¹

[]
 []
 until dust was kneaded
so that clods of earth stuck fast together. **to make Adam**

[] to the earth
 until You made song heard
 on the wing³²
 to the one who spreads it forth.

[]
[that which is gathered in] the hollow of Your hand³³ **water**
 until it fled
 from Your rebuke.³⁴

By its design You depressed
that which flows from a vessel³⁵ **water**
 until You broke down
 the **humble** as required.³⁶ **waters**

55 By its fullness You closed
 the sluiced windows
 until they were to open
 on the day of **the furious rain.** **the Flood**

30. According to y. Hagigah 2:1 and Gen Rabbah 10:3 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 75), snow was used to create the world.

31. See Job 38:23.

32. See Isa 24:16.

33. The expression derives from Isa 40:12. On these stanzas, cf. especially Job 38:8–16.

	<p> ב.. ..ה אֹר מְעֵלָה עַד לֹא הִטְמִינָתָהּ תָּהוּ וְבָהּ בְּתֵהוּמוֹת </p>	
	<p> ב.. .. 45 שִׁלְגַּ וְקִיטּוֹר עַד לֹא תַחֲסֹכֶם לְיוֹם קָרֵב וּמִלְחָמָה </p>	
	<p> ב.. ת עַד לֹא יוּצַק עָפָר לְדָבָק וְגִבִּים </p>	
ליצירת אדם	<p> ב.. .. ת..ה לְאַרְקָא עַד לֹא תִשְׁמִיעַ בְּכִנּוּף זָמַר לְרוֹקְעָה </p>	
המים	<p> ב.. .. רִי שֶׁעָלָהּ עַד לֹא יָנוּסוּ מִגִּעְרָתָהּ </p>	
המים	<p> בְּחוֹטְבָהּ הִנְבַּכְתָּהּ שִׁפְךָ בְּדִלִי </p>	
המים	<p> עַד לֹא תַחֲצֶה חַפּוּיִים לְחוּקֶם </p>	
המבול	<p> בְּכֹלִיָּה נָעִלְתָהּ 55 אֲשַׁנְבִּי אַרְבּוֹת עַד לֹא יוֹפְתָחוּ בְּיוֹם גְּשֵׁמֵת זַעַם </p>	

34. Ps 104:7. Cf. Tanḥuma Ḥaye Sarah 3: God trampled down the water to make space for the earth and killed its designated angel (*sar*). When the rest of the waters saw this, they fled.

35. In Tanḥuma Ḥaye Sarah 3 interpreting Job 38:16 ("Have you penetrated to the depths of the sea?"), it is said that the waters cried when He killed the angel appointed over them.

36. Job 38:10.

With its compass You set a limit
on the great springs of the deep
until they were to open
to blot out [all] existence in anger.

With its nectar You sweetened
produce, choice fruit, and crops
until You were to plant a tree
for tasting death and life.

With [its] You made []
white as fleece
until You were to draw Your bow
and lead an arrow to attack.³⁷

With its whetstone You sharpened
a sword for the Twisting Serpent³⁸
until He locked up,
with his bar, the deep sea.³⁹

Leviathan's fin

65 With its pools You increased
fins and fowl
until You were to give commands
concerning a fish and a raven.⁴⁰ the fish that swallowed Jonah;
the ravens that fed Elijah

With its granary You nipped
leaven from the earth⁴¹
until You were to pour [him]⁴² like milk,
to curdle [him like] cheese.

Adam

By its delight
You created the world in six days,
until repose came to You,
and You rested from labor.

37. Cf. Ps 18:13–16, where God disperses the darkness and destroys enemies with arrows of lightning.

38. According to Isa 27:1.

39. See Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 9. The idea here is that the Twisting Serpent used Leviathan's fin as a bolt to fasten the sea.

בְּחִוְגָה חֻקָּתָהּ
עֵינֹת תִּהְיוּם רַבָּה
עַד לֹא יוֹבִקְעוּ
לְמַחֲוֹת יְקוּמִים [בְּזַעַף]

בְּנוֹפֶתָהּ הִמְתַּקְּתָּהּ
יָבֹול מִגֵּד וּתְנוּבָה
עַד לֹא תִטַּע אֶשֶׁל
לְטַעוֹם מוֹת וְחַיִּים

בַּחֲרָהּ .. הִחְוֹרָתָהּ
צָמָר מִרֹּ.. בְּעֵת
עַד לֹא תִתְאַיֵּר קֶשֶׁת
וְתִדְרִיךְ חֵץ לִפְגֵּעַ עֲ

[בְּשִׁנְנָה] לְטִשְׁתָּהּ
חָרֵב עַקֵּל תוֹן
עַד לֹא יִבְרִיחַ
עַל בְּרִיחֵי מְצוּלָה

סנפירי לויתן

[בְּבְרִיכְתָּהּ] הֶעֱצַמְתָּהּ
סִפְּיִרִים וְדָאִים
עַד לֹא תִתֵּן סִיחַ
לְדֹג וְעוֹרֵב

65

הדג שבלע את יונה; העורבים שהאכילו את אליהו

[בְּקוֹמְצָהּ] קִרְצָתָהּ
שׁ אֹר מְאֻדָּמָה
עַד לֹא תִתֵּן חֶלֶב
לְהִקְפִּיא גְבִינָה

אדם

[בְּשַׁעֲשׂוֹ] עֵינָהּ
שִׁשְׁתִּי יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה
עַד לֹא יִגִּיעַ נֹפֶשׁ
וְחִשְׁבוֹת עֲבוּדָה

40. See 1 Kgs 17:2–6.

41. See Job 33:6.

42. Cf. Job 10:10. The idea here is that after God created man from the first “batch of dough,” he was able to use that “leavening” to make every subsequent human being.

With perfection⁴³ []

Torah

each action according to plan
and afterward, like a wise man,
You started to build.

As it is written: The Lord founded the earth by wisdom; He established the heavens by understanding. (Prov. 3:19)

[THE FIRST DAY]

You clothed Yourself in might;
You girded Yourself in strength;
and You stood like an expert
to do Your work.

You exalted Yourself
and hung the foundations
without establishing
and erecting afterward.⁴⁴

You placed the rooftop
over the upper story;
then You made firm
the outer edges of the skies.⁴⁵

80 You spread out the heights of heaven
like a cloth tent
with pegs of storm
on the wheels of wind.

You solidified **the ravine**⁴⁶
in the springs of the deep,
and it was placed in the midst of water
and [] liquid.

earth

43. See Ps 19:8.

44. That is, unlike human builders, You did not erect the building after the foundation.

45. Cf. Prov 8:28. Cf. Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 3. The idea here is that God, not following the

התורה

[בתמימה] <...>

כָּל פּוֹעַל בְּמַחְשָׁבֶת

וְאַחֵר כֶּךָּ כְּחֶכֶם

הַתְּחַלְתָּה לְבָנוֹת

<ככ'> ייי בחכמה (מש' ג, יט)

[מעשה היום הראשון]

גְּבוּרָה לֵב <שָׁתָה>

<וְעַז> הִתְאַזְרְתָּה

וְנִצַּבְתָּה כְּמַהֲרִיר

לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכָתְךָ

גָּאָה גָּאָ <יָתָה>

<וְיִסְדוּתִיָּה תִּלִּיתָה>

בְּלִי לִי־סֹד

וְאַחֵר כֶּךָּ לְשֹׂאת

גָּגִי עָלֶיָּה

<לְמַעַלָּה> קִירִיתָה

וְאַזְ אִימְצָתָה

<י> רִכְכְּתִי שְׁחָקִים

גְּבִי שְׁמִים

כְּאֶהֱל דוֹק מְתַחַתָּה

בִּיתִידוֹת שְׁעָרָה

עַל גִּלְגָּלִי <י רוּחַ>

80

הארץ

גִּיא הַקֶּרֶשֶׁתָּה

בְּנִיבְכִי תְהוֹמוֹת

וְהוֹשֵׁן <מ'> הַ בְּתוֹךְ מַיִם

<נֹזְזִים ...>

usual way of erecting a tent, placed the central support in place first and then spread out the expanse of the tent.

46. Heb. gy'.

You made its peaks level
 with leveling tools,
 and it was sunk
 []

You weighed its hills
 in a balance, and constructed it,
 []
 []

You stored up **that which hovers**⁴⁷ **the wind**
 in its four directions
 by measure and by weight
 []

90 You rolled back the primordial chaos
 to the chambers of the depths,
 and from darkness You illumined
 []
 []
 []
They recoiled for fear of You,
 and heeding You, they rolled back.

the primordial waters

95 [THE THIRD DAY]

[]
 strong []
 to gather []
 []

You made thunder
 []
 []
 []

You made known []
 []

47. Cf. Gen 1:2.

גְּבוּנוֹיָהּ פִּילְסָתָהּ
בְּמִסּוּרֵי פֶלֶס
וְהוֹטְבָּע <ו...>
<... ...>

גְּבוּעוֹתֶיהָ בְּמֵאזְנִים
עֵינֶיהָ וְהַצְבָּתָהּ
או... <...>
<... ...>

הרוח

גְּנֻזָּתָהּ מְרוּחָפָת
בְּאַרְבַּע פִּינוּזֵיהָ
בְּמִידָה בְּמִשְׁקָל
ב... <...>

גְּלֻלָּתָהּ תוֹהוּ וְבוֹהוּ 90
לְחֻדְרֵי מַצְלוֹת
וּמִחֻשֵּׁי הַיָּאֲרָתָהּ <ה>
<... ...>

<... ..ג>

<... ...>

המים

הֵן מִפְּחָדָהּ חֶלֶו
וּמִקְשָׁבָהּ הַתְּגִלְגָּלוּ

[מעשה היום השלישי]

95

<ה... ..>

<...> עֲזִים

<...> לְאֶסּוֹף

<... ...>

<ה... ..> הָרַעְמָתָה בְּקֻל

<... ...>

<... ...>

<... ..> ם

<ה... ..> וְהוֹעֲדָתָהּ

<... ...>

[]

[] they poured

[]

[]

to inform to those who were to go down

[]

You commanded the water
 that if a **stutterer** should come,
 it should honor him
 and stand at his right hand[’s command].

Moses

- 105 And You made Your tempestuous storm
 rule over it;
 against the will of a demigod,⁴⁸
 You put it to rest.

You informed it
 of the integrity of **the Servant**,
 when he lifted his heart to You (in prayer)
 that it should turn backward.⁴⁹

Joshua

You told it
 that if a **prophet**⁵⁰ should spread his mantle
 it should stay low, near the riverbed,⁵¹
 for the one who ascended in a whirlwind.

Elijah

You set down a rule for it,
 not to be ignored,
 to show the path through the Red Sea
 to **him who was thrown into the sea**.⁵²

Jonah

You marked its tongue
 to be divided into seven⁵³
 to clean off the dust of the road
 from **the one whose feet are lovely**.

Israel at the Red Sea

48. An archangel, possibly Metatron, known from early Jewish magical and mystical literature.
 Cf. Gen Rabbah 5:4.

49. Cf. Ps 114:3.

50. See 2 Kgs 2:8, in which the Jordan divides for Elijah and Elisha.

	<p> <... ...> <...> יִשְׁטֹפוּ ה... ..<...> <... ...> וְהוֹדִיעַ <ליהודים> [לַיְהוּדִים] <ר..או פ..ס..> <הַמִּים> לָמוּ צִוִּיתָהּ אִם יָבֹא אֵילִם יִתְּנוּ יָקָר <וְיַעֲמִדוּ> לִימִינוּ <ו>הַמְשַׁלְתָּה עֲלֵיהֶם סַעַר סוּפָתָךְ <בַּעַל כּוֹרַח אֵל יִשְׁתַּוְּקוּ לְנוֹחַ הוֹדַעְתָּ לָמוּ תַּמַּת מִשְׁרַת בְּנִשְׂאוֹ [לֵב] אֶלֶיךָ יִהְיֶה לְאַחֹר הַשְׁמַעְתָּה לָמוּ אֲדָרַת אִם יִגְלוּם נְבִיא יַעֲבֹר בְּחֶרֶבָה לְעוֹלָה <בְּסַעְרָה> הוֹרִי[ן] תָּם חוֹק וְלַעֲד לֹא נֶעְדָּר לְהַרְאוֹת אוֹרַח סוֹף לְמוֹשֶׁלֶךְ יָמִים הַתּוֹנֶתָ עַל לְשׁוֹנוֹ לְחַתְּכוֹ לְשִׁבְעָה לְהַדִּיחַ אֶבֶק אוֹרַח מִיַּפֶּת <פְּעָמִים> </p>	105
משה		
יהושע		
אליהו		
יונה		
ישראל בים סוף		

51. That is, should stay low so that they could pass.

52. That is, Jonah was given a guided tour through the ocean, during which he was shown the place in the Red Sea where the waters had divided.

53. See Isa 11:15.

115 The roaring waves
 appealed to You when they fled,
 for You set a limit for them,
 not to be transgressed.

You illuminated **that which is covered** earth
 and refreshed it with fruit,
 made it redolent with fragrance
 in honor of God and human being.

It conceived and carried
 but did not give birth
 until it overflowed
 and gave birth and raised a man.

On that day, by Your word You created three—
 those born by Your decree.
 It was called the third [day]
 by **the third [man]**. Moses

As it is written: Who measured the waters with the hollow of His
 hand, and gouged the skies with a span, and meted earth's dust
 with a measure, and weighed the mountains with a scale? (Isa
 40:12).

[THE FOURTH DAY]

You resolved to form
 two illuminating lights
 to display Your creations,
 for there is no flaw in Your handiwork.

You commanded and they stood
 like faithful emissaries
 to tell Your mercies
 and to recount Your faithfulness.

And You opened, for their departure,
 windows in the east
 to make (the sun) shine heroically
 so that laborers could go to their work.

115

׃הַמֹּן גְּלִים
בְּנוֹסֶם יִשְׁבִּירוּ
כִּי חֻקָּתָה בַּעֲדָם
בְּלִי חֹק יַעֲבֵרוּ

אדמה

׃הִיאֲרֶתָה <כְּסוּיָה>
<וְהוֹעֲדָנָה בְּכָל מַגֵּד>
וְהִרְקָחָה רֵיחַ בּוֹשֶׂם
לְכָבוֹד אֱלֹהִים וְאִישִׁים

הָרָה וְעִיבָרָה
אָבֵל לֹא הַמְּלִיטָה
עַד עֵת הַחֻשְׁרָה
וְיִלְדָה וְגִידָלָה אִישׁ

הַשְּׁלֶשֶׁתָה יוֹם בְּקִי
בְּרוּאֵי בְּמ[ו]צֵא
וְה[ו]קְרָא שְׁלִישִׁי
מִפִּי שְׁלִישִׁי

משה

כֹּכ' מִי מִדָּד בִּשְׁעָלוּ מִים וּשְׁמִים בִּזְרֹת תִּיכֵן וְכֹל בִּשְׁלִישׁ עֶפֶר הָאֶרֶץ וְשִׁקֵּל
בַּפֶּלֶס הָרִים <יֵשׁ מ, יב>

[מעשה היום הרביעי]

וְאֶמְרֶתָה לְצוּר
שְׁנֵי מְאוּרֵי אוֹר
לְהַרְאוֹת מַעֲשִׂיךָ
שְׂאִין מוֹם בְּפַעֲלֶךָ

וְצוּיָתָה וְעַמְדוֹ
כְּצִירֵי אֱמוּנָה
לְהַגִּיד חֲסָדֶיךָ
וּלְסַפֵּר אֱמוּנָתֶיךָ

וּפְתַחְתָּה לְצִאתָם
חֲלוֹנִים בְּמִזְרָח
לְהוֹפִיעַ בְּגִבּוֹרָה
לְצֹאת עַמִּלִּים לְפַעֲלָם

- 130 And in the west You blazed
paths for them to enter
to lower their prominence
before the **Rider of the heavens**.⁵⁴ **God**
- And You arranged those numbered above,
corresponding to the hosts below,⁵⁵ **stars**
and appointed them to the Kishon, **Israel**
to the beating of horses' hooves.⁵⁶
- And they were given as omens
of the day of war and battle,⁵⁷
for the time when You will no longer
incline Your ear, heeding prayer.
- And a **youth** would command them **Joshua**
in the mighty battle
to be still at Gibeon
and to halt at Ayalon.
- And if a **sick man** should cry out⁵⁸ **Hezekiah**
and You added days to his life,
the Healer would reverse them,⁵⁹
and they would not be obstinate.⁶⁰
- 140 And when You bind up
the wounds of Your burdened [people],⁶¹
they will place
balm on its wings.⁶²
- And when You cover them with sackcloth
to humiliate those who serve them,⁶³ **idolaters**
You will renew their light
forty-nine-fold.

54. The divine presence (Shekhinah) resides in the west, so that when the sun sets in the west, it bows down to God. See Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 6 (fol. 14b).

55. Likened to the stars in Gen 15:5.

56. See the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:20–22), in which the stars are said to fight against Sisera.

57. Joel 2:10; the stars dimmed in anticipation of the Day of the Lord.

58. See Isa 38:1–8, in which God extends Hezekiah's life in response to his prayer.

	וְחִתְּרָתָהּ בַּמַּעֲרָב אֲשֶׁנְּבִים לְבוֹאֵם לְשׁוֹחֵיחַ גְּבָהֶם לִפְנֵי רוֹכֵב בְּעֲרָבוֹת	130
האל		
כוכבים	וְעֲרֹכְתָהּ סְפוּרֵי מַעְלָה מְשׁוּלֵי בְּצִבְאוֹת מָטָה וְהִזְמְנוּ לְקִישׁוֹן לְהֵלֶם עֶקְבֵי סוּס	
ישראל		
	וְנִי[ן] תִּנּוּ לְאוֹתוֹת לְיוֹם קָרֵב וּמִלְחָמָה לְעֵת תַּסִּיר אוֹזֶן מִשְׁמוֹעַ תְּפִילָּה	
יהושע		
	וְנֶעַד יִמְשָׁל בָּם בְּמִלְחָמֹת עֵיזוֹז וְיִדְּמוּ בְּגִבְעוֹן וְיַעֲמְדוּ בְּאֵילוֹן	
חזקיהו		
	וְאִם יִבְכֶּה חוֹלָה וְתוֹסִיף לוֹ יָמִים יִהְיֶה רֹפֵא וּבֹל יִקְשׁוּ עוֹרָף	
	וּבָעֵת תַּחֲבוֹשׁ מִכַּת עֲמוּסִיָּה הֵם יִתְּנוּ לָמוֹ צָרֵי בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם	140
	וּבָעֵת תִּכְסֶּם שָׁק לְהַחֲפִיר עוֹבְדֵיהֶם תִּחַדֵּשׁ אוֹרָם לְאַרְבָּעִים וְתִשְׁעָה	
עובדי אלילים		

59. God would reverse the progression of the sun and the stars.

60. The passage plays on the root *rph*, which can mean “to soften” (here, perhaps, “to massage”) and “stiff-necked.”

61. These stanzas deal with the eschatological future.

62. See Mal 3:20.

63. The reference is to those who worship the stars.

And when Your elders calculate
 the times of month and year,
 the Younger one will be diminished the moon
 so that it can be sanctified.

And their dominion is over
 the four corners of the earth.
 So the One who rules over every day
 ordained them on the fourth day.

As it is written: He made the moon to mark the seasons (Ps
 104:19);
 and it is written: He reckoned the number of stars; to each He gave
 its name (Ps 147:4).

[THE FIFTH DAY]

150 There is a great sea,
 which You made vast and spacious
 and which was commanded to bring forth swarms,
 with creatures beyond number.

You established within it
 the offspring of scaled fish
 and those that grow fins
 so that no one can fathom.

There arose from the waters of the sea
 swooping and flying,⁶⁴ abundant,
 for when they perish,
 they bring tidings to their captor.⁶⁵

You bestowed a blessing on them,
 and they were fruitful and multiplied,
 and from then until now
 they look to You for their bounty.

You appointed over them
 great chiefs:

64. An allusion to two kinds of birds, birds of prey and the others.

הירח

וּבִמְנוֹת זְקִינֶיהָ
 רִגְעֵי חֹדֶשׁ וּשְׁנִים
 יִמְעִיטוּ צְעִירָה
 לְמַעַן תִּתְקַדֵּשׁ

וּמִמִּשְׁלֵתָם בְּאַרְבַּע
 קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ
 לָכֵן מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל יוֹם
 בְּרַבִּיעִי חֲקֵקוֹן

ככ' עשה יריח למועדים (תה' קד, יט)

ונא' מונה מספר לכוכבים לכולם שמות יקרא (תה' קמז, ד)

[מעשה היום החמישי]

זֶה הֵימָּה [ה]גְּדוֹל 150

ה[ר]חֲבִתָּהּ לְיָדִים
 וְהוֹזֵמֵן לְהַשְׁרִיץ
 רִמָּשׁ בְּלִי מִסָּפֶר

זֶרַע קִשְׁקָשִׁים
 וּמִגְדְּלֵי סִנְפִּיר
 הַכִּינוֹתָהּ בְּתוֹכוֹ
 בְּלִי אִישׁ יַחְקוֹר

זֶהוּ מִמֵּי יָם
 עֵיטִים וּמַעוֹפָפִים [לְרוֹב]
 כִּי בָעֵת יִלְקוּטוֹן
 בֶּשׂ(ו)י[י]רָה יִתְנוּ לְמַלְכָּם

זִבְדָתָם בְּרָכָה
 וּפְרוּ וּרְבוּ
 וּמֵאֵז וְעַד עֵתָהּ
 לִלְקַטְךָ יִשְׁבְּרוֹן
 זִימְנָתָהּ עָלֶיהֶם
 שָׂרִים גְּדוֹלִים

65. This reading is from the variant, by which the birds' function is to provide good omens to their owners by means of organ divination.

the elusive serpent⁶⁶
and the twisting Leviathan.

160 No stranger can rouse him⁶⁷
nor ascertain his dwelling place,
for like the hinge sockets of doors,
the depths are sealed.

O God,⁶⁸ when You wish
to draw him out with a fishhook,⁶⁹
[You make him sink]⁷⁰ by piercing
his tongue with a rope.

You prepared his muzzle
and pierced his cheek
to provide food
for the holy [people].

When You play with him
like a pet bird,
he will plead with You
not to leash him for young girls.⁷¹

The virtuous shall feast on him;
the pious shall divide him up;
those who eat him will [];
[] will say blessings.

170 What You propose, O Lord,
cannot be reversed,
for Your thoughts
are the deeds of Your hands.

The breaking waves
sing praise to You;
for Your part⁷² You blessed
the fifth day of creation.

66. Cf. Isa 37:1.

67. Referring to the Leviathan.

68. Lit., "this," from Exod 15:2: "This is my God."

69. In the end of days, when God will capture Leviathan as a feast for the righteous.

נָחַשׁ בֶּרֶךְ יְיָ
[ו]ל[י] וְיִתֶּן מְעֹקֶל

זֶר לֹא יַעֲרֶנּוּ 160
וְלֹא יִבִּין רִבְצוֹ
כִּי כְּפֹתוֹת לְדִלְתוֹת
תִּהְיוּ סָגוֹר

זֶה עֵת תִּרְצֶה
לְמַשְׁכּוֹ בַּחֲפָה
לְהַשְׁקִיעַ לְשׁוֹנוֹ
בְּחָבֵל רוֹצֵצוֹ

זָמְמוּ הִיכַנְתָּהּ
וְנִקְבַּתָּהּ לַחֲיוֹ
לְתַתּוֹ מֵאֶכֶל
לְ... קוֹדֵשׁ

זָמַן תִּשְׁחַק בּוֹ
כְּצִיפּוֹר לְשַׁעֲשִׁיעַ
יִפִּיל תִּחְיֶנָּה
בֵּל לְעַלְמוֹת יִקְשֹׁר

זָכִים יִכְרוּהוּ
חֲסִידִים יַחֲצוּהוּ
אוֹכְלֵי יֵשׁוּ...
... בְּרַכּוּ

זִמְמַתָּהּ אֲדוֹן 170
אֲחֹזר לֹא הוֹשָׁבָה
כִּי מַחֲשָׁב וְתִיָּהּ
פְּעוּלֵת יָדֶיהָ

זָמַר נִתְּנוּ לָהּ
מִשְׁבְּרֵי רִהְבִּים
כִּי־חֲסָהּ בִּירְכָתָּהּ
יּוֹם חֲמִישִׁי לְרֵאשִׁית

האל

70. Restored from the fragmentary text in line 162.

71. Cf. Job 40:29.

72. The creatures created on that day praise You. Therefore, You blessed them in return.

As it is written: Above the thunder of the mighty waters,
 more majestic than the breakers of the sea (Ps 93:4);
 and it is said: All of them look to you (Ps 104:27);
 and it is said: Give it to them, they gather it up; open your hand,
 they are well satisfied (Ps 104:28).

[THE SIXTH DAY]

Congeaed cream, crawling creatures: most of them unfavored and some of them avored .	impure pure
---	------------------------------

You made from it the first of Your works . Its crib ⁷³ is a thousand mountains, and its watering place is the Jordan.	behemoth
--	-----------------

[]
 to struggle together
 for the blessing of the Creator,
 for the entertainment of the faithful.

You made his strength as great
 as bronze armor;⁷⁴
 His limbs are like iron;
 his thighs are knit together.

185 Holy Creatures and angels
 are in dread as he rears up,⁷⁵
 but only the One who made him
 will put His sword to him.

He who lives forever
 consulted His heart
 to make in [His] image
 to have dominion over all these.

73. Or feeding trough.

74. Lit., "tubes of bronze." See Job 40:18.

ככ' מקולות מים רבים אדירים משברי ים (תה' צג, ד)
 ונא' כ'ולם אליך ישבר'ון (תה' קד, כז)
 ונא' תתן להם וג' (שם שם, כח)

[מעשה היום השישי]

טמאים
 טהורים

בהמות

חֲמָה קְפוּיָה
 רִמְשֵׁי חַיּוֹת
 רֹבֶם **לְחֶרוֹן**
לְרֹצוֹן
וְיָמָהֶם
חֹלְלֵת מִמָּנָה
רֹאשִׁית דֶּרֶךְ
 אֲבוֹסִי אֶלֶף הָרָר
 וּמִשְׁקִי יֶרֶדֶן
 ח. ..
 לְהִתְגַּר יָחַד
 לְבִרְכַּת יוֹצֵר
 לְשַׁעֲשׁוּעַ אֲמוֹנִים
חִילוֹ הָעֶרֶץ
כְּאִפִּיקִי נְחוּשָׁה
אֲבִרְיוֹ כְּבָרָזֶל
פָּחַדְיוֹ שְׂרוּגִים
חִיּוֹת וּמִלְּאֲכִים
 מִשְׁאֲתוֹ יְגוּרוֹ
 אֲבָל לְבַד הָעוֹשׂוֹ
 יִגֹּשׁ חֲרָבוֹ
חִי עוֹלָמִים
 בְּלִיבוֹ נוֹעֵץ
 לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּצֶלֶם
 לְרִדּוֹת בְּכָל אֱלֹהִים

185

The Merciful One saw
a lonely earth
sitting silently
like a widowed woman.

He willingly made
a human being in His image
and set him to govern all creation
and commanded him to protect it.

Fat and milk,
cream and honey,
he shall eat and enjoy
and say praise to his Creator.

195 No anger shall come to him,
or theft trouble him;
“I will protect his life
if he will observe my laws.”

You carved him out in wisdom
in the image of divine beings⁷⁶
and made him a little less
than the image of his Maker.

He was nipped from clay
but his soul is a lamp;
“if he becomes arrogant, I will snuff him out,
and he will sleep in his darkness.”

He fathomed skillfully
and brought forth from the earth
and blew with his mouth
the breath of life.

You joined with him
a woman who loved to steal,
and You rejoiced on the day that he was made
and placed him on the sixth day.

76. See sources in Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 85.

<ח>נוֹן רָאָה
 אֲדָמָה בּוֹדְדָת
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת וְשׁוֹמֶמֶת
 כְּאִשָּׁה אֶלְמָנָה

 חֶפֶץ וְעֹשֶׂה
 אָדָם בְּצֶלֶם
 וְהִשְׁלִיטוּ בְּכָל מַעַשׂ
 וְצִוָּה הוּא לְשִׁמּוֹר

 חֵלֶב וְחֵלֶב
 חֶמְאָה וְדִבֶּשׁ
 יֹאכֵל וְיִתְעַנֵּג
 וַיֹּאמֶר הָלֵל לְבוֹרְאוֹ

 חֲרוֹן בַּל יְבוֹאִינוּ 195
 שׁוֹד בַּל יִדְאִיגְנוּ
 "אֶעֱצִים חַיִּי
 אִם חֻקֵּי יִשְׁמֹר"

 חֻקֵּיהֶם בְּחֻמָּה
 בְּצֶלֶם בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
 וְחִסְרוֹתָם מַעֲט
 מִדְּמוּת יוֹצְרוֹ

 חוֹמֶר קְרִיצָתוֹ
 נֶר נִשְׁמָתוֹ
 אִם יִתְגַּאֵה אֶכְבְּנוּ
 וַיִּלֵּן בְּאַפִּילוֹ

 חָקֵר בְּחֻמָּה
 וְהוֹצִיא מֵאֶרֶץ
 וְנִפַּח מִפִּי
 נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים

 חוֹמֶדֶת לְגִנוֹב
 עֲמוֹ חִיבָרְתָּהּ
 וְשִׁשְׁתָּה בְּיוֹם נַעֲשֶׂה
 וְשִׁמָּתוֹ <יוֹם שְׁשִׁי>

- 205 As it is written: How many are the things You have made, O Lord,
 [You have made them all in wisdom] (Ps 104:24);
 and it is said: You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, the
 highest heavens, and all their host, the earth and everything
 upon it, the seas and everything in them (Neh 9:6).
 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in
 His works (Ps 104:31).

[THE SABBATH]

- The Good One gazed,
 the Adorned One looked out,
 Shaddai's rest,
 and God's repose.
- 210 The good and the bad,
 The oppressed and the free, non-Jews and Jews
 those who enter and those who accompany,⁷⁷ converts and
 all desire it. "God-fearers"
- A decree was issued
 to those who enjoy it forever
 so that those who rest on it can stride
 the heights of the earth.
- Daubers of plaster⁷⁸ heathens
 will not enjoy its quiet,
 for its light
 is denied to the wicked.
- Ghostly impurity
 will not prevail on it,⁷⁹
 for the wicked
 have no opportunity to succeed.⁸⁰

77. This seems to be a reference to converts to Judaism and other sympathizers known as "God-fearers," who participated in Jewish beliefs and attended the synagogue.

78. Cf. Ezek 13:11. Perhaps Christians who add Sunday to the Sabbath. Cf. the prayer *ve-lo netatto le-goye ha-'araṣot* in the Sabbath Amidah, in which it is said that God did not give the Sabbath to the other nations of the world.

205 ככ' מה רבו מעשיך יי' (תה' קד, כד)

ונא' אתה הוא יי' לבדך אתה עשית את השמים שמי השמים וג' (נח' ט, ו)
יהי כבוד יי' לעולם וג' (תה' קד, לא)

[מעשה השבת]

טוב היציץ
הדור השקיף
מנוחת שדי
ונפישת אלהים

210 טובים ורעים
חפשים ורצוצים
באים ונלזים
בה חשקו

נוכרים ויהודים
גוים ויראי אלוהים

טעם נתן
לתענוגי עד
לדרוך שובתיו
על במתי ארץ

עובדי אלילים

טחי תפל
בו לא ישקוטו
כי מאורו
נמנעו רשעים

טומאת אוב
בו לא תרדה
כי אין לרשע
פתחון פה בצדק

79. This section uses *bo* to refer to the Sabbath, listing the auspicious events that cannot be prevented on that day.

80. That is, evil spirits have no dominion over the Sabbath observer.

Tasting the household table⁸¹
 was not prohibited on it,
 for the inheritance of those who are blessed by Him
 is **the reward of the fruit of His hosts.**⁸² **children of Israel**

220 The fortress of the belly
 is not closed up on it,
 for He who opens the womb
 does not delay its time.

Dew and rain
 do not cease up on it,
 for they provide for the banquet
 like wine and nectar.

Flowing manna, with its taste,
 did not rain down on it,
 for a second portion was prepared
 and was preserved in its honor.⁸³

The pure of heart
 do not sigh on it,
 for it has been given forever
 for the joy of those who honor it.

the **Pure One** crowned (it) **God**
 with “remember” and “observe”;⁸⁴
 so like a ring,
 he sealed his works with it.

230 He who is good to all [perfected on the sixth]
 and made rest on the seventh.
 Then He blessed it and sanctified it,
 for he rested on it.

As it is written: It shall be a sign for all time between Me and the
 people of Israel (Exod 31:17);

81. Perhaps marital intercourse.

82. See Ps 129:3. Marital intercourse was not prohibited on the Sabbath, because children are the reward of those blessed by God.

ילדי ישראל

טָרַף שׁוֹלֶחַן בֵּית
בּוֹ לֹא נֶאֱסַר
כִּי נִחַלַת מְבוֹרָכִיו
שֶׁכֶר פְּרִי צִבְאוֹ

טִירַת בֶּטֶן 220
בּוֹ לֹא הוֹסְגָרָה
כִּי פוֹתִיחַ רָחֶם
לֹא יֵאָחַר קֶץ

טַל וּמָטָר
בּוֹ לֹא הוֹעָצְרוּ
כִּי כִּיּוֹן וּכְעָסִיס
לְמִשְׁתָּה נּוֹתְנוּ

טַעַם שְׂכֵבֶת טַל
בּוֹ לֹא הוֹמָטָרָה
כִּי הוֹכֵן בְּמִשְׁנֶה
וּלְכָבוֹדוֹ נִשְׁמָר

טְהוֹרֵי לֵב בּוֹת
בּוֹ לֹא נֶאֱנָחוּ
כִּי לַעֲד נִיתֵן
לְשִׁמְחַת מַכְבְּדֵיו

האל

טְהוֹר עֵיטָר
בְּזָכוֹר וְשִׁמּוֹר
לָכֵן כָּטִבַּעַת
חֶתֶם בּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיו

טוֹב לִכְלָל (...) 230
וְהִשְׁקִיט בַּיּוֹם שְׁבִיעִי
וַיְבָרֶכְהוּ וַיְקַדְּשׁוּ
כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבֹת

כֹּכ' בִּינִי וּבִין בְּנֵי (...) (שְׁמוֹת ל"א, יז)

83. The Sabbath. Here the reference is to the legend that in the Sinai wilderness an extra portion of manna descended every Friday and was miraculously preserved for the Sabbath.

84. In the two versions of the Ten Commandments Israel is commanded to "remember" the Sabbath (Exod 20:8) and "observe" it (Deut 5:12).

and it is said: Happy is the man who does this, the man who holds fast to it: who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it (Isa 56:2).

[ADAM AND EVE]

God abided
to tell his deeds
to make his benevolence known
when he nipped the clay.⁸⁵

Fine stature,
chambers [of] organs,
twisting channels,
were prepared when he was created.⁸⁶

The supernal servants
were afraid of him,
for they were all created with speech,
and he with the hand of God.

240 **Fiery creatures**

angels

[]
regarded him
and said: "What is man?"⁸⁷

The Creator crafted⁸⁸ it
[]
and he perfected his body
in the recesses of the earth.⁸⁹

The molding of his body
[]
and his spirit and breath
from the God of faith.

85. In chapter 2 of Genesis God interrupts the story of creation to go back and tell of the creation of humankind.

86. Cf. Ezek 28:13.

87. Ps 8:5.

ונא' אשרי אנוש יעשה זאת ובן אדם יחזיק בה שומר וג' (יש' נו, ב)

[אדם וחוה]

יִשָּׁב אֶל
 <לְסִפְרֵי מַעֲשָׂיו
 לְהוֹדִיעַ חֲסָדָיו
 בְּעֵת קֶרֶץ חוֹמֶר
 יוֹפִי קוֹמָה
 <חֲדָרֵי נְקוּבָיו
 וּפִיתוּחַי תוֹפְיוֹ
 בְּהִבְרָאוֹ כוֹנְנוֹ

יִרְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
 <מִשְׁרָתִי עָלָיו
 כִּי כָל בְּאוֹמֶר נִבְרָא
 וְהוּא בְּכַף אֶל

מלאכים

יִצְוִי לַהֲבֵת 240
 <... ..>
 הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ בּוֹ
 וְשָׁחוּ "מָה אֱנוֹשׁ"
 יוֹצֵר רִיקָם
 <... ..>
 וְהִקְרִים גִּיּוֹר
 בְּתַחֲתִית אֲדָמָה
 יִצִּיקֵת גּוֹפּוֹ
 <... ..>
 וְרוּחוֹ וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ
 מֵאֵל אֱמוּנָה

88. Lit., "knit." See Ps 139:15.

89. The stanza deals with two stages of God's formation of the human being: the first, the stage of "weaving" or "molding," is the basic; the second, the "finishing" or "glazing," is the completion of the work.

They were all astonished
 when God blew into his nostrils,
 for [they were] of fire and flammable,
 and he of the breath of life.

Reptiles and birds
 were alerted and came,
 and he who was named by his Creator
 gave each its pedigree.

250 God, as he arranged them,
 had joined one to the other,
 but for his⁹⁰ bodily pleasure,
 no one was found.⁹¹

God, wondrous and exalted,
 said, "It is not good.
 I am one,
 so how can he be one?"

"I created him to honor Me—
 how can I test him?⁹²
 Let fire come forth from him
 and through her he will be refined."

woman

God put him to sleep
 and cast a pleasant slumber over him
 and took a rib away,
 but she led him astray.⁹³

He awoke from his sleep
 and said, "This one at last
 is formed from my bone
 and given to me for intimacy."

260 He set her opposite him
 and balanced his value with hers,

90. That is, Adam's.

91. That is, God had provided a mate for every creature except the man.

יַחַד תִּמְהוּ
בִּינְפֹחַ אֶל בְּאֶפִּי
כִּי מֵאֵשׁ וּשְׂרוּפִים
וְהוּא בְּנִישְׁמַת חַיִּים

יַעֲזֹרוּ וַיְבֹאוּ
רְחוּשִׁים וְעוֹפִים
וּלְכוּלִם יַחֲסֹם
נִיקְרָא בָשִׁם ׀ מִפִּי בּוֹרֵאם

יֵה כְּסִידְרָם 250
וְהוֹחֲבֵר זֶה לָזֶה
וּלְנַחַת שְׁאִירוֹ
עוֹד לֹא נִימְצָה

יֵה נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה
נָם "לֹא טוֹב
אֲנִי אֶחָד
זֶה אֵיד יֵהִיָּה אֶחָד"

"יִצְרָתִיו לְכַבְּדֵנִי
וְאֵיד אֲבַחֲנֶנּוּ
תִצָּא מִמֶּנּוּ אֵשׁ
וּבֵה יִצְרָף"

יִשְׁנוּ אֵל וְהִנָּעִים
תְּנוּמַת רִדְמוֹ
וְשָׁלַף מִנוּ צֶלַע
וּבֵה נִצָּלַע

[יִקַּץ מִתְנוּמָה
וְשָׁח "זֹאת הִפְעִם]
[אֲצוּלָה מִעֶצֶם
נְתוּנָה לִי שְׁאֵר]"

יִשְׁבָּה כְּנֶגְדּוֹ 260
וּשְׁקָלָה כְּעָרְכוֹ

אִישָׁה

92. That is, how can God distinguish Adam from Himself? Cf. Gen Rabbah 8:10, in which the creatures mistake Adam for God and bow down to him until God casts sleep upon him.

93. Heb. *šl*, the same root as "rib."

but still her desire for her husband
had not been set.

As it is written: Men are mere breath (Ps 62:10).

[THE GARDEN OF EDEN]

Ruby and turquoise,
sapphire and amethyst,
beryl and lapis lazuli,
jacinth and emerald:

265 With those gems
You adorned his dwelling,
and You paved his chambers
with shining foundation stones.

A dome of fire
was his canopy,
and You guided his steps
over coals of fire.⁹⁴

You crowned the bride;
You wreathed the bridegroom;
and like a cantor⁹⁵ You blessed them
and said, "Be fruitful and multiply."

You called their name
Adam when they were created,
for the generations of Adam
would sprout from them.

All the heavenly hosts
shook like celebrants
when they saw the Creator
making His creatures happy.

275 All the fruits of Eden
and the bounty of the garden—

94. Cf. Ezek 28:14.

וְעֵדִין לֹא שֶׁת
 תְּשׁוּקָתָהּ אֶצְלוֹ
 כֹּכ' אֶךְ הַבַּל בְּנֵי (תה' סב, י)

[גן העדן והפיתוי]

כְּדָד וְנוֹפֵךְ
 סִפִּיר וִיהָלֵם
 תְּרִשִּׁישׁ וְשִׁהֵם
 לָשֵׁם וּבִרְקַת
 כָּל אֶבֶן יִקְרָה 265
 סִכְתָּה דִּירְתּוֹ
 וְרִצְפָּתָהּ חֲדָרָיו
 בְּבִהָק אֲבָנֵי בַחֵן

כִּיפַת אֵשׁ
 חוֹפְתּוֹ הִיתָה
 וְעַל גַּחְלֵי אֵשׁ
 הִילַכְתָּה צִעְדִּיו
 כִּילֶלְתָּה כָּלָה
 עִיטְרָתָה חֲתָן
 וְכִסּוּפָהּ בִּרְכָתָה
 וְנִמְתָּה "פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ"

[כְּנִית שְׁמֵם]
 אָדָם בְּהִבְרָאָם]
 [כִּי מֵהֶם יִפְרוּ]
 [תּוֹלְדוֹת אָדָם]

כָּל צָבָא מָרוֹם
 כְּבָנֵי מִשְׁתָּה שִׁיקְשָׁקוּ
 בְּשׁוֹרֵם לְיוֹצֵר
 מִשְׁמַח יְצוּרָיו

כָּל פִּירוֹת [עֵדִין] 275
 וּתְנוּבַת הָגֶן

95. Lit., "scribe." Cf. Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 12, which describes the *ḥazzan*'s blessing of the bride at a wedding.

You permitted them
except for the tree of knowledge.

“If you do not taste of
the bough of good and evil,
you will succeed in doing good
and be saved from evil.”

You created the **instrument**
for the **destroyer** to make havoc
and he came with smooth speech
to arouse the **arouser**.⁹⁶

the snake
Satan

Eve

He flattered the innocent
and misled the upright
and ascribed flaws
to the Perfect One's work.

“You shall be like gods
if you listen to me;
for if it were not so,
why would He begrudge you?”

- 285 As it is written: Let slanderers have no place in the land; let the
evil of the lawless man drive him into corrals (Ps 140:12).
As it is written: A lawless man misleads his friend, making him
take the wrong way (Prov 16:29).

He was stripped of steps
by smooth speech;
and the one who misled the upright
fell in his depravity.

As it is written: He who misleads the upright into an evil course
[will fall into his own pit] (Prov 28:10).

[THE FIRST SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT]

- 290 She who is snares and nets⁹⁷
listened to the evil one,

96. Eve disturbed Adam, lit., “ringing his bell” all night.

הַתִּרְתָּהּ לָהֶם
חוּץ מֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת

"כִּנְתָּ טוֹב וָרַע
אִם לֹא תִטְעֲמוּ
הֵן בְּטוֹב תִּצְלָחוּ
וּמִרַע תִּוָּצְלוּ"

הנחש; שטן

כָּלִי [הַ]מִּשְׁחִית
בְּרֹאשָׁהּ לְחַבֵּל
וּבֶאֱוֵהָ לִיקֹּץ
לְפָנֶיךָ הַמַּפְעֵמֶת

חווה

כִּיחַשׁ בְּתַמִּימִים
וְהִשְׁגִּיא יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנָתַן דּוֹפִי
בְּפַעוּלַת תָּמִים

"כִּאִיִּם תִּהְיוּ
אִם לִי תִאָּזְנוּ
כִּי לִילִי שָׁכֵן
לָמָּה [מִכֶּם] כָּלְאוּ"

285 ככ' איש לשון בל יכון בארץ איש חמש רע יצודנו למדחפות (תה' קמ, יב)
ככ' איש חמש יפתה רעהו להוליכו בדרך לא טוב (מש' טז, כט)

[כְּלִיתָהּ פְּעָמָיו
בְּשִׁפְתֵי חֲלָקוֹת]
[וְנִפְל בְּשָׁחוֹתָיו
מִשְׁגָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל]

[ככ' משגה ישראלים (מש' כח, י)]

[החטא הראשון ועונשו]

לְמִרְעַת הָאֲזִינָה
מִצֻּדֹת חֲרָמִים

290

and the **innocent one** was caught
in the trap of the devious.

Adam

A heart of flesh⁹⁸ turned away from them, **an obedient heart**
and they understood evil;
they girded themselves with leaves from the tree
when they stole the fruit of that tree.

You took a walk in the cool of the day,
and they heard Your voice,
and they hid in their shame,
for they recognized their defiance.

To the end of their generations
at the beginning You tested them;
so that You might judge them favorably,
You asked, “Where are you?”⁹⁹

You said to them,
“Perhaps you erred in eating,”
so that You might answer, “You made a mistake—
you have acted ignorantly.”¹⁰⁰

300 The boor did not understand
the soft answer.
He was undone by his folly
and raged against You.

To **her who drips endlessly**¹⁰¹
You said, “What have you done?”
and she answered You,
“The **cunning one** deceived me.”

woman

snake

To the base plotter
You accused and cursed,
and his lying mouth
You filled with dust.

98. See Ezek 36:26.

99. That is, in asking this question, God hoped they would repent.

אדם

וְנוֹקֵשׁ תָּמִים
בְּמַלְכוּדַת עֵינָשִׁים

לב כנוע

לֵב בָּשָׂר סָר מֵהֶם
וְהִבִּינוּ בְּרָעָה
וְעָלִי עֵץ חַגְרוֹ
כְּגֹנְבִים פָּרִי עֵץ

לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם הִילַכְתָּהּ
וְשָׁמְעוּ קוֹלָהּ
וְנַחֲבֹאוּ בְּבִשְׁתָּם
כִּי יָדְעוּ מְרִים

לְסוֹף דּוֹרוֹתָם
מֵרֹאשׁ חֻקֵּיהֶם
וּלְמַעַן תִּחַנְּנִם
בְּ"אֵיִיכָה" שְׁאֵלָתָם

לְמוֹ אֲמַרְתָּה:
"שָׁמָּה בָּאוּ כָּל תַּעֲיִיתָם"
לְהִשִּׁיב "שִׁגְגָתָם"
בְּבִלִי דַעַת עֲשִׂיתָם

לְמַעַנָּה רַךְ 300

בְּעַר לֹא הִבִּין
וּבְאִיּוֹלָתוֹ סוֹלֶף
וְעָלִיהַ נִזְעַף

אישה

לְדַלֵּף טוֹרֵד
אֲמַרְתָּה "מָה עָשִׂיתִי"
וְהִשִּׁיבָה לָהּ

הנחש

"עָרוֹם הָשִׂיאֲנִי"

לְיוֹעֵץ בְּלִיעַל
הִרְשָׁעְתָּהּ וְקִילְלָתָהּ
וּמְלֵאֲתָהּ עָפָר
פִּי דוֹבֵר שָׁקֶר

100. God gave Adam and Eve an opportunity to say that they sinned inadvertently and so be spared punishment.

101. See Prov 19:13.

The devisor of evil¹⁰²
 You threatened with “enmity”¹⁰³
 and he was punished with¹⁰⁴ striking at the head
 and striking at the heel.¹⁰⁵

That which begets a dullard the earth; man
 You enveloped in grief
 as it was condemned to give forth thorns
 and to grow thistles.

310 With convulsions in childbearing
 and labor pains
 and with the helpmeet’s urge to lust
 You punished her.

Who can plumb the mind¹⁰⁶
 of the one who searches the inward parts?
 For three sinned
 and four were punished.

You prepared a remedy
 for the affliction of all of them
 except for the slithering
 of **the one who speaks impiety.**¹⁰⁷ the snake

Thus in all Your ways
 there is faithfulness and justice.
 And You are merciful,
 not destroying Your deeds.

As it is written in Your holy scriptures: The Lord is beneficent in
 all His ways (Ps 145:17).

102. Lit., “him who wove the love of evil.”

103. Between the woman and the snake; See Gen 3:15.

104. Lit., “[his punishment] was tied to.”

לְאוֹגֵר אֶהֱבֵת [רָשָׁע]
הַתְּרִיתָהּ בְּ"אֵיבָה"
וְהוֹקֵשֶׁר בְּשׁוֹף רֹאשׁ
וּבְשׁוֹפֵת עֶקֶב

האדמה; האדם

לְיֹלֶדֶת כָּסִיל
תּוֹגָה הֶעֱטִיתָהּ
[וְהִרְשֵׁתָּ] לִיתֵן קוֹץ
וּלְגִדֹּל דֶּרֶדֶר

לְשִׁבְרֵי הַרְיוֹן 310
וְהַפְּכֵי צִירִים
וְתִשׁוּקֵת עֶזֶר
לְרַעֲב(ת) [נָ]תַתְּ עֲנֻשָּׁתָהּ

לְבוֹחֹן כָּלִיּוֹת
מִי יִתֶּכֶן דַּעַת
כִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה חָטְאוּ
וְאַרְבָּעָה לָקוּ

לְמַכַּת כּוֹלָם
צָרִי (לַעֲד) הִיכַנְתָּהּ
חוּץ מִלְחִיכָתָהּ
דּוֹבֵר נִבְלָה

הנחש

לָכֵן בְּכָל דֶּרֶכֶיהָ
אָמְנָה וּמִשְׁפָּט
וְחִסִּיד בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂיהָ
בְּלִי לְחַיִּל פּוֹעֵל

ככ' בד' ק' צדיק י'י בכל (תה' קמה, יז)

105. That is, as the snake strikes at a person's heel, so human beings will strike at his head. See Gen 3:15.

106. Isa 40:13.

107. According to legend, the snake will not be restored to its former self in the world to come.

[SIBLING RIVALRY]

They did not sleep
 one night in honor,
 for **the one who is like a beast**
 did not understand honor.¹⁰⁸

Adam

They were expelled from Eden
 to devour food¹⁰⁹ in sweat,¹¹⁰
 for pleasure
 is not fitting for a fool.

{From the path of life,
 the fools were expelled;
 with a fiery ever-turning sword,¹¹¹
 the tree of life was protected.}

Those aware of good and evil
 became acquainted with the bed,
 and their belly gave forth
 children, one good and one evil.

Adam and Eve

325 The occupation of each
 was different from the other's;
 neither resented
 the other's vocation.

The one who causes the honest to stray
 cast jealousy between them
 and sowed discord
 between the children of **those who stayed.**

the snake

Adam and Eve

The elder hatched a cunning plan
 with his offering
 and presented fruit,
 recalling his parents' sin.

The younger hurried
 to arrange an offering;

108. Cf. Ps 49:21.

109. Lit., "taste."

[שנאת אחים]

אדם

מָלוֹן אֶחָד
בְּכָבוֹד לֹא לָנוּ
כִּי לֹא בֶן
מְשׁוּל בְּהֶמָּה בִּיקָר

מַעֲדָן גּוֹרְשׁוֹ
לְלַעֲוֹט טַעַם בְּזִיעָה
כִּי לֹא נָאָה
לְכָסִיל תַּעֲנוּג

<מִדְרָךְ חַיִּים
אֲוִילִים נִגְרְשׁוּ
וּבִלְהֻט מִתְהַפֵּכֶת
עַץ חַיִּים נִשְׁמַר>

אדם וחווה

מְשָׁכָב יָדְעוּ
מִכִּירֵי טוֹב וָרַע
וְהַמְלִיטָה בְּטָנָם
יִלְדֵי טוֹב וָרַע

מְלֶאכֶת שְׁנִיָּהם
זֶה מִזֶּה הִפְרִדְתָּהּ
בְּלִי יִשְׁטוּמוּ
זֶה אֶת זֶה בְּעֶבְדָּם

325

הנחש

מְשֻׁגָּה יִשְׂרָיִם
שֶׁת בִּינִימוֹ קִנְיָה
וְשִׁלַּח מְדָנִים
בְּנִינֵי שִׁיגִיו

אדם וחווה

מַחֲשַׁבֶּת הָעָרִים
גָּדוֹל בְּמִשְׁאָתוֹ
וְהִיגֵשׁ פִּירוֹת
וְהִזְכִּיר עוֹן הוֹרָיו

מִיָּהָר קִטּוֹן
וְעֶרֶךְ מִנְחָה

110. Cf. Gen 3:19.

111. This stanza is restored from MS ENA 2147.22-23. See Gen 3:24.

You took comfort in the aroma¹¹²
and looked with favor on the sacrifice.

You did not want
the malefactor's offering,
for the wicked's sacrifice
is considered an abomination.

335 His countenance
changed to downfallen,
for he did not turn
to the Merciful to plead mercy.

"Why are you enraged?"

You said to him,

"Bar **the lurking at the door**;¹¹³
return and I will return you."

sin

O King, to You are revealed
the [inner] details of the vital parts,
counting steps
and repaying deeds in kind.

As it is written by Your prophet: Most devious is the heart (Jer 17:9);
and it is said: I, the Lord, probe the heart (Jer 17:10).

[MURDER COMES INTO THE WORLD]

Livid revenge
and a vicious grudge¹¹⁴
were borne in the inner chambers
of the born criminal.

345 With words of enmity
and hateful speech
he assaulted him in the field,
to find a way to harm him.¹¹⁵

112. Playing here on the words *minḥah* (offering) and *niḥoah* (aroma).

113. Cf. Gen 4:7.

וְנִחַתָּה עַל נִיחוּחַ
וְשַׁעֲתָה עַל קִרְבֹּן

מִיד עוֹל
מִנְחָה לֹא רָצִיתָה
כִּי זָבַח רְשָׁעִים
לְתוֹעֵבָה נִיתַן

מִרְאָה פָּנָיו 335
בְּנִפּוֹל נִשְׁתַּנּוּ
כִּי לֹא פָּנָה
חֲנוּן לְחֹנְנוֹ

"מָה לָּךְ נִזְעַמְתָּה"
אֲמַרְתָּה לוֹ
"סָגוּר אוֹרֵב בַּפֶּתַח"
שׁוּב וְאַשִּׁיבָךְ

[מִלֶּךָ לָךְ גְּלוּיִם]
מַחְקֵרֵי כְלִיּוֹת
לְסָפוֹר צַעֲדִים
[וּלְשֵׁלֶם גְּמוּלִים]

כֹּכ' ע' י' נ' עֲקוֹב הַלֵּב (יִר' יז, ט)
וּנ' אֲנִי יֵי חוֹקֵר (יִר' יז, י)

הַחֲטָא

[רִצַּח בַּעוֹלָם]

נְקִימַת אֵף
וְנִטִּירַת חֶרוֹן
הוֹצֵפְנוּ בְּחִדְרֵי
פוֹשֵׁעַ מִבֶּטֶן

נוֹאֲמֵי אֵיבָה 345
וְדַבְרֵי שִׁנְאָה
הִתְעַלְל בְּשָׂדֶה
[לְהִתְאַנּוֹת לוֹ]

114. Cf. Lev 19:18.

115. See Gen 4:8.

He turned a blind eye
 before **the One that no eye can see**¹¹⁶
 and did not set
 the God of hidden things before him.

God

The child of thieves¹¹⁷
 taught murder,¹¹⁸
 wounded the righteous,
 and stoned the immaculate.

Cain

He who is exalted on high
 stood up to plead the cause;
 He demanded the victim
 from the murderer.¹¹⁹

The arrogant one retorted,
 answering his Maker,
 “Am I an employee—
 hired to watch over my brother?”

355 He hid his face
 when God rebuked him—
 “Could he who is not watching
 ambush someone more innocent?”¹²⁰

“You shall surely be
 a destructive curse
 along with **that which opened its mouth**¹²¹
 to share **that which you stole.**”¹²²

earth
 Abel’s blood

A ceaseless wanderer,
 his insolence was humbled.
 And he replied to the Exalted One,
 “My guilt is too much to bear.”

116. See Job 24:15.

117. Because Adam and Eve stole the fruit, Cain was the “son of thieves.”

118. That is, taught the rest of the world to murder.

119. God demanded to know where Abel, the victim, was.

120. The lines play on the word *shomer* in Gen 4:9, which means both “keeper” and “watching.” Alternatively, this couplet could be translated as Cain’s reply to God: “And is he who does not watch

אלוהים

נִצַּר אִישׁוֹן
לֹא עֵינַי תְּשׁוּרִינוּ
וְלֹאֵל נִסְתָּרוֹת
לֹא שֵׁת לִנְגְדוֹ

קין

נִין גּוֹנְבִים
הוֹרָה רְצִיחָה
וּפִיצַע צָדִיק
וְסִיקֵל נָקִי

נִיֵּצַב לָרִיב
נִשְׁגָּב בְּמָרוֹם
דָּרַשׁ הָרוֹג
מִיד רוֹצֵחַ

נֶעַן מִתְחַטֵּא
וְהִשִּׁיב לְיוֹצֵר
”נָכִי שָׂכִיר אָנִי
לְשִׁמּוֹר אָחִי”

נִחַפּוּ פָּנָיו
בְּהוֹכִיחוֹ אֵל
”וּמִי לֹא שׁוֹמֵר
מִזֵּנֵב זֶה מִמֶּנּוּ”

355

”נִכּוֹן תִּהְיֶה
לְקָלֶלֶת מְאִירָה
עִם פָּצָה פִּיהָ
לְחַלֵּק גִּנְבִּיהָ”

האדמה

דם הבל

נָע וְנָד
נִכְנַע זְדוֹנוֹ
וְהִשִּׁיב לְנִשְׁגָּב
”מִנְשׂוֹא גָדוֹל עֲוֹנִי”

over a murderer more innocent?” That is, anyone who allows murder to take place is as guilty as the murderer. Cf. Tanḥuma Bereshit 9. Two couplets missing in this section may have completed this dialogue.

121. See Gen 4:11.

122. God is apparently answering Cain in this poetic dialogue. The idea here is that not only is Cain, who stole Abel's blood, cursed, but so is the earth, since it accepted Abel's blood by absorbing it.

He who bears guilt
 was filled with mercy
 and suspended the sentence
 of **fading grass**.¹²³

humanity

As it is written: But He, being merciful, forgives iniquity (Ps 78:38).

[THE GENERATION OF ENOSH]

You dragged him away from seeing
 Your glorious countenance,
 and his parents were excluded
 from **the great primordial dwelling**.

Eden

You increased the account of his generations¹²⁴
 without limit,
 and they were fruitful and multiplied
 immeasurably.

You increased the abundance
 of Your delicacies for rich pastures;
 they ate what was Yours
 but did not know You.

370 They luxuriated
 on couches of licentiousness—
 and because of that the divine beings
 were called **those who fall about**.¹²⁵

Nephilim

They planned to proclaim
 the Faithful One a false god
 and called a **carving**¹²⁶
 by the name of **the One who dwells in shelter**.¹²⁷

idol

God

The Rider,¹²⁸ to whom joyous praise is due,
 was saddened in his heart,

God

123. Cf. Ps 103:15.

124. Lit., “book of generations” (Gen 8:1); the author is playing on the root *spr*, which can also refer to counting.

125. Playing on the Hebrew *nefilim* and the root *npl* “to fall”; see Gen 6:4.

נושא עוון
 רחמים נ[ת]מלא
 ותלה דין [צדק]
 לחציר עובר
 בני אדם
 ככ' והוא רחום (תה' עח, לח)

[דור אנוש]

סחבתו מלראות
 (עוד) פני כבודך
 ושכן קדם טוב
 נמנעו הוריו
 עדין
 ספר תולדותיו
 העצמתה בלי חקר
 ופרו ורבו
 עד אין מספר
 סרח מעדניך
 העדפתה לדשנם
 ושלך אכלו
 ולך לא ידעו
 סרוחים היו 370
 במשכבי זימה
 ומשם בני אלהים
 נקראו נפילים
 סרה חשבו
 לענות בנאמן
 פסל
 וכינו מסורד
 השם יושב סתר
 האל
 סולו לרוכב
 על ליבו נעצב
 האל

126. Reading *mswrd* for *mswrr*. Cf. Isa 44:13.

127. Cf. Ps 91:1.

128. God rides the clouds, according to Ps 68:5.

for he had it set on¹²⁹
 creating an image on dry ground. earth

Despising His work,
 disgusted with¹³⁰ His creation,
 He rejoiced in destroying,
 as He had delighted in building.

There was a fragrant spice Noah
 among the rotten fruit—
 balm in the wound,
 and wine in the vinegar cellar.

380 You placed him as a watchman
 for one hundred and twenty years
 to warn the insolent
 who knew no shame.

Before his ship
 set sail,
 he delayed for seven days
 to allow for life.¹³¹

Their hope was lost,
 their anticipation was extinguished,
 their eyes darkened,
 and sight ended.

As it is written in Your holy scriptures: But the eyes of the wicked
 pine away; escape is cut off from them; they have only their last
 breath to look forward to (Job 11:20).

[THE FLOOD]

Against them, the Merciful One
 turned cruel,
 locking up his compassion,
 not listening to groaning.

129. Lit., "he had lifted it" (his heart).

130. Having had enough of; cf. Gen 27:46.

ארץ

כִּי הוּא נִשְׂאוֹ
לְבָרוֹת צֶלֶם בְּצִיָּה

שָׁנָא פִּעְלוֹ
וְקָץ בְּמַעֲשָׂיו
וְשֵׁשׁ לְהָרוֹס בְּגִיל
כְּגִילוֹ לְבָנוֹת

נוח

שֵׁם רָקַח נִמְצָא
בְּתוֹךְ צֶחֶן בְּאוֹשִׁים
צָרִי בְּתוֹךְ מִכָּה
וַיִּזְן בְּמִרְתֵּף חוֹמָץ

שְׁמָתוֹ לְצוּפָה 380
שָׁנוֹת מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים
לְהַזְהִיר יָדַיִם
וְלֹא יָדְעוּ בִשְׁת

סְפִינְתוֹ
עַד לֹא הִפְרִישׁ
(עוֹד) שְׁבַעַת יָמִים אַחֵר
(רוּחַ) [רוּחָה] לְחַיִּים

סִבְרָם אֲבָד
וְתִקְוָתָם פָּחָה
וְעֵינֵיהֶם קָדְרוּ
[וּ]מִבֶּטֶם כָּל

כֹּכ' בִּד' ק' וְעִינֵי רִשְׁעִים (אִיּוֹב י"א, כ)

[המבול]

עֲלִיהֶם נִהַפֵּד
חֲנוּן לְאַכְזָר
וְנָעַל רַחֲמָיו
בְּלִי שִׁמְעַת אֲנָק

131. According to a midrash (t. Sotah 10:3–5), God delayed the flood for seven days after the death of Methuselah to allow the sinful generation to repent and thus survive.

The Most High
 broke the edges of **the expanse**¹³² **the earth**
 and opened the floodgates
 that he had closed with his word.

The Mighty One burst open
 the fountains of the deep
 and smashed the heads
 of **the bolts of the seas.** **Leviathans**

He punished them with rain
 for forty days and nights
 for they rebelled against Him
 who formed humankind in forty days.¹³³

395 He summoned and poured out
that which He holds in the hollow of His hand **water**
 and it rose up as fast as
that which cascades down.¹³⁴ **falling water**

[]
 to close up the sluices¹³⁵—
 they rose up in their strength,
 but they fell like weaklings.

The **mighty** overcame **water of the flood**
 and swept away the fools;
 the heathen were wiped out—
 a people who lusted after theft.

[]
 slaughtered the fools;
 and every high mountain
 was covered with **that which is cold.** **water**

The sustenance of all existence **soil**
 was swept away with it,

132. That is, he ruptured the borders of the land by which it held back the water.

133. Their rebellion corrupted the form of the human embryo, which takes form in forty days.
 See Gen Rabbah 32.5 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 292).

אדמה	עֲלִיוֹן נִיתַק (עול) עֲבָרֵי רְקִיעָה וּפְתַח אֲרֻבוֹת סִגְר בְּמֶאֱמָר
לויתנים	עֵינֹת תְּהוֹם עִיזוֹ בִיקַע וְשִׁיבֵר רֹאשִׁי בְּרִיחֵי מְצוּלָה עֲנֹשׁ(ת)ם בְּגִשִּׁימַת אֲרֻבַּעִים יוֹם וְלֵילָה בְּבִגְדָם בִּיזָר אֲנוֹשׁ לְאֲרֻבַּעִים
מים	עֲצוּרֵי שָׁעֶלֹ 395 קָרָא וְשִׁפָּךְ וּמִי־הָרוּ לְעֹלוֹת כְּמוֹנָגִידִים לִירֵד
נוזלים	(ע... ג... ת לְסִתּוֹם אֲרֻבוֹת וְגָאוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֶתָם וְנִפְּלוּ כְּחֶלֶשׁ
מי המבול	(עֲזִים גְּבָרוּ) וְטֹאטְאוּ אֲוִילִים וְנִמְחֹו חֲנִיפִים עִם גִּזַּל חֲשָׁקוֹ (ע... ...) (הֶשׁ) חִיתוֹ אֲוִילִים וְכָל הָר גְּבוּהָ כָּסוּ קָרִים
מים	
אדמה	עוֹמֵד כָּל יְקוּם עִימָם הוֹנֵד

134. The meaning is that the waters rose as fast as rain falls; cf. Gen Rabbah 32:7 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 294).

135. According to Gen Rabbah 31.12 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 285), the giants of that generation tried to step on the sluices to stop the water from flowing.

for woe to the wicked
and woe to his neighbor!¹³⁶

405 On a boat of **the blameless man** Noah
You floated life,
and in the midst of the storm
You led it on a straight path.

Who can tell
the abundance of Your wonders?
For with **the staff with which You strike** water
You bind the wound.

Because of this **the strayer**¹³⁷ Habakkuk
was fearful and prayed,
when he saw that in Your anger
You remember compassion.

As it is written: A prayer of the lowly man when he is faint and
pours forth his plea before the Lord (Ps 102:1).
As it is written by Your prophet: O Lord, I have learned of Your
renown (Hab 3:2).

[THE TOWER OF BABEL]

The survivor of the universe Noah
opened a porthole in his shelter,
and before he set out,
he sent forth two messengers.

415 You spoke to him,
“Go out in peace,
for **the scoffer** has been expelled, Cain and his descendents
and the contention has ceased.”

He offered young birds
and pieces of livestock

136. This phrase, apparently a popular saying found in m. Nega'im 12:6, means that since the earth allowed the wicked generation to flourish, it too is cursed. See Gen Rabbah 31:7.

	כִּי אוֹי לְרָשָׁע וְאוֹי לְשָׂכֵינוּ	
נוח	עַל אֲנִי תָמִים רוּחַ חַיִּים רִיחַפָּתָה וּבְתוֹךְ סִעָרָה בְּמִישׁוֹר הִילַכְתָּ הַ	405
מים	עוֹצֵם נִפְלְאוֹתֶיהָ מִי יוֹכַל סִיחַ כִּי בְשִׁבְט תִּכָּה בּוֹ תַחֲבוֹשׁ מַחֵץ	
חבקוק	עַל זֶאת תִּרְדּוּ שׁוֹגֵג וּפִילֵל בְּשׁוֹרוֹ רַחֲמֶיהָ כִּי בְרוּגָז תִּזְכָּרֶם	
	כֹּכ' תַּפְלָה לַעֲנִי כִי וְג' (תה' קב, א)	
	כֹּכ' ע' י' נ' 'י' שְׁמַעְתִּי 'שְׁמַעְך' (חב' ג, ב)	

[דור הפלגה]

נוח	פְּלִיטָה עוֹלָם פֶּתַח צוֹהַר צָפוֹנוֹ 'וְטָרָם צֵאתוֹ שְׁנֵי צִירִים הִירֵץ	
קין וצאצאיו	פִּצְתָהּ לוֹ "צֵא בְשָׁלוֹם כִּי הִגֵּרְשׁ לֵץ וְהִשְׁבֵּתָ מְדוּן" פָּרַחִי גוֹזְלוֹת וּבְתָרִי פְגָרִים	415

137. This epithet for Habakkuk is based on Hab 3:1, which would seem to mean "prayer of Habakkuk, prophet of errors." The idea is that Habakkuk erred in questioning God's mercy; see Midrash Tehillim 90:7.

in purity
on a pure altar.

You turned to smell
his sacrificial offering,
and You repented Your sadness
so that (the earth) not be cursed again.

You signaled the sight
of Your radiant glory in the clouds.
If again they are destroyed,
they will be drowned in the rivers.¹³⁸

A threefold thread **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**
You fortified with blessings
and made the earth swarm
with sum of their descendents.

425 They unraveled Your moral teachings,
broke off Your yoke,
and trampled on **that which is rewarding.** **Torah**
[]

They opened their mouths to say “Come”¹³⁹
and were dispersed like corpses;
they wished to think Your thoughts
[]

They faced upward
but were cast downward,
for they rejected God,
[]

430 They founded a corner of plaster
and bound straw for a dome
[] to wage
war against **the Fire.** **God**

138. God will no longer send a flood, but could in the future drown the wicked in the rivers if he desired.

עֶרֶךְ בְּתֶהְרֶה
עַל מִזְבֵּחַ טְהוֹר

פָּנִיתָ וְהִרְחַתָּ
מִנְחַת זִבְחִיו
וְשׁוֹבֶבְתָּהּ עֲצָבָךְ
〈לֵאמֹר〉 עוֹד 〈תִּקְלָל〉

פִּינוּי זִיו כְּבוֹדְךָ
בְּעֵבִים רְמִזָּתָהּ
עוֹד אִם יִשְׁחַח יִתּוֹ
〈וּבְנֵהרִים תִּישָׁטְפָם〉

שם, חם ויפת

פָּתִיל חוּט מְשׁוֹלֵשׁ
בְּבִרְכוֹת אִמְצָתָהּ
וְהִרְחַשְׁתָּהּ תִּבְלָה
בְּחֶק צִיָּצֵאֵיהֶם

פִּיתָחוּ מוֹסְרוֹתֶיךָ 425

וְנִתְקוּ עוֹלָךְ

וּבְעֵטוֹ בְּמִשְׁלָם

אוֹיֵךְ... 〈...〉

התורה

פָּצוּ בְּפִיהֶם "הִבֵּה"
וְנוֹפְצוּ כְּמוֹ חֶלֶל
וְזָמְמוּ זִמְמָתְךָ
〈... ...〉

פָּנוּ כְּלָפִי מַעֲלָה
וְהוֹרְדוּ עַד מִטָּה
כִּי מֵאִסוֹ 〈אֵל〉
〈... ...〉

פִּינֵת טִיט יִסְדּוּ 430

וּבִינֵין קֶשׁ רִכְסוּ

עַל עֶרְוֹךְ

קָרַב נֶגְדְּ אִשׁ

האל

פִּתְעֵ הוֹפ־עֵת
 וְהִפְרִדְתָּה אֲגוּדָם
 וְהוֹתַמְר מַעֲנָם
 וְהוֹב־לֵל מִלֵּלָם
 פְּלָצוֹת אֲחֻזָּתָם
 <... ...>
 לְמַעַן אֶהְבֶּתָם
 לֹא עֲשִׂיתָם כָּלָה

ככ' שינ'אה' תעורר מדאנים וג' (מש' י, יב)

[אברהם המאמין]

<צ... ..>
 <..> קִי חֲרוּלִים
 חֲבֻצֶלֶת שׁוֹשָׁן
 בְּקַמְסוֹנֵי כְסוּחִים
 צְבִי בֵין פְּרָאִים
 יִשָּׁר בֵין מַעֲקָשִׁים
 <... ...>
 צֵל עֵץ בְּתוֹךְ חוֹרֵב

440

פסילים

אליל

צָר בְּצוּרֵי הָבֵל
 וְנַעֲצֵב בְּעַצְבִּים
 וְתִיעֵב מִתּוֹאֵר
 וּמֵאֵס בְּמִסְבָּל
 צִמְאָה נִפְשׁוֹ
 בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים
 וְאוֹר עֲפַעְפּוֹ
 הֵן לֹא נִדְעָכוּ
 צָנִיף עָטָה
 פֶּאֶר וְצִדְקָה

143. Cf. Isa 46:7.

144. Based on an emendation; see Yahalom, *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 114.

and looked above and below
for You rule them all.

He spoke rightly,
abiding at the gates;
he was girded with faith
and relied on justice.

450 He looked over the earth and said,
“If no one spreads it out,¹⁴⁵
from whom does it tremble,
and who keeps it steady?

“The luminaries of the sky—
if they are not called by name,
how is it that they do not change
their courses of day and night?

“The shadows of night—
if they are not spread out in time,
who holds back the sun,
detaining it until dawn?”¹⁴⁶

He expounded the commandment:
“Who made the moon?”¹⁴⁷
Is there a house that is laid out,
built by itself?”

You soothed his heart,
for You are Lord of all,
and before You were revealed to him,
You tried him¹⁴⁸ and he prevailed.

460 You leapt toward him,¹⁴⁹
like a lover his companion,
and by the power of Your light
he took his steps.

145. See Ps 136:6.

146. The idea here is that the sun must be held back in the tent of the night until day.

147. God commanded him (Gen 15:5) to look heavenward, and Abraham interpreted God's command according to Isa 40:26: “Who created these?”

וְהִבִּיט בְּמַעְלָה וּבְמַטָּה
כִּי אֶתָּה מְנַהִיגֵם

צֶדֶק הָגָה
וְשָׁקֵד מְזוּזָה
וְנֶאֱזָר בְּאַמוּנָה
וְנִשְׁעַן בְּמִשְׁפָּט

צָפָה עָלֵי אֶרֶץ וְנָם 450

"אִם אֵין לָהּ רִקְיָע
מִמִּי תִרְעַד
וּמִי מַעֲמִידָה"

"צִחְצִיחֵי שַׁחַק
אִם לֹא בָּשִׁים קְרֹאוּם
אֵיךְ לֹא יִשְׁנוּ
מִשְׁמְרוֹת יוֹם וּלְיָלָה"

"צִלְלֵי עָרֵב
אִם לֹא בְּעִיתָם מְנוּטִים
מִי מַעֲמִיד חֶרֶס
וְעוֹצֵר עַד שַׁחַר"

צִוּוּי דָּרֶשׁ
מִי לְבָנָה עֲשֵׂה
יֵשׁ בֵּית נִרְתֵּק
וּנְבִנָה לְעֶצְמוֹ

צָרִי שֶׁתְּ לִלְבוֹ
כִּי אֶתָּה אֲדוֹן כָּל
וּבִטָּרָם תִּימָצָא לוֹ
צִרְפָּתוֹ וְעָמַד

צִלְחַתָּה עָלָיו 460
כְּאוֹהֵב עַל רֵיעַ
וּלְתוֹקָף נוֹגֵהָ
צִעְדוֹ אֶשׁ[וֹ]רִיו

148. By commanding him to leave his home (Gen 12:1).

149. Following the suggestion of Bronznick, review of *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, 152, and idem, "Li-Meqoro u-le-Horato shel ha-Munah Qefiṣat ha-Derekh," *Lešonenu* 37 (1972-73): 15-20.

As it is written by Your prophet: Who has roused a victor from the east, summoned him to His service? (Isa 41:2).

[THE ELECTION OF ABRAHAM]

Bound as a seal on the heart,
like a bracelet for the arm,
like a belt for the loins,
like a turban for royalty,

465 You called him out
to gaze at the stars;
You augmented his faith
with reward and punishment.¹⁵⁰

You cast darkness
and passed a torch through
and made a covenant of pieces
in which each piece was burned.

Before You took note of him
by making him flourish in old age,
You relieved him of a trifle
and appeared in his honor.

have a son
foreskin

The rebels were jealous of him
as those who wanted no visitors,¹⁵¹
with the nature of the evil,
with the rage of sinners.

people of Sodom

You let Your secret reach
the father's¹⁵² ears
when their abominable outrage
went up before You.

Abraham's

475 He arose like a wise man
to appease the King's wrath,

150. Cf. Gen 15:8, 13-16.

151. Lit., "those who forgot the path"; cf. Job 28:4. In Gen 19:4-5 the Sodomites were inhospitable to the visitors.

ככ' ע' י' נ' מי העיר ממזרח צדק וג' (יש' מא, ב)

[בחירת אברהם]

קוֹשֶׁר כְּחוֹתֶם עַל לֵב
וּכְטַבַּעַת לְזִרְעֵךְ
וּכְאֶזֶז לְמַתָּנִים
וּכְצִנִּיף לְמַלּוּכָה

קִרְיָתוֹ לַחוּץ 465

וְיֶשֶׁר בְּכוֹכְבֵּימָה
וְהוֹסִיף אֱמוּנָה
וְהָשִׁיב וַיַּעֲנֵשׁ

קִידְרָתָה עֲלָטָה
וְהַבְּעֵרָתָה לַפִּיד
וְכִרְתָּה בְּרִית נֶתַח
וְכָל פֶּגֶר נִיתָן

קָדָם תִּפְקְדָנוּ
לְנוֹב בְּשִׁיבָה
הִיתְרָתָה קִלּוֹתוֹ
וְהוֹפַעְתָּה כְּבָדוֹ

ערלה

אנשי סדום

קָמִים קָנְאוּ בוֹ
עִם נִשְׁכָּחֵי רֶגֶל
בְּמִידַת רָעִים
וּבְכַעַס חֲטָאִים

אברהם

קָשָׁב סוּדָךְ
בְּאֶזְנֵי אָב הַשְּׁמַעְתָּה
בְּעֵלּוֹת לְפָנֶיךָ
צַעֲקַת תּוֹעֲבֹתֶם

קָם כְּחָכֶם 475
לְכַפֵּר חַמַּת מֶלֶךְךָ

to persuade, with discourse,
the Keeper of Faith:

God

“If the yeast in still liquor
 has begun to effervesce,¹⁵³
 recognize the contrite heart—
 do not destroy all.

“If the impious¹⁵⁴
 have bared their necks,¹⁵⁵
 take heed to the humble—
 do not commit extinction.”

He offered his appeal,
 and made his case;
 he pleaded for the sake of fifty,
 but not ten were found.

Easily and swiftly
 You set Your hand against the flint¹⁵⁶
 and overturned the wicked;
 they were decimated and were no more.

485 The ruthless slaughtered in the dark,
 hiding their faces,
 but their deeds were repaid;
 they vanished like smoke.

As it is written: Therefore, men of understanding, listen to me;
 wickedness be far from God, wrongdoing, from Shaddai (Job
 34:10).

And it is said: For He pays a man according to his actions, and
 provides for him according to his conduct (Job 34:11).

153. “If the people of Sodom have begun to repent.” The reference is to a fermented beverage whose fermenting agents (i.e., the few righteous people) have just begun to take action but have not yet caused fermentation.

האל

לַפְתּוֹת בְּשִׁיחַ

לְשׁוֹמֵר אֱמוּנִים

”קְפוּאִים אִם חָלוּ

לַחֲלָחַל שְׁמִרְהֶם

בֵּין בְּדָכוֹת לֵב

וְאַל תִּשְׁחִית הַכֹּל”

”קִלִּי רֹאשׁ

אִם עוֹרֶךְ הַפָּנוּ

שׁוֹר בְּשַׁפְּלֵי רוּחַ

וְאַל תַּעַשׂ כָּלָה”

קִירַב עֲצוֹמוֹת

וְהִגִּישׁ צַדִּיקוֹת

וּבִיקֵשׁ עַל חַמְּשִׁים

וְעִשָּׂרָה לֹא «נִמְצָאוּ»

קַל מְהִירָה

יָד בְּחִלְמִישׁ שִׁילַחְתָּהּ

וְהִפְכָתָה רְשָׁעִים

וְהוֹבִקְעוּ וְאֵינָם

קָשִׁים בַּחוּשָׁן הִישָׁחִיתוּ 485

וְסִיתָר פָּנִים שָׁמוּ

וְהוֹמַחָה לָמוּ פּוֹעֵלָם

כְּקִיטוֹר נִידָעָכוּ

(כֹּךְ לֹכֵן אֲנֹשִׁי לִבִּב שִׁמְעוּ לִי וּג' (אִיּוֹב לֵד, י)

(וּג' כִּי פּוֹעֵל אָדָם יִשְׁל' לוּ וּג' (שֵׁם, שֵׁם יֵא)

154. Lit., “light-headed.”

155. A sign of contrition.

156. Cf. Job 28:9.

[THE BINDING OF ISAAC]

You fulfilled faithfully
 the essence of Your word
 and made the withered tree flourish,
 yielding rich fruit.

The laughing woman was refreshed with shade,¹⁵⁷ **Sarah**
 and she said, “Everyone will laugh at me.”

The one who laughed was expelled, **Ishmael**
 to be free as a wild animal.

You resolved to prove
 Your **friend's** devotion **Abraham's**
 to glorify Your name
 before **those who said “what is humanity?”**¹⁵⁸ **the angels**

495 The father was tested greatly
 with a son who was born to him at one hundred,
 a son tender to his mother
 and unique before his father.

“Take the [beloved, from your loins,]
 away to Mount Moriah,
 for I desire him
 to take back My gift.”

His insides were in turmoil,
 and his thoughts articulated:
 “Who is dearer to a man—
 his flesh or his Creator?”

“I have gone down to fire and hot coals,
 and I react with dismissal;¹⁵⁹
 now, what He has entrusted me—
 shall I not return it gladly?”

He stirred and exulted
 gladly

157. That is, she was blessed with the cool refreshment of a son.

158. Ps 8:5, often used in Midrash by angels disparaging humanity.

[יצחק והעקדה]

	<p>ראש דְּבָרָךְ כְּנֶאֱמָן הָאֲמִנְתָּהּ וְהִפְרַחְתָּהּ יְבִישׁ לִיתֵן פְּרִי מֶגֶד</p>	
שרה	<p>רוֹעֲנָה צֶל מִצְחָתָהּ וְשָׁחָהּ «לִי כֹל יִצְחָק» וְהוֹגֵרֶשׁ מִצְחָק לְחֹפֶשֶׁת פְּרָאִים</p>	
ישמעאל		
אברהם	<p>רִיעוּת אוֹהֲבָה שְׁקִדְתָּה לְהִרְאוֹת לְהַאֲדִיר שִׁמָּה בְּאִמְרֵי "מָה אֲנוֹשׁ"</p>	
המלאכים		
	<p>רַב מְנוּסָה אָב בֶּבֶן נוֹלָד לְמֵאָה בֶּן רֶךְ לְאִם וְיַחֲדִיד לְפָנֵי אָב "רַחֲמֵי מִיעִיָּה מְשׁוֹךְ לְהֵרֵם מְוֹרָהּ כִּי בִּוּ אֲנִיתִי קַחַת מִתְּנָתִי" רַחֲשׁוּ קִרְבִּי וְהִגּוּ שְׂרַעְפִּי "מִי מוּטָב לְאִישׁ שְׂאֵרוֹ אוֹ יוֹצְרוֹ" "רַדְתִּי לָאֵשׁ וּלְגַחַל וְלֹא אָמַרְתִּי בְּחָבֶל וּפְקִדוֹנוֹ לֹא אָשִׁיב בְּשִׁמְחָה" רָגַשׁ וְצָהַל בְּשִׁמְחָה <...></p>	495

[]
[]

505 He ran quickly to do His desire,
though the way was concealed from him;
he did not shirk from doing it
and believed in the Rescuer.¹⁶⁰

He discovered at Ariel
the crouching of the lion¹⁶¹ **the divine presence**
and arranged at Moriah
a pure offering.

The angels quaked
and the heroes grew weak
when they saw the enthusiastic sacrificer
and the eager offering.

You made known Your presence¹⁶²
among a **great company** **of angels**
when You showed that not in vain
was humankind created.

As it is written: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name
throughout the earth (Ps 8:2).

[J A C O B]

515 []
[]
He joined with him when he fled¹⁶³
he was taken as a tithe¹⁶⁴

[]
[]
[]
[]

160. The spelling, *mšh*, may reflect a play on the name Moses (Moshe), from Exod 14:31.

161. Heb. *arieh*.

162. Lit., "his crouching"; see above, line 507.

<... ...>

<... ...>

505

רַץ לְמַהֵר חִיפָץ
וְדָרָךְ מִינּוּ הוֹעֵלָמָה
וְלוֹ קֵץ בְּדָבָר
וְהָאֱמִין בְּמֹשֶׁה

השכינה

רְבִיצַת אֲרִיָּה
מָצָה עַל אֲרִיָּאֵל
וְעָרָךְ בְּמוֹרֶיָה
מְנַחָה טְהוֹרָה

רַעְשׁוֹ אֱלִים
וְרַפּוֹ אֲרָאִים
בְּשׁוֹרֵם זֹבִיחַ דָּץ
וְנִיזְבַח שְׁמִיחַ

של מלאכים

רוֹבְצוֹ בְּסוֹד
רַבָּה הוֹדְעָתָהּ
בְּהֶרָאֵךְ לָלוֹ רִיק
יִצְרָתָהּ אָדָם

ככ' ייי אדונינו וג' (תה' ח, ב; י)

[יעקב]

515

<ת... ...>

<... ...>

נִלְוָה לֹא בְּבָרַחוּ
עֹשֶׁר וְיֹשֶׁר

<ת... ...>

<... ...>

עַל שְׁלֹךְ הִיגְדִלְתָּהּ
וְלִרְ... תִּאֲוֶךְ שְׁלֹךְ

163. The word “joined” (*nilvah*) may be an allusion to Levi. See the following note; cf. Jubilees 31:16.

164. Probably referring to Levi, who according to Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 37 was pledged to God's service by Jacob at Jabbock to fulfill his promise in Gen 28:22..

[]
 []
 []
 []

[As it is written:]

[THE CHOSEN CLAN]

[]
 []
 []
 []

[]
 []
 []
 []

[]
 []
 []
 []

[]
 []

sprouting almonds
 and putting complaints to rest.¹⁶⁵

530 []
 giving honor
 to warn [against violating the proscription],
 You punished Achan.¹⁶⁶

[]
 Your staff [] peoples
 []
 to strike the rebels.¹⁶⁷

165. See Num 17:21–23.

166. Probably referring to Josh 7, in which Achan violates the ban against taking the spoils of Jericho.

〈ת.. ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈ככתוב ...〉

[המשפחה הנבחרת]

〈ת.. ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈ת.. ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

בְּיוֹפֵי סִנְסָנִים

〈ת.. ...〉

〈... ...〉

〈... ...〉

בְּמִלְצֵי צֶדֶק

〈ת.. ...〉

〈... ...〉

לְגִמּוֹל שְׂקָדִים

וּלְהַשְׁבִּית תְּלוֹנוֹת

530 **שׁ.. עָר**

לְשִׁמֶת כְּבוֹד

לְהַזְהִיר ... מִיָּחָרָם

עָכְוֹן תְּאַסֵּר

שׁ.. ...

שְׁבִטךָ ... עַמִּים

בְּרַ ...

לְהַכּוֹת הַמְּאֻרִּים

167. Cf. Num 20:10, in which Moses strikes the rock to silence the people's rebellion.

He executed judgment
 against Zoan and its idols Egypt
 and tore, like a garment,
 that which is measured in His hollow¹⁶⁸ into footpaths. water

[] approached
 the one with whom He plays¹⁶⁹ wisdom
 when he would speak
 and You would answer.¹⁷⁰

[] peace
 on the neck []
 when his lips produce
 genuine knowledge.¹⁷¹

540 You raised his stature
 from all the people of []
 [for there is none so] great;¹⁷²
 he served like an angel.

They perfumed his beard
 with the aroma of spices
 to mix for **the mixer**¹⁷³ Aaron
 of the fragrance of myrtle.

He hurried in the place of Ariel
 for seven days
 to fulfill his installation¹⁷⁴
 for Him (whose glory) fills the world.

As it is written in Your Torah: Everything done today, the Lord has
 commanded to be done to make expiation for you (Lev 8:34).

168. Isa 40:12.

169. See Prov 8:30.

170. An apparent reference to Exod 19:19, in which Moses spoke on Mount Sinai and God answered him in thunder.

171. Cf. Mal 2:7: the stanza refers to the priest.

	שְׁפָטִים < עֲשֶׂה
מצרים	בְּצִוְעֵינָּהּ < וּבְאֵלֶיהָ
	וְקָרַע כְּשֶׁמֶלֶח >
מים	< שְׁבִיל רֶגֶל בְּתוֹךְ שׁוּעֵל >
	< ש. > נִיגְשׁ < ש
חכמה	< ... > לָלוּ מִשְׁחָקָהּ
	בְּהִיוֹתוֹ מִדְּבָר
	וְאַתָּה עוֹנָה
	< ר. .. > שְׁלוֹם
	< בְּצִוְאָר > < תה >
	בְּהִפִּיק שְׁפָטִיו
	דַּעַת נְכוֹחִים
	רוֹמְמָתָה גְּדִלוֹ 540
	מִכָּל בְּנֵי ר' ב. >
	< כִּי .. בְּלָתוֹ > גְּדוֹל
	כְּמִלְאָהּ מִשְׁרָת
	רִיקָח מְרֻקָּחִים
	עַל זִקְנוֹ רוֹקְחִים >
	לְרִיקָח < קוֹחַ > לְרִיקָח
	מְרֻקָּחוֹת הַדָּסִים
	רָץ בְּמָקוֹם אֲרִיאֵל
	שְׁבַעַת < ימ' >
	מִמֶּלֶא < ידיו >
האל	לְמֶלֶא עוֹלָם
	ככ' בת' כאשר עשה (ויק' ח, לד)

172. This restoration is tentative.

173. Aaron mixes the incense.

174. Heb. *le-male yadav*. Cf. Exod 28:41. The biblical meaning is “commissioning” or “ordaining”; the rabbinic sense is “instruction” (cf. Rashi to Exod 28:14).

[IN PRAISE OF THE PRIESTHOOD]

Before he approached
to present a gift of sacrifices,
they adorned him
in eight garments.

Holiness struck him,¹⁷⁵
purity tempered him,
before he wrapped linen
around his flesh.¹⁷⁶

His stature
rose to the height of a cedar
when he was fit with embroidered garments
to ornament his body.

The pact of brothers	
over a brother in a tunic	Joseph
he atoned for with his tunic	
for her who takes off her tunic ¹⁷⁷	Israel

555 The shape of the robe is like a paenula,¹⁷⁸
woven at its narrow and wide parts,
to swaddle his chest
and to make way for wide steps.

The shape of the neck opening
reinforces its hem
lest it tear
when he attacks the malevolent one.

He set golden bells
and wove them into his hem
to recall (God's) love
of (the one of whom it is said): "How beautiful are your steps."¹⁷⁹

175. Perhaps referring to the young priests' beating him to keep him awake.

176. Lit., "neck." Perhaps an allusion to his private parts, which he covers with the breeches. The reading is from ms n.

177. Song 5:3. Note the echo of a form found in Midrash and early piyyut in which a keyword is repeated three or four times; on this form, see Joseph Heinemann, "'Al Defus Piyyuti Qadum," *Bar Ilan* 4-5 (1977): 132-37; Ze'ev Yavetz, "Ha-Piyyutim ha-Rishonim," in *Festschrift zum siebzigsten*

[שבח כהונה]

קָדָם גֵּשׁ
לַעֲרוֹךְ שִׁי קְרִבְנוֹת
בְּבָגְדִים שְׁמוֹנָה
אֶז הָאֲדִירוֹהוּ

קְדוּשָׁה פִּיעַמְתָּהּ
טְהִרָה בִּירְתָּהּ
וַחֲרִיזַת בֶּד
עַל צִנּוֹאָר

קוֹמָתוֹ
כְּאֶרֶז נִתְעַלָּת
בְּהִתְאִים לוֹ מִשְׁבָּצוֹת
לְחֹדֶר גּוֹי

קֶשֶׁר אֲחִים
עַל <אֶח ב> כְּתוּנָה
יִרְצָה בְּכֹתָנָתוֹ
לְפֹשְׁטֵי כְּתוּנָת

יוסף

ישראל

צוֹרֶת מְעִיל כְּפֹל <נ> ס 555
אֲרִיגַת צֶר וְרֹחַב
לְהַחֲשִׁיק חֲזֵהוּ
וּלְהַסְרִיחַ פְּעָמָיו

צוֹרֶת בֵּית צִנּוֹאָר
יִתְחִיל שְׁפָתוֹ
פֶּן יִקְרִיעַ
בְּפָגְעוֹ בְּמִסְטִין

צָג פְּעֻמוֹנֵי פֶז
וְשִׁילָשׁ <ל> ס בְּשׁוּלָיו
לְחִזְכִּיר חֲשֶׁקֶת
<מָה יָפוֹ פְּעָמָיִד>

Geburtstage David Hoffman's, ed. Simon Eppenstein, Meier Hildesheimer, and Joseph Wohlgemuth (Berlin: Lamm, 1914), 69–70 [Hebrew section]; Swartz, *Mystical Prayer*, 197–98; and Yahalom, *Piyut u-Meṣi'ut*, 137–43.

178. A long sleeveless cloak worn on the upper body, narrow at the top and wide at the bottom.

179. Song 7:2.

Alongside of them he placed
 pomegranates of majesty
 made of three (colors)
 to recall our faithful deeds:

A blue-green thread for the fringes,
 and purple for the locks of the head,¹⁸⁰
 a silken strand
 like the thread of her lips.¹⁸¹

565 A paenula []
 and struck one another
 so that the Beloved would listen
 to the pomegranates of his steps.¹⁸²

When his soles moved,
 they gave voice,
 like **him who called in the wilderness**
 to make a path straight.

Aaron

The servants of the Shekhinah
 were fearful of him,
 for the robe was named
 after the One who wears justice.¹⁸³

Over his heart there was
 an open place
 so that **that which searches hearts** could be redeemed **the soul**
 by the One who unravels the heart.¹⁸⁴

It measured
 a span by a span
 to glorify the One who measures
 the heavens with his span.

575 Its work was like that of a craftsman
 for the One who crafted all by His design

180. That is, to recall Israel: Song 7:6.

181. See Song 4:3.

182. Here the poet relates Isa 40:3 to Aaron's intervention in Num 17. See Yahalom, *Az be-'En Kol*, 32.

צִידָם שֶׁת
רְמוֹנֵי הוֹד
פְּעוּלִים מְשַׁלֶּשֶׁה
לְהַזְכִּיר חֲסִדֵינוּ

פָּתִיל תַּכְלֶת לְצִיצִית
וְאַרְגָּמָן לְדֹלֶת רֹאשׁ
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
כְּחוּט שְׁפֹתוֹתֶיהָ

פֶּלֶאֶס כְּגֵ...נו 565
וְהַקִּישׁ[ו] זֶה לָזֶה
לְמַעַן יֵאָזִין דּוֹד
לְרְמוֹנֵי שְׁלַחִיו

פְּעָמָיו יִנִּיעַ
וְהֵם יִתְּנוּ קוֹל
כְּקוֹרָא בַּמִּדְבָּר
לְיֹשֵׁר מְסִילוֹת

אהרון

פ[ו]תְּדִים מִמֶּנּוּ
מִשְׁרָתִי שְׁכִינָה
כִּי מַעֲיִל נִקְרָא
לְשֵׁם לֹבֵשׁ צַדִּיקָה

עַל לְבוֹ הָיָה
בְּמָקוֹם קְרוּעַ
לְפָדוֹת לְחוּפֵס לֵב
אַצֵּל קִרְיָשׁ לֵב

הנשמה

עַל זֶרֶת וְזֶרֶת
הָיָה מְמוּדָד
לְהַאֲדִיר לְמִתְכַּן
שָׁמַיִם בְּזֶרֶת

עֲשִׂיתוּ כְּמֵלָאכֶת חוֹשֵׁב 575
לַעֲשׂ כָּל בְּמַחֲשַׁבֶּת

183. Isa 59:17.

184. God, who opens the heart to discover its secrets.

and who calculates
[] a penalty.

Because of that it was called
the Breastpiece of Judgment
for the One who judges in secret
and so that offense could be covered.

He placed it on his heart,
like a seal on the heart,
as a remembrance of placing
a seal on the heart.

He encircled it
with corded chains
to arouse feelings of
the drawing of cords.¹⁸⁵

God's love

He arranged in it
twelve stones
to remove the heart of stone
from the remnant of **the mild man.**¹⁸⁶

Israel

585 Sheathed in gold,
like the wings of a dove,¹⁸⁷
engraved with the names
of the twelve tribes.

They were arranged in rows,
three by three,
to remind the people
of the righteousness of **their three ancestors.** **the patriarchs**

They were set and bordered
into four rows
to propitiate the One who deposes the four (empires)¹⁸⁸
and gathers the exiles from the four (corners of the earth).

185. In Hos 11:4 God draws Israel with ties of love.

186. Cf. Gen 25:27.

וּמַחְשִׁיב

׃אֵל ׀כַּפֹּר

עַל כֵּן נִקְרָא

חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט

לְשׁוֹפֵט כָּל בַּחֲשִׁי

וּלְמַעַן [יִכְסֶה פָשַׁע]

שָׁמוּ עַל לְבוֹ

כְּחוֹתֶם עַל לֵב

זְכָרוֹן (שׁ)[א]יִמַּת

חוֹתֶם עַל לֵב

סָבַב לוֹ

שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת עֲבוֹתוֹת

לְעוֹרֵר חִישָׁת

מְשִׁיכַת עֲבוֹתוֹת

סִידֵר ׀בַּתּוֹכּוֹ

שְׁתִּימִים עֲשֶׂרָה אָבֹן

לְהַסִּיר לֵב אָבֹן

מְשִׁאֲרִי(ם)[ת] (אבֹן)[תָּם]

סְכוּכוֹת יִרְקָק

בְּכַנְפֵי יוֹנָה

מְפֹתָחוֹת שְׁמוֹת

שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר שֹׁבֵט

נִתּוּנִים בְּטוּרִים

שְׁלֹשָׁה שְׁלֹשָׁה

לְהַזְכִּיר לְכוֹלֵם

[צֶדֶק] שְׁלוֹשֶׁת הוֹרִיָּהֶם

נִכּוּנִים וּמוֹגְבָלִים

לְאַרְבָּעָה טוּרִים

לְחִלּוֹת לְמַפִּיל אֲרָבַע

וּמִקְבָּץ מֵאַרְבַּע

אהבת האל

ישראל

האבות

585

187. Lit., “in the wings of a dove”; cf. Ps 68:14.

188. See Dan 8:22.

	To the first was given (the color) red for the first fruit of his vigor ¹⁸⁹ to make scarlet white ¹⁹⁰ and so that he may sit at the head of his tribes.	Reuben
	The second was stamped with the impression of topaz to absolve the tribe of Simeon from the sin of Shittim.	Simeon
595	The third one gave off light like the morning star as he hurried in his camp to do his mission like lightning.	Levi
	The fourth caused an uproar against his foes, and he shall not bare his neck, ¹⁹¹ for there is an emerald at hand. ¹⁹²	Judah
	The fifth is provided with a sapphire among the sheepfolds. ¹⁹³ For he understood Comfort and inclined his shoulder to bear the burden.	Issachar Torah
	The inscription of the sixth he placed inside a diamond, for he nursed from the hidden hoards of the countless. ¹⁹⁴	Zebulun grains of sand
	Leshem, the seventh, ¹⁹⁵ You chiseled into a jacinth, for in it the mild man ¹⁹⁶ waited for redemption of the great name. ¹⁹⁷	Dan Jacob

189. Gen 49:3.

190. See Isa 1:18.

191. In submission.

192. The word for emerald, *nofekel*, plays on the sound of *yafneh*, "bares."

193. Gen 49:14. NJV: saddlebags; KJV: sheepfolds. Gen Rabbah 99:10 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 1282) and 98:12 (ibid., p. 1262) interpret this to be the rows of students learning Torah from the lips

ראובן	<p>נִיתֵן רֹאשׁוֹן אֹדֶם [לְשֹׁם (אל) [אוֹן] לְהִלְבִּין אֹדֶם וּלְ[יָשִׁיב בְּרֹאשׁ מִתִּיו</p>	
שמעון	<p>נִטְבַּע שִׁינִי בְּמִטְבַּע פֶּטְדָה לִפְטוֹר שִׁבְט שְׁמַעוֹן מִעֲוֹן שָׁטִים</p>	
לוי	<p>מֵאֹרֶן הִבְהִיק 595 שְׁלִישִׁי כְּבָרְקָת כְּמַהְרֹו בְּמַחֲנֶה לְהִיּוֹת צִיר כְּבָרְקָת</p>	
יהודה	<p>מְהוּמָה עֲשָׂה רְבִיעִי בְּצִרְיוֹ וְעוֹרֵף אֶל יַפְנֶה כִּי בְנוֹפֵף סָמוּךְ</p>	
יששכר	<p>מוֹכֵן חֲמִישִׁי בְּסַפִּיר בְּמִשְׁפָּתִים</p>	
התורה	<p>כִּי הִבִּין מְנוּחָה וְהִיטָה שְׁכֶם לְסָבּוּל</p>	
זבולון	<p>מִכְתָּב שְׁשִׁי שֵׁם בְּתוֹךְ יְהוֹלֹם כִּי הוּא יוֹנֵק</p>	
גרגרי חול	<p>סְפוּנֵי מְדוּדִים</p>	
דן	<p>לְשֵׁם הַשְּׁבִיעִי חֲרֻטָּה בְּלֶשֶׁם</p>	
יעקב	<p>כִּי בּוֹ חִיָּכָה תֵם לִישׁוּעַת שֵׁם גְּדוֹל</p>	

of the rabbis; the Sanhedrin, which sat in rows, consisted mostly of Issacharites. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, renders *shefatayim* as “border-mounds.”

194. See Deut 33:19.

195. See Josh 19:47.

196. Gen 25:27; cf. line 584 above.

197. Heb. *shem*. The divine name engraved on the frontlet.

- 605 For **the one full of blessing**¹⁹⁸ Naftali
 he engraved the eighth with agate,
 for he returned¹⁹⁹
 to inherit the west and south.
- The one who raids at the heel**²⁰⁰ Gad
 (was inscribed) on the ninth, amethyst,
 for as a lion he tears off
 arm and scalp.
- The one whose bread is rich**²⁰¹ Asher
 (was) on the tenth, beryl,
 for it yielded
 royal delicacies.
- He placed the glory of onyx
 on the head of **the elect of his brothers**²⁰² Joseph
 when he sanctified the Name in secret²⁰³
 and El Shaddai helped him.
- A diadem of jasper
 became the crown of **the beloved one**,²⁰⁴ Benjamin
 for (the One who says) “I will dwell here”
 rests between his shoulders.
- 615 Each one was placed
 in its station
 like **mighty forces**²⁰⁵ stars
 going out by number.
- It was set
 into the ephod,
 held in place with rings,
 and chained with thread.

198. Deut 33:23.

199. Heb. *šb*; a play on *šbw*.

200. Gen 49:19.

201. Gen 49:20.

202. Gen 49:26.

נפתלי	למלא ברכה חֶקֶק שְׁמִינִי בְּשׁוּבוֹ כִּי שָׁב לִירֵשׁ בָּיִם וּבְדָרוֹם	605
גד	ליגוד עקב בְּאַחֲלָמָה הַתְּשִׁיעִי כִּי כָלְבִיא טָרַף זָרוּעַ אֶף קִדְקֹד	
אשר	ללחמו שמנה בְּתִרְשִׁישׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי כִּי הוּא נֹתֵן מַעֲדָנֵי מֶלֶךְ	
יוסף	כְּבוֹד שׁוֹהֵם שָׁם בְּרֹאשׁ נָזִיר אֲחִים בְּקִדְשׁוֹ שָׁם בְּסֶטֶר וְאַל שְׂדֵי עֲזָרוֹ	
בנימן	כָּלִיל יִשְׁפָּה הֹוֹכֵתֶר לִידִיד כִּי פֹה אֵשֶׁב נָח בֵּין כְּתַפִּיו	
כוכבים	כֹּלֶם נְכוֹנִים אִישׁ בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹ כְּצַבֹּאוֹת אוֹנִים יוֹצְאִים בְּמִסְפָּר כְּנוֹס הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הָאֶפֹּד מְרוֹכֵס בְּטַבְּעוֹת וְשָׁלוּל בַּפְתִּיל	615

203. By resisting Potiphar's wife. See Gen Rabbah 98:20 (ed. Theodor and Albeck, p. 1270) and b. Sotah 36b: An image of his father appeared to him and said: In the future your name will be placed among those of your brothers on the ephod. Do you want it to be erased?

204. Deut 33:12.

205. See Isa 40:26.

He placed his beautiful ephod
 between his shoulders
 girded with frames
 like the work of the breastpiece.

He placed on it
 two onyx stones
 engraved
 for the twelve tribes:

On the right he engraved
 Exceeding in Rank and Weapons
 Lion Cub
 Snake and Hind;

Reuben, Simon and Levi
 Judah
 Dan and Naftali

625 he indicated on the left
 Ass and Sailor
 Delicacy and Tearer
 Ox and Wolf.

Issachar and Zebulun
 Asher and Gad
 Joseph and Benjamin

He set the two
 on his two shoulders
 so that when he went forth before the holy shrine,
 we would be remembered for good.

He whose eyes are pure
 would look at them
 to arouse feelings of
 {the drawing of cords}.²⁰⁶

God's love

The hewing of the stone
 was done without hands
 to smash plaster
 and to shatter iron.²⁰⁷

the nations
 the fourth kingdom

The second (stone),
 which was engraved by hand,
 was hewn to injure our injurers
 and to tear out those who tear us out.

the enemies of Israel

206. Cf. line 582 above.

יּוֹכִי אֶמּוֹדָתוֹ
שֶׁת בֵּין כְּתָפָיו
חֲרוּזָה בְּמִשְׁבְּצוֹת
כְּמַחֲשַׁבֶּת הַחֶשֶׁן

יִישֵׁב עָלָיו
שְׁתֵּי אֲבָנֵי שֹׁהַם
מִפְּוֹתְחוֹת
לְשָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר שֹׁבֵט

יְמִינִי חֶקֶק
שֶׁאֵת וְכָלִי חָמָס
גּוֹר אֶרֶיָּה
נַחֲשׁ וְאַיִלָּה

יִידַע בְּשִׁמְאֵלִית
גֶּרֶם וּמִלַּח
מַעֲדָן וְטוֹרֶף
שׁוֹר וְזֵאֵב

טוֹכְסוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם
עַל שְׁתֵּי כְּתָפוֹתָיו
בָּבֹאוֹ לִפְנֵי קוֹדֶשׁ
יִזְכְּרֵנוּ לְטוֹבָה

טָהוֹר עֵינָיִם
בָּהֶם יָבִיט
וַיַּעֲזֹר חֵישֶׁת
<מְשִׁיכַת אֶהְבְּתִינוּ>

טִיעַת אָבֹן
חֲצוּבָה בְּלֹא יָדָיִם
לִידוֹק טִיט
וְל(י) רוֹעַ בְּרָזֶל

טִירַת שְׁנֵיָּה
חֲקוּקָה בְּכַפָּיִם
לְשֹׁרֹט שׁוֹרְטִינוּ
וְלְמָרוֹט מוֹרְטִינוּ

ראובן, שמעון ולוי
יהודה
דן ונפתלי

יששכר וזבולון
אשר וגד
יוסף ובנימין

אהבת-אל

האומות
המלכות הרביעית

אויבי ישראל

625

635 He put on the sash,
 like a belt on his loins,
 to cleave **the place of fire**
 to the **Fire Consuming Fire**.

Israel
God

He wore it on top of it,
 like a dressing for a wound,
 to wear over a **ruin**
 as vast as the sea.²⁰⁸

Jerusalem

It was hollow
 and made of embroidered work
 to revive our hollow corpses
 and to stop our slaying.

He girded himself
 and concealed its end inside,
 like the rivers that go around,
 ending at the sea.

He placed on his head
 the radiant royal headdress,
 like a hairnet
 and like large twisted chains.

645 Sparks of the seraphim
 recoiled from it,
 for its image
 is like that of a helmet of redemption.

Rage,²⁰⁹ when he saw it,
 could not open his mouth,
 for on the day of vengeance
 he will be swallowed up.

He tied his head
 with a sky blue thread
 and tied it to his neck
 like the bonds of a cow.

²⁰⁸. Lam 2:13.

ישראל
האל

635 חָגַר אֲבִיט
כְּאֲזֹר לְמִתְנַיִים
לְהִדְבִּיק לְבֵית אֵשׁ
לְאֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה אֵשׁ

חִבְשׁוֹ עָלָיו
כְּחִיתוֹל לְמַכָּה
לְחִבּוּשׁ שֶׁבֶר
גָּדוֹל כַּיֵּם

חֲלוֹל הָיָה
וּמַעֲשִׂיהוּ כְּחוּשָׁב
לְהַחֲיוֹת חֲלָלֵינוּ
וּלְהַשְׁבִּית הָרוּגֵינוּ

חָגְרוּ לוֹ
וְהִחְבִּיא רֹאשׁוֹ בּוֹ
כְּנִחָלִים סוֹבְבִים
וְסוֹפֶם לַיָּם

זִיו הוֹד מִצְנַפֶּת
נָתַן בְּרֹאשׁוֹ
כְּמַעֲשֵׂה שְׁבָכָה
וּכְשִׁרְשָׁרוֹת גְּדִילִים

645 זָחֳלוּ מִמֶּנָּה
זִיקֵי שְׂרָפִים
כִּי דְמוּתָהּ
כְּכוֹבֵעַ יְשׁוּעָה

זַעַף בְּשׁוּרוֹ בָּהּ
פָּה לֹא יִפְצָה
כִּי בָעֵת נִקְמָה
הוּא מִתְבַּלֵּעַ

זוֹרְזָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ
בְּחוּטֵי תַכְלֶת
וּקְשָׁרָה לְעֶרְפוֹ
כְּמוֹסֶרֶת פָּרָה

And²¹⁰ he placed on his forehead
 the frontlet, the holy diadem,
 and his eyes
 shone like the heavens.

And on it was written
 the letters of the Great Name,
 “YY” above²¹¹
 and “Holy” below.

655 And the supernal demigods
 made room for him
 lest their eyes be filled with (the sight of him)
 and grow dim.

And at his right
 walked grass;²¹²
 he communed with fire
 and was not burnt.

humankind

They brought him
 the holy linen breeches,
 like a kind of leggings²¹³
 that horsemen wear.

He attached them to his loins
 and draped them over his thighs
 in order not to be revealed
 because of the One who covers up our sins.²¹⁴

It hid the shameful place
 when he stood in the place of glory,
 for the covering of our shame
 would be opened there.

210. The conjunction *vav* is used here for the acrostic.

211. The Tetragrammaton.

212. Cf. Isa 40:6.

וְשֵׁם עַל מַצְחוֹ
צִיץ נֹזֵר הָדָר
וְעַפְעָפִיו
הִבְהִיקוּ כְּרָקִיעַ

וְכָתוּב עָלָיו
אוֹתוֹת שֵׁם גָּדוֹל
"יִי" לְמַעַלָּן
וְ"קָדוֹשׁ" לְמַטָּן

וְאֵילֵי מְרוֹם 655
מְקוֹם יִתְּנוּ לוֹ
פֶּן יִמְלְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
עֵינַיִם וַיִּכְהוּ

וּמִימֵינוּ שְׂדֵי
מִתְהַלֵּךְ חָצִיר
מִתְיַחַד עִם אֵשׁ
וְלֹא נִשְׁדָּרָף

הִבִּיאוּ לוֹ
מִכְנָסִי בַד קוֹדֶשׁ
כָּמִין פְּמִלִּיא
לְבוּשׁ פְּרָשִׁים

הַדְּבִיקָם לְמִתְנִי
וְהִסְרִיחֵם לִירִיכֹ
בְּלִי יַעֲרָה
עַל מִכְסֶּה פֶשַׁעֵינוּ

הִסְתִּיר בֵּית בּוֹשֶׁת
בְּעֶמְדוֹ לְבֵית כְּבוֹד
כִּי כִסּוּי בִּשְׁתֵּינוּ
שֵׁם יִקְרִיעַ

בן אנוש

213. Gk. *feminalia*: see Daniel Sperber, "Meḥqarim be-Milim ve-Girsa'otehen," *Te'udah* 7 (1991): 149–51.

214. That is, so as not to expose him before God.

665 He put on the Urim
and strapped on the Thummim,
which is consulted and replies—
a sign of testimony.

He mortified his soul
and humbled his spirit,
for contrite hearts
and the downcast shall live.

He would reply
in soft language,
for a soft reply
turns away anger.

He would make
the rough places plain
and return many
from pursuit of **the abyss**.²¹⁵

the mouth of Sheol

He would cast down
the doors of his eyes
lest he look at the Glory
and his pupil dissolve.²¹⁶

675 His throat would
express peace,²¹⁷
for he served
Him who makes peace.

Nor would he plan treachery
in his inmost parts,
for he must open discourse
with Him who searches hearts.

(Though) great in his glory,
he would not be too proud,
for pride and presumption
are loathsome to high God.

215. See Isa 5:14. By leveling the ground, God will bring the abyss to the same level as the plains.

216. Heb. *dwqw*. Usually “cataract”; here, most likely, “pupil.”

665 הִיתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּאוֹרִים
וְנִתְאַזֵּר בְּתוֹמִים
וְנִשְׁאַל וּמְשִׁיב
אוֹת מִתְעוּדָה

דִּיכָא נַפְשׁוֹ
וְהַשְׁפִּיל רוּחוֹ
כִּי לֵב שְׁפָלִים
וְנִדְכָּאִים תַּחֲיָה

דְּבַר לְשׁוֹן רַכָּה
הָיָה מְשִׁיב
כִּי מַעֲנֶה רָךְ
מְשִׁיב חַיְמָה

דֶּרֶךְ מַעֲקָשִׁים
הָיָה מְ(ל)שִׁר
וּמְשִׁיב רַבִּים
מִרְדֶּף פּוֹעֲדָה

דְּלַתִּי עֵינִי
יִרְכִּין לְמַטָּן
פֶּן יִבִּיט בְּכַבּוּד
יִדְלוּף דּוֹקוֹ

675 גְּרוֹנוֹ הָיָה
מְבִיעַ שְׁלוֹם
כִּי לְעוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
הָיָה מְ(שִׁרְתָּ)

גַּם בְּקִרְבִּי
לֹא תֵאָרֹב אֵיבָה
כִּי לְחֹזֶקֶר לֵב
יִפִּיק שִׁיחָה

גָּדוֹל בְּכַבּוּדוֹ
לֹא יִתְגַּאֵה
כִּי גָאָה וְגֵאָוֶן
יִגְעַל אֶל רָם

פי שאול

No stranger could cross
the border of his place,
for he was exalted
by twenty-four gifts.²¹⁸

contributions to the priesthood

Generally and specifically
they were all inscribed
to silence the mouth
of one who would find fault with him.²¹⁹

685 {You made with him}
a covenant of salt,
for You drew him near,
and no one can distance him.

He had no inheritance
in the favored legacy,²²⁰
for his allotted share
and portion²²¹ are in heaven.

the land of Israel

He did not expend his energy
on working the soil,
for he feasted on
bread from Your table.

Happy are those who fear You!
What is stored up for them:
Your good actions
in the presence of human beings.²²²

How happy indeed,
were Moses and Aaron,
for the glory they inherited
cannot be conceived.

695 Happy are our fathers—
what their eyes saw!

218. See Num 18.

219. According to Sifre Num pisqa 119 (ed. Horovitz, p. 143), the proximity of Num 18 to Num 17 indicates that the priestly gifts were given to Aaron to silence Korah.

גָּבֹול מְקוֹמוֹ
 אֵין זֶר לְהִשְׁיֵג
 כִּי בְּעֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע
 מִתְּנֹת מַעֲוָלָה
 בְּכָל־וּפְרָט
 יַחַד כָּוֶלֶם חֻקּוֹת
 לְהַדְמִים פֶּה
 ׀נֹתֵן בּוֹ דּוֹפִי

בְּרִית מַלַּח 685
 ׀אֲתוֹ כְּרַתָּה׀
 כִּי אֲתָה קִירְבַתָּה
 וְאֵין מִי לְהַרְחִיק

ארץ ישראל

בְּנַחֲלַת צָבִי
 יְרוּשָׁה אֵין לְ׀ו׀
 כִּי מִנֵּת חֶלְקוֹ
 וְ׀כּוֹס׀ בְּשָׁמַיִם

בְּעִבּוּדֵת אָדָמָה
 כּוֹחוֹ לֹא יִבָּלֶה
 כִּי בְלָחָם
 שׁוֹלְחָנָה יִסְעֵד

אֲשֶׁרִי יְרִיאֶיהָ
 מֶה נִצָּפֵן לָמוֹ
 פְּעוֹלֵת טוֹבָתָהָ
 נֶגֶד בְּנֵי אָדָם

אֲשֶׁרִיָּהֶם מֵאֵד
 מִשֶּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
 כִּי אֵין לְחֻקּוֹר
 כְּבוֹד נִחְלוֹ

אֲשֶׁרִי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ 695
 מֶה חָזוּ עֵינֵיהֶם

220. Specifically, the portions accorded to the tribes; see Deut 18:2.

221. Lit., “cup”: Ps 16:5.

222. That is, God stores up good deeds for his worshipers to perform in the presence of other people.

Happy are their children
for **whom** they can expect! the Messiah

As it is written, Happy the people who have it so; happy the people
whose God is the Lord (Ps 144:16).

[THE AVODAH]

Then, every year²²³
a faithful man
was distinguished
from the seed of Aaron.

700 Chief of his brothers,
valiant in deeds,
a harvest of wisdom,
a treasury of understanding.

In the dwelling of the counselors
he would abide
for seven days
before **the Tenth**.²²⁴

Yom Kippur

They would select
a select one instead of him
in case he became repugnant by emission
and his service be interrupted.

He would betroth
a second **one who was shaped from a bone** a wife
lest **his rib be broken** his present wife die
and (his prayer) "for his household" become invalid.

In a circular court,
like the shores of the sea, they would surround him
lest he become distracted²²⁵
and he be defective for service.

223. The first word in this section is *Az*, which began the entire poem.

224. Yom Kippur occurs on the tenth day of the month.

המשיח

וְאֲשֶׁרִי בְּיָהֶם
לְמִי הֵם מִצָּפִים

כֹּכ' אֲשֶׁרִי הֵעֵם שִׁכְכָה לוֹ אֲשֶׁרִי וּג' >' (תה' קמד, טו)

[העבודה]

אֶז בְּכָל שָׁנָה
הָיָה מוֹבָדֵל
אִישׁ אָמֶת
מִזֶּרַע אֲהָרֹן

700 אֱלוֹף אַחִים
אֲבִיר מַעֲשִׂים
אֲגוּר חֲכָמָה
אֲסוּם בֵּינָה

בְּדִירַת פְּלֶהֶדְרִין
הָיָה מִתְלוֹנֵן
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
קוֹדֵם לַעֲשׂוֹר

יום הכיפורים

בּוֹרְרִים הָיוּ
בְּרוּר לְעוֹמָתוֹ
שָׁאֵם יוֹגֵעַל בְּקָרִי
וְתוֹגֵרַע עֲבוּדָה

אישה

גְּלוּפָה מַעֲצָם
שְׁנִיָּיָה יֶאֱרֵס

תמות אשתו

פֶּן תִּשְׁבֵּר צִלְעוֹ
"וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ" יַעֲזֹב

גוֹרֵן עֲגוּלָה
כְּגָבּוּל יָם יְסוֹבְבוּהוּ
פֶּן יִלְפֹת
וְיִפְגַּל מִן הָעֲבֹדָה

710 He could not stray in his way
 from the platform of the **Prominent One**,²²⁶
 offering fatlings continually
 and not to his liking as otherwise.

God

Rich foods
 and sweet delicacies
 were served at his table
 for six and a half days.

They woke up early to hand him over
 to the ministers of the priesthood.
 Then they warned him not to change (the order)
 and turned aside and wept.

They directed his steps
 to the eastern gates
 to acquaint him with his sacrifices
 so that he would be adept.

And in the spice-maker's loft
 he would dine in the evening
 but would not taste after that,
 for food brings sleep.

720 And scholars taught him
 from four books;²²⁷
 if he was not wise
 they would entertain him with tales of kings.

Youthful Levites
 would wake him up with the middle finger,
 and if sleep was weighing him down,
 they would drive it away on the floor.

The time came
 to clear the altar;
 those hoping for forgiveness
 hurried to the court.

226. See Song 5:10.

האל

710 דָּרָךְ אֶל יְנִיא

מִדְּבִיר דָּגוּל

לְהַתְמִיד מִחִים

וְלֹא כָּאֵז חֲפָצוֹ

דְּשֻׁנֵי מֶאֶכֶל

וּמִתְקֵי עֵידוּנִין

שְׁשֹׁת יָמִים וּמִחֲצָה

שְׁלַחְנוּ יַעֲוֹדֹן

הַשְׁכִּימוּ לְמִסְרוֹ

לְשָׂרֵי כְּהוֹנָה

וּבִיטוּהוּ לֹלֵא יִשְׁנָה

וּפְרָשׁוּ וּבְכוּ

הֵם הֲצַעֲיִדוּהוּ

לְדִלְתֵי מִזְרָח

לְבִקְרוֹ בְּקִרְבָּנוֹתָיו

לְמַעַן יְהִי בָקִי

וּבַעֲלִיית רִקְחִים

כָּעֵת עֶרֶב יִסְעֵד

וְעוֹד לֹא יִטְעֵם

כִּי אוֹכֵל מִרְדִּים

720 וּבְאַרְבַּעַת סָפָרִים

חוֹקִים לִימֵינוֹ[וֹדוֹ]

אִם לֹא יִחַכֶּם

בְּסִיחַ מְלָכִים יִשְׁעֲשַׁעְהוּ

י>כִּי לֹיָהּ

בְּצִרְדָּה יַעֲוֹרֶר[וֹ]הוּ

וְאִם <כָּבֵד נֹוֹם

עַל חֵן[וֹ]צִפָּה יִפְיִגּוּהוּ

י>מִן הַגִּיעַ

עַתָּה לְתִירוֹם מִזְבַּח

מִיִּיחָה סְלִיחָה

הַרְגִּישׁוּ לַעֲזָרָה

When the cock began to call,
 the doorkeepers hastened
 to open the gate
 before **that which** glides emerged from its canopy.²²⁸ **the sun**

They held and sounded
 two trumpets
 to entreat the **One who gives**
songs in the night.²²⁹ **God**

730 Before the sun
 stepped out from the east,
 he declared, "Determine
 if the time for slaughtering has come."

They answered him aloud
 and gave him a sign,²³⁰
 then the true emissary
 began to serve.

They made a partition
 between him and the people;
 then he washed and immersed
 and went up and dried himself.

He adorned his limbs
 in golden clothing;
 then again he washed
 his hands and his feet.

He began to perform (the sacrifice)
 of the lamb for the Tamid,
 offering it entirely
 over **that which is entirely beautiful.**²³¹ **Zion**

740 As required, he made the incision,
 and they finished slaughtering it

228. See Eccl 1:5 and Ps 19:6.

229. Job 35:10. Cf. b. Erubin 18b: a house in which words of Torah are spoken in the night will never be destroyed.

השמש

חֶשֶׁךְ גָּבַר לְקִרְוֹת
וְחָשׂוּ שְׁ[ו]עֵרִים
לִפְתּוֹחַ פֶּתַח
לִפְנֵי חֹפֶת שׂוֹאֵיף

האל

חֲצוֹצְרוֹת שְׁתֵּימִם
אֶחָזוּ וְתִקְעוּ
לְחִלּוֹת לְנוֹתֵן
זְמִירוֹת בְּלִילָה

730

טָרַם יִצְעַד
חָרַס מְמִזְרַח
מִפִּיק "בִּינוּ
אִם בָּאת עֹנֶת שְׁחִיטָה"

טַעַם הַשִּׁיבוֹהוּ
וְגַם אוֹת נָתַנּוּ לוֹ
וְאִזְ הִתְחִיל
צִיר אֶמֶת לְשֶׁרֶת

יַעֲשׂוּ מְחִיצָה
בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עָם
וְקִידֵשׁ וְטָבַל
וְעָלָה וְנִסְתַּפָּג

יָפָה פָּדְרוּ
בְּלָבוֹשׁ פֶּז
וְעוֹד קִידֵשׁ
יָדְיוֹ וְרַגְלָיו

כָּבֵשׁ הִתְמִיד
הִתְחִיל לַעֲשׂוֹת
לְקָרְבוֹ כָּלִיל
עַל מְכַלל יוֹפִי

ציון

בְּמִשְׁפַּט קָרְצוּ
וְהֵם יִמְרִיקוּהוּ

740

230. They gave him an answer both verbally and by indicating the light over Hebron (m. Yoma 3:1).

231. According to Ps 50:2. Alternatively, according to a midrash in t. Kippurim 2:14, "that on which (is founded the) entire (world's) beauty."

and collected its blood
in a bowl to be tossed.

He cut it to pieces,
dividing it according to its limbs
to ten (priests),
with the recitation of the Shema.

To the Mountain-of-God²³²
he ascended like a lion
to present the aroma
in the chambers of Lebanon.

They supplied him
with wine²³³ for libation,
with the blood of the grape,
and with that which reddens the eyes.

Immediately he bowed
and waved a towel,
and with cymbals of thanksgiving
the singers extolled.

750 He entered and repaired
the lamps in order
and offered the incense
for the morning service.

He quickly came
to the house of Parvah,
and they spread out a curtain,
respecting his privacy.

The pourers would pour
from bowls of gold of Parvaim;
then he washed his hands
and his feet and immersed.

232. Heb. *le-Har'el*; cf. Pesiḳta de-Rav Kahana pisqa 13 (ed. Mandelbaum, p. 239), which plays on the term *Ariel* for Zion and *arieh*, "lion," as a term for God.

וְקִיבֵּל דָּמוֹ
 בְּמִזְרֵק לְזֶרְקוֹ
 לְנִתְחָיו נִתְחוּ
 כְּפִי אֵיבְרִיו בֵּיתְרוֹהוּ
 עַל יְדֵי עֲשָׂרָה
 עִם קֶרֶת שְׁמַע
 לְהַהֲרֹאֵל
 קְאָרִיָּה עָלָה
 לִיתֵן רֵיחַ
 בְּחֻדְרֵי לְבָנוֹן
 מִמְּצִיאִים לוֹ
 עָסִיס לְנֶסֶךְ
 מְדָם עֵינָב
 וְחֻלְלִי עֵינָיִם
 מִדְּשָׁחָה
 וְהִנֵּי בְּסוּדְרֵים
 וּבְנִבְלֵי תוֹדוֹת
 מְשֹׁדְרִים רוֹמְמוֹ
 נִכְנָס וְהִיטִיב 750
 נִירוֹת כְּעֶרְכֶּם
 וְהִקְטִיר קְטֹרֶת
 עֲבוֹדַת שְׁחִירֵת
 נִמְהָר לְבוֹא
 לְבֵית הַפָּרוֹוָה
 וּפְרָשׁוֹ מִסֶּךְ
 לִיחְדוֹ בְּכָבוֹד
 סָף זָהָב פְּרוֹוִיִּים
 פּוֹשְׁטִים יָרִיקוּ
 וְקִידֵשׁ יָדָיו
 וְרוֹגְלָיו וְטָבַל

233. Heb. *asis*, possibly referring to must.

He dried himself and was adorned
in white garments;
then again he washed
his hands and his feet.

His bull was placed
between the portico and the altar—
the place where they say,
“Spare Your people, O Lord.”²³⁴

760 His eyes²³⁵ faced the west,
and his head faced the south,
before **the One who comes from Teman**—²³⁶
and he is a servant to Him.

God

He opened the Gate
of Justice for himself,
for an offender cannot
make atonement for (others’) offenses.

“Forgive my offenses—
I am a messenger of Your redeemed;
pull me out of the pit
lest those who wait for You be accused!

“I am an emissary of the faithful
(sent) to implore my God:
Save, I pray, Your servant;
restore my soul, as You have promised.”

Excitedly, he placed
his hands on his ox
and asked balm for his wound,
and well-being for his mate.²³⁷

770 Thus he would say: [“O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I
have transgressed before You, I and my household. O Lord, forgive
the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed
against you, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of

²³⁴ Joel 2:17.

²³⁵ Lit., “eyelids.”

סִיפֵג וְהוֹדֵד־

בְּבִגְדֵי לָבָן

וְעוֹד קִידָשׁ

יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

עֲמִידַת פָּרוֹ

בֵּין אוֹלָם לַמִּזְבֵּחַ

מִקּוֹם אוֹמְרִים

"חֹסֶה י'י עַל עַמּוֹ"

עַפְעָפִיו לַמַּעֲרָב

וְרֹאשׁוֹ לְדָרוֹם

לִפְנֵי בַּאֲמִיתִּימָן

וְלֹא מִשְׁמַשׁ

יִפְתַּח צִדְקָה

לְעַצְמוֹ יִפְתַּח

שְׂאִין פּוֹשַׁע

מִכֶּכֶּר עַל פּוֹשְׁעִים

"פִּשְׁעֵתִי סִלַּח

שְׁלֹחַ פְּדוּיִיךָ אֲנִי

פָּצָה נַפְשִׁי מִשַּׁחַת

פֶּן יֶאֱשָׁמוּ מִצַּפִּיךָ"

"צִיר אֲמוּנִים אֲנִי

לְחַלּוֹתְךָ אֵלִי

הַצְלִיחָה נָא לְעַבְדְּךָ

וְהַשִּׁיבָה נַפְשִׁי בְּנוֹאֲמֶךָ"

צַהֵל לַתֶּת

יָדָיו עַל שׁוֹרֹ

וּבִיקֵשׁ צָרִי לְמַחְצוֹ

וּרְפָאוֹת לְצַלְעוֹ

אלוהים

760

770

וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר > אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם. חֲטָאתִי, עֲוִיתִי, פִּשְׁעֵתִי לִפְנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי: אֲנִי בִשְׁם, כֶּכֶר נָא לְחֲטָאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפִּשְׁעִים. שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשַׁעֲוִיתִי וְשִׁפְשַׁעֲתִי לִפְנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי. כִּפְתּוֹב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְךָ מִפִּי כְּבוֹדְךָ. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חֲטָאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ

236. According to Hab 3:3.

237. Lit., "rib."

Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the glorious explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”]

His feet hastened²³⁸
to the two goats
standing like a palm frond²³⁹
between the myrtle and the willow.

The officer of the priest’s division on the left
and the prefect on the right
planted in Your abode
to flourish in Your courts.

775 He cast the lot
and shook the urn,
and the first came up for the Lord,
and the second for Azazel.

He drew near to (the goat)
that bore a crimson strand
to give a sign
that our scarlet has been turned to white.²⁴⁰

He turned (the goat)
to face the precipice;
he handed it over to the designated man
until the time that it was to be sent.

His steps were aligned
with the slaughtering place,

the feet of the goat

238. Lit., “his ankles came early.”

239. In the lulav, used in the holiday of Sukkot.

שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא מפךש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדשה ובטהרה היו
 כוֹרְעִים ומִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים על פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם
 וָעַד: וְאֵף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים לְגֹמֵר אֶת הַשֵּׁם, וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ <

קִדְמוֹ קִרְסוּלִיו

אַצֵּל שְׁנֵי [ה]שְׁעִירִים

מִוְתֵּיךְ פְּלוּלָב

בְּהֶדֶס בְּעֶרְבָה

קִצִּין בֵּית אָב מִשְׁמָאל

וּסְגֹן מִיָּמִין

שְׁתוּלִים בְּנוֹךְ

לְהַפְרִיחַ בְּחִצְרוֹתֶיךָ

רְמָה חֲבָלִים

775

וְטָרֹף בְּקִלְפֵי

וְעָלָה הָרֹאשׁ לְשֵׁם

וְהַשְׁנִי לְעִזְאֵזֶל

רִיתֶק בְּנוֹשָׂא

דָּלַת שְׁנֵי

לְתַת אוֹת

לְלִבֹּן אֲדָמָנוּ

שֵׁם פָּנָיו

כְּנֶגֶד גְּזִירָה

מִסְרוֹ לְעֵתִי

עַד עֵת יִשְׁלַחֲנוּ

שְׁלַחֲנוּ יִישָׁר

לְבֵית הַשְּׁחִיטָה

רגלי שער החטאת

for they were fated as fragrant (offering)
for Him who does not eat or drink.

God

He proceeded, returning
to the second bull,
and lay his dear hands²⁴¹
to rest between its horns.

785 Errors and unperceived guilt,²⁴²
and flaws in guilt offerings—
his own and his clan's—
over these he confessed.

And thus he would say: [O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. O Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against you, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: 'For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—' (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: "Blessed is the name of His Majesty's glory for ever and ever." He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, "You shall be pure."]

He held up the knife
and passed it through its neck
and collected in a basin
the outpouring of his slaughtering.

790 He gave it to another
to stir while it was bubbling
so that it would not coagulate,
as it was needed for the Ḥatta't.

241. Cf. Jer 12:7.

האל

כִּי לֹא אוֹכַל

הוֹגֵרֵל לְנִיחוֹחַ

תָּר לְשׁוּב

אֶצֶל פָּרוֹ שְׁנִייה

וְהַשְׁכִּין בֵּין קֶ־רֶ־נִי

יְדִידוֹת כְּפִיו

תַּעֲוֹת וְנִסְתָּרוֹת

785

וּמַחְצֵי אֲשָׁמוֹת

שָׁלוֹ וְשִׁלְשׁוּטוֹ

עָלִיו הַתְּנוּדָה

וכך היה אומ' <אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם. חֲטָאתִי, עֲוִיתִי, פָּשַׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי: אָנָּה בְּשֵׁם, כֹּפֶר נָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים. שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשַׁעֲוִיֹתִי וְשִׁפְשָׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי. כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבֹדָה מִפִּי כְבוֹדָךְ. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהָר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאוֹתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהֵיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֵהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבִטְהָרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: יָאֵף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים לְגִמּוֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם, וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ>

תִּמְדָּה מֵאֲכֻלָּת

וְהִילָכָה בְּצוּרָאוֹ

וְקִיבֵל בְּמִזְרָק

שְׁפִיכַת שִׁחְטוֹ

תִּנְהוּ לְאַחֵר

790

לְמָרְסוֹ רוֹתַח

שָׁלֹא יִקְרֹשׁ

וְצוּרָה בּוֹ לְחֻטָּא

[Note: This is where the extant fragments end. The acrostic of this section has reached the letter *shin*.]

[A R O M E M L A - ' E L]

[]

[]

to go quickly
up to the altar.

He extended his hand
and took the fire-pan
and took a handful of the **burning**
according to his strength;

incense

he returned, and they gave him
the fire-pan with a shovel.
Then he poured into the pans
fire from the censer.

When he carried them both,
his appearance glowed.
The fire-pan in his right hand
and the shovel in his left,

he approached diligently
between the curtains.
Displaying his great strength,
he passed, pushing them aside

that one does not dominate
the image []
while he importuned
(with) a brief prayer.

He put the fire-pan
between the poles
and prepared below
for the image of His presence.²⁴³

243. These lines are obscure.

[ארומם לאל]

קטורת

<ש...>

<...>

לְעֹלוֹת מְהֵרָה
אֵי-צָלֵם הַמִּזְבֵּחַשְׁלַח יָדֶיךָ
וְלָקַח מִחֲתָה
וְחָפֶן בֹּעֲרֵת
לְפִי גְבוּרָתוֹשָׁב וְנִתְּנוּ לוֹ
מִחֲתָה עִם כָּף
וְעֵרָה בְּמִחֲתֹת
אִשׁ מִן הַבַּיִתשְׁתִּיחֵם בְּנִשְׂאוֹ
יִבְהִיק מְרִאֵהוּ
מִחֲתָה בְּזֶמֶן
וְהִכָּף בְּשִׁמְאֵלשֶׁקֶד לְבוֹא
בֵּין הַפְּרוֹכוֹת
לְהוֹדִיעַ רוֹב כּוֹחַ
יַעֲבֹר לְדַחוֹתֶם שָׁםשְׁלֹא יִשּׁוּר
דַּמּוֹת <ה...>
בְּהִפְגִּיעוֹ
תְּפִילָה קֶצֶרָהשֵׁם מִחֲתָה
בֵּין הַבְּדִים
וְהִכִּין לְמִטָּה
דַּמּוֹת צוּרַת פָּנָיו

The Shekhinah could be seen
 [over the smoke of]²⁴⁴ the incense;
 then he turned to depart
 the way he entered.

He hurried to [].

[]

blood in the bowl
 and entered inside

[]

He sprinkled once upward

[]

and seven times downward.

He set his steps
 to go out []
 to slaughter the goat of the people
 and to collect its blood.

He directed (his steps) a second time,
 entering, []
 to do with (the goat's) blood
 as he did with the bull's blood.

He made a mixture
 a second time;
 with it he would purge
 the inner altar.

He set forth and sprinkled
 on the curtain,
 facing the ark
 for the times²⁴⁵ he sprinkled.

He raised his hands
 and sprinkled the altar,
 four around
 and seven [on the top.]

244. Conjectural restoration.

שְׂכִינָה נִרְאִית
 ע>..< הִקְטֹרֶת
 וְאֵז יִיפֹן וְיִצֵּא
 דְּרֹךְ כְּנִיסָתוֹ
 תִקַּף ל>..<
 <... ...>
 דָּם בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ
 וְנִכְנַס לִפְנֵים
 <ת... ...>
 אַחַת לְמַעַן יֵצֵא
 א>..<ך
 שִׁבְעַת לַמִּטָּה בַּמִּסְפָּר
 תִּכֶּן פְּעָמָיו
 יֵצֵאת א>..<
 לְשֹׁחַט שְׂעִיר עִם
 דָּמוֹ לְקַבֵּל
 תִּרְגֹּל שְׁנֵיהֶם
 לְהִיכָנֵס <נ..>
 לַעֲשׂוֹת דָּמוֹ
 כַּעֲשֵׂה לְדָם הַפָּר
 תַעֲרֹבוֹת עֵשׂ
 שְׁנֵי ת...<
 יַחֲטֵא מִמֶּנּוּ
 מִזִּבְחַ הַפְּנִימִי
 תִּיכֶן וְהֵזָה
 עַל הַפְּרוֹכֶת
 <נ> וְכַח הָאָרוֹן
 כְּתוּכָן הַזֵּוֹת
 תִּלָּה יָדָיו
 וְהֵזָה מִזִּבְחַ
 אֲרָבַע סָבִיב
 וְשָׁבַע ע>ל טָהָרוֹ<

245. That is, corresponding to the number of times he sprinkles the blood.

When the sprinkling was completed,
he went out and poured
the rest of the blood
on the foundation of the altar.

The service of the Day
of Atonement was completed
according to its order and custom,
every year.

He turned and came close²⁴⁶
to the scapegoat,
then laid his hands on it
firmly and confessed.

Thus he would say: “O Lord, they have sinned, they have done wrong, they have transgressed before You, Your people, the house of Israel. O Lord, forgive and pardon the sins and iniquities and transgressions that they have committed against You, Your people, the house of Israel, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.” And You, in Your great beneficence, aroused Your mercy and [pardoned the community of Jeshurun] for the sake of Your holy name.

The assistants of the priesthood
would always do it this way:
leading the goat
in the hands of a designated man.

246. From here to the end the text is from Yahalom’s edition in *Az be-’En Kol*, 186–88, lines 439–60.

תִּמּוּ הַזִּיּוֹת
וַיֵּצֵא וְשָׁפַךְ
שִׁיּוֹר דָּמִים
יְסוֹד <הַמִּזְבֵּחַ>

תִּמָּה עֲבוֹדֹת
יוֹם כַּפָּרָה
תִּכְוֹנָה כְּדִבְרָה
בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה <

תִּבְעַ וְנִצְמַד
שְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח
סָמֵךְ יָדָיו עָלָיו
בְּכוֹבֵד וְהַתְּוֹדָה

תִּבְעַ וְנִצְמַד
שְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח
סָמֵךְ יָדָיו
בְּכוֹבֵד עָלָיו וְנִתְּוֹ <דָּה>

וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר. אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם חָטָאוּ <עוֹוֹ > פִּי שָׁעוּ לִפְנֵי עַמִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: אֲנִי
בִשְׁם. כִּפָּר נָא עַל הַחֲטָאִים עַל הָעוֹלָם עַל הַפְּשָׁעִים. שְׁחָטָאוּ שְׁעוּוּ <וְשָׁפְשָׁעוּ לִפְנֵי
עַמִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. כִּכְתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ מִפִּי כְּבוֹדְךָ. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עָלֵיכֶם
לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ
שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֵהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבִטְהָרָה הָיוּ
כוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם
וָעֵד: וְאַף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים לִגְמֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ.
וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבָה מְעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסוֹלֵחַ לַעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל >

תִּמּוּכֵי כְהוֹנָה
בְּכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה קָבַע
לְהוֹלִיךְ שְׁעִיר
בְּיַד אִישׁ עֵתִי

A company of elders
would accompany it,
for there were ten tents
between Jerusalem and Şoq.

445 They set forth to **the emissary**, **high priest**
and he divided the scarlet thread;
half of it he tied to its horns,
and half to the rock.

Those who insisted on being observers²⁴⁷
while he was reciting eight blessings
were not allowed to see
the burning of the bulls.

He took off his garment
of linen when he was finished;
five immersions
and ten washings.

As is customary, he performed
the evening Tamids.
He returned the incense utensil
and maintained the lamps.

A quick immersion,
then he washed and undressed,
and he wrapped himself in his own covering²⁴⁸
and went out backward.

455 **His perfect one**²⁴⁹ would rejoice **the priest's people**
when they saw the silken thread,
which had turned as white
as lye and snow.

He stepped like a deer,
going out of the sanctuary,
and the nobles of the people
accompanied him to his home.

²⁴⁷. See m. Yoma 7:1.

²⁴⁸. A garment that belonged to him; see m. Yoma 7:4.

תַּחֲבוֹרֶת יְשִׁישָׁת
עֲמֹ יְשׁוּלָחוּ
כִּי עֶשֶׂר סּוֹכּוֹת
מֵעִיר וְעַד צוֹק

תַּרְגְּלוּ לַצִּיר 445
וַחֲלַק לְשׁוֹן שְׁלִזְהוֹרִית
בִּקְרָנָיו קֶשֶׁר חֲצִי
וַחֲצִי בַסֵּלַע

תּוֹקֵפִי לַחֲזוֹת
מִבֶּרֶךְ שְׁמוֹנָה
יִבְטְלוּ מִרְּאוֹת
שְׂרִיפֹת פְּרִים

תִּלְבוֹשֶׁת בּוּץ
יִפְשׁוּט בְּגָמְרוֹ
חֶמֶשׁ טְבִילוֹת
וְעֶשֶׂר קְדוּשׁוֹת

תְּמִידֵי עֲרֵבִים
יַעֲשֶׂה כְּדַבְּרוֹ
יִשׁוּבֵב כְּלִי קֶטֶרֶת
וַיִּטִּיב נִירוֹת

תִּכַּף טְבִילָה
קִדָּשׁ וּפֶשֶׁט
וְעֵט כְּסוֹת הֹנֹן
וַיּוֹצֵא לְאַחֲרָיו

תִּמְתּוּ תְּרוֹן 455
בְּשׁוֹר חוּט «שְׁנִי»
אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיבֵן
כְּבוֹרִית וְשָׁלֵג

תָּר כְּאַיִל
צֵאת מִן הַקֶּדֶשׁ
וְכַבִּירֵי עָם
יִלוּוְהוּ לְנִוְיָהוּ

He made a feast
for his admirers and family.
Everyone rejoiced,
for he had come out safely.

תְּסַעֲוֹדֶת יַעֲשֶׂה
 לְאוֹהֲבָיו וְקִרְבָּיו
 וְהַכֹּל יִגְיֵלוּ
 כִּי יֵצֵא בְּשָׁלוֹם

5. Azkir Gevurot Elohad

“Let Me Recount the Wonders of God”

YOSE BEN YOSE

Yose ben Yose, who most likely lived in the fourth or fifth century C.E., is the first payetan known to us by name. However, nothing else is known about him except that he composed several important early piyyutim, including at least four Avodot. This composition, Yose ben Yose’s masterpiece, is perhaps the most influential Avodah piyyut and was probably the best known of the ancient Avodah piyyutim. Although it may have been influenced by *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, it seems to have set the pattern for subsequent Avodah compositions.

Azkir Gevurot is distinguished by an elegant style, which describes its subjects with poetic precision, although without giving up the basic predisposition of piyyut toward elaboration. It also uses biblical history more selectively than *Az be-ʿEn Kol*, emphasizing cultic and priestly dimensions of Israel’s past.

Ismar Elbogen discussed *Azkir Gevurot* in his pioneering studies of the Avodah.¹ Zvi Malachi included an edition of *Azkir Gevurot* in his 1974 dissertation; soon afterward Aaron Mirsky edited it in his collection of the piyyutim of Yose ben Yose.² T. Carmi included a partial prose translation in *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*.³ This translation is based on an improved version of Mirsky’s edition based on Genizah manuscripts

1. Elbogen, *Studien*. Editions also appear in Davidson, Asaf, and Joel, eds., *Siddur Rav Sa’adiah Gaon*, 264–65; *Qoveš Ma’ase Yede Ge’onim Qadmonim* (Berlin, 1856), 1–9; and *Anthologia Hebraica*, ed. H. Brody and M. Wiener (Leipzig 1922), 26–36.

2. Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 122–72.

3. T. Carmi, ed., *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (New York: Penguin, 1981), 209–14.

[INTRODUCTORY PRAISE]

Let me recount the wonders
of the magnificent God,
Who is unique; there is no other,
self-sufficient and none second to Him.

There is none beyond Him in the universe,
none prior to Him in heaven;
none preceded Him,
and none can supplant Him.

When the Lord conceived,
when God invented,
He consulted but none could prevent Him,
He spoke and none constrained Him.

He speaks and fulfills,
decrees and enacts,
He is strong enough to support it, the world
heroic enough to bear it.

- 5 He who is lauded
by the lips of his creatures,
from above and below,
let Him receive praise.

One God, unique on earth,
and holy in heaven,
among the great waters,
magnificent on high.

Exaltation from the depths,
praise from the lights,
speech⁴ during the days,
melody during the nights.

Let fire announce His name;
let the trees of the forest sing for joy;

4. Heb. *omer* (n.). According to Mirsky, the term here has connotations of song.

[השמים מספרים כבוד אל]

אֶזְכִּיר גְּבוּרוֹת

אֱלֹהֵי נֹאדָרִי

יְחִיד וְאֵין עוֹד

אָפֶס וְאֵין שְׁנִי

אֲחֵרִיו אֵין בְּחֶלֶד

לִפְנֵי אֵין בְּשַׁחַק

אֵין בְּלִתּוֹ קֶדֶם

זוֹלָתוֹ בְּעֶקֶב

אֲדוֹן לַחֲשׁוֹב

אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת

נִמְלֵךְ וְאֵין נֶעְדָּר

שָׁח וְאֵין מֵאַחֵר

אוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה

יוֹעֵץ וּמְקִים

אֲמִיץ לְשֹׂאת

וְגִבּוֹר לְסָבּוֹל

אֲשֶׁר לוֹ רְנָנוֹת

מִפִּי יִצְוֶרִיו

מִמַּעַלָּה וּמִמַּטָּה

יֵשָׁא תְהִלָּה

אֶל אֶחָד בְּאָרֶץ

קָדוֹשׁ בְּשָׁמַיִם

מִמֵּי רַבִּים

אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם

אֲדָר מִתְהוֹמוֹת

שְׂבַח מִמְּאֹרוֹת

אוֹמֵר מִיָּמַיִם

לְקֹד מְלִילוֹת

אֲשֶׁ תוֹדִיעַ שְׁמוֹ

עֲצִי יַעַר יִרְנָנוּ

let each beast rehearse
the might of His awesome deeds.

[THE CREATION]

The Workman⁵ was his amusement, the Torah
the Law, his plaything;
it was His occupation
until His treasure arose. Israel

At first, before a thousand generations,
it arose in his intention,
and from it came the plan
for all the works of the construction.⁶

On high He established
the throne of His majesty;
he spread His cloud,⁷
and stretched out the gauze as a tent, heaven

so that it shall not move,
nor will its pegs wander
until its end comes
and it is renewed with His word.

He strengthened, over the waters,
the pillars of the earth,
and he girded his loins
with chaos and storm.

They will not move,
nor will they slip
until the world wears out like a garment
and is exchanged as of old.⁸

15 Disorder and darkness
covered the face of the earth;

5. Heb. *ʿoman*, from Prov 8:30. See Gen Rabbah 1:1.

6. Heb. *tavnit*. There may be connotations of the building of the Temple.

7. Job 26:9.

בְּהִמָּה תִּלְמַד
עֲזוֹז נֹרְאוֹתָיו

[הבריאה]

התורה

אָמוֹן שִׁחֲקוּ

דָּת שֶׁעָשׂוּ עֵינָיו

הִיא הֶגְיוֹנוֹ

ישראל

עַד עָמוֹד סִגְלָה

אִז קָדָם לְאֱלֹף דּוֹר

עֲלֵתָהּ בְּמַחֲשַׁבֶּת

מִמְּנָה תְּכוּנֵת

מִלְאָכֹת תְּבִנִית

בְּמָרוֹם הַכִּין

כֶּסֶּא הַדְּרוֹ

פֶּרֶשׁוֹ עֲנָנוֹ

השמים

וְדוֹק נָטָה לְאֹהֶל

בֶּל יֵצֵעַ

וּבֶל יִסַּע יִתְדוֹתָיו

עַד בּוֹא קִצּוֹ

וַיִּתְחַדֵּשׁ בְּאוֹמֶר

בִּירַר עַל מַיִם

עֲמוּדֵי חֶלֶד

שִׁינָס מִתְּנִיָּה

בְּתוֹהוֹ וּבִסְעָרָה

בֶּל תִּמּוּט

וּבֶל יִמְעַדוּ מְכוּנֶיהָ

עַד תִּבְלֶה בְּבִגְדִי

וְתוֹמַר כְּמֵאֵז

בוֹהוֹ וְאַפְלָה

15

כֶּסֶּו פְּנֵי אֶרֶץ

8. Cf. the idea found in Gen Rabbah 3:7 and 9:2 that God created many worlds and destroyed them before creating this one.

then it shone with light
from the face of the King.

He cloaked the world with radiance for the day,
for humankind to go out to work,
and made darkness for **shadow**, night
for animals to crawl out to the forest.

When the spirit hovered
between the heaven and the waters,
He placed a ceiling within
to bear half of **that which is measured**, water

By them his marvel
in his handiwork can be known:
in the goodness of the fruit of rain,
the channel of all the waters.⁹

When he divided
between waters and waters,
He ignited **the Inferno**,¹⁰ Gehenna
the immeasurable Topheth,
with an unfanned fire,¹¹
which can never be extinguished,
nor can a flood of many waters
affect it.

He banished to a pool
the mighty water,
and placed sand there
as a gate and bar.¹²

He made a fence for it
so that it would not cover the earth
until **the Faithful of his house** Moses
cut it in half.

9. The idea here is that the rain is the conduit through which the upper waters reach the earth.

10. Heb. *Aluqah*, from Job 20:26. See the references in Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*.

	וּתְבַהֵק מֵאוֹר פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ
לילה	בִּיהֶק נֹגֶה לַיּוֹם לְצֹאת אָדָם לְפוֹעַל וַיֵּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ לְאִישׁוֹן לְרַמֵּס חֵיתוֹ יַעַר
מים	בְּרַחֵף רוּחַ בֵּין שְׁחָקִים לְמִים שֶׁת תִּקְרָה בְּתוֹךְ שִׁאת חֲצִי מְדוּדִים
	בָּם יוֹדִיעַ פְּלֹאוֹ לְפַעֲלוֹ בְּטוֹב חֲשֶׁרֶת פְּרִי פֶּלֶג מֵלֵא מִים
גיהנום	בְּהִבְדִּילוֹ בֵּין מִים לְמִים הִסִּיק עֲלוּקָה תּוֹפֶת לְבִלִי חֶק
	בְּאֵשׁ לֹא נֹפֵחַ לֹא נִכְבָּה נֶצַח וַיִּשְׁטֹף מִים רַבִּים לֹא יִגְיעוּהוּ
	גֵּרֶשׁ לְמִקְוֵה מִים אֲדִירִים וְשֵׁם לָהֶם חוֹל בְּרִיחַ וּדְלָתִים
משה	גִּדֵּר בְּעֶדֶם בְּלִי יְכֶסֶוֹ אֶרֶץ עַד נֶאֱמַן בֵּית יַעֲשֶׂם גְּזָרִים

11. See Job 20:26.

12. See Deut 3:5.

He revealed the face of the earth
for humankind to work
and planted shrubs
and seed-producing grass.

He also planted in Eden
a luxuriant garden
as a canopy for the Glory
for **the foremost of all creatures.**¹³

the righteous

25 He finished obscuring
light sevenfold,
and arranged lamps
to rule the day and the night.

They did not transgress boundaries,
and they did not delay in their movement
until **the attendant in the tent**
made them stand still in the valley.¹⁴

day and night

Joshua

There arose from the water
the fugitives of the deep,¹⁵

**the Leviathan
and the sea serpent**

protected by scales
and **sharp arrows.**

fins

He set some of them aside
for an eternal feast,
and prepared a prison in them
for **the deserting messenger.**

Jonah

The birds that fly upward
sprang from alluvial mud¹⁶
for those who will eat at the King's table
and the army of His hosts.

He proscribed as an abomination
impure fowl

13. The righteous will be enveloped by God's glory in Eden in the world to come. See Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*. Here, as in several places in this section, the poet prefigures human history and eschatology in his account of creation.

	<p> גִּילָה אֲדָמָה לְעִבּוֹדֶת אָנוּשׁ וְהִדְשִׁיָּאָה שִׁיחַ וְעֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע גַּם נָטַע בְּעֶדֶן בֶּן רַעֲנָנָה לְחַפּוֹת כְּבִדּוֹת אֲדִירֵי חֶפֶץ </p>	
הצדיקים	<p> גָּמַר לְהַעֲלִים אוֹר שְׁבַעֲתִים וְעָרָךְ יִרּוֹת לְמִשּׁוֹל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה </p>	25
יהושע	<p> גָּבּוּל לֹא יִשְׁיִגּוּ וּלְכַת לֹא יֵאָחֲרוּ עַד מִשְׁרַת אֹהֶל יְדִמִּימִם בְּעֶמֶק </p>	
הלויתן והתנינים	<p> גָּאוּ מַמִּים בְּרִיחֵי תְהוֹמוֹת אֶפְיָקִי מִן </p>	
סנפירים	<p> שְׁנוּנֵי חֲצִים </p>	
יונה	<p> גָּנַז יָמָם לְמִשְׁתֵּה נֶצְחִים וְהִכִּין בָּם כָּלָא לְצִיר הַבּוֹרַח </p>	
	<p> גְּבִיחֵי עוֹף צָצוּ מִרְקַק מִים לְאוֹכֵל שְׁלֶחַן מֶלֶךְ וְחִיל צְבָאוֹתָיו גָּזַר לְתוֹעֵבֶת עוֹף לֹא טָהוֹר </p>	

14. See Josh 10:12.

15. See Isa 27:1. Note that here a form of spontaneous generation is assumed, by which creatures spring forth from some substance, such as water or mud.

16. See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. *rqq*.

until the Tishebite came
and the ravens fed him.¹⁷

Elijah the prophet

There grew out of the earth
horned animals for slaughter,
edible beasts,
both cattle and those that crawl.

He pastured the Behemoth
with the produce of a thousand mountains,
for on the day when it is slaughtered,
He¹⁸ will put His sword to it.

The Creator exulted
and rejoiced in His deeds
when He saw
that his work was good:

grasses for rest,
and food of choice;
the table was set,
but there was no one to relish it.

35 He said to Himself,
“Who will approach
for the butchered animals
and blended wine?

If he abides by My word,
he will be like God;¹⁹
if he defies My word,
I will send him back to matter.”

He investigated and understood
and knew them to be worthless,
for he will not know enough
to pass the night in glory.²⁰

17. Cf. the pattern in *Az be-En Kol* in which each thing is created so that (*ad lo*) it can serve a purpose in subsequent history.

18. That is, God himself.

אליהו הנביא

עַד בּוֹא תִשָּׁבִי
וְעוֹרְבִים יִכְלְלוּהוּ

דָּגוּ מִחֶלֶד
מִקְרִינִים לְזֶבֶחַ
חַיִּית מֵאֵכֶל
עִם טְמֵאָה וְרָמֶשׂ

דִּישָׁן בְּהִמּוֹת
בְּבוֹל הַרְרֵי אֶלֶף
כִּי בְיוֹם זִבְחוֹ
יִגֶשׁ חֲרָבוֹ

דָּעַ יוֹצֵר
וְשִׁמַּח בְּמַעֲשָׁיו
בְּהַבִּיטוֹ
כִּי טוֹב פָּעָלוֹ

דְּשָׂאֵי מְנוּחֹת
וְאֶכְלֵי מִגְדִּים
וְשִׁלְחוֹן עָרוֹד
וְאִין מִי יְדוֹשָׁן

דָּבַר בְּלִבּוֹ
"מִי יִסּוּר הִנֵּה
לְטֹבַח הַטְּבוּחַ
וַיִּין הַמָּסוּד"

דְּבָרֵי אִם יַעַשׂ
יְהִי יְאֱלֹהִים
אִם יִמִּיר אוֹמֵר
לְחִמְרוֹ אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ¹⁹

דָּרַשׁ וְהִבִּין
וַיֵּדַע מִתֵּי שְׁוֹא
כִּי לֹא יָבִין
לְלִין בִּיקָר

35

19. Because he was created in God's image.

20. See Ps 49:13.

[THE FIRST HUMANS]

He likened²¹ him in His image,
 engraved him in His shape,
 so that on heaven and earth
 he would be held in awe.

The Distinguished One²² made
 a beautiful bed in Eden;
 of spun gold and precious stones
 he fashioned its canopy.

God

He ornamented him with true knowledge²³
 and favored him with spirit
 so that from the beginning
 he could foresee the consequences.²⁴

He let him rule
 as a righteous ruler
 so that he could provide names
 for God and His works.

He warned him
 about the tree of knowledge
 lest he be struck
 by the appealing food.

He put him to sleep
 in a pleasant slumber
 and took a bone from him
 and prepared a young woman.

He adorned her as a bride,
 with adornments of jewels,
 and attached them together
 to be one flesh.²⁵

21. Heb. *dimmahu*.

22. From Song 5:10.

23. Heb. *qisheto*, implying both decoration and truth.

[אבות עולם]

אלוהים

דִּימָהּ בְּצֶלֶם
חֲקֵקוֹ בְּתַבְנִית
הַיּוֹת בְּדוֹק וְחֶלֶד
פֶּחַד מוֹרְאוֹ

דָּגוּל בְּתוֹךְ עֵדֶן
יִיפָּה יִצְוֵנוּ
בְּפִזְאָבֹן יִקְרָה
חֶק מְסֻכְתּוֹ

דַּעַת קִישְׁטוֹ
וְרוּחַ חֲנֻנּוֹ
לְהַשְׁכִּיל מִקֶּדֶם
קֶץ אוֹתִיּוֹת

הַמְשִׁילוֹ
כְּצַדִּיק וּמוֹשֵׁל
לְכָלִּיל שְׁמוֹת
לְאֵל וּמַפְעֲלֵיוֹ

הַזְהִירוֹ
עַל עֵץ הַדַּעַת
פֶּן יִנָּקֶשׁ
בְּמֵאֵכֶל תַּאֲוָה

הַרְדִּימוֹ
בְּנוֹעָם שִׁינָה
הַרִים מִנוֹ עֶצֶם
וְכוֹנֵן עֲלֶמָה

הַעֲדָה כְּכֹלָה
עַדִּי קְשׁוּרִים
הַדְּבִיקָם הַיּוֹת
שְׂאֵר אֶחָד

24. Heb. *qes otiot*.

25. On the Hebrew term used here, cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. *šr*

45 **He who crawls in the dust**
 duped the foolish woman
 into defying the command
 and returning to the dust.

the snake

She caused man to die,
 by her appetite for idleness,
 and she caused many to fall
 and killed multitudes.²⁶

The snake was punished by means of his food
 and by means of his feet²⁷ for eternity,
 and he was made messenger
 for **those who break through the wall.**²⁸

transgressors

They felt naked and were covered
 by the leaf of **that which withers,**²⁹
 instead of being clothed in a cloud,
 enveloped in fog.

fig tree

Their stature was altered,
 and their fearsomeness was denied,³⁰
 to be ruled by all
 and not to rule all.

They were removed from Eden
 and were expelled from the garden,
 and the cleft of a rock was prepared
 as a home for them.

The Creator placed the sense of lust
 into His creature
 and made a place in his helpmeet
 for him to lie down for his desire

And she was in heat and conceived
 and went into labor and gave birth

26. Cf. Prov 7:26.

27. His feet were taken away from him.

28. Transgressors will be punished with snakebite. See Eccl 10:8.

הנחש

הָשִׂיא פֹּתֶה 45

זֹחֵל עָפָר

לְהִנִּיא אוֹמֵר

וְלָשׁוּב לְעָפָר

הַמִּיתָה אִישׁ

בְּתַאֲוֹת עֶצֶל

הַפִּילָה רַבִּים

וְהִרְגָה עֲצוּמִים

הוֹכָה בְּטֶרְפוֹ

וּבִפְעֻמָּיו לְנֹצֶחַ

הוּא יִשְׁלַח צִיר

לְפֹרְצֵי גֵדֵר

משיגי גבול

הָעֶרְמוֹ וְכֶסֶו

בַּעֲלֵה נֹבֶלֶת

תָּמּוּר לְבוֹשׁ עֵנָן

חֲתוּלֹת עֶרְפֶּל

הוֹמֵר תְּאָרֶם

וְהוֹסִיר פִּחְדָּם

לְהִרְדּוֹת מְכַל

וְלֹא לְרִדּוֹת בְּכַל

תאנה

הוֹרְמוֹ מֵעֵדָן

וְגוֹרְשׁוֹ מִנֵּן

וְהוֹכִן נִקִּיק סֶלַע

בֵּית מְלוֹן לָמוֹ

וַיּוֹצֵר הַחִישׁ

תַּאֲוֹת יִצִּירוּ

וְהִרְגִּיל עֲזָרוֹ

לְרִבֵּעַ תְּשׁוּקָתָהּ

וַיַּחֲימָהּ וְהִזְרִיעָהּ

וַחֲיִבָּלָה וַיִּלְדָּהּ

29. See Isa 34:4.

30. God made them fearful of the animals and not the other way around.

a first time to a plower
of furrows of earth.

Cain

- 55 She gave birth a second time
and sent forth
a youngster, bearer of a staff,
a shepherd of flocks.

Abel

And as a gift offering
they offered before the King
one from the fruit of the earth
and the other from first of the flock.

Then the Holy One looked
at the heart and not the appearance³¹
and paid heed to the service
of the fragrant offering of the younger.

He raised
the dejected brother on high
when he accepted the offering
of a fragrant sacrifice,

and made the elder dejected,
and he was aggrieved,
for He rejected his offering,
his choice food.

Then his anger raged,
and his fury stormed,³²
and he cut off the earth
a brother and his kin.³³

And blood that was spilled
let forth a scream,
and the first bloodletter
was punished with wandering.

31. Lit., "the eyes."

32. See Amos 1:11.

קין

וּבִכְרָה מִשְׁדֵּד
תִּלְמִי אָדָמָה

וְהוֹסִיפָה שְׁנִית 55
וְהִבְרִיכָה וְשִׁלַּחַה
עוֹיֵל תּוֹמֵךְ שִׁבְט
רוּעָה עֲדָרִים

הבל

וּבִתְשׁוּרַת שִׁי
קִידְמוּ פָנֶי מֶלֶךְ
זֶה בִּפְרֵי אֶרֶץ
זֶה בְּפִטְרֵי צֹאן

וְהִבִּיט קְדוֹשׁ
לֵלֶב וְלֹא לְעֵינַיִם
וְשָׁע עֶרֶךְ
נִיחוּחַ צָעִיר

וְשִׁיגָב אָח
קוֹדֵר לְמָרוֹם
בְּרָצוֹתוֹ שִׁי
רֵיחַ קֶרְבָּנוֹ

וְהִקְדִּיר פָּנֵי רֵב
וְגַם חָרָה לוֹ
כִּי מָאָס בְּשִׁי
יֵתֵר מֵאֲכָלוֹ

וְטִרַף אֵף
וְשָׁמַר עֲבָרָה
וְחִיבֵל מֵאֶרֶץ
אָח וּמִשְׁפָּחוֹתָיו

וְהִצְרִיחַ זַעֲקָה
דָּם הַשְּׁפוּךְ
וְנִעְנֵשׁ בְּנֵעַ וְנָד
רֹאשׁ לְשׁוֹפְכֵי דָם

33. His potential descendants, who were, as it were, eliminated with him.

	וְנִיתְּנָהּ עַל פֶּשַׁע וְנִיתֵן לוֹ אוֹת פֶּן יִשְׁפֹּךְ דָּמוֹ בָּאָדָם	
האל	זֶה חֲבֵשׁ עֶצֶב	65
אדם	יִצִּיר קַדְמוֹנִי	
מוות	כִּי הִחֵל שְׁתוֹת כּוֹס מִסֶּדֶד לְדוֹרוֹת	
	זָכַר לַתֵּת	
שם; אדם	זֶרַע לְזוֹרַע לְהַחֲלִיף לוֹ	
הבל	פְּרִי הָאוֹמֶלֶל	
	זֶרְעוֹ הַשְּׂרִישׁ שׁוֹרֵשׁ פּוֹרֶה רֹאשׁ וְשׁוֹשֵׁב נִטְעוֹ עֲשׂוֹת פְּרִי בְּאוֹשִׁים	
	זָמְמוּ וְהִחֲלוּ דוֹר עֲקֻלָּלוֹת לְהִמָּר בְּשֵׁם אֱלִיל שֵׁם אֶל אֶחָד	
	זַעַף מִים עֲצוּרִים עֲלֵיהֶם קָרָא פָּרְצוּ גְבוּלָם וַיַּהֲפֹכוּ אֶרֶץ	
	זָכַר תִּקְוַת אָנוּשׁ הָאֶבֶד מֵאֶרֶץ וְשִׁטּוֹף יְסוּדֵי סִפְיָחֵי עֵפֶר אֶרֶץ	
	זִלְזָלִים אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲצֵי יַעַר	

37. See Isa 5:2.

38. Heb. *hekheleu*, carrying connotations of blasphemy (*hillul*).39. Heb. *Enosh*, alluding to the patriarch Enosh.

did not bear fruit
until the tenth generation.

A pure and innocent man Noah
found among them,
and the fragrance of his deeds
was like perfume in his generation.⁴⁰

Presumptuously they rebelled
during the seven days of sunshine.⁴¹
In the goodness and abundance
they said to God, "Leave us alone!"⁴²

They were punished by the upper waters
and were crushed by the lower waters,
but **the righteous one** appealed to him with a gift⁴³ Noah;
sacrifice
for the waters of Noah not to flood.⁴⁴

75 The face of the earth was renewed
and returned to its former state
from the few people
who went out from prison. the ark

The fifth generation the generation of Peleg
then took counsel and planned
to go up and put up
a nest on high.

The Living One did not withhold
from them their scheme—
He who scoffs at scoffers
fulfilled their purpose.

He divided the speech
of the tongue of the dissenters,
and they were broken up into factions
and fought each other to the death.

40. Cf. Gen 6:9.

41. Before the flood, God gave humanity a week of clear weather in order to repent.

42. Cf. Job 21:14.

נוח

עַד דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי
לֹא עָשׂוּ פְּרִי

זָד וְתַמִּים

בְּקֶרְבָּם נִמְצָא
רֵיחַ מַפְעָלָיו
כְּרָקֶחַ בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו

זָדוּ וּמָרְדּוּ
בְּשִׁבְעַת יָמֵי נֹחַ
בְּטוֹב וּמְרַב כָּל
אֲמָרוֹ לֹאֵל סוֹר

נוח; קרבן

זוֹעֵמוּ בְּמִי מַעֲלָה
וְדוֹכָאוּ בְּמִי מַטָּה
וְרִיצָהוּ צָדִיק בְּשִׁי
מַעֲבוֹר מִי נֹחַ

התיבה

חֹדֶשׁוֹ פָּנֵי חֹלֶד
וְשָׁבוּ לְקִדְמָתָן
מִמַּתִּי מִסָּפֶר
יּוֹצְאֵי מִמִּסְגָּר

דור פלג

חָשְׁבוּ וְנוֹעְצוּ
אֶז דּוֹר חֲמִישִׁי
לְרוֹם וְלָשׁוֹם
קֹן בְּמָרוֹם

חִי לֹא בִיּוֹר
מֵהֶם מְזִימָה
מְלִיץ לְלִצִּים
חֲפָצִם הַשְּׁלִים

חֵילֶק שִׁפְת לְשׁוֹן
בְּעָלֵי מַחְלֻקוֹת
וְכִתְּתוּ זֶה בָּזֶה
וְנִלְחֲמוּ לְמִשְׁחִית

75

43. Gen 8:20.

44. Cf. Isa 64:9.

[THE PATRIARCHS]

They vanished after the storm,
 passed, and they were gone;
 then a **righteous man** arose
 who was an everlasting foundation.

Abraham

He reasoned, understanding
 the secret of creation,⁴⁵
 which is controlled
 by Him who governs and rules.

When he saw the course
 of **that which glides and shines**,
 eager as a hero when it emerges
 and weak when it sets,

the sun

the windows of the sky,
 in the east and the west,
 through which the moon
 leaps every day,

the arrows of lightning,
 the rush of the stars
 dashing to and fro—
 and not one fails to appear—

the unenlightened became wise
 and inferred by himself,⁴⁶
 saying, "There is a Lord of these—
 Him I will follow."

Abram

- 85 Before he began,
 God cleared the way for him,
 "Go forth from death,
 to the way of life."

45. Lit., "works."

[אבות האומה]

אברהם

חֲלָפוֹ כְּעָבוֹר
סוּפָה וְאֵינָם
וְהוֹקֵם צַדִּיק
יִסּוֹד עוֹלָם

חֶשֶׁב לְהַבִּין
סוֹד מַפְעָלוֹת
הַמִּתְנַהֲגִים
בְּשׁוֹטֵר וּמוֹשֵׁל

השמש

חֲזוֹתוֹ מְרוֹצֵת
שׁוֹאֵף וְזוֹרֵחַ
שֶׁשׁ כְּגִבּוֹר בְּצֵאתוֹ
וְחֶלֶשׁ בְּבֹאוֹ

חֲלוּנֵי שַׁחַק
אֲשֶׁר בְּקִדְמָה וַיִּמָּה
אֲשֶׁר בָּם תִּנְתֵּי
לְבָנָה יוֹם יוֹם

חֲצִי בְּרָקִים
וְדוֹהֵר כּוֹכָבִים
רָצִים וְשָׁבִים
וְאִישׁ לֹא נֶעְדָּר

אברם

חָכֵם סוֹג לֵב
וְשָׁכַל מֵאֱלֹו
וְשָׁח אֲדוֹן לְאֵלָה
אֲחֵרִיו אֲרוּצָה

טָרֵם הַקָּדִים
אֵל בִּירַר לוֹ דֶּרֶךְ
לָךְ לֵךְ מִמֶּנֶה
לְדֶרֶךְ הַחַיִּים

85

He who was pure in his deeds **Abraham**
 spoke heroically,⁴⁷
 “O God of justice,
 judge with mercy!”

He swept away the monarchs⁴⁸
 without shield or sword;
He lifted him up from fire, **God**
 aided him in war.

His generation was ignorant
 and did not recognize **the Rock.** **God**
 So he informed them at the tamarisk⁴⁹
 of the name of the eternal God.

He placed in his flesh
 a stamped impression of the covenant,
 which **that which gapes** will see **Gehenna**
 and snap its mouth shut.⁵⁰

He caused leaves to sprout
 in old age,
 when **the source of the withered bed** **Sarah’s womb**
 was opened.

The One who tested him⁵¹ placed the burden **God**
 of the ordeal on his shoulder;
 indeed, he overpowered his urge,
 giving his lamb to the slaughter.

He gave **a basket of first fruits** **Isaac**
 as an offering;
 the father had no pity,
 and the son did not hesitate.

When the slaughterer of the lamb **Abraham**
 grasped the sword,

47. That is, Abraham spoke to God regarding Sodom and Gomorrah; see Gen 18:25–32.

48. The four kings of Gen 14:9.

49. Gen 21:33. According to the midrash, it was a kind of inn, in which Abraham would extend hospitality and teach the guests about the eternal God.

אברהם

טָהוֹר בְּמַעֲשָׂיו
דָּבָר גְּבוּרוֹת
נָא אֱלֹהֵי מִשְׁפָּט
שְׁפוֹט נָא בְּרַחֲמִים

האל

טָרַף רוֹזְנִים
בְּלֹא מִגֵּן וְחָרֵב
שִׁיגְבוּ מֵאֵשׁ
עֲזְרוּ בְּמַלְחָמָת

האל

טָפַשׁ דּוֹרוֹ
וַיַּצּוֹר לֹא הִכִּירוּ
וְהוֹדִיעָם בְּאֵשׁ
שֵׁם אֵל עוֹלָם

גיהנום

טִבַּעַת חוֹתָם בְּרִית
שֵׁם בְּשִׂאָרוֹ
בָּה תִּפֶּן פֹּעֶרֶת
וְאִז תִּקְפֹּץ פִּיהָ

רחמה של שרה

טָרְפֵי צֶמַח
זְקוּנִים הֶצִּיץ
בְּהִפְתָּח מִקְוֹר
לְעִרוּגַת חוֹרֵב

האל

טוֹרַח בּוֹחֵן מְנַסִּיהוּ
עָמַס עַל שְׁכָם
וְגַם מִשָּׁל בִּיזָר
תֵּת שִׂיו לְזִבַּח

יצחק

טָנָא בְּכוּרִים
מְנַחֶה הוֹבִיל
אָב לֹא חָמַל
וּבֵן לֹא אָחַר

אברהם

טוֹיַח בְּעַד שָׁה
בָּעַת תִּפֹּשׁ חָרֵב

50. When Gehenna sees a Jew's circumcision, it will shut its gaping mouth so as to keep him out.

51. God tested Abraham at the binding of Isaac.

יעקב
התורה

מֵלֶאכִי שְׁלוֹם
מִרְזָקוֹ בְּכִי

טוֹב וְרַחוּם שָׁח
"אַל תִּשְׁחַת נַעַר
נִרְצָה פְעֻלָּתְךָ
כְּזוֹבַח וְנִזְבַּח"

96 יוֹסֵד אִישׁ תָּם
בִּפְתָּחֵי תְּעוּדָה
טָרָם תֹּאמַר
שִׁינֹן אֲמַרְיָה

יְהִי מַעוֹלָם
בּוֹ נִתְפָּאֵר
וּבְשִׁמוֹ לְעוֹלָם
יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת

יִוָּדְעוּ נֹצֵב
עָלְיוֹ בְּמַלְאוֹן
וְשָׁח אֲנִי שׁוֹמְרֶךָ
צֵל עַל יְמִינֶךָ

המלאכים

יִוָּרְדִים וְעוֹלִים
קְדוֹשִׁים לְמַעְנֵהוּ
לְהַכִּיר תִּאֲרוֹ
חֲקוֹק בְּמַרוֹמִים

האל

100 יוֹצֵר חֶסֶד
מַעֲט מַאֲלָהִים
לִיחַם בְּמַקְלוֹת
כְּחוֹמֶר בְּיַד יוֹצֵר

לבן

יִרְאֵת חֲזוֹן
אֲרָמִי בַעֲתָתוֹ
"אַל תִּגַּע בְּבֶן
עָמוֹס מִנִּי בְטָן"

55. Ps 121:5.

56. See note 54 above. The angels recognized his image from the throne and saw him on earth.

57. Gen 30:39.

המלאך

יְדוּד אֵשׁ לוֹהֵט
בְּהֶאֱבֹקוֹ לוֹ
כִּי לֹא יָכוֹל
נִתְחַנֵּן בְּבִכִּי

עשיו

יֵשַׁע הַפְּלִיא לוֹ
מִחֲגוֹר חָרֵב
שׁוֹטֵם וְשׁוֹמֵר
אֵיבֹת עוֹלָם
יֵרֵשׁ תְּאֵוֹת
בְּרָכוֹת הוֹרִיו
שָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר שִׁבְט
כְּשׁוֹטְרֵי רָקִיעַ

[לוי ובניו]

משה, אהרון ומרים

יִוְחַד שְׁלִישִׁי
לְרֹאוֹת פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ
לְשׁוֹרֵר לְשָׁרֵת
לְבוֹא חֲדָרָיו
כָּעֵץ שְׁתוּל
עַל פְּלָגֵי מַיִם
הַפְּרִיחַ מִטְּהוֹ
שְׁלֹשֶׁת בְּיָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ

בני מררי

כַּפּוּפֵי סָבֵל
לְאַהֵל וּקְרָשָׁיו
תּוֹקְעֵי יָתֵד
פּוֹרְשֵׁי יְרִיעוֹת

בני גרשון

כְּתֵף נְטוּיָה
כְּעִגְלָה מְלוּמָּדֶת
לְעוֹל עֲבוֹדַת קֹדֶשׁ
אֲדוֹן כָּל הָאָרֶץ

בני קהת

כְּגִפֵּן אֲדָרֶת
יִפֹּת פָּרִי וְעִנָּה

He caused Amram to sprout forth
from the root of Levi.

110 For it sent forth
three precious offspring:
a priest, a shepherd, Aaron and Moses
and a woman prophetess. Miriam

When the time of love⁵⁹ drew near, the Exodus
his flower arose Moses
to break the yoke-bands of Zoan, Egypt
to break through the gate of the hollow.⁶⁰ water

Hidden in a cloud
and sanctified for a week,
he stood inside
when the Word was given.

The power of mighty ones⁶¹ angels
was subdued before him;
for fear of him,
not a single one prevailed.

He nourished the holy flock
with flesh in the wilderness
from the bread of heaven
until they came to the land.⁶²

The drumming maiden Miriam
dug a well for the people;
she perished and was gathered, died
and there was no water.⁶³

The beloved were favored Israel
with the accompaniment of the clouds of glory
by virtue of the officiator,⁶⁴ Aaron
in peace and in ease.

59. Based on Ezek 16:8.

60. The term is from Isa 40:12. The meaning here is that Moses split the sea.

61. The angels opposed to the giving of the Torah to Moses.

	הַצִּמִּיחַ עֲמָרָם מְשׁוֹרֵשׁ לִי	
	כִּי שִׁלַּח שְׁלוֹשֶׁת שְׂרִיגֵי חֶמֶד מִכֶּהֶן וְרוּעָה וְאִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה	110
אהרון ומשה מרים	כְּגִשֶׁת עֵת דּוֹדִים פָּרַחוּ הוּקָם לְשֹׁבֹר מוֹסְרוֹת צוּעֵן וְלִפְרוֹץ גָּדֵר שׁוֹעֵל	
זמן הגאולה משה מצרים המים	כּוֹסָה בְּעֵנָן וְנִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁבוּעַ נֶצֶב בַּתְּנוּךְ בְּעֵת מִתֵּן אוֹמֶר	
מלאכים	כּוֹחַ אֲדִירִים לִפְנֵי הֹכְנֵעַ מִמּוֹרָאוֹ לֹא עָמַד אִישׁ כָּלֶכֶל צֹאן קֹדֶשׁ שְׂאֵר בִּישִׁמוֹן וּמִלְחָם שְׁחָקִים עַד בּוֹאֵם לָאָרֶץ כָּרְתָהּ בְּאֵר לָעָם עֲלָמָה מִתּוֹפֶפֶת גּוֹעָה וְנֹאסָפָה לֹא הָיָה מִיָּם לוֹוִי עֲנִי הוֹד יְדִידִים נַחֲנֵנוּ עַל יְדֵי מִכֶּהֶן בְּשָׁלוֹם וּמִשׁוֹר	
מרים		
ישראל אהרון		

62. The land of Israel.

63. Because of Miriam the people had water.

64. The clouds of glory accompanied Israel for Aaron's sake.

A covenant of salt
 was engraved for him and his descendants
 so that the covenant of salt of the fragrant offering
 would never cease.

For the zealous wrath of the hero Pineḥas
 God paid recompense
 and renewed his office
 for generations forever.

No foreigner shall ever acquire
 the inheritance of their glory;
 no other man shall inherit
 their given portion.

120 The company of notables⁶⁵
 was taken down to the valley of the shadow;
 and they settled the king of power⁶⁶ Uzziah
 in isolated quarters.

They may not be jealous
 of the lot of their brothers' portion;
 God is called
 their designated allotment.

Sacrificial bread
 was reserved for them
 when they came near to God,
 in the time of the repulsive calf.⁶⁷

The lawgiver taught them Moses
 the order of the Avodah
 because he was in charge of it⁶⁸
 when they were at the gate⁶⁹
 to wash and anoint,
 to cleanse their hands and feet,

65. See Num 16:2.

66. Uzziah's name literally means "the power of God"; he presumed to offer incense on the altar himself. See 2 Chr 26:16–21.

פנחס

לוּ וּלְזָרְעוֹ בְּרִית
אֶמֶת נִחֲקָקָה
בְּלִי תַשְׁבוֹת מַלְח
בְּרִית הַנִּיחוּחַ

לְקִנְיַת חֶמֶת גִּבֹּר
גָּמוּל גָּמַל אֵל
וְחִידֵשׁ חֻקּוֹ
לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם

לָזָר לֹא יֵאָתֶה
נִחְלֵת כְּבוֹדָם
לֹא יִירֶשׁ אֲנוֹשׁ
מִתַּת חֵלְקָם

עוזיה

לְצַלְמוֹת הוֹרְדוּ 120
עֵדֹת אֲנָשֵׁי שָׁם
וְהוֹשִׁיבוּ עוֹז מֶלֶךְ
בְּבֵית הַחֲפָשִׁית

לֹא יִקְנְאוּ בַחֲבֵל
אֲחוֹזַת אֲחִים
כִּי אֱלֹהִים נִקְרָא
מִנֵּת גּוֹרְלָם

לָחֶם הָאֲשִׁים
לָהֶם הוֹכֵן
בְּהִתְקַרְבָּם לְאֵל
בְּעֵת רַחוּק עָגַל

משה

לִימָדָם מִחוּקָה
סִדְרֵי עֲבוֹדוֹת
כִּי בִשְׁבָתָם פָּתַח
עֲלֵיהֶם הִפְקֵד

לְרַחוּץ וְלִסְוֹךְ
לְקַדֵּשׁ יָד וְרֶגֶל

67. The term *riḥuk* carries connotations of distance and abomination, in opposition to the verb *qrb*, “came near,” in the same stanza.

68. The instructions concerning the Avodah.

69. The gate of the Tabernacle during the ceremony of ordination; see Lev 8:35.

to wear linens,
and to put on the girdle,

to ordain them
for seven days,
and to make it a law
for generations forever.

As it is written: Everything done today, the Lord has commanded to be done to make expiation for you (Lev 8:34).

[THE AVODAH]

Impeccable families
drew a lot
to magnify a chief
and to raise him in wealth.

From his bed where he lay,
they separated his wife,
lest he be impure for a week,
becoming tainted unintentionally.

The place where the chiefs gather

**the chamber
of Palhedrin**

was his dwelling place;
would he not sleep there
all seven days?

He offered the minḥah,
placed the incense,
and arranged the lamps,
and was the first to offer the head and foot.⁷⁰

Of the sale for the Sabbaths
and the portion of the priestly divisions,
his portion took precedence
over everyone else's.

70. Of the sacrificial animals.

לְלִבּוֹשׁ בְּדִים
וְלַחֲגוֹר בְּמִזַּח

לְמַלֵּא יָדָם
יָמִים שְׂבָעָה
וְיִשְׂמְחָה לַחֲזוֹק
לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם

ככת' כאשר עשה ביום הזה צוה יי לעשות לכפר עליכם

[העבודה]

מִשְׁפָּחוֹת בְּרוּרִים
גֹּזֵל יְטִילוּ
לְגִדֵּל סֶגֶן
וְלַעֲלוֹתוֹ בְּעוֹשֶׁר

מִרְבַּע יִצְעוּ
שְׂאֵרוֹ יַבְדִּילוּ
פֶּן יִטְמָא שְׂבוּעַ
בְּשִׁגְגַת דָּוָה

לשכת פלהדרין

מְקוֹם עֲצֶרֶת סְגָנִים

בֵּית מוֹשְׁבֹו
הֵלֵא שָׁם יֵלִין
כָּל יָמֵי שְׂבָעָה

מַעֲלָה מִנְחָה
וְנוֹתֵן סָמִים
וְעוֹרֵךְ נְרוֹת
וְרֹאשׁוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ וְרֹגֵל

מִמֶּכֶר שְׁבָתוֹת
וְחֶלֶק מִשְׁמְרוֹת
חֶלְקוֹ בְּרֹאשׁ
כְּנֶגֶד כּוֹלָם

Those who make wise the simple
 stayed with him
 to teach and train him
 in the laws of the **tenth day.**

the sages

Yom Kippur

They brought him,
 on the eve of the day of forgiveness,
 his bull and his ram
 and the sacrifices of his community.

“How pleasant,” they said,
 “is your service!
 Be strong and of good courage,
 for all these are your tasks.”

135 They restricted food
 from him toward evening
 lest he fall asleep and there occur
 a nocturnal pollution.

His instructors brought him to
 the elders of his clan;
 and in the incense-makers' house⁷¹
 they adjured him by (God's) name.

He wept sadly
 because he was accused of ignorance,⁷²
 and they cried
 lest they accuse a righteous person.

They engaged him
 with the strains of Midrash and scriptures
 or occupied him
 with the sacred writings.

They restored his soul
 with talk of former kings
 if he was a boor
 and did not learn **Instruction.**⁷³

Torah

71. The house of Avtinas, according to m. Sheqalim 5:1.

החכמים

מַחֲכִימֵי פֶתִי

יַעֲמִתּוּ לוֹ

לְשֹׁנּוֹ לְחַנְכוֹ

יום כיפור

בְּחֻקֵּי עֲשׂוֹר

מִרְאִים לוֹ

בְּעֶרֶב יוֹם סְלִיחָה

פָּרוּ וְאִילוּ

וּזְבַחֵי קָהֵל

”מָה נָאָה

עֲבוֹדָתְךָ” יֹאמְרוּ

”חֲזֵק וְאַמֶּץ

כִּי כָל אֱלֹהֵי פְעֻלָּךְ”

מֵאֲכָל יַמְעִיטוּ

135

מִנוֹ לַעֲתַת עֶרֶב

פֶּן יִירָדֻם וַיִּקְרָ

מִקְרָה לִילָה

מִחֲנֻכּוֹ יַחֲבֹרֶהוּ

לְזִקְנֵי מִטְּהוֹ

וּבֵית רוֹקְחֵי רֶקַח

בְּשֵׁם יִשְׁבִּיעֶהוּ

נִעְגֹם בְּבָכִי

פֶּן יוֹרֶשֶׁע כְּפֹתִי

וְהִמָּה יִבְכוּ

פֶּן צַדִּיק יִרְשִׁיעוּ

נְעִימוֹת מִדֶּרֶשׁ

וּמִקְרָא יִשׁוּחַח

אוּ בְּכַתְּבֵי קֹדֶשׁ

הֵם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ

נִפְשׁוֹ יִשׁוּבְבוּ

בְּשִׁיחַ מַלְכֵי קֹדֶם

אִם בְּעֶר הוּא

תורה

לֹא לָמַד לֶקַח

72. Heb. *peti*.73. Heb. *Leqah*; cf. Prov 4:2.

If he was inclined to doze,
 they prevented him from sleeping
 with a whistle of the middle finger,⁷⁴
 with the mouth, but not the harp.

In the tumultuous city⁷⁵
 they let forth a roar
 to make him sated with sleeplessness
 until the dawn.⁷⁶

Those who guard the laws,
 who plunder the commandments,⁷⁷
 got up before midnight
 to remove the ashes.

They used to run hurriedly
 on the ascent to the altar,
 so they took care (to institute) a lottery
 to put an end to disputes.⁷⁸

They readied themselves vigilantly for immersion⁷⁹
 and tied the wreath⁸⁰
 and cast lots first
 for taking the ashes.

145 They cast a second time,
 for the case of the lamb
 and for the ashes of the inner
 altar and the lamps.

They cast the lots anew,
 a third time, for the spices;
 a fourth, for the combination⁸¹
 to arrange (the offering of) the limbs.

74. See Zvi Malachi, "Makkin Lefanav be-'Ešba' Seradah: Ne'ima ba-Peh ve-Lo ba-Kinor," *Sidra* 2 (1986): 67-75.

75. Isa 22:2.

76. Job 7:4.

נָטָה לָנוּם
שָׁנְתוּ יִפְרִידוּ
בְּנוֹעִם צָרָה
בְּפָה וְלֹא בְּכִינוֹר

נֹתְנִים שְׂאוֹן
עִיר הוֹמָיָה
לְהַשְׁבִּיעוּ נְדוּדִים
עַדִּי נֶשֶׁף

נוֹצְרֵי חֻקִּים
בוֹזְזֵי מִצְוֹת
כְּחֻצוֹת לִילָה יִקְדִּימוּ
לְהָרִים דָּשֶׁן

נִהְדְּפוּ רָצִים
בְּמַעֲלוֹת מִזֶּבֶחַ
וְשָׁקְדוּ בְּפִיס
לְהַשְׁבִּית מִדְּנִים

נוֹעְדוּ וְטָבְלוּ
וְעִינְדוּ עֶטְרָה
וְהִפִּיסוּ תַחֲלָה
עַל תְּרוֹמַת דָּשֶׁן

נִצְבָּעוּ שִׁנִּית 145
עַל מַעֲשֵׂה כָּבֶשׂ
וְעַל דִּישׁוֹן מִזֶּבֶחַ
פְּנִימִי וְנֵרוֹת

נִתְחַדְּשׁוּ
שְׁלִישֵׁי לְסָמִים
רְבִיעֵי לְתַעֲרוּבָת
לְעֶרְךָ הַנִּתְחַיִּים

77. Alluding perhaps to the statement in m. Yoma 2:2 that specific duties are meted out to individual priests because of the intense competition for them in the past.

78. Prov 18:18.

79. Heb. *no'adu*. See Mirsky's note to this line (*Yose ben Yose*, 153).

80. The headdress. Other mss read: they formed a circle.

81. Of old and new priests.

The overseeing chief officer
of the holy labor
sent to the east
faithful emissaries.

He said to them: "See
whether the dawn has arrived,
if the eastern light has spread
over the earth."

They told him
that the radiance had flashed,
and he ran to the purifying bath
for those who come to the court.

They spread a fine linen divider
between him and the people
to do him honor
not to see his nakedness.

Quickly he took off
the covering against his skin;
then he went down and bathed
and came up and dried himself.

The dressing attendant
wrapped him in linen
and added to his greatness
with ornamental garments of gold.

He rejoiced in his splendid attire,
but he was not too proud;
he wore them for God's honor
and not for his own.

He would inquire
about making war in them;
his eyes cast to his Teacher
like a student to his master.

God

155 A secret was revealed to him
in the judgment of the Urim:

שׁוֹר פִּקִּיד נָגִיד
מִלְאֶכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
יִשְׁלַח לְקֶדֶם
צִירֵי אֲמוֹנָה

שָׁח לְמוֹ "הַבֵּיטוּ
אִם עָלָה הַשָּׁחַר
אִם הִפִּיעַ אוֹר
קָדִים עָלֵי אֶרֶץ"

סוֹפֵר לוֹ
כִּי בֵרַק נוֹגֶה
וְרֵץ לְמִקְוֵה טוֹהַר
לְבָאֵי עֲזָרָה

סָכוּ מְחִיצַת שֵׁשׁ
בֵּינוֹ לְבֵין עַם
לְנִהוֹג בּוֹ בְּגוֹדֵל
בְּלִי חֲזוֹת מַעֲרָהוּ

שְׁמַלְת עוֹרוֹ
יִמְהַר וַיִּפְשׁוּט
וַיֵּרֶד וַיִּטְבּוֹל
וַיַּעַל וַיִּסְתַּפֵּג

סָגַן הַמַּלְבִּישׁ
יַעֲטִיחוּ בְּדִים
וַיִּוְסִיף לְגַדְלוֹ
בְּעָדֵי בְּגָדֵי פֶז

שֵׁשׁ בְּמַעֲטֵי הוֹד
וְלֵב לֹא יִגְבִּיהַ
לְבָשָׁם לְכָבוֹד אֵל
וְלֹא לְמַעֲנֶהוּ

סֶדֶר מְלַחְמוֹת
בָּהֶם יִשְׁאֵל
עֵינָיו לְמוֹרָהוּ
כְּתַלְמִיד לָרֵב

סוֹד יִגְלֶה לוֹ
בְּמִשְׁפַּט אוֹרִים

if he will succeed or fail,
whether to the sword or salvation.

Extol God,
children of a great nation!
He is near at all times
to proclaim redemption.

He rejoiced like an angel,
in the woven linen breeches,
like a vigilant horseman,⁸²
a messenger faithful to those who send him.

With them he covered over
carnal nakedness,
for they were commanded
for covering indecency.

His strong body
filled his tunic,
doubled and woven⁸³
as far as the sleeves.⁸⁴

The sin of the house of Jacob
was atoned by this—
those who sold **the righteous one**
over a sleeved tunic.⁸⁵

Joseph

The crown on his head
was like regal glory;
wrapped in a turban of fine linen
for glory and beauty.

He banished from the holy women⁸⁶
the burden of uncovering the head,⁸⁷

82. According to b. Niddah 13b, they resembled riding breeches.

83. Heb. *kefulah meshubešet*; according to some sources, such as y. Yoma 3:6 (40c) and Sifra Šav 2:1 (ed. Weiss, fol. 29d), it was a double garment. On the other hand, according to b. Yoma 71b, the term *shesh*, translated here as “fine linen,” means that it was made of sixfold thread. On the possible interpretations of this line, see Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 155.

84. Mirsky points out that, based on the meaning of *pas* as palm, Gen Rabbah 84:8 interprets *pasim* as sleeves: the tunic reached his palms (i.e., was long-sleeved).

אִם עָלָה אִם חָדַל
אִם לַחֲרֹב אִם לְיִשָּׁע

סוֹלוּ לְאֱלֹהִים
בְּנֵי גוֹי גָּדוֹל
קָרוֹב בְּכָל עֵת
לְבִשָׁר יְשׁוּעוֹת

עַלֶּץ כְּמִלְאָךְ
בְּשִׁבּוּץ מְכַנְּסֵי בֶד
כְּפָרֶשׁ מוֹכֵן
צִיר אֶמֶת לְשׁוֹלְחָיו

עֲרוֹת זָמָה
בָּהֶם יִכְסֶה
כִּי כֵן מְצוֹתֶם
לְכִסּוֹת עֲרוֹהָ

עֲלָמוֹת קוֹמָה
יִמְלֵא בְּכַתְנֹת
כְּפוֹלָה מְשׁוֹבְבָצֵת
עַד פְּסִי יָד

עוֹן בֵּית יַעֲקֹב
יִכְפֹּר בְּזֹאת
מוֹכְרֵי צִדִּיק
עַל כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים

עֲטָרַת רֹאשׁוֹ
כָּהוֹד הַמְּלוּכָה
צָנוּף צִפִּירַת שֵׁשׁ
לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת

עֶסֶק פְּרִיעֵת רֹאשׁ
יִסִּיר מְקֻדָּשׁוֹת

יוסף

85. Cf. also the motif of the emperor's exploitation of the sins of Jacob's sons against Israel in the Ten Martyrs complex.

86. Cf. Num 5:18.

87. The priest's headdress atoned for the adulterous woman (*sotah*) of Num 5, whose hair is to be unbound during her trial.

and he would justify the holy nation
with the diadem of his frontlets.

(God) will cleave to the jaw,
like a belt at the loins,
of those who stray after images
(of men) with girded loins.⁸⁸

He girded himself with a belt,
a woven sash
made of unmixed linen,
unlike every other day of the year.

165 Wrapped in a blue robe
as bright as the firmament,
his rounded arms
filled the sleeves.⁸⁹

The circular opening
for his head was like a coat of mail,
plaited all around
so that it could not be torn.⁹⁰

At the edge of its hem
were colored pomegranates
and golden bells
between them.

When they struck each other,
the voice of one with the other,
they atoned for the voice
of one who strikes his neighbor in secret.⁹¹

The weave of the ephod
was a work of decoration,
fine twined linen,
bright blue and purple.

88. See Ezek 23:14–15.

89. Here following Carmi's translation.

וַיִּצְדִּיק קְדוֹשִׁים
בְּנֶזֶר טוֹטְפוֹת

עוֹד יִדְבֵק בְּלֶחִי
כְּאֶזֶר מִתְנִים
תּוֹעִי בְּצַלְמִי
חֲגוּרֵי מִתְנִים

עוֹז אֲבִיט יִתְאַזֵּר
בְּמִזְח אֲרוּג בַּד
וְלֹא כְּלֹאִים
כָּכָל יְמֵי שָׁנָה

עָטוּי מְעִיל תַּכְלֶת 165

כְּזוֹהַר הָרְקִיעַ
מִמַּלְא בֵּית יָד
גְּלִילֵי זְרוּעוֹתָיו

עָגוֹל שְׁפַת פִּי
רֹאשׁוֹ כְּתַחֲרָא
מִסֵּב קָלַע
בְּלִי לְהִקְרַע

עַל שְׁפַת שׁוּלְיוֹ
רְמוֹנֵי צְבָעִים
וּפְעֻמוֹנֵי פֶז
סָבִיב בְּתוֹךְ

עֵת יִשְׁיִקוּ
קוֹל זֶה בָּזָה
יִכְפֹּר בְּעַד קוֹל
מִכָּה רַע בִּסְתֵּר

פְּעוֹלַת חוֹשֵׁב
אֲרִיגַת הָאֶפֹּד
מְשֻׁזָּר שֵׁשׁ וְשֵׁנִי
תַּכְלֶת וְאֲרָגְמָן

90. Exod 28:32.

91. Verbally, through slander.

A golden cord
 was spun into each thread,
 and he was dressed in it
 from heart to navel.

The corners of its shoulders
 were like the brilliance of the luminaries;
 they radiated light
 from precious stones.⁹²

He engraved them with a *shamir*⁹³
 as a remembrance of the tribes,
 their names and letters
 divided among them.

An ornamented band
 extended from it;
 it was embroidered like it;
 he tied it on afterward.⁹⁴

It banished sin against the commandment, (spoken)
 at the beginning of the Holy Utterances, the Decalogue
 against sheathed images
 of gods of gold.

175 In the breast of the ephod
 was an opening of a span by a span
 where it was bound to the breastpiece
 by golden rings.⁹⁵

The number of rows of stones
 equaled the number of standards;⁹⁶
 their names were engraved on them,
 and they were set into the breastpiece.

92. Heb. *Avne Shoham*; cf. Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), 137, who translates “onyx”; cf. Mirsky’s note to this line, citing Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshutah*, vol. 8 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1973), 735–37. NJV: “Lazuli.”

פְּתִיל זָהָב
נִטְוֶה בְּכָל חוּט
וְנִתְלַבֵּשׁ בּוֹ
מִלֵּב וְעַד טְבוּר

פְּנוֹת כְּתִפָּיו
כְּזוֹהַר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת
מִבְּהִיקוֹת אוֹר
מֵאֲבֵנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם

פֶּתַח בְּשָׁמִיר
זָכְרוֹן שְׁבָטִים
הַמִּתְחַלְקִים
בְּשִׁמוֹת וְאוֹתוֹת

פֶּרֶשׁ מְמֻנּוּ
חֶשֶׁב הָאֶפֹּד
אֲרוֹג כְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ
וַיַּעֲנֵדוּ לְאַחֲרָיו

פֹּרֶק עוֹן צוֹ
רֹאשׁ דִּיבְרוֹת קֹדֶשׁ
אֶפְדַּת מִסִּכַּת
אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב

פָּנֵי יָלַב הָאֶפֹּד
קְרוּעַ זֶרֶת עַל זֶרֶת
מְקוֹם יְרוּכָס חֲשׁוֹן
בְּטַבְּעוֹת זָהָב

פֶּקֶד טוּרֵי אֲבֹן
כְּמִסְפַּר דְּגָלִים
שְׁמֵם חֲקִיק בָּם
וַיִּמְלֵאוּ חֲשׁוֹן

175

עשרת הדיברות

93. A hard stone or legendary worm. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:53, and Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990), s.v. *shamir*.

94. That is, after donning the ephod.

95. See Josephus Ant. 3.7.5

96. The divisions of the twelve tribes, three tribes per banner.

Framed in gold
in their setting,
their appearance was like
the appearance of eyes.

The gap of the rings⁹⁷
between the ephod and the breastpiece
was covered by links
of golden cords.

The sin of perverters of justice
was wiped out by the breastpiece of justice;
may the God of justice
declare us righteous in justice.

Golden bells were placed around,
between the ephod and the breastpiece,⁹⁸
attached to the holy diadem
on his two shoulders.

The gold frontlet was surrounded
with diadems of jewels;⁹⁹
he¹⁰⁰ fastened and attached it
to the sacred diadem.

He placed the royal headdress on his forehead¹⁰¹
and the frontlet upon it;
there was a strip of hair
between it and the headdress.

The Rock of Eternity,
the powerful name,
was engraved on the diadem
like an inscription on a signet.

The filth of impurity
of transgressions of (sacrificial) blood and libations

97. Lit., "scales," after 1 Kgs 22:34; that is, the distance between the rings at the corners of the breastpiece and those of the shoulder straps of the ephod. The cords connect the two.

98. According to no extant tradition are bells on the upper part of the vestments; tradition has them only at the hem of the robe. Mirsky suggests that this stanza is corrupt and contains remnants

פֶּז מוֹסְבוֹת
בְּמִלּוֹאוֹתֶם
מִרְאֵה דְמוֹתֶם
כְּפִתְחֵי עֵינִים

פֶּרֶץ דְּבָקִים
בֵּין אֶפֶוד לְחֹשֶׁן
יְכֶסֶה בְּשָׂרָשְׁרוֹת
עֲבוֹתוֹת זָהָב

פֶּשַׁע הוֹפְכִי מִשְׁפָּט
יִמַּח בְּחֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט
וַיִּצְדִּיקֵנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט
אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט

פַּעֲמוֹנֵי פֶז מוֹקֶף
בֵּין אֶפֶוד לְחֹשֶׁן
חוֹבֵר לְנֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁ
עַל שְׁתֵּי כִתְפוֹי

צִיץ פֶּז מוֹקֶף
צִיצֵי פָּנִינִים
דִּיבֶק וְחִבֵּר
לְנֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁ

צָנִיף הוֹד שֶׁם בְּמִצַּח
וְעֻלְיָהּ הַצִּיץ
וְשִׁיטַּת שִׁיעָר
בֵּינוֹ לְמִצְנֶפֶת

צוּר עוֹלָמִים
שֶׁם הַנֶּעֱרָץ
חֶקוֹק עַל צִיץ
בְּמִכְתֵּב חוֹתֶם

צוֹאֵת טוֹמְאֵת
עוֹן דָּם וְנֶסֶד

of previous lines (cf. line 167).

99. Heb. *peninim*, usually “coral” or “pearls.”

100. That is, the attendant; see above.

101. Heb. *ṣenif*; this seems to be a kind of twisted rope of cloth worn around the diadem.

was absolved by the frontlet
like a pure, aromatic offering.

- 185 A fading flower,¹⁰²
a worm not a man,
was found worthy of serving
Him who lives forever.

He saw the face of the King
and entered the holy chamber,
dressed in linens
and not in fine gold.

He commanded the death penalty
on those who come into the court
(without) washing their hands
and feet when they enter.

So the emissary, before
he approached to serve,
hastened to wash
his hands and his feet.

the priest

His assistants brought
the daily morning sacrifice.
He made the incision and collected
its blood and dashed it.

He stepped forth to offer the incense
and repair the lamps,
to sacrifice the head and pieces,
cakes and libation.

of the carcass

He hurried out
to the chamber of Parvah,
and they spread a partition of fine linen
between him and the people.

He washed and undressed
and bathed and dried himself

102. Heb. *šiš*, also used to signify "frontlet"; cf. Isa 28:1.

יִרְצָה הַצִּיץ
כְּנִיחוֹחַ טְהוֹר

צִיץ נוֹבֵל 185
תּוֹלַעַת וְלֹא אִישׁ
נִחָשׁב לְשֶׁרֶת
לְחֵי הָעוֹלָמִים

צוֹפֶה פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ
וּבֹא בַּחֲדָר קֹדֶשׁ
לְבוּשׁ בְּדִים
וְלֹא בְּכֶתֶם אֹפִיר

צוֹ עוֹנֵשׁ מִיתָה
לְבֹאֵי עֲזָרָה
לְקֹדֶשׁ יָדַיִם וְרַגְלָיִם
בְּבוֹאֵם לְשֶׁרֶת

צִיר לֶכֶן
בְּטָרֶם גִּשְׁתּוֹ לְשֶׁרֶת
יִמְהַר יְקֹדֶשׁ
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

צָעִירָיו יִגִּישׁוּ
אֶת תְּמִיד הַשְּׁחָר
קָרְצוּ וְקִיבֵל
דָּמוֹ וְזָרַק

צָעַד לְהַקְטִיר קְטוֹרֶת
לְהִטִּיב נְרוֹת
לְהַקְרִיב רֹאשׁ וְנִתַּח
חֲבָתִים וְנָסַךְ

קִידִם בְּצִאָתוֹ
לְבֵית פְּרוּהָ בְּקֹדֶשׁ
וְסָכוּ מְחִיצַת שֵׁשׁ
בֵּינוֹ לְבֵין עָם

קִידֵשׁ וּפֶשֶׁט
וְטָבֵל וְסִיפָג

הכּוּהֵן

and put on linen clothes
and washed again.

He approached
the bull of his sin offering,
standing
between the portico and the altar.

He arose to place his hand
on its head firmly,¹⁰³
to confess on behalf
of himself and his household.

Thus he would say: “O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household. O Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against you, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the glorious explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”

Eastward, toward the Gate of Entrance,¹⁰⁴
north of the altar,
the assistant priests
accompanied him respectfully.¹⁰⁵

205 Was it not there
where the goats were placed,

103. Heb. *be-sevel*.

104. Heb. *Sha'ar ha-'Iton*, from Ezek 40:15, identified with the Middle Gate (y. Erubin 5:1 [22c]),

וְעָטָה כָּלִי בַד
וְשָׁב וְנִתְקַדֵּשׁ

קָרַב אֶצֶל
פֶּר חֲטָאוֹתוֹ
וְהוּא עוֹמֵד
בֵּין אוֹלָם וְלִמְזֻבָּח

קָם תַּת יָדוֹ
עַל רֹאשׁוֹ בְּסִבָּל
לְהִתְנַדֹּת בְּעַד
עֲצָמוֹ וְנוֹיָהּ

וכך היה אומ' > "אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם. חֲטָאתִי, עֲוִיתִי, פָּשַׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי: אֲנִי בְּשֵׁם, כֹּפֵר נָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים. שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשַׁעֲוִיתִי וְשִׁפְשָׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי. כִּפְתּוֹב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבֹדֶךָ מִפִּי כְבוֹדֶךָ. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהֳרָתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאוֹתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֵהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבִטְהָרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמְשַׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאֵף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים לְגִמּוֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם, וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ" <

קִדְמָה לְשַׁעַר אֵיתָן
לְצִפּוֹן מְזֻבָּח
יְלווהוּ בְּכָבוֹד
כְּהִנֵּי מִשְׁנָה

קִימַת שְׁעִירִים 205
הֵלֵא שֵׁם הָיְתָה

known also as the Nikanor Gate (m. Middot 1:4); see m. Yoma 3:9 and Mirsky's comment to this line, *Yose ben Yose*, 164.

105. Cf. Carmi: "with pomp."

as well as the container
where the golden lots were kept?

He gathered them in his hand¹⁰⁶
and shook them and raised them,
one for Him who lives forever,
and the one for death in *Ṣoq*.¹⁰⁷

Azazel

If in his right hand
he took the lot¹⁰⁸ engraved “for the Lord,”¹⁰⁹
the assistant said to him,
“Raise your right hand!”

If (the lot for) of the severity of the generation’s deeds
came up in his left hand,
the chief of the priest’s division¹¹⁰ said,
“Raise your left hand!”

He hastened to place them
on the two goats
and shouted in a loud voice,
“This one is a sin offering for the Lord!”

He tied a thread
to the head of the one who was to be dispatched;
he turned him over to the wilderness,
and the other to the place of slaughter.

Next he got up
and approached his bull¹¹¹
and placed his two hands
on him and confessed.

And thus he would say: “O Lord, I have sinned, I have done
wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household
and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. O, by the Lord,
forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have
committed against you, I and my household and the children

106. Heb. *goveṣam ‘al yad*, from Prov 13:11—there interpreted to mean “little by little”; here, perhaps, that he takes them one by one.

עזאזל

וְכָלִי בֵּית הַנֶּחֱת
גִּזְרֹת זֶהָב

קֹבֶצֶם עַל יָד
וְטוֹרֶף וּמַעֲלָה
זֶה לַחֵי עוֹלָם
וְזֶה לְמִיתַת צוֹק

קַחְתּוּ בְיָמֶיךָ
פֶּנֶס חֶקֶק "לְשֵׁם"
סָגַן יִשְׁמִיעַ לוֹ
"הַגְבִּיָּה יְמִינָה"

קָשִׁי מַעֲלָלִי דוֹר
בְּשִׁמְאֵל אִם יַעֲלֶה
רֹאשׁ בֵּית אָב יִשְׁיַח
הַגְבִּיָּה שְׁמֹאלָהּ

קָפֶץ וַיִּנְתָּנָם
עַל שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים
וְהִצְרִיחַ בְּקוֹל רָם
"זֶה לְשֵׁם חֲטָאת"

קָשֶׁר שְׁנֵי
בְּרֹאשׁ הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח
הִפְכוּ לְמַדְבָּר
וְזֶה לְבֵית שְׁחִיטָה

קָם וּבָא לוֹ
אֶצֶל פְּרוֹ שְׁנֵיָהּ
וְסָמַךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו
עָלָיו וְהִתְנוּדָה

וְכָךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר. "אֲנִי הֵשֵׁם. חֲטָאתִי, עֲוִיתִי, פָּשַׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי וּבְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן
עִם קְדוּשָׁתְךָ. אֲנִי בָשָׂם. כִּפֹּר נָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְּשָׁעִים. שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשְׁעוֹתִי
וְשִׁפְשָׁעְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי וּבְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן עִם קְדוּשָׁתְךָ. כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְךָ מִפִּי

107. The name *Soq* refers to the precipice from which the goat was cast in m. Yoma 6:4 and 6:6.

108. Heb. *pur*, after Esther 9:24.

109. Heb. *la-shem*.

110. Heb. *rosh bet av*: the head of the family of priests on duty for that day.

111. That is, the bull for the priest's personal sin offering.

of Aaron, Your holy people, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’ ” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.”

- 221 He killed it¹¹² as required
and collected the blood in a vessel,
and another stirred it
at the steps of the portico.

He strode up the ramp
and ascended to the altar,
in his hands a fire-pan
made of red gold.

He filled it with glowing coals
from the western side.¹¹³
He went down and placed it
at the paved landing.¹¹⁴

His colleagues brought out
the ladle for him
and **the utensil for heaping
the finest of incense.**

the fire-pan

- 225 He put a handful of incense
into the ladle;
he held it in his left hand
and the fire-pan in his right.

112. Heb. *reṣaḥo*.

113. Of the altar; cf. Sifra Aḥare Mot 3:6 (ed. Weiss, fol. 81a), cited by Mirsky.

כְּבוֹדָךְ. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ
יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁה וּבְטַהֲרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם
וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד¹¹⁴: וְאַף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן כְּנֹגֵד
הַמְּבַרְכִּים לְגֹמֵר אֶת הַשֵּׁם, וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם "תִּטְהָרוּ"

רָצַחוּ כָדֵת 221

וְקָבַל דָּם בְּכָלִי
וְאַחֵר יִמְרֹסֵינוּ
בְּמַעֲלוֹת אוֹלָם

רָמַס כָּבֵשׁ
וְעָלָה לְמִזְבֵּחַ
וּבִידוֹ מַחֲתַת
פֶּז הָאָדוֹם

רִשְׁפִּים מְלֵאָה
מִפְּנֵי מַעֲרֵב
יָרַד וְשָׁמָּה
בְּרוּךְ הַמְרַצֶּפֶת

רִיעֵיו יוֹצִיאוּ לוֹ
אֶת הַכֶּף
וְכָלִי בֵּית צְבִירָת
דִּקְתַּת הַדֶּק

המחתה

רוֹקַח מְלֵא חֲפָנָיו 225

נָתַן לְתוֹךְ כֶּף
נִטְלָה בְּשִׁמְאֵל
וּמַחֲתָה בִּימִין

114. In m. Yoma 4:3, the "fourth landing" between the steps leading up from the court to the sanctuary.

He joined the load
of the right hand to the left¹¹⁵
and went left to the sanctuary,
to the outer curtain.

He walked between the (curtains)
from south to north,
and when he arrived there he returned
to the middle of the house.

The ends of the rods¹¹⁶
stood out like breasts;
they pushed against the curtain,
for there was nowhere to pass.

He displayed his great strength
and pushed aside the curtain
and entered without stepping
between the two rods.

The first clump of earth,
the foundation stone,
the place where the ark was established,
was where he put the fire-pan.¹¹⁷

He poured the incense into it,
and the smoke rose straight up;
he turned his face to the side
and went out on his way.¹¹⁸

He pled on behalf of the people
briefly in the sanctuary
that the senior may not wield
power over the junior.¹¹⁹

The (priest) who was stirring the blood
returned it to him,

115. That is, he used the left hand along with his right to hold the fire-pan, which had a longer handle on Yom Kippur, according to m. Yoma 4:4.

116. The poles that project from the ark; see b. Yoma 54a and y. Yoma 42b, Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. *bad*.

רִיכֵב כּוֹבֵד
יָמִין עַל שְׂמָאל
וְהַשְׂמָאִיל בְּהִיכֵל
בְּעֵקֶב הַפְּרוּכָת

רִיגִיל בְּקֶרֶבָם
מִנְגֵּב לְצִפּוֹן
וּבְהִגְיֵעוֹ שָׁב
עַד חֲצִי הַבַּיִת

רָאשֵׁי הַבָּדִים
כְּמִרְאָה שָׂדִים
לְחוּצִים בְּפְרוּכָת
וְאִין דֶּרֶךְ לַעֲבוֹר

רַב כַּח יוֹדִיעַ
וַיִּדְחָה בְּפְרוּכָת
וַיָּבֹא בְּלֹא פֶסַע
בֵּין שְׁנֵי הַבָּדִים

רֹאשׁ עֲפֻרוֹת תִּבְל
אָבֹן הַשְּׁתִּיָּה
מְקוֹם מְכוֹן אֲרוֹן
שֵׁם שֵׁם מַחֲתָה

שִׁפְךָ בָּהּ קְטָרֶת
וְתִימָר עֶשֶׂן
וְהִצְדִּיד פָּנָיו
וַיֵּצֵא כְּדֹרְכוֹ

שִׁינֵּע בְּעַד עַם
בְּקוֹצֵר בְּהִיכֵל
אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשׁוֹר
רַב עַל צָעִיר

שׁוֹבֵב לוֹ דָם
הַמִּמָּרֵס בּוֹ

117. According to m. Yoma 5:2, when the ark was removed, the foundation stone (*even shetiyah*) was exposed.

118. That is, the way he came in.

119. According to y. Yoma 5:3 (42c) and Lev Rabbah 20:4, the high priest prayed that no one in Israel assume high authority over the other.

and he approached and stood
where he was waiting.

He stretched out his most skilled finger¹²⁰
and dipped it and swung it,¹²¹
once up
and seven times down.

235 And this is how he would count: “One, one and one, one and
two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six,
one and seven.” He went out and set it down on the golden
stand in the sanctuary.

He returned and placed it on the stand
and slaughtered the goat of the people
and collected the blood and entered
and swung (his finger with the blood) as required.

He placed it on its stand
and took the blood of the bull,
and so he sprinkled the Tent¹²²
outside, opposite the ark.

And this is how he would count: “One, one and one, one and
two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six,
one and seven.” He went out and set it down on the second
stand in the sanctuary.

He returned and mixed it
with the blood of the goat
and dealt with it
according to the law for the blood of the bull.

He completed
the sprinkling of the inside;
he combined them¹²³ and went out
and expiated the incense altar.

120. The index finger of the right hand; see Sifra Aḥare Mot 3:12 (ed. Weiss, fol. 81a).

121. In a whipping motion.

וּבֹא וְנִתְּצַב
בְּמָקוֹם עֲמֻדוֹ

שָׁלַח אֶצְבַּע מִיֻּמָּנֶת
וְטָבַל וְהִצְלִיף
אֶחָת לְמַעַלָּה
וְשִׁבַּע לְמַטָּה

235 וְכֹךְ הָיָה מוֹנֶה: "אֶחָת. אֶחָת וְאַחַת. אֶחָת וְשְׁתֵּי־סָמִים. אֶחָת וְשָׁלֹשׁ. אֶחָת וְאַרְבָּע. אֶחָת
וְחֲמִשָּׁה. אֶחָת וְשֵׁשׁ. אֶחָת וְשִׁבְעָה": יֵצֵא מִקֹּדֶשִׁי הַקִּדְּשִׁים וְהִנִּיחוּ עַל כֵּן הַזֶּהָב שֶׁהָיָה
בְּהִיכָל:

שָׁב וְשָׂמוּ בִּכְנֹ
וְשִׁחַט שְׁעִיר עִם
וְקִיבֵל דָּם וּבֹא
וְהִצְלִיף כְּדָרְכוֹ

שְׂיֹהוּ בְּכִנּוֹ
וְנָטַל דָּם פֶּרֶךְ
וְכֵן יִזֶּה בְּאֵהָל
מוֹל אֶרֶוֹן חוּצָה

וְכֹךְ הָיָה מוֹנֶה: "אֶחָת. אֶחָת וְאַחַת. אֶחָת וְשְׁתֵּי־סָמִים. אֶחָת וְשָׁלֹשׁ. אֶחָת וְאַרְבָּע. אֶחָת
וְחֲמִשָּׁה. אֶחָת וְשֵׁשׁ. אֶחָת וְשִׁבְעָה": יֵצֵא וְהִנִּיחוּ עַל כֵּן הַזֶּהָב הַשְּׁנִי שֶׁהָיָה בְּהִיכָל:

שָׁב וַיִּמְרְנוּ
בְּדָם הַשְּׁעִיר
וַיַּפְעֵל בּוֹ
כְּמִשְׁפַּט דָּם הַפֶּרֶךְ

שָׁלְמוּ כִּדָּת
הַזִּיּוֹת פְּנִימָה
בְּלֶלֶם וַיֵּצֵא
לְחֹטָא מִזִּבְחַת הַקְּטוֹרֶת

122. Cf. Lev 16:16.

123. The two types of blood.

He had to begin
 from the northeast direction,
 and where he ended,
 there he sprinkled seven times.

Afterward, he came to the scapegoat and placed his two hands on it and confessed¹²⁴ on our behalf. And thus he would say: “O Lord, they have sinned, they have done wrong, they have transgressed before You, Your people, the house of Israel. O, by the Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that they have committed against you, Your people, the house of Israel, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: ‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.”

255 He appointed a man
 who was designated to send it
 and went up and burned
 the fat of the bull and the goat.

He seized it by its yoke
 outside the camp of the city.
 They burned them entirely:
 skin, flesh, and excrement.

They walked the goat
 to the edge of the wilderness;
 they took (the priest) to recite
 from the Laws of the Tenth Day.¹²⁵

Yom Kippur

First he washed
 his hands and his feet

124. The second half of this sentence is not in the Mishnah.

שִׁיתְחִיל מִקְרוֹן
צְפוּנָה מִזְרָחָה
וּבְמִקוֹם יִגְמוֹר
שֵׁם יִזָּה שְׁבַע

צָעַד וּבֵא לוֹ אֶצֶל הַשָּׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח לַעֲזָאזֵל לְהַתְּנוּת עָלָיו אֲשֶׁמֶת קֶהְלוֹ, וְסַמָּךְ
שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְהַתְּנוּדָה: וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר. "אֲנִי הָשֵׁם. חֲטָאוּ. עוֹו. פָּשְׁעוּ לִפְנֵי עַמֶּךָ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: אֲנִי בָשָׂם. כִּפֹּר נָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְּשָׁעִים. שְׁחַטְאוּ וּשְׁעוּוּ
וּשְׁפָשְׁעוּ לִפְנֵי עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. כִּכְתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה מִשֶּׁה עֲבָדְךָ מִפִּי כְבוֹדְךָ. כִּי בְיוֹם
הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם
הָעוֹמְדִים בַּעֲזָרָה כָּשֶׁהֵיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הָשֵׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשֵׁי יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֵהֵן
גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטַהֲרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ
שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

255 תִּיכֵן אִישׁ
מוֹעֵד לְשַׁלַּח
וְעֵלָה וְהִקְטִיר
חֶלְבִי פֶר וְשָׁעִיר
תִּקְרָם בְּמוֹטוֹת
חוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה עִיר
שָׂרְפוּם כָּלִיל
עוֹר וּבָשָׂר וּפָרֶשׁ

תָּאֵר שָׁעִיר
לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר
מִשְׁכּוּהוֹ לְשִׁינָן
בְּחֻקֵּי עֶשׂוֹר
תַּחֲלָה יִקְדָּשׁ
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

יום הכיפורים

and took off the linen clothes
and wrapped himself in his rich clothes.¹²⁶

He finished his reading,
undressed and immersed,
and put on the eight [vestments],
and washed again.

He burned his offering
of lambs and rams completely;¹²⁷
he washed his hands
and his feet and undressed.

His steps led on
to the place of immersion;
he immersed and dried himself
and put on his linen garments.

He did what he had learned,
as was the custom,¹²⁸ and washed
and took the ladle and fire-pan
from inside.

He completed (the main)¹²⁹ service
in linen garments;
he washed and undressed
and laid them down forever.¹³⁰

He immersed immediately
and put on his gold garments
and again washed
his hands and his feet.

265 He performed the Tamid
of the evening as required
and offered the incense
between the pieces and the libation.

126. A festive garment of his own; see m. Yoma 7:1.

127. Heb. *hikhilil*; so Mirsky. Alternatively, he offered them together.

128. Heb. *ke-dovro*.

וַיִּפְשׁוּט כְּלֵי בֶד
וַיַּעַט כְּלֵי עֶשְׂרוֹ

תָּם הֶגְיוֹנוֹ
פָּשֵׁט וְטָבַל
וְעָטָה שְׂמוֹנָה
וְשָׁב וַנִּתְקַדֵּשׁ

תְּשׁוּרַת כְּבָשִׁים
וְאַלִּים הַכֶּלֶל
קִידֵשׁ יָדָיו
וְרָגְלָיו וּפָשֵׁט

תִּירְגַּל פְּעָמָיו
לְבֵית הַטְּבִילָה
טָבַל וְסִיפֹג
וְעָטָה כְּלֵי בֶד

תִּלְמוּדוֹ יַעַשׂ
כְּדָבָרוֹ וְקִידֵשׁ
וַיּוֹצִיא מִפְּנִימָה
כֹּף וּמַחֲתַת פָּז

תּוֹכֵן עֲבוֹדוֹת
כְּלֵי בֶד הַשְּׁלִים
קִידֵשׁ וּפָשֵׁט
וְהִנִּיחָם נֶצַח

תִּכְפֹּ טְבִילָה
וְלָבַשׁ כְּלֵי פָז
וְשָׁב וְקִידֵשׁ
יָדָיו וְרָגְלָיו

תְּמִיד הָעֲרִבִים 265
יַעֲשֶׂה כְּסֹדֶר
וְהִקְטִיר קְטוֹרֶת
בֵּין נְתָחִים לְנֶסֶךְ

129. Heb. *tokhen 'avodot*.

130. According to Sifra (Aḥare Mot 6:7 [ed. Weiss, fol. 82b]), the garments are buried (*te'unim genizah*), never to be used again.

The deeds having being completed,
 he lit the lamps
 and spread his hands
 and washed and undressed.

the sacrifices

The assistants ran
 with the clothes for his body
 and dressed him in reverence;
 then he went out joyously.

His form radiated
 like the sun rising in all its power.
 To those who sent him¹³¹
 he sent justice and healing.

It was the hope of the congregation
 that the vigilant man¹³² would emerge
 bearing good news of redemption
 and announcing forgiveness.

the priest

He gave praise
 to God, facing the people,
 and immersed five times
 and washed ten times.

First he told them,
 "Go, drink with a good heart!
 God has pardoned sin
 and passed over transgression."

"Give us a sign,"
 they said to his ears,
 "that we may know whether
 He has forgiven sin."

He showed (them) the messenger who sent the goat,
 and he announced redemption:

131. That is, Israel, whose emissary he is.

קרבנות היום

תְּכַלִּית מַעֲשִׂים

נִירוֹת הַבְּעִיר

פִּירֵשׁ כַּפִּים

וְקֹדֶשׁ וּפֶשֶׁט

תִּלְבוֹשֶׁת שְׂאֵרוֹ

חֲנִיכּוֹ יִרְצוּ

יִלְבָּשׁם בְּכָבוֹד

וַיֵּצֵא בְּמִשׁוֹשׁ

תֹּארוֹ הוֹקֵרֵן

כְּצֶאֱת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבוֹרָתוֹ

מְשַׁלַּח לְשׁוֹלְחָיו

צִדְקָה וּמִרְפָּא

תִּקְנוֹת קֹהֶל

לְצֶאֱת אִישׁ מָהִיר

מִבֶּשֶׁר יְשׁוּעוֹת

וּמוֹדִיעַ סְלִיחוֹת

תִּהְיֶה נָתַן לָשִׁים

אֶל פְּנֵי עַם

בְּחֶמֶשׁ טְבִילוֹת

וְעֶשֶׂר קְדוּשׁוֹת

תִּחְלֶה הַשְּׂמִיעַם

"לָכוּ שְׁתּוּ בְּלֵב טוֹב

אֶל נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן

וְעוֹבֵר עַל פֶּשַׁע"

"תֵּן לָנוּ מוֹפֶת"

בְּאֲזִנּוֹ יֹאמְרוּ

"וַיִּגְדַּע בָּמָה

יְכֹפֵר עוֹן"

תִּתּוּ צִיר שְׁעִיר

וְהוּא מִבֶּשֶׁר יְשׁוּעוֹת

הכוהן

the scarlet thread
had turned white as snow.¹³³

They gave thanks,
for he had told good news
about the messenger of the faithful
who was sent to the wilderness.

275 Perfect and upright,
they accompanied him home,
and they rejoiced
when he came out unharmed.

Happy is the people
who have it so;
happy is the people
whose God is the Lord.¹³⁴

133. Cf. Isa 1:18.

הַלְבִּין כְּשֶׁלֶג
אֹדֶם הַשָּׁנִי

תּוֹדָה נִתְּנוּ
כִּי טוֹב הַשְׁמִיעַם
עַל צִיר אֲמוֹנִים
הַמְשֹׁלַח לַמַּדְבָּר

תְּמִימִים יִשְׂרָאֵל 275
לְנוֹהוּ יְלֹוּהוּ
וְשִׁמְחָה יַעֲשׂוּ
בְצִאתוֹ בְּלֹא פֶגַע

אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה
שְׂכָכָה לוֹ
אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה
שֵׁי אֱלֹהֵיו

6. *Atah Konanta ʿOlam be-Rov Ḥesed* “*You Established the World in Great Mercy*”

YOSE BEN YOSE

This composition is a fully formed Avodah and provides another example of Yose ben Yose’s handiwork. It is close in language and structure to *Azkir Gevurot*, and like it, this piyyut helped set the structure and themes of subsequent Avodah piyyutim. However, it varies in content and some of its emphases within the set themes. For example, this poem emphasizes not only that God created animals, including the Leviathan, for food but also that God embedded anatomical signs in kosher animals so they could be recognized as such. Although *Atah Konanta ʿOlam be-Rov Ḥesed* may not attain the elegance of *Azkir Gevurot*, it does contain some interesting details from Midrash and cultic lore.

Atah Konanta ʿOlam be-Rov Ḥesed was included in Saadia Gaon’s liturgical handbook and entered the medieval French and Provençal liturgies. The following translation is based on an improved version of Mirsky’s edition.¹

1. Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 172–99. See also Samuel David Luzzatto, *Maḥazor Kol ha-Shanah kefi Minhag Italiyani* (Livorno, 1855).

You established the world
 in great mercy,
 and (the world) shall be governed with it mercy
 till the end of days.

It will not shatter the world
 because of the sin of (Your) creatures,
 and will not collapse
 from the weight of transgression and sin.²

While the earth was still
 desert and wasteland,³
 You amused Yourself with the glow of the Law,
 and it frolicked at Your feet.

You made up Your mind to make it
 a cure for all humanity,
 ere You made it
 You assured its vitality.

You braced the skies
 as a place for Your dwelling,
 and extended the rafters
 as a throne for Your glory;

You are hidden in (the skies),⁴
 and no eye can see You,⁵
 and from there Your eyes
 survey every deed.

You contrived to cover
 the abyss with land⁶
 as a footstool for You
 and a dwelling for Your creatures.

With chaos and storm
 You suspended its foundations,

2. By rights, the world should be destroyed because of its sinfulness. But, out of mercy, God will not do so.

3. Heb. *šalmavet*.

4. Cf. Ps 91:1.

חסד

העולם

אַתָּה כּוֹנֵנֵת עוֹלָם

בְּרֵב חֶסֶד

וּבּו יִתְנַהֵג

עַד קֶץ הַיָּמִין

אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמוּט

מֵעֶזְרֵן יְצוּרִים

וְלֹא יִמָּעַד

מִכְבֹּד פֶּשַׁע וַחֲטָאִים

אֲדָמָה בְּעוֹדָהּ

צִיָּה וְצַלְמוֹת

בְּאוֹר דָּת שְׁעִשְׁעֵת

וְרִגְלָהּ שְׁחָקָהּ

אֲמַרְתָּ לְתַתָּהּ

מִרְפָּא לְכָל אָנוּשׁ

טָרָם תִּפְעֹלְנוּ

חֲיֵיו הַכִּינּוֹת

בְּרִית שְׁחָקִים

לְמִכּוֹן שְׁבִתָּהּ

וְרוּחָהּ עֲלִיּוֹת

לְכֶסֶד הַדְּרִיָּה

בָּם תִּסְתֵּיר

בְּלִי תְשׁוּרָה עֵין

וּמִשָּׁם עֵינֶיהָ

מְשׁוּטָטוֹת בְּכָל פֶּעַל

בְּנֵת לְקָרוֹת

אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִי מָה

לְהַדּוּם רִגְלֶיהָ

וּמוֹשֵׁב יְצוּרֶיהָ

בְּתַהוּ וּבִסְעָרָהּ

יְסוּדֶיהָ תְּלִית

5. Lit., "without an eye being laid on You."

6. Heb. *banta liqrot 'eresfl blimah*.

and when You oversee it,
its pillars quake.

You expelled darkness
and called light;
by name You called them,
and with measure You engraved them.⁷

- 10 You placed a border for them
and a division between them,
so that their lot cannot be diminished
and their order cannot be changed.

You defined the firmament
and stored away half of the waters,
and clouds sift out
(rain) from their produce.

You also kindled a fire pit⁸
for those who hate You;
and You will save those who love You
from fire and water.

You commanded to uncover
the appearance of the radiance of the land;
You suppressed **the other waters** **the lower waters**
and gathered them together in a pool.

The pasture of the earth
sprang up with Your word,
the herbage of grass sprouting
and the Garden of Eden for those who trust You.

The lamps of the firmament **stars**
were ignited with Your breath
so that the seasons and times
may be ascertained with them;

7. That is, the measure of light and darkness (and hence day and night) were also created with the creation of light.

וְעַתָּה תִּשְׁגִּיחַ בָּהּ
עֲמוּדֶיהָ יִתְפַּלְצוּן

גִּרְשֵׁת אוֹפֶל
וְתִקְרָא אוֹר
בְּשֵׁם קִרְאָתָם
וּבְמִדָּה חֻקָּתָם

גְּבוּל לָהֶם שְׁמֹתָ 10
וּפּוֹר בֵּינוֹתָם
לִבֶּל יִגְרְעוּ חֶק
וּבִל יִשְׁנוּ סֶדֶר

גִּדְרֹת רִקְיעַ
וְכַמְסֹת חֲצִי מַיִם
וּמְפִירוֹתָם
עָבִים יַחֲשׂוּרוּ

גַּם מְדוֹרֹת אֵשׁ
לְשׁוֹנֶיהָ הַסִּקָּתָ
וּמֵאֵשׁ וּמִמַּיִם
אוֹהֲבֶיהָ תִּצְלִל

דְּמוֹת זִיו אֲדָמָה
יַעֲצֹת לְגִלּוֹת
דְּכִיַּת שְׂאֵר מַיִם
צָרְרָתָם בְּמִקְוֶה

הַמַּיִם הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים

דְּשֹׂאֵי אֶרֶץ
צָצוּ בְּמִאֲמָרֶיהָ
דְּשֵׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע
וְגַן עֵדֶן לְחוּסִיָּה

כּוֹכָבִים

דְּלִקוּ בְּרוּחַ פִּיָּה
נִרוֹת רִקְיעַ
לְהַפְקֹד בָּם
תְּקוּפוֹת וְעֵתִים

8. See Isa 30:33, in which a fire pit is prepared for Assyria.

You showed for them
a way through windows,⁹
one for day and one for night
so that none may falter.

You brought forth from the waters
those that fly on the wing,
hosts of fish
and a phalanx of sea monsters.

You made, as a sign for **those who know You,**
those who are clad with scales,
and a fleeing serpent¹⁰
for the meal in eternity.¹¹

Israel
pure fish

Did You not make out of the earth
in great abundance
cattle and crawling creatures
and the beasts of the earth?

20 You set signs to be known
of edibility and purity,
and for the company of the righteous
You made the Behemoth fit to eat.

And when the world was built,
in wisdom,
and when the table was set,
and its bounty,

You resolved¹²
to invite a guest
and to feed him
Your choice food,

and to make him dominant
over the work of Your hands,
to be like God,
a judge and a ruler,

9. According to a midrash in Exod Rabbah 15:22, God created 365 windows for the sun and moon.

10. See Isa 27:1.

ישראל
דגים טהורים

דָּרֶךְ חֲלוֹנוֹת
לָהֶם הוֹרִית
זֶה בַּיּוֹם זֶה בַּלֵּילָה
לְבַל יֵאָחֲרוּ פְעַם

הַשְּׂרִצָּת מִמֵּי
מְעוֹפְפֵי כָנָף
צְבָאוֹת דָּגִים
וְתוֹקֵף תַּנִּינִים

הַתּוֹיֵת לְיֹדְעֶיךָ
עֲטוּיֵי קִשְׁקָשׁוֹת
וְנָחַשׁ בָּרִיחַ
לְאַרוּחַת נָצַח

הֵלֹא מֵאֲדָמָה
לָרֹב הָעֵדָפָת
בְּהֶמָּה וּרְמֶשׂ
וְחַיִּיתוֹ אֶרֶץ

הוֹדַעַת סִימְנֵי
מֵאֲכָל לְטֶהְרָה
וּלְחִבּוּרֵת צֶדֶק
בְּהֵמוֹת הַכִּשְׁרֹת

20

וּבַהֲבָנוֹת
עוֹלָם בְּחֻקָּהָ
וּבַהֲעֶרְךָ נַחַת
שְׁלַחַן וּדְשׁוֹן

וְתִשְׁקֹד
לְהַזְמִין אוֹרֶחַ
וּלְהַאֲכִילוֹ
טוֹב מֵאֲכָלְךָ

וּלְהַרְדּוֹתוֹ
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ
הַיּוֹת כְּאַלֹּהִים
שׁוֹטֵר וּמוֹשִׁיל

11. On this concept, see pages 31–33 in the Introduction above and the sources cited there.

12. Heb. *va-tishqod*.

and to prevail over angels,¹³
 to rend the measured waters,¹⁴
 to dim the lights,¹⁵
 and to revive the sleepers.¹⁶

You erected a body,
 sculpted from clay;
 You wrought him in the recesses,¹⁷
 in the image of Your vision.

You kindled the lamp
 of his lifebreath within him,
 for it will search
 the dark places of his innermost parts.¹⁸

You endowed him with an honored woman
 in the canopy of Eden;
 with gold and precious stone,
 You adorned his bed.¹⁹

Eve

You filled this man
 with the spirit of understanding,
 to crown with names²⁰
 all of Your creatures.

You, who live forever,
 wished to present him with a test:
 whether he could bear
 a slight commandment:²¹

30 “Abstain from the tree of knowledge,
 lest you be snared,²²
 but from the trees of produce
 you may fill your belly.”

13. Referring to Jacob; see Gen 32:29.

14. Cf. Isa 40:12.

15. See Josh 10:12–13.

16. Both Elijah and Elisha revived the dead.

17. See Ps 139:15–16.

18. See Prov 20:27.

19. This may be an allusion to Edenic intercourse; see the Introduction, above.

וְלִשׁוֹר אֶל מְלֶאךָ
וְלִקְרוֹעַ מִי שׁוֹעַל
לְהַדְמִים מְאוֹרוֹת
וּלְהַחִיּוֹת רְדוּמִים

זְכוֹן גּוֹלְמוֹ
מְחוּמֵר קִרְצָת
רִקְמָתוֹ בְּסִתֵּר
בְּצֶלֶם חֲזִיוֹנִיךָ

זֶהָר נֵר נִשְׁמָה
בְּגוֹו עֶרְכָּת
כִּי הִיא תַחֲפֹשׁ
חֲשֵׁכֵי חֲדָרֶיךָ

זְבִדְתוֹ כְּבוֹדָה
בְּתוֹךְ חֹפֶת עֵדֶן
בְּפִז וְאֶבֶן יְקָרָה
יְצוּעוֹ יְפִית

זֶה מְלֹאֲתוֹ
רוּחַ תְּבוּנָה
לְכָלֵל שְׁמוֹת
לְכָל מַפְעָלֶיךָ

חֵי עוֹלָמִים
לְבַחְנוּ רְצִית
בְּמִצְוֶה קְלָה
אִם יוֹכֵל קוֹם

"חֲדַל מֵעַן הַדַּעַת
פֶּן תִּנְקֹשׁ
וּמֵעֲצֵי תְנוּבָה
תִּמְלֹא בְטִנָּה"

30

חווה

20. This seems to imply that Adam knew the animals' (preexisting) names and did not make them up for himself.

21. *Mišvah qalah*; cf. m. Avot 4:2: "Run to fulfill a light commandment as much as a weighty one."

22. Here perhaps employing both meanings of the verb *nqš*, implying both being smitten and being tempted by the serpent. Cf. Deut 12:30.

You saw him alone,
and said, "I will make him a helpmeet;
if he perverts the way,²³
she will be a stumbling block."

You caused him to fall into
a sweet slumber;
You set aside a rib,
and prepared flesh.

You breathed grace into her;
You adorned her with favor;
You brought them to the canopy
and graced them with blessings.

The crawling creature seduced her
into a deceptive error.
He led her like an ox to the slaughter
to violate the command.

She devoured and gave to devour
fruit she was warned not to taste;
they were disgracefully naked
and covered themselves with **that which withers.**²⁴ **fig leaves**

The feet of **the one with (forked) tongue** **the snake**
were taken away from him;
and his food was **altered**²⁵ **into dust**
incurably, forever.²⁶

He will be bitterly despised,
being crushed at the head;
and he will strike at the heel
of those who secretly use their tongues viciously.²⁷

He was sentenced to death²⁸
and wearying toil,

23. That is, Torah.

24. See Isa 34:4. The Hebrew, *novelet*, is a play on "disgracefully," *be-navlut*.

25. Mirsky cites Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 14: any food he ate would end up tasting like dust.

26. The snake, unlike all other creatures, will not have his punishment revoked in the world to come.

חֲזִיתוּ לְבַד וְשַׁחַתְתֶּם
 "אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזֶר
 אִם יִסְלֹף אוֹרַח
 תִּהְיֶה לוֹ לְמַכְשׁוֹל"

חֲטִיפֹת שִׁינָה
 עָלְיו הַמִּתְקֶת
 צָלַע אֲצֵלֶת
 וּבָשָׂר כּוֹנֶנֶת

טַפְחָתָה בָּחוּן
 יִפִּיתָה בְּחֶסֶד
 הַבֵּאתֶם בְּחוּפָה
 חֲנֻנְתֶּם בְּרָכוֹת

טָעוֹת כָּזָב
 רָמַשׁ הַשִּׁיאָה
 מְשַׁכָּה כְּשׁוֹר לְטִבַּח
 לְהֵנִיא צוּוִי

טַעַם פְּרִי הַזֶּהָרוּ
 לַעֲטָה וְהַלְעִיטָה
 הוֹעֲרָמוּ בְּנִבְלוֹת
 וְכוֹסוּ בְּנוֹבֵלֹת

טוֹרְדוּ פְּעֵמִי
 בַּעַל הַלְשׁוֹן
 וְנִהַפְּדוּ מֵאֲכָלוֹ
 לְבַל יִרְפָּא נֶצַח

יֹשְׁטֹן בְּאִיבָה
 לְהִרְצֵץ בְּרֹאשׁ
 וְהוּא יִשׁוּף עֶקֶב
 לְמַלְשָׁנִי בִּסְתֵר

יֵצֵא דִין לְמוֹת
 וַיִּגְיעַת עֵמֶל

עלי התאנה

הנחש
 לעפר

27. Referring perhaps to those Israelites who spoke against God and Moses in the wilderness in Num 21:4–9 and who were bitten by snakes. See Tanhuma Hūqqat 12, in which it is said that the snake, who used evil speech (lit., “evil tongue”), is the instrument of punishment against those who used evil speech against God.

28. Lit., “A death sentence was issued.”

and she to birth pangs
and **the arid land** to thorns. the earth

His urge was inclined
to desire for his mate;
and she sent forth her youngsters,
the worker and the shepherd. Cain and Abel

40 They honored, with an offering,
the Maker of all, God
the elder with the earth's fruit, Cain
and **the younger** with the fat of the flock. Abel

When You regarded, Exalted One,
the humility of **the lowly,**²⁹ Abel
You preferred his offering,
and rejected **the fragrance** of the brother. Cain's incense

He suppressed his mercy,
and did not conquer his inclination;
he raised his hand against the Image
and originated bloodshed.

When You heard, You who requite,
the voice of blood crying out,
You punished him with ceaseless wandering
and vain and empty toil.

When he confessed,
You engraved a sign for him
so that his murderer
would be punished sevenfold.

The generation of Enosh began³⁰
to anger You, O God,
displacing Your glory
and calling on the name of an idol.

29. Cf. Ps 138:6, there referring to David, who, like Abel, was a shepherd (Mirsky).

האדמה	וְהִיא לְקוֹשֵׁי יָדָה וְצִיָּה לְשָׁמִיר	40
קין והבל	יִצְרוּ הוֹרָגִל לְתַאֲוֹת רְבִעוּ וְשִׁלְחָה עֲוִילֶיהָ עוֹבֵד וְרוֹעָה	
האל	יִקְרוּ בְּמִנְחָה לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל	
קין הבל	רַב בְּפָרִי אֶרֶץ וְרֹד בְּחֶלְבֵי צֹאן	
הבל	כְּהַבִּיטָה רָם דְּכָאוֹת שָׁפֵל שַׁעֲתָ בְּמִנְחָתוֹ וְקִצְתָּ בְּנִיחָח אַח	
מנחת קין	כָּפָה רַחֲמָיו וְלֹא כָבֵשׁ יִצָּר שָׁלַח יָד בְּצֵלָם הֵחֵל שְׁפוֹךְ דָּם כְּשִׁמְעָה דוֹרֵשׁ קוֹל זַעֲקַת דָּם עֲנִשְׁתּוֹ בָּנֵעַ וְנָד וַיִּגִּיעַת רִיק וְהַבֵּל	
	כְּהִתְנִידוֹתוֹ אוֹת לוֹ חֲקוֹתָ לְהַשִּׁיב לְהוֹרָגוֹ נָקָם שְׁבַעֲתֵים	
	לְהַכְעִיסָהּ אֵל הֵחֵל דוֹר אָנוּשׁ לְהַמִּיר כְּבוֹדָהּ וּלְקְרוֹא בְּשֵׁם אֱלִיל	

30. Here, as in *Azkir Gevurot*, line 68, the verb *hl* carries connotations of sacrilege.

For the sea You set the sand
as a boundary not to be transgressed;³¹
but You called it to destroy them
because they called (the idols) by name.

Those filled with lawlessness
were attracted to corruption;
they became fat and sleek
and said to God, "Leave us alone!"

Therefore You raged against them
with the springs of the deep,
and upon them You poured
a channel full of water.

Among them You found
a righteous, innocent man;
You sheltered him in Your tabernacle³²
until the rage had passed.

Noah

50 From him you made many
families of **all creation,**
and when You were comforted by him,³³
You said, "I will no more curse."

humankind

The residents of **Shinar**
transgressed against Your name,
climbing up to the throne
to make a name for themselves.

Babel

You fulfilled their wish,
making of them a mockery;
You scattered them in every direction,
perverting their language.

A lamp was lit in the chaos—
the father of a multitude appeared;
and by the flame of his fire
ran those who falter.

Abraham

31. Cf. Jer 5:22.

32. Heb. *be-sukkah*; cf. Ps 27:5. NJV translates the term as "pavilion."

לִים חֹל שְׁמֶת
חֶק לֹא יַעֲבֹר
קָרְאתוֹ לְאַבְדָּם
תִּמְוֹר קָרְאוּ בְשֵׁם

לְמִדּוֹ הֶעִיָּה
מְלֵאֵי חֶמֶס
שְׁמִנּוּ עֲשֵׂתוֹ
וְאָמְרוּ לֵאל "סֹר"

לְכֵן זְעַמְתָּם
בְּמַעֲיָנוֹת תְּהוֹם
וּפְלָג מַלְא מִים
עֲלֵיהֶם שִׁפְכָתָ

מֵהֶם מִצָּאתָ
צִדִּיק תִּמִּים
צִפְנָתוֹ בְּסוֹכָה
עַד יַעֲבֹר זָעַם

מִמֶּנּוּ הֶעֱצַמְתָּ
מִשְׁפָּחוֹת כָּל יָצִיר
וּבִהְנִיחָמָהּ בּוֹ
"לֹא אֶקְלָל" שְׁחַתָּ

מָרוּ בְשִׁמָּהּ
יוֹשְׁבֵי שְׁנַעַר
לְרוֹם עַד כֶּסֶּם
לַעֲשׂוֹת לָמוֹ שֵׁם

מִלֵּאת חֶפְצָם
בְּהִלְעִיגָה לָמוֹ
נִפְצָתָם בְּכָל רוּחַ
בְּסִלְפָה לְשׁוֹנָם

נִר עָרוֹךְ בִּתְהוֹ
אֵב הַמִּזֵּן נוֹדֵעַ
וְלִשְׁבִּיב אִשׁוֹ
רָצוּ נִכְשָׁלִים

נוח

האנושות

בבל

אברהם

50

He announced to those astray
 the straight path:
 “Rely on the living God—
 what good can an idol do you?”

He separated from his homeland
 and was attracted to follow you;
 and You presented Yourself to him
 in fire and war.³⁴

Nimrod’s furnace

He wallowed in the blood of the covenant,
 and his offspring after him,
 for it will save **the covenant of circumcision**
those who are carried from the pit. **Israel; Gehenna**

You made him joyful
 with a **lovingly tended fruit**³⁵ **Isaac**
 when he said: “I am deprived
 and my roots have dried up.”

He bore, like a hero,
 the burden of ordeals;
 You bade him to slaughter
 his only son, and he prevailed.

The father was glad to bind,
 and the son to be bound,
 for by it **the burdened** **Israel**
 will be justified in judgment.

60 You placed a ram as his atonement,
 and he was considered meritorious.
 On this day (may we) hear:
 “I have found ransom.”³⁶

As it is written in Your Torah: And Abraham named that site
 Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, “On the mount of the
 Lord there is vision” (Gen 22:14).

34. According to a widespread legend, Nimrod had the young Abraham cast into a fiery furnace, which Abraham survived. See Gen Rabbah 38:13 and b. Pesahim 118a; cf. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:198–203 and notes.

נְחִיב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל
הוֹדִיעַ לְתוֹעִים
"הִשְׁעֵנוּ בְּאֵל חַי
וּמָה יוֹעִיל פֶּסֶל"

נָטַשׁ מְגוּרָיו
וְנִמְשָׁךְ אַחֲרָיו
וְנִמְצְאָתָה לוֹ
בְּאֵשׁ וּבַמְלַחֶמֶת

כבשן נמרוד

נִתְבֹּסֶס בְּדָם בְּרִית
וְזָרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו
כִּי הִיא תִצְלֵל
עַמּוּסָיו מִשָּׁחַת

ברית מילה
ישראל; גיהנום

שְׁמַחְתּוֹ
בְּפָרִי שְׁשׂוּעִים
בְּאִמְרוֹ "אֲמַלְלֶתִּי
וַיִּבְשׁוּ שְׂרָשָׁי"

יצחק

סָבַל כְּגִבּוֹר
כָּבֵד נְסִיוֹנוֹת
וּבִיחִידוֹ לְטִבּוֹחַ
בַּחֲנֻתוֹ וְעָמַד

שָׁשׂ אֵב לַעֲקוֹד
וּבֵן לְהַעֲקֹד
כִּי בָהּ יִצְדָּקוּ
עַמּוּסָיו בְּתוֹכָחַת

ישראל

שָׁמַת כְּפָרוֹ אֵיל
וְנִחְשֵׁב לוֹ צֶדֶק
בַּיּוֹם זֶה נִקְשֵׁיב
מִצְאָתִי כּוֹפֵר

60

ככתוב בתורתך ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא יי יראה אשר יאמר היום בהר
יי יראה

35. Cf. Isa 5:7.

36. Job 33:24.

Before You taught
the law from Your right hand,
an innocent man observed it Jacob
and guarded its gates.

When You cast sleep upon him
in a dream, he found You,
and you promised him
that You would be his stronghold.

You sheltered him³⁷
from the sword of **the pursuer**, Esau
and You caused the **prince** the angel with whom
of a **flaming fire** to become weak before him. Jacob wrestled

You wreathed him
with a **number of banners**, twelve tribes
and like grains (of sand) in the sea,
You increased his community.

You tithed a **youngster**
from his **tribes** to serve You Levi
in return for tithing his fortune
for You at the pillar.³⁸

You caused the fruit of the righteous to flourish
from the tribe of Levi:
Amram and his sons
like a vine and its shoots.

You watched over Your flock
with a **faithful man**, Moses
saving it from **Zoan** Egypt
passing it through measured water.

You ornamented him for a sanctification of **days**³⁹ six days
and with the covering of a cloud,

37. Heb. *sakota*, possibly connoting a tabernacle (*sukkah*).

38. The phrase refers to the pillar Jacob erected at Bethel in Gen 28:18.

יעקב	<p>עד לא הֹרַתְּ דַּת מִימִין נִצָּרָה אִישׁ תָּם וְשָׁקֵד דִּלְתֵּיהָ עַת הִרְדַּמְתּוּ בְּמִלּוֹן מִצָּאָה וְתַבְטִיחַהּ הֵיוֹת לוֹ לְמִשְׁגָּב</p>
<p>עשיו המלאך שיעקוב נאבק עמו</p>	<p>עָלִיו סְכוֹת מִחֻרֵּב רוֹדֵף וְשׂוֹר אֵשׁ לוֹהֵט לִפְנֵי הַחֲלָשֶׁת</p>
שנים עשר שבטים	<p>עֲטַרְתּוּ בְּמִסְפַּר דְּגָלִים וְכַמְעוֹת יָמִים קָהְלִיו הִרְבֵּיתְּ</p>
לוי	<p>פָּרַח מִשְׁבָּטִיו לְשֶׁרֶתְךָ עֹשֶׂרֶת תָּמּוֹר עֲשָׂרוֹ לָךְ הוֹנוּ בְּמִצָּבְתְּ</p>
<p>משה מצרים</p>	<p>פָּרִי צִדִּיק הַצִּמְחַת מִגִּזַּע לֵוִי עַמָּרִם וְנִינִיּוֹ כִגְפֹן וְשָׁרִיגִיהָ</p>
שישה ימים	<p>פָּקְדֶת צֹאנֶךָ בֵּיד נֶאֱמָן לְחִלָּצָה מִצּוּעֹן וּלְהַעֲבִירָה בְּשׁוּעַל פֶּאֶרְתּוֹ בְּקֹדֶשׁ יוֹם וּבְסִכּוֹךְ עֵנָן</p>

39. On this phrase, see Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 187.

- until he took a **captive**,⁴⁰ Torah
 taking the **lady of the house**⁴¹ as a spoil. Torah
- 70 You have wreathed **Your holy one** Aaron
 with a crown of priesthood,
 and he will bequeath it
 to his children after him,
 sheltered and preserved
 for generations forever,
 and those who disgrace their honor⁴²
 will be swallowed up and afflicted.
- The Rock sustained them
 with an abundance of gifts,
 and from the table of the King
 You prepared their food.
- You commanded them to dwell
 at the gates of Your tent,
 to ordain them
 for seven days.⁴³
- As it is written: Everything done today, the Lord has commanded
 to be done to make expiation for you (Lev 8:34).
- 75 The **holy ones** separated priests
 a **man** from his abode, the high priest
 sequestering him in the chamber,
 as in the law of ordination.⁴⁴
- They washed him and cleansed him
 with water of expiation⁴⁵
 in place of the sprinkling of blood
 and the anointing oil.⁴⁶

40. This figure is based on Ps 68:19, "you went up to the heights, having taken captives," which is taken to refer to Moses receiving the Torah from heaven; see b. Shabbat 89a.

41. Cf. Ps 68:13.

42. Referring especially to Korah and his allies in Num 16.

43. Referring to priestly ordination, according to Lev 8:35.

התורה	עַד יִשְׁבֶּה שְׂבִי	
תורה	וַיִּשְׁלַל נֹת בֵּית	
	צִיץ עֲטֹרַת כְּהוֹנָה	70
אהרן	לְקַדְּשֶׁהָ הָעֲטִיף	
	וַיַּחֲלִינָהּ	
	לְבָנָיו אַחֲרָיו	
	צָפוּנָה שְׁמוּרָה	
	לְדֹרוֹת עוֹלָם	
	וּבֹזֵי כְבוֹדָם	
	יְבֹלְעוּ וַיְנוּגְעוּ	
	צֹר הָעֲנֻקָּתָם	
	רֹב מִתְּנוּת	
	וּמִשְׁלַחַן מֶלֶךְ	
	מֵאֲכָלֶם הַכִּינּוֹת	
	צוֹיָתָם שְׁבֵת	
	פֶּתַח־י אֱהִיָּהּ	
	לְמֵלֶךְ יָדָם	
	יָמִים שְׂבָעָה	
	ככתוב כאשר עשה ביום הזה צוה יי לעשות לכפר עליכם	

הכוהנים	קָדוֹשִׁים יִבְדִּילוּ	75
הכוהן הגדול	אִישׁ מִנֹּהוּ	
	לְעֲצֹרֹ בְלִשְׁכָּה	
	כְּחֹק מְלוּאִים	
	קָדְשֻׁהוּ וְחֹטְאוֹהוּ	
	בְּיָמָיו נָדָה	
	תָּמוּר חֲטוֹי דָּם	
	וְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה	

44. The law of sequestration of the priest (m. Yoma 1:1) is derived by analogy from the law of ordination in Lev 8:34.

45. Heb. *hit'uhu*. See Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 188: During those seven days they sprinkled him with water from the ashes of sin offerings in order to purify him. See y. Yoma 1:1 (38c), b. Yoma 4a; cf. m. Parah 3:1.

46. Of the priestly initiation; cf. Lev 8:30.

Discerning captains
 joined him in fellowship
 as brothers dwelling together⁴⁷
 to teach him **the order**.

order of sacrifice

He woke early, tossed blood,
 offered incense, and trimmed lamps,
 the first (to offer) the head and hind leg,
 and the first to take a portion.⁴⁸

The sacrifices of his atonement
 and the sacrifices of the community⁴⁹
 were led before him
 to acquaint him with them.

80 They withheld from him
 excess of sleep and food
 on the eve of forgiveness
 lest he be lulled into emission.

The heads of his tribe
 joined him in fellowship
 to adjure him by the name
 in the chamber of incense.

Tears ran down his eyes
 that he was considered a simpleton,
 and they broke into weeping
 because it was necessary.

If he was wise,
 they spoke before him
 delighting him with Midrash⁵⁰
 and discoursing on holy scriptures.

If he was a boor,
 they would occupy him
 by recounting tales
 of ancient kings.

47. Ps 133:1.

48. A paraphrase of m. Yoma 1:2.

סדר הקרבנות

קָצִינִי מִזֶּמֶה
 הֵם נֶעֱמְתוּ לוֹ
 כְּשֶׁבֶת אֲחִים יַחַד
 לְהוֹרוֹתוֹ סֹדֶר

קוֹרֵץ וְזוֹרֵק
 מִקֶּטִּיר וּמִטִּיב
 רֹאשׁוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ וְרֹגֶל
 וְרֹאשׁ לִיטוֹל חֵלֶק

רֹצִי זִבְחִי
 וְזִבְחִי עֹדָה
 לִפְנֵי יוֹבִילוֹ
 הֵיוֹת רָגִיל בָּם

רַב שִׁינָה וְאוֹכֵל
 מִמֶּנּוּ יִמְעִיטוּ
 עֶרֶב יוֹם סְלִיחָה
 פֶּן יוֹרְגַל לְקָרִי

80

רֹאשֵׁי שֶׁבֶטוֹ
 הֵם נֶעֱמְתוּ לוֹ
 לְהִשְׁבִּיעוֹ בְּשֵׁם
 בְּעֲלִיית רִקְחִים

רַד בְּדַמְעוֹת
 כִּי נִחָשֵׁב לִפְתִּי
 וְהֵם בְּכִי הִזְלוּ
 כִּי לִכְךָ הוּצָרְכוּ

שַׁעֲשׁוּעַ מִדֶּרֶשׁ
 וְהִגָּא כְּתָבִי קֹדֶשׁ
 אִם יַחֲכֶם
 לִפְנֵי יִשׁוּחָחוּ

שְׁנוֹן שְׂיִחוֹת
 מְלָכִים קְדָמוֹנִים
 אִם יִהְיֶה בָּעֵר
 בָּם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ

49. The animals of the priest's individual atonement, and those for the people of Israel.

50. According to Ps 119:92.

85 The young priests
 Sang songs to him
 By mouth and by pleasant laughter⁵¹
 and by the sound of the middle finger.

The masses in [the city] full of people⁵² Jerusalem
 raised a tumult:
 For because of their voice
 his sleep will disperse.

Those who offered the fat
 assembled since midnight
 to observe the commandment
 of sacrifice at night.

A lottery was decreed
 to be prepared for them
 lest they push (someone) off
 when they wanted to ascend the ramp.⁵³

Those who stood in the court
 cast lots at once
 for performing the Tamid,
 clearing the inner altar, and the lamps.

90 Those who desired blessings God
 from the Guide,
 new priests, would cast
 a lottery for the incense.

The prompt faithful
 were sent to the east,
 to see if the sun's light
 had appeared for the slaughter.

His brothers accompanied him
 to the outer place of immersion
 where those who came to the court
 were purified.

51. That is, not on musical instruments, according to y. Yoma 1:7. See Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 190, and Malachi, "Makkin Lefanav."

ירושלים

85 שִׁיר יְשׁוּרְרוֹ לֹ

פְּרָחִי כְהוֹנָה

בִּפְּהַ וּבְחֵיד עֶרֶב

וּבְנִעִימַת צָרָה

שְׁאוֹן יִגְבִּירוּ

הַמֶּזֶן רַבְתִּי עִם

כִּי מְקוֹלָם

שְׁנִתּוּ תְּפוֹרֵר

תּוֹרְמִי דָשׁוֹן

מִחֲצוֹת נֹעֲדוּ

לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת חֶקֶק

עֲבוֹדַת לֵילָה

תִּקְנֵת פִּיס

לָהֶם הוֹכְנָה

פֶּן יִהְדָּפוֹן

בְּרִיצָתָם לִכְבֹּשׁ

תִּכְפֹּ לֹ יִפִּיסוּ

עוֹמְדֵי עֲזָרָה

לְמַעֲשֵׂה תִמִּיד

וְדִשׁוֹן פְּנִימִי וְנִרוֹת

90 תְּאִיבִי בְּרָכוֹת

מִפִּי מוֹרָה

לְשִׁים קְטָרֶת

חֲדָשִׁים יִפִּיסוּ

אֲמוּנִי עֵתִים

יְשׁוּלַח לְקֹדֶדִים

אִם בָּרַק נֹגֶה

יִפֶּן לְשַׁחֲטָה

אֲחִיו יִלְוֶהוּ

לְבֵית טְבִילָה חוּצָה

אֲשֶׁר שָׁם יְטוֹהֲרוּ

בְּאֵי עֲזָרָה

האל

52. According to Lam 1:1.

53. See m. Yoma 2:2.

They behaved toward him
with honor and dignity
and spread a screen
between him and the people.

His own clothes
he took off quickly,
and went down and immersed
and went up and dried himself.

- 95 With woven linen breeches
like those of horsemen
he first covered
the roundings of his thighs.⁵⁴

In them he would cover
the licentious **sin of Shittim**⁵⁵
and reveal to us
the merit of **the locked garden**.⁵⁶

sexual sin

chastity

With a double linen tunic
he covered his flesh
from the palm of his hand
to the heel of his foot.

The One whose glory fills the earth,
looked upon them
and allayed the fear of
(Joseph's) sleeved tunic.⁵⁷

The belt, the sash,
was different on the fast day,
for it was all linen,
not woven with mixed fabric.

- 100 He wrapped it and rolled it
in every direction

54. Cf. Song 7:2.

55. According to Num 25:1.

56. Cf. Song 4:12.

אֶז יִנְהֲגוּ בּוֹ
גְדוּלָה וְכָבוֹד
וַיַּפְרְשׁוּ מִסֶּדֶד
בֵּינוֹ לְבֵין עָם

אֶת כְּסוּת עֲצָמוֹ
יִמְהַר וַיַּפְשׁוּט
וַיֵּרֶד וַיִּטְבּוֹל
וַיַּעַל וַיִּסְתַּפֵּג

בְּשִׁבּוּץ מְכַנְסֵי בֶד 95
כָּעֵין פָּרָשִׁים
תַּחֲלָה יְכַסֶּה
חֲמוּקֵי יֶרֶכִיו

בָּם יְכַסֶּה
פֶּשַׁע עֲרוֹת שָׁטִים
וַיִּגָּלָה לָנוּ
זְכוּת גֹּן נְעוּל

בְּכַפֵּל כְּתָנִת בֶּד
יְכַסֶּה שְׂאֵרוֹ
מִפְּסֵי יָד
עַד עִקְבוֹת רֶגֶל

בָּם יִפֹּן
מֵלֶאכֶּרֶץ הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ
וַיִּסְרֵר דְּאָגַת
כְּתוֹנֶת הַפָּסִים

גַּם מִיִּזְח אֲבָנִט
יִשְׁנָה בַּיּוֹם צוֹם
כִּי כֻלּוֹ בֶּד
בְּלִי אֲרוּג כְּלָאִים

גוֹלֵל וּמַקִּיף 100
וּמִשְׁלָשְׁלוֹ לְכָל עֶבֶר

גילוי עריות

צניעות

האל

57. The plain linen tunic atones for the sins of Joseph's brothers. The passage plays on the words *pase yad* (palms) and *ketonet passim* (sleeved tunic).

for the girded belts
of the figures of Chaldeans.⁵⁸

He was great and resplendent
in the [wreath] of kingship
when he raised his head
in the linen headdress.

Lo, with **that** he would cleanse **the headress**
the taint of **the loose-haired woman**⁵⁹ **the suspected adulteress**
and would take away the shame
of the harlot's hardheadedness.⁶⁰

His likeness was like **Tarshish**, **sea**
like the look of the firmament
when he put on the blue robe,
woven like a honeycomb.

Its upper opening
was plaited like mail,
surrounding it
so that it could not tear.

105 Fastened to the hem
were colored pomegranates
and golden bells
encircling it.

When the **Prominent One**⁶¹ heard **God**
the sound of his steps,
he atoned for the sound
of the slanderer's voice.

They wrapped him in an ephod,
(as thick as) felt,
woven of gold and crimson,
and fine linen blue and purple.

58. To atone for Israel's worship of Chaldean images (Ezek 23:14–15).

59. See the ritual of the suspected adulteress (*sotah*) in Num 5:11–29.

בְּעַד חֲגוּרֵי אֲזוֹר
צִלְמֵי כְּשָׁדִים

גָּדוֹל וְנֹהֵדָר
בְּנֹזֶר הַמְּלוּכָה
בְּהִגְבִּיהוּ רֹאשׁ
בְּמִצְנַפֶּת הַשֵּׁשׁ

במצנפת
הנואפת

גַּם בָּהּ יִנָּקֶה
דּוֹפֵי פְּרִיעֵת רֹאשׁ
וַיַּעֲבִיר כְּלִימוֹת
אֵשֶׁת זָנוֹת מִצַּח

ים

דְּמוּתוֹ כְּתִישֵׁשׁ
כְּמִרְאָה רְקִיעַ
בְּלִבָּשׁוֹ מַעִיל תְּכֵלֶת
אֲרוֹג כְּכֹרֶת

דִּלֵּת שְׁפָתוֹ
גִּדְּלָה כְּתַחֲרָא
מוֹקֶפֶת לוֹ
בְּלִי לְהִקְרַע

דבק לשוליו 105

רְמוֹנֵי צְבָעִים
וּפַעֲמוֹנֵי פֶז
עָגוֹל סָבִיב

אלוהים

דָּגוּל בְּשִׁמְעוֹ
קוֹל פַּעֲמָיו
מִכְפָּר בְּעַד קוֹל
מוֹצִיא שֵׁם רַע

הַעֲטוּהוּ בְּאַפּוֹד
דּוֹמָה כְּמִין לָבָד
אֲרוֹג פֶּז וְשָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן

60. Lit., "forehead," a biblical figure for brazenness; see Jer 3:3.

61. Song 5:10.

On his shoulders were there not
two lapis lazuli,
and on them the names of the tribes,
like the number of banners?

As called by name,⁶²
they were carved with letters,
engraved by the shamir,
which was formed at Creation.⁶³

110 With them he justified
those who were ensnared by the ephod⁶⁴
and exchanged God
for a bull eating grass.

And set at the heart
was the breastpiece, folded,
a span by a span square,
woven like the ephod.

And on it were rows of stones,
one for each tribe,
encircled with gold,
engraved by the shamir.

And it was bound with rings
so that it could not come loose;
it was covered like plates of armor
with braided chains.

And He who loves justice
called it “justice,”⁶⁵ the “breastpiece of judgment”
to bring to justice
those who pervert justice.

115 He placed a wreath of gold
on a blue cap⁶⁶

62. The names of the tribes are arranged on the stones as they were called by God to appear in the Temple; see Mirsky’s note here, citing y. Sotah 7:4 (21d).

63. The creature known as the shamir, the only thing that could engrave the names of the tribes on the stones, was created during the six days of creation; see b. Sotah 48b.

הֵלֵא בְּכַתְּפָיו
שְׁתֵּי אֲבָנֵי שׁוֹהֵם
וּבָם שְׁמוֹת שְׁבַטִים
כְּמִסְפַּר דְּגָלִים

הַגּוֹיִים בְּשִׁמוֹת
חֲצוּיִים בְּאוֹתוֹת
בְּפִתּוֹחַ שְׁמִיר
נוֹצֵר מִבְּרָאשִׁית

הַצִּדִּיק בָּם 110
לְנוֹקְשֵׁי בְּאִפּוֹד
וּמַחְלִיפֵי אֵל
בְּשׁוֹר אוֹכֵל עֵשֶׂב

וְקִבּוּעַ בִּלְבַּח חֶשֶׁן
כְּפֹל רְבֹעַ
זֶרֶת עַל זֶרֶת
אֲרוֹג בְּאִפּוֹד

וּבֹו טוֹרֵי אֶבֶן
אַחַת לְכָל שִׁבֵּט
מוֹסִבּוֹת פֶּז
חֲקוּקוֹת בְּשְׁמִיר
וַיִּרְכָּסֶם בְּטַבְּעוֹת
כָּחַק לֹא יִזַּח
וּבְשִׁרְשָׁרוֹת גְּבִלוֹת
דְּבָקִימוֹ יִכְסֶה

וְאוֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט
קָרְאוֹ מִשְׁפָּט
לְהַצִּדִּיק בְּמִשְׁפָּט
מַעֲוֹתֵי מִשְׁפָּט

זֶרֶת זֶהָב שֵׁם 115
עַל תְּכִיפֶת הָאִפּוֹד

חושן המשפט

64. Who worshiped the ephod idolatrously (Judg 8:27)

65. Exod 28:15.

66. Following Mirsky's suggested reading; on the cap, see b. Hullin 138a.

from ear to ear
opposite the headdress.

The remembrance of the esteemed Name
is engraved on the frontlet;
he placed it on his forehead;
it was attached to the diadem.

Intentional impurity of blood, flesh,
fat, the handful of incense, and libation
is atoned by the frontlet
so that they can arise⁶⁷ favorably.

The eight (garments) were designated
for **him who is greater than his brothers**⁶⁸ **the high priest**
when he served
and when he inquired with the Urim.

120 He girded himself with them correctly
and put them on according to order;
then he washed
his hands and his feet.

His assistants brought him
the daily morning offering.
He slaughtered it
and collected its blood in the bowl.

He meted out a **peras** and offered it, **a measure of incense**
and repaired the lamps,
and sacrificed the head and pieces,
cakes and libation.

He hurried to the Parvah chamber,
to the place of holy immersion,
and washed his hands
and feet and undressed.

He immersed and dried himself
and put on the linen vestments,

67. On the altar.

מֵאֵזֶן וְעַד אֵזֶן
מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמִּצְנֶפֶת

זָכַר שֵׁם נַעֲרֵץ
חָקוּק עַל צִיץ
נִתְּנוּ עַל מִצַּח
מִחֶבֶר לְגֹזֶר

זֶדוֹן טְמֵאת דָּם
וְקוֹמֵץ וְנִסְכִּים
יִרְצוּ בְצִיץ
וַיַּעֲלוּ לְרִצּוֹן

זֹמְנוּ שְׁמוֹנֶה
לְגִדּוֹל מֵאֲחִיו
לְשֶׁרֶת וּלְשֹׂאוֹל
עֶצֶה בְּאוֹרִים

חֲגָרִם כֶּדֶת
לְבָשֶׁם כֶּסֶדֶר
וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

חֲנִיכָיו יִגִּישׁוּ
אֶת תְּמִיד הַשְּׁחִיר
קָרְצוּ וְקִבֵּל
דָּמוֹ בְּמִזְרָק

חֵילֶק פָּרִס וְהֶקְטִיר
וַיִּנְרוֹת הַטֵּיב
הַקָּרִיב רֹאשׁ וַנִּתַּח
חֲבִיתִים וְנִסָּךְ

חֵשׁ לְגַב פְּרוּה
לְבֵית טְבִילַת קֹדֶשׁ
וְקִידֵשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו
וּפֶשֶׁט

טָבַל וְסָפַג
וְעָטָה כְּלֵי בַד

הכוהן הגדול

מנת קטורת

120

and again he washed
his hands and his feet.

Pure, he approached
the bull designated for him,
which stood between
the portico and the altar.

His secrets were revealed
before the Creator of all;
he could not conceal sin,
for thus he would receive mercy.

The Good One forgave him
when he confessed
and placed his hands
on the bull firmly.

And thus he would say: "O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household. O, by the Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against you, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: 'For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—' " (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the glorious explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: "Blessed is the name of His Majesty's glory for ever and ever." He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, "You shall be pure." And You, in your great beneficence, arouse Your mercy and pardon Your pious man [the high priest].

The prefect and the head of the father's house⁶⁹
encircled him
and he entered the inner gate
at the east of the court.

69. The head of the one of the families of the priestly division in attendance at the Temple; cf. the Introduction, above, and *Shi'vat Yamim*.

וַיִּקְדָּשׁ עוֹד
 יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו
 טָהוֹר נֶגֶשׁ
 אָצֵל פֶּר מָמוֹנוֹ
 הָעוֹמֵד
 בֵּין הָאוֹלָם וְלַמַּזְבֵּחַ
 טְמוֹנוֹתָיו יִגְלֶה
 לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל
 וְלֹא יִכְסֶה פָּשַׁע
 כִּי בָכֹן יְרוּחָם
 טוֹב יִסְלַח לוֹ
 בְּהִתְנַדְּוֹתָיו
 בְּסִמְכוֹ יָדָיו
 עַל פָּרוֹ בְּכוֹבֵד

וכך היה אומר: אנא השם. חטאתי, עויתי ופשעתי לפניך אני וביתי אנא בשם כפר נא לחטאים ולעונות ולפשעים שחטאתי ושעויתי ושפשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני יהוה והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה כשהיו שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא מפרש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדושה ובטהרה היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלין על פניהם ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד: ואף הוא היה מכוין לגמור את השם כנגד המברכים ואומר להם תטהרו ואתה בטובך הגדול תעורר רחמיך וסלח לאיש חסידך:

יְקִיפוּהוּ סָגֵן
 וְרֹאשׁ בֵּית אָב
 וּבֹא לְשַׁעַר הַתִּיכוֹן
 לְמַזְרַח עֶזְרָה

There they would find
two goats of the people
and the golden lots
placed in the urn.

He shook it
and raised up the lots:
One for the Esteemed One
and one for Azazel.

If the lot of the goat for the Lord
came up in his right hand,
the prefect would call in a loud voice
joyously, "Raise your right hand!"

If it came up
in his left hand,
the head of the father's house would say,
"Raise your left hand!"

140 When he placed them
on the two goats,
he called out in a loud voice,
"This is for the Ḥatta't."

He directed himself to
the second bull
to confess for sin,
transgression, and offense.

He pressed his hands
heavily between its horns
to confess again
for the transgression of his family and clan.

And thus he would say: "O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have transgressed before You, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. O, by the Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that I have committed against you, I and my household and the children of Aaron, Your holy people, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant:

יִמְצָא שֵׁם
שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירֵי עֵם
וְגֹרְלוֹת זֶה־ב
נִתּוּנִים בְּקִלְפִי

יִטְרוֹף בָּה
וַיַּעַל גֹּרְלוֹת
זֶה לְשֵׁם נַעֲרָץ
וְזֶה לַעֲזָאזֵל

יְמִינוֹ אִם תַּעַל
גֹּרֵל שְׁעִיר שֵׁם
סָגַן יִשְׁמִיעַ לוֹ בְּגִיל
הַגִּבְיָה יְמִינָהּ

כְּהַעֲלוֹתוֹ בֵּיד
הַשְּׁמֵאלִית
רֹאשׁ בֵּית אָב יִשִּׁיחַ
הַגִּבְיָה שְׁמֵאלָהּ

כְּהִנְתָּנָם
עַל שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים
קוֹרֵא בְּקוֹל רֶם
זֶה לְשֵׁם חֲטָאת

כִּנּוֹן וּבֵא לוֹ
אֵצֶל פְּרוֹ שְׁנִיָּה
לְהִתְנַדּוֹת בְּעַד חֲטָא
עוֹן וּפֶשַׁע

כָּבֵשׁ יָדָיו
בֵּין קַרְנָיו בְּכוֹבֵד
לְהִתְנַדּוֹת עוֹד
בְּעַד עוֹן בֵּיתוֹ וּמִטָּהוּ

140

וכך היה אומר: אנא השם. חטאתי, עויתי ופשעתי לפניך אני וביתי אנא בשם כפר נא לחטאים ולעונות ולפשעים שחטאתי ושעויתי ופשעתי לפניך אני וביתי ובני אהרון עם קדושיך ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר

‘For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; before the Lord—’” (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness and purity, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: “Blessed is the name of His Majesty’s glory for ever and ever.” He would also intend to finish the name while facing those saying the blessing and say to them, “You shall be pure.” And You, in Your great beneficence, arouse Your mercy and pardon Your ministering tribe [the priests].

[152] He turned to slaughter it
and collected its blood
and assigned it to be stirred
on the terrace of the court.

He went up and around
the altar of the flame,
in his hand the fire-pan
of beaten gold.

He put down the embers,
facing west,
and went down and put it
on the terrace of the court.

They brought before him
the golden ladle
and the dish that contained
the fine incense.

He took a handful
and put it in the ladle;
he placed it in his left hand,
with the fire-pan in his right.

He walked into the sanctuary
until he came to the curtain;
he stepped inside
until he reached the ark.

אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני יהוה והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה כשהיו שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא מפרש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדושה ובטהרה היו כורעים ומשתחווים ונופלין על פניהם ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד: ואף הוא היה מכוין לגמור את השם כנגד המברכים ואומר להם תטהרו ואתה בטובך הגדול תעורר רחמך וסלח לאיש חסידך:

[152] לַשְׁחָטוּ נִפְנָה

וְקָבַל דָּמוֹ

וְצִוָּה לְמָרְסוֹ

בְּרוּיָד הָעֶזְרָה

לְמִזְבֵּחַ מוֹקְדָה

עָלָה וְהִקְיָף

וּבִידוֹ מִחֶתֶת

זָהָב שְׁחוּט

לוֹחֲשׁוֹת חֶתֶה

מִפְנֵי מַעֲרָב

וַיֵּרֶד וְשָׁמָּה

בְּרוּיָד הָעֶזְרָה

לְפָנָיו יוֹבִילוּ

כִּף הַזָּהָב

וְהִמָּגַס אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ

קִטְרֶת הַדִּקְהָה

מִלֵּא חֲפָנָיו

וַיִּתֵּן לְתוֹךְ כִּף

נִטְלָה בְּשִׁמְאָל

וּמִחֶתֶה בְּיָמִין

מִהֶלֶךְ בְּהִיכָל

עַד בֹּא לַפָּרֹכֶת

צוּעֵד בְּקִרְבָּהּ

עַד גִּשְׁתַּת לְאֶרֶז

He put the fire-pan
between the two rods,
and if there was no ark,
on the Foundation Stone.⁷⁰

He poured the incense
on the burning coals;
a cloud covered over;⁷¹
he turned aside and went out.

160 He was careful to pray
briefly in the sanctuary
that the senior not
subjugate the junior.

He said to the stirrer,
“Bring the blood of the bull.”
He took it and entered
and stood between the rods.

Facing the cover,
he sprinkled with his finger,
once up
and seven down, whipping.

He put it on the golden stand
in the sanctuary,
and he slaughtered the people's goat
and collected its blood.

the bowl

He turned around the way (he came)
and stood at his place
and whipped some of it
as he had done with the bull.

He put it on a second
stand in the sanctuary
and took the blood of the bull
and came to the cover.

70. See m. Yoma 5:2.

מַחֲתָה שֵׁם

בֵּין שְׁנֵי בָדִים

וְאֵם אֵין אֶרֶן

בְּאֶבֶן שְׁתִּייה

מַעֲרָה קְטָרֶת

עַל גַּחְלִי אֵשׁ

כֶּסֶה עֵנָן

צִדָּד וַיֵּצֵא

נִבְהַל לְשׁוּעַ

160

בְּקוֹצֵר בְּהִיכָל

לְבַלְתִּי רְדוּת עִם קֹדֶשׁ

רַב בְּצַעִיר

נֵם לְמַמְרָס

הִגֵּשׁ דָּם פֶּרֶךְ

נִטְלוּ וְנִכְנָס

וְקָם לְבֵין הַבָּדִים

נוֹכַח הַכַּפֹּרֶת

הִזָּה בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ

אַחַת לְמַעַלָּה

וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה כְּמַצְלִיף

נִתְּנוּ עַל כֵּן

זֶהָב בְּהִיכָל

וְשִׁחַט שְׁעִיר עִם

וְקִבֵּל דָּמוֹ

סוֹבֵב כְּדָרְכוֹ

וְעָמַד בְּעָמְדוֹ

וְהַצְלִיף מִמָּוֶה

כְּמִשְׁפֹּט דָּם פֶּרֶךְ

שָׁמוּ עַל כֵּן

שְׁנֵי בְּהִיכָל

נִטְלָה דָּם פֶּרֶךְ

וּבָא לְפָרֶכֶת

He counted as he sprinkled
opposite the ark outside,
once up
and seven times down.

He turned and exchanged it
for the blood of the goat
and did with it
as he had done at first.

He made it into a mixture⁷²
as one expiation;
then he went out to the altar
of gold to expiate it.

On its horns he sprinkled
and put his finger
around **the four**
quarters and expiated it.

the four horns of the altar

170 On the eastern side
he finished his expiation
and from there sprinkled
seven times on its top.

When he had finished, he came
to the live goat
and placed his two hands on it
to confess for the people.

Thus he would say: "O Lord, they have sinned, they have done wrong, they have transgressed before You, Your people, the house of Israel. O, by the Lord, forgive the sins and iniquities and transgressions that they have committed against you, Your people, the house of Israel, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant: 'For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord' " (Lev. 16:30). And when the priests and the people standing in the court and

72. The blood of the goat and the blood of the bull, thus using them together in one act of purification.

סֵפֶר וְהִזָּה
מֹל אֶרֶן חִיצָה
אַחַת לְמַעַלָּה
וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה כְּמִסְפָּר

סָר וְהַחֲלִיפוּ
בְּדָם הַשְּׁעִיר
וַיַּפְעֵל בּוֹ
כְּסֹדֶר הָרָאשׁוֹן

עֲשָׂאוּ בְּתַעְרוּבָת
חֲטָאת אֶחָד
וַיֵּצֵא לְמִזְבֵּחַ
הַזֶּהב לְחֲטָאוֹ

עַל קְרָנוֹתָיו הִזָּה
וַנִּתֵּן בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ
סָבִיב עַל אַרְבַּעַת
רִבְעָיו וְחֲטָאוֹ

ארבע קרנות המזבח

עַל צֶלַע מִזְרָח
גָּמַר חֲטוּיוֹ
וּמִשָּׁם הִזָּה
שָׁבַע עַל טְהָרוֹ

170

עֵת גָּמְרוּ בָּא
אַצֵּל שְׁעִיר חִי
וְסִמָּךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו
לְהִתְנֹדֹת בְּעֵד עַם

וכך היה אומר. אנא השם חטאו. עוו ופשעו לפניך עמך בית ישראל: אנא בשם. כפר נא לחטאים ולעוונות ולפשעים שחטאו ושעוו ופשעו לפניך עמך בית ישראל. ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך. כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני יי: והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה כשהיו שומעים את השם

serving in the Sanctuary heard the explicit name coming forth from the mouth of the high priest in holiness, they would kneel, prostrate themselves, and fall to their faces and say: "Blessed is the name of His Majesty's glory for ever and ever." And You, in Your great beneficence, arouse Your mercy and pardon the community of Jeshurun.

180 He commanded that it be sent forth
by a designated man,
burdened with the sins
of the nation and its offenses.

He set his face
to the bull and the goat,
cut them open, and took out
their fat and burned it.

The young priests
carried them on poles;
and burned their skin, flesh, and excrement
outside the city.

The goat headed out
for the edge of the desert;
they waved turban cloths
one to another to tell the news.⁷³

He exulted on displaying
the riches of his majesty
and to take pleasure in
his splendid garments.⁷⁴

the gold vestments

He stepped forth and washed
his hands and his feet
and took off the linen garments
and put on his clothing.

He announced the order
of the commandment to the congregation;

73. Messengers would signal with towels from one post to another when the goat had reached the wilderness; see m. Yoma 6:8.

הנכבד והנורא מפורש יוצא מפי כהן גדול היו כורעים ומשתחוים ונופלין על פניהם ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד: ואף הוא היה מכוין לגמור את השם כנגד המברכים ואומר להם תטהרו. ואתה בטובך תעורר רחמיך וסלח לעדת ישורון:

פָּקֵדוּ לְשִׁלְחוֹ 180

בֵּיד אִישׁ עֵתִי

עָמוּס עֲוֹנוֹת

אוֹם וּפְשָׁעֵיהָ

פָּנִיו שָׁם

בְּפֶר וְשָׁעִיר

קָרָעַם וְהוֹצִיא

חֶלְבָם וְהִקְטִיר

פֶּרְחֵי כְהוֹנָה

יִסְבְּלוּם בְּמוֹטוֹת

וְיִשְׂרְפוּ חוּץ לְעִיר

עוֹר וּבָשָׂר וּפָרֶשׁ

פָּשַׁט שָׁעִיר

לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר

מִנִּיפֵי צְנִיפוֹת

זֶה לָזֶה יִבְשְׁרוּ

צָהַל לְהִרְאוֹת

עוֹשֶׁר תִּפְאָרְתּוֹ

וּלְהַתְנַאוֹת

בְּמַלְבוּשׁ יִקְרוּ

צָעַד וְקָדַשׁ

יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

וּפָשַׁט כְּלֵי בַד

וְעָטָה כְּסוּתוֹ

צוּוֵי סֹדֶר

יִוְדִיעַ לְעֵדָה

בגדי הזהב

he recounted by heart
the law of the tenth day.

Yom Kippur

He fulfilled the need for blessing;⁷⁵
then he washed and undressed
and went down and immersed
and went up and dried himself.

recited prayers

He put on the holy
garments of gold
and again washed
his hands and his feet.

He hastened to sacrifice
the goat for the additional offering
and included his ram and the ram for the people
with the fat for the day.

190 He washed his hands
and feet and undressed
and went down and immersed
and went up and dried himself.

They brought before him
white garments;
he put them on and washed
his hands and his feet.

He ran like a sprinter⁷⁶
to the place between the rods
and took out from there
the ladle and the gold fire-pan.

His hands and his feet
he washed as was his custom;
then he took off his linen garments
and laid them down forever.

He bathed and dried himself
and put on the gold garments,

75. See m. Yoma 7:1.

יום הכיפורים

וַיִּרְגַּל בָּפֶה
חֶק הָעֶשׂוֹר

צֶרֶךְ בְּרָכוֹת הַשְּׁלִים
וְקִדְשׁ וּפִשֵּׁט
וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל
וַעֲלָה וְסָפַג

קְדוּשַׁת בְּגָדֵי
זָהָב לְבָשׁ
וַיִּקְדֵּשׁ עוֹד
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

קָדָם וְעָשָׂה
שְׁעִיר הַמּוֹסָף
וְהַכִּלִּיל אֵילֹו וְאֵיל עִם
עִם חֻלְבֵי יוֹם

קִדְשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו 190

רֶץ וּפִשֵּׁט
וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל
וַעֲלָה וְסָפַג

קָרְבוֹ לִפְנֵי
בְּגָדֵי לְבָן
לְבָשָׁם וְקִדְשׁ
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

רֶץ כְּאִישׁ מָהִיר
לִבִּין הַבָּדִים
וְהוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם
כֶּף יִמְחִיתָת פֶּזֶז

רַגְלָיו וַיִּדּוּ
קִדְשׁ כְּדַבְּרוֹ
וּפִשֵּׁט כְּלִי בַד
וְהִנִּיחָם נֶצַח

רַחֵץ וְסָפַג
וַעֲטָה כְּלִי פֶזֶז

and again he washed
his hands and his feet.

He offered the desired
daily sacrifice in the evening
and offered the incense
between the pieces and the libation.

He waited until evening
to light the lamps,
for the requirement
is from evening to evening.⁷⁷

He returned to lift up his hands
to bless the people;
then washed his hands
and his feet and undressed.

He covered his body
in his own clothes;
he was accompanied by officers
resplendently to his abode.

Safe as he departed,
no fault having occurred,
the congregation celebrated
in joy and high spirits.

200 The messenger who sent the goat
brought cause for giving praise⁷⁸—
the news that **the wayward daughter's**⁷⁹
sins had been pardoned.

Israel's

“Give us a sign,”
his couriers said,
“how we may know
that offense has been atoned.”

77. The lamps are only to be lit each evening.

78. Following Mirsky's suggested reading.

וַיִּקְדָּשׁ עוֹד

יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

רָצוּי תָּמִיד

הִגִּישׁ בְּעֶרְבִים

וְהִקְטִיר קִטְרֶת

בֵּין נְתָחִים לְנֶסֶךְ

שֶׁמֶר לְעֶרֶב

דְּלִיקַת גִּירוֹת

כִּי מִצֹּתָם

מִעֶרֶב וְעַד עֶרֶב

שָׁב שְׁאֵת כַּפִּים

לְבָרֶךְ אֶת הָעָם

וַיִּקְדָּשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

וּפָשֵׁט

שְׂאֵרוֹ וְכֶסֶה

בְּבִגְדֵי עֲצָמוֹ

וְשָׂרִים יְלוּוֶהוּ

בְּהֶדֶר לְנוֹיָהוּ

שָׁלוֹם בְּצִאֲתוֹ

בְּלִי הֻקְרָה פִּיסוּל

תִּרְנֹן עֲדָה

בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבטוֹב לֵבָב

תַּהֲיֶלְהָ יְבֹשֶׁר

שְׁלִיחַ הַשְּׁעִיר

כִּי נִרְצוּ עֲוֹנוֹת

בַּת הַשּׁוֹבְבָה

תֵּן לָנוּ מוֹפֶת

שׁוֹלְחֵיו יֵאֱמִירוּ

בְּמָה נִדַּע

כִּי כָפַר פָּשַׁע

200

ישראל

“The appearance of the crimson
thread has turned white,
and I led the goat,
and it was pushed and died.”

They clothed themselves in beauty,
dressed themselves in splendor;
they found joy
and gained jubilation.

תּוֹאֲרֶת לְשׁוֹן
הַשָּׁנִי הַלְבִּינָה
וְשָׁעִיר הוֹלֶכֶתִי
וְנִדְחָה וְנֵמֶת

תַּפְאֲרֶת יַעֲטוּ
וְהִדָּר יִלְבְּשׁוּ
שְׂמֻחָה יִמְצְאוּ
וְשִׁשׁוֹן יִשְׂיגוּ

7. Emet Mah Nehedar

“Truly, How Beautiful”

This poem, simple in structure but vivid in its use of imagery, has its origins in the apocryphal Book of Ben Sira, or Ecclesiasticus, which served as perhaps the most influential model for the Avodah genre.¹ In chapter 50, a seminal composition in which Ben Sira describes the service of Simeon, the son of Yoḥanan, the high priest in the Temple, he includes a twelve-line passage describing the beatific radiance that overcame the high priest as he emerged from the sanctuary.² Several poems dating from late antiquity and the Middle Ages expand on Ben Sira’s rhapsody, using acrostic and extravagant images and figures. Particularly prominent is the poet’s use of cosmic images, such as stars, to describe the high priest’s face, and allusions to objects in the Temple and even aspects of the priestly vestments. In keeping with the late antique aesthetic, the author, in contrast to Ben Sira, tends to place his dazzling images into frameworks, such as the garden and the window.

This text, which is not attributed to a single author, is published in Goldschmidt’s edition of the Maḥzor³ and is recited in Ashkenazic communities.

1. See the Introduction, above. On this composition, see Yahalom, *Piyyut u-Mešîṭ ut*, 15–16.

2. The Hebrew text of chapter 50 is only found in manuscript B. For translation and analysis, see Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes* (New York: Anchor Bible Doubleday, 1987), 546–55, and Hayward, *Jewish Temple*, 38–84.

3. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor*, 483–84.

Truly, how beautiful was the high priest when he emerged from
the holy of holies safely, without harm!

Like a tent stretched out among the dwellers on high⁴ angels
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like bolts of lightning going forth from the radiance of the Holy
Creatures
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the size of the fringes on the four corners⁵
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the image of a rainbow inside a cloud⁶
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the majesty with which the Rock clothed His creatures God
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like a rose planted in a delightful garden
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like a wreath placed on the forehead of a king
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the grace on the face of a bridegroom
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the purity inherent in a pure diadem⁷
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the one who dwells in shelter assuaging the countenance of
the King⁸ Moses
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the planet Venus in the eastern sky⁹
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like one clad in the garments and helmet of triumph
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like an angel standing at the beginning of the road
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like a lamp shining through windows
was the appearance of the Priest;

4. Heaven is stretched out over the angels like a tent.

5. According to Num 15:38, fringes (*šīšit*) are to be worn on a four-cornered garment.

6. Cf. Ezek 1:28 and Ben Sira 50:7.

7. See Zech 3:5, where the prophet envisions a pure diadem being placed on the high priest's head.

אֶמֶת מִה נִהְדָּר הָיָה גְדוֹל בְּצִאתוֹ
מִבֵּית קֹדְשֵׁי הַקֹּדְשִׁים בְּשָׁלוֹם בְּלִי פָגַע

שמים; מלאכים

כָּאֵהָל הַנִּמְתָּח בְּדָרֵי מַעֲלָה
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּבָרְקִים הַיּוֹצְאִים מִזִּיּוֹ הַחַיּוֹת

מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּגֹדֶל גְּדִילִים בְּאַרְבַּע קְצוּוֹת
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּדַמּוֹת הַקִּשּׁוֹת בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵנָן
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּהוֹד אֲשֶׁר הִלְבִּישׁ צוּר לַיְצוּרִים

אלוהים

מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּנוֹרָד הַנֶּתוּן בְּתוֹךְ גִּנַּת חֶמֶד
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּזֹר הַנֶּתוּן עַל מִצַּח מֶלֶךְ
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּחֶסֶד הַנֶּתָּן עַל פְּנֵי חֶתָן
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּטִהָר הַנֶּתוּן בְּצִנִּיף טְהוֹר
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּיוֹשֵׁב בְּסִטֵּר לְחִלּוֹת פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ

משה

מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּכוֹכֵב הַנִּגָּה בְּגִבּוֹל מְזָרַח
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּלְבוּשׁ מַעִיל וּכְשָׂרִין צִדְקָה
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּמֶלֶךְ הַנֶּצֶב עַל רֹאשׁ דָּרֶךְ
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן
כְּנֵר הַמְצִיץ מִבֵּין הַחִלּוֹנוֹת
מִרְאָה כֹהֵן

8. As Goldschmidt notes, the line refers to Moses pleading before God to spare Israel; cf. Deut 9:25–26.

9. Heb. *kokhav nogah*.

Like the army commanders at the head of the holy people
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the magnificence with which purity adorns **the purified**¹⁰
the priest at his ordination
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the golden bells on the hem of the robe¹¹
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the form of the sanctuary and the Curtain of Testimony¹²
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like a [chamber]¹³ enveloped in blue and purple
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the sight of the sunrise over the earth
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like a lily of the garden among thorns
was the appearance of the Priest;
Like the shape of Orion and Pleiades from Teman
was the appearance of the Priest.

10. Cf. Lev 8.

11. Of the high priest.

כְּשָׂרִי צְבָאוֹת בְּרֹאשׁ עִם קֹדֶשׁ
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּעֹז אֲשֶׁר הִלְבִּישׁ טְהוֹר לַמִּטָּה־

כוהן בימי המילואים

מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּפַעֲמוֹנֵי זָהָב בְּשׁוּלֵי הַמַּעֲיִל
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּצוּרַת הַבַּיִת וּפְרֻכַת הָעֵדוּת
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּקִילָה מְכֻסָּה תְּכֵלֶת וְאַדְמָן
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּרוֹאֵי זְרִיחַת שֶׁמֶשׁ עַל הָאָרֶץ
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּשׁוֹשְׁנֵת גֵּן בֵּין הַחוֹחִים
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן
 כְּתַבְנִית כְּסִיל וְכִימָה מִתִּימָן
 מִרְאָה כְהֵן

12. Those in the Temple, which were very colorful.

13. Reading *ke-qilah* for *ke-qehilah*, with Goldschmidt.

8. En Lanu Kohen Gadol

“We Have No High Priest”

YOSE BEN YOSE

This poem, attributed to Yose ben Yose, is one of several laments of its kind and is meant to be recited in the confession of sins for Yom Kippur. The poem has a strict form and repeats verbs and motifs for the sake of the literary structure and the acrostic. Its literary and historical value lies in its constant wordplay, using clever puns and alliterations, and in its tone, which combines bitter lament with an almost ludic preoccupation with the details of the cult and their relationship to Israel’s tragic fate. It is impossible to convey the full impact of the poem’s wordplay in English translation. However, we have endeavored to give the reader a taste of its complexity and style by noting examples of the wordplay in our notes and by occasional free translations that convey similar puns in English. This translation is based on an improved version of Mirsky’s edition based on manuscript evidence (*Yose ben Yose*, 210–17).

We have no high priest
to atone for us;
how shall we be expiated
on account of our misdeeds?

We have no Urim and Thummim
to inquire;¹
how can we have light
while our desire² lies in darkness?

We have sinned ...

The service³ has been abolished
from the place of service;
how can we serve the Righteous One
while in servitude to a foreigner?

The sacrificial fire and guilt offering⁴
have been withheld from us;
how can we make fires
while the fire of the altar is extinguished?

We have sinned ...

The rejoicing over the lots⁵
is absent from among us;
how can we go up in joy
while we are in exile?

1. Cf. the prayers to be recited before practicing divination, on which, see Michael D. Swartz, "Sacrificial Themes in Jewish Magic," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 311–12.

2. The Temple, that is, the place of our desire. The phrase is based on Ps 132:13. Cf. Eleazar ben Qallir's phrase *be-ohel 'ivvui*, "the desired tent," in his *qerovah* for Sukkot Az Hayetah, in *Maḥazor*

אֵין לָנוּ כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל
 לְכַפֵּר בְּעֵדְנוּ
 וְאֵיךְ יִתְכַפֵּר לָנוּ
 עַל שְׁגוֹתֵינוּ

אֵין לָנוּ אוֹרִים וְתוֹמִים
 לְשֹׂאֵל בָּהֶם
 וְאֵיךְ יֵאָזֵר לָנוּ
 וְאוֹיְיֵינוּ מְאֹפֵל

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

בְּטָלָה עֲבוֹדָה
 מִבֵּית עֲבוֹדָה
 וְאֵיךְ נַעֲבֹד לְזָךְ
 וְזָר מַעֲבִיד בָּנוּ

בְּטִלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
 אֲשֵׁים וְאֲשָׁם
 וְאֵיךְ נַעֲשֶׂה אֲשִׁים
 וְאֵשׁ מִזְבֵּחַ כָּבֵה

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

גִּיל גּוֹרְלוֹת
 קָדַל מִמֶּנּוּ
 וְאֵיךְ נַעֲלֶה בְּגִילָה
 וְאֵנוּ בְּגוֹלָה

Sukkot, Shemin Aseret, ve-Simhat Torah, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Koren, 1981), 105, line 12; see Abraham Even-Shoshan, *Ha-Milon he-Hadash* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1989), s.v. ³wwy.

3. Heb. *Avodah*.

4. Heb. *asham*.

5. That is, the lots cast for the goats.

Repairers of broken walls⁶

are broken down because of our sins;
 how shall we repair what is broken,
 when there is none to stand in the breach?⁷

We have sinned ...

We have been deprived of
 juice and succulent fruit offerings;
 how can we offer moist fruit
 when our eyes are moist with tears?⁸

The blood sprinkled in slaughter
 has passed from the house of slaughter;
 how can we sprinkle blood
 when our blood has been spilled?

We have sinned ...

Offerings of aromatic incense
 have been taken away from us;
 how can we offer aroma
 when our aroma has gone foul?

10 Light has been extinguished
 from **the place of our desire**;
 how can we repair the lamps
 when our light has gone out?

We have sinned ...

And the savor has ceased
 at our Divine resting place;
 how can we set forth offerings⁹
 when there is no Divine place of rest?

Israel's leaders

Temple

6. See Isa 58:12.

7. Cf. Ezek 22:30.

מנהיגי העם

גִּדְרֵי פְּרָצוֹת

נִפְרָצוּ בְּאֶשְׁמִינוּ

וְאִידָּ נִגְדֹּר פֶּרֶץ

וְאִין עֹמֵד בִּפְרָץ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

דְּמָעָה וּמְלָאָה

דָּלְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ

וְאִידָּ נִתְרוֹם דְּמָעָה

וְדְמָעָה בְּעֵינֵינוּ

דָּם זְרִיקָת זֶבַח

פֶּסַח מִבֵּית זֶבַח

וְאִידָּ נִזְרוֹק דָּם

וְנִשְׁפָּךְ דְּמִינוּ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

הַקְטַרְת רֵיחַ סַמִּים

הוֹסֵר מִמֶּנּוּ

וְאִידָּ נִקְטִיר רֵיחַ

וְהוֹבֵאֵשׁ רֵיחֵנוּ

הַטְּבַת גִּרּוֹת

הוֹדְעָכוּ מֵאוֹיְבֵינוּ

וְאִידָּ נִטִּיב גִּרּוֹת

וְכָבֵה גִּירָנוּ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

וְנִיחַח חֲדָל

מִמִּנּוּחָתֵנוּ

וְאִידָּ נִבְיֵא מִנְחָה

וְאִין בֵּית מִנּוּחָה

10

בית המקדש

8. Playing on fruit offerings, *dema'*, and tears, *dema'ot*.9. Heb. *Minḥah*, playing on the root *nwh*, "to rest."

And our first-fruit offerings
 have ceased to be offered;
 how can we ascend on the festival of first fruits
 when there is no early fruit?

We have sinned ...

Whole-sacrifices¹⁰
 have passed from that which was wholly beautiful; the Temple
 how shall we sacrifice
 when the house of sacrifice is destroyed?

The abject (people)
 has been ridiculed by foreigners;
 how can we approach the inheritance
 when our inheritance belongs to foreigners?

We have sinned ...

Fat offerings
 are no longer given;
 how can we offer fat
 when there is no fat of the land?¹¹

We are bereft of
 goats for the sin offering;
 how can we perform the sin offering
 when our sins are overwhelming?

We have sinned ...

There is no more purifying immersion
 in the chamber of Parvah;
 how can we immerse in purity
 when our immersions have ceased?

10. Heb. *zivḥe kalil*, see Ps 51:21.

המקדש

וּבִיכּוּרִים
 חָדְלוּ לְבַכֵּר
 וְאִידָּ נַעַל בְּבִיכּוּר
 וְאִין בִּיכּוּרָה

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

זָבַחִי כָּלִיל
 פָּסוּ מִמֶּכֶלֶל יוֹפִי
 וְאִידָּ נַעַשׂ זָבַח
 וְחָרַב בֵּית זָבַח

זוֹלָלָה
 זָלְזוּלוֹהָ זָרִים
 וְאִידָּ נְבוֹא לְנַחֲלָה
 וְנַחֲלָתָנוּ לְזָרִים

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

חֲלָבִים
 פָּסוּ מִהֶקְטִירָם
 וְאִידָּ נֶקְטִיר חֶלֶב
 וְאִין חֶלֶב חֹטֵה

חָדְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
 שְׁעִירֵי חֹטֵאת
 וְאִידָּ נַעַשׂ חֹטֵאת
 וּגְבָרוּ חֹטְאֵינוּ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

טְבִילַת טְהָרָה
 אִין בִּפְרֹה
 וְאִידָּ נְטָבֹל בְּטוֹהַר
 וּפְסָקוּ טְבִילוֹת

11. Lit., "when there is not one grain (*helev*) of wheat."

The rows of stones
have disappeared from that which was filled with stones;¹² the
breastpiece
how shall we remove the heart of stone¹³ repent
when they¹⁴ have thrown stones at us? Israel's enemies

We have sinned ...

The forest of Lebanon¹⁵ has been reduced to a wreckage;¹⁶
how shall the bride from Lebanon¹⁷ sing love songs to her beloved?¹⁸

²⁰ Our beauty has been laid waste the Temple
and our light has dimmed;
how can she whose eyes are beautiful Israel
beautify herself for the Preeminent One?²⁹ God

We have sinned ...

The atoning bull
has passed from the palanquin;²⁰ the Temple
how can we sacrifice a bull
when there is no one who can atone?²¹

Our (sacrifices of) atonement
have departed from the **place of our desire**; the Temple
how shall we present a gift
when **the root of Jesse** is no more?²² David

We have sinned ...

12. Precious stones were embedded in the breastpiece.

13. See Ezek 11:19.

14. See Lam 3:53.

15. Since cedars of Lebanon were used to build the Temple, references to Lebanon are taken as references to the Temple.

16. Cf. Isa 10:6.

17. Song 4:8-9.

חושן המשפט	טורי אָבן פסו ממלואת אָבן
נחזור בתשובה	ואיך נסיר לב אָבן וידו בנו אָבן
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו
המקדש	יער הלבנון
האל	הוֹשֵׁת לְמֶרְמֶס
ישראל	ואיך תִּלְבֵּב לְדוֹד
	כֶּלֶת הַלְבָּנוֹן
המקדש	יפִינוּ הוֹשֵׁם
	ואוֹרְנוּ אֹפֶל
האל	ואיך תִּיַּפֶּה לְדָגוּל
ישראל	יִפֶּת עֵינֵינִים
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו
המקדש	כּוֹפֵר פָּר
	פֶּס מֵאִפְרִיֹן
	אֵיךְ נִקְרִיב פָּר
	וְאִין מִי יִכְפֹּר
המקדש	כִּפְרוֹתֵינוּ
	פֶּסוּ מֵאוֹיְנוּ
	וְאֵיךְ נִגִּישׁ שֵׁי
	וְאִין שׁוֹרֵשׁ יְשֵׁי
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

18. Ibid.

19. See Song 5:10.

20. See Song 3:9.

21. The stanza plays on words containing the ordered consonants *p* and *r*: *par* (bull), *kpr* (atone), and *apirion* (palanquin).22. From a variant reading (see Mirsky, *Yose ben Yose*, 213), playing on *shai*, “gift,” and *Yishai*, Jesse. The alternative text reads: “when You have dissolved our bodies?”

We have not made incense
 on the hill of Lebanon;
 how can her sins be whitened Israel's
 who is as beautiful as the moon?²³

The *log* of oil is gone
 from the fruitful hill;²⁴ the land of Israel
 how can we pour oil
 on that which is mixed with oil?²⁵ the meal offering

We have sinned ...

She who is perfumed with myrrh²⁶ Israel
 is bereft of flowing myrrh;
 how, on the mountain of myrrh, Zion
 can the Sachet of Myrrh²⁷ reside? God

The shovel for gathering coals
 has been ruined;
 how can we use the shovel
 when we are in ruins?²⁸

We have sinned ...

The aroma of nard and saffron
 has drifted away;²⁹
 how can we say, "My nard
 has given forth its fragrance"?³⁰

The libation of fermented drink
 is no longer offered;³¹
 how shall we offer libations
 as (we) poured them of old?

We have sinned ...

23. Playing on *lavan* (white) and *levanah* (moon).

24. Isa 5:2; Heb. *qeren ben shemen*, using the word *shemen*, which also means oil.

25. Lev 2:4.

26. Song 3:6.

27. Song 1:13.

	<p>לְבוֹנָה לֹא עָשְׂנוּ בְּגִבְעַת הַלְבָנוֹן וְאִידָּ יִלְוֶבֶן חֹטֵא יִפֶּה כָּל־בְּנֵה</p>
ישראל	
	<p>לֹוג שֶׁמֶן פֶּס מִקְרָן בֶּן שֶׁמֶן וְאִידָּ נִצּוֹק שֶׁמֶן עַל בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן</p>
ארץ ישראל	
קרבת מנחה	
	<p>חֹטְאָנוּ צוּרְנוּ סֹלַח לָנוּ יוֹצֵרְנוּ</p>
	<p>מֶרְדְּרוֹר אֶפֶס מִמְקוֹטְרַת מוֹר וְאִידָּ בְּהֵר הַמּוֹר יִלִּין צְרוֹר הַמּוֹר</p>
ישראל	
ציון	
האל	
	<p>מַחֲתָה הוֹחֲתָה מִלְחָתוֹת גְּחָלִים וְאִידָּ נַעַשׂ מַחֲתָה וְאָנוּ בְּמַחֲיָתָה</p>
	<p>חֹטְאָנוּ צוּרְנוּ סֹלַח לָנוּ יוֹצֵרְנוּ</p>
	<p>נֶרֶד וְכִרְכּוֹם נֶדֶד רִיחוֹ וְאִידָּ נַעַן נֶרֶדִּי נֶתֶן רִיחוֹ</p>
	<p>נִסְכֵּי שֶׁכֶר פֶּסוּ מִהֶסֶד וְאִידָּ נִנְסֶד כְּנִיסְכָתוֹ מִרָאשׁ</p>
	<p>חֹטְאָנוּ צוּרְנוּ סֹלַח לָנוּ יוֹצֵרְנוּ</p>

28. The stanza plays on *mahtah*, “incense shovel,” and *mehitah*, “destruction” or “ruin.”

29. Heb. *nadad*, playing on the sound of *nerd*, “nard.”

30. Song 1:12, applied to Israel offering incense before God.

31. See Num 28:7.

Choice flour has been diverted
 from the arrangement of loaves;³²
 how can we prepare choice flour
 when we have been captured in a siege?³³

30 Spices have been taken away
 from the handful;³⁴
 how shall we offer the spices
 when we have been depleted by taxes?³⁵

We have sinned ...

The burnt offering has been removed
 from **the forest of burnt offerings**;³⁶ the Temple
 how can we perform the burnt offerings
 when our burden is heavy?³⁷

The arranged wood³⁸
 has vanished from the wood altar;
 how can we be purified with wood³⁹
 when we have been **defeated on wood**?⁴⁰ crucified

We have sinned ...

Bull and ram
 are no longer burned;
 how can we burn the bull
 when our Temple has been burned?

The curtain has crumbled,
 and the cover has been cut up;
 how can we cry out in prayer
 when we have been crushed?

We have sinned ...

32. The *ḥalot* of Lev 24:5-6.

33. Playing on *solet*, "choice flour," and *solelot*, "siege."

34. The handful of incense that the high priest offered on Yom Kippur.

35. Playing on *samim*, "incense," *husam*, "melted" or "depleted," and *missim*, "taxes."

36. Heb. *ya'ar ha-olot*.

סֹלֶת סוֹלֶפֶה
מִסֵּדֶר חֲלוֹת
וְאֵיד נִיפָּה סֹלֶת
וְנִלְכְּדֵנוּ מִסּוֹלֹת

סָמִים הוֹסֵר 30
מִמְּלֹא חֲפָנִים
וְאֵיד נַעַשׂ סָמִים
וְהוֹמְסֵנוּ בְּמָסִים

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

המקדש

עוֹלָה עֲתָקָה
מִיַּעַר עוֹלֹת
וְאֵיד נַעַשׂ עוֹלֹת
וְהוֹכֵבֵד עוֹלָנוּ

נצלבנו

עֲצֵי עֶרְבֹךְ
חֲדָלוּ מִמִּזְבֵּחַ עֵץ
וְאֵיד נִטְהַר בְּעֵץ
וְכִשְׁלָנוּ בְּעֵץ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

פֶּר וְשַׁעִיר
פֶּסוּ מִלְּהִישָׁרָךְ
וְאֵיד נִשְׂרֹף פֶּר
וּמִקֹּדֶשׁ נִשְׂרָף

פְּרוֹכֶת פּוֹרְכָה
וְכַפּוֹרֶת כּוֹרֶתָהּ
וְאֵיד נִפְצִיחַ פֶּלֶל
וְאָנוּ בְּפֶרֶךְ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

37. Lit., “yoke,” *ol*, playing on *olah*, “burnt offering.”

38. The pile of wood on the altar in the Temple.

39. Which provides fire for purifying sacrifices.

40. Cf. Lam 5:13.

Zion is desert,
 Jerusalem has gone to the beasts;
 how can we set up
 signposts for ourselves?⁴¹

The diadem of the frontlet has been stripped
 from **the atoning forehead**;⁴² **forehead of the high priest**
 how can we atone with the diadem
 when we are dried up like a flower?⁴³

We have sinned ...

The voice that spoke⁴⁴
 is absent from **the tent**; **the Temple**
 how can we pitch our tent
 when our tent has been plundered?

The sacrificial victims⁴⁵ are absent
 from the (storeroom) of the lamb sacrifices;
 how shall we offer the victims
 when **Shalem** has been victimized?⁴⁶ **Jerusalem**

We have sinned ...

The myriads have been sent afar; **Israel**
 the boiled cakes have gone cold;⁴⁷
 how can we make boiled cakes,
 when we ourselves boil in oil?⁴⁸

40 The **wide place** has been narrowed; **Jerusalem**
 the **winding passage** has been shut; **Jerusalem**
 how can we open our mouths wide
 when our enemies prosecute us?

We have sinned ...

41. So that we can find our way back to the destroyed Zion. The line plays on *Ṣiyyon*, "Zion," and *siyyun*, "signpost."

42. The frontlet, which was worn on the high priest's forehead, was said to have atoning power.

43. Cf. Isa 40:7; playing on the meaning of *šiš* as flower and priestly frontlet.

44. Cf. Num 7:89.

	צִיּוֹן צִיָּה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְעֵינַי וְאֵיד נָצִיב לָנוּ נָצִיב צִיּוֹנִים
הכוהן הגדול	צִיץ נֶזֶר נוֹצֵל מִמִּצַּח מְרֻצָּה וְאֵיד נֶרְצָה בְּצִיץ וְחִסְדָּנוּ כְּצִיץ
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו
אוהל מועד	קוֹל מְדַבֵּר חֵדֶל מְאוּהֵל וְאֵיד נִנְטָה אוֹהֵל וְשׁוֹדֵד אֶהְלִינוּ
ירושלים	קֶרֶבֶן חֵדֶל מִטְּלָה קֶרֶבֶן וְאֵיד נִקְרִיב קֶרֶבֶן וְשָׁלֵם בְּחֶרֶבֶן
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו
ישראל	רִבְבָּה הוֹרַחְקָה רְבוּכָה הוֹקְרָה וְאֵיד נַעַשׂ מְרַבֶּכֶת וְאָנוּ מְרֻבֶּכִים
ירושלים	רַחֲבָה הוֹצָרָה וְנִסְבָּה הוֹסְגָרָה וְאֵיד נִרְחִיב פֶּה וְאוֹיְבֵנוּ פְּלִילִים
	חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

40

45. That is, the animals for sacrifice.

46. Lit., "in ruins" (*be-hurban*, playing on *qorban*, "sacrifice").

47. Heb. *rehivim*, cakes boiled in water and cooked in oil; cf. Lev 6:14 and M. Men. 7:1. njv: "soaked cakes."

48. Are sentenced by the Romans to boil in oil.

The whole ones⁴⁹ agonize;
 the whole offerings have ceased;
 how can we pay tribute
 when we are bereft of peace?⁵⁰

Israel

The seven flawless sacrifices
 have ceased from our land,
 how can we praise God sevenfold
 when we have been punished sevenfold?

We have sinned ...

Prayer has come to an end
 in the house of prayer;
 how can we say prayers
 when (God) has screened Himself off from prayer?⁵¹

The *Temidim* have ceased
 in the forest of *Temidim*;
 who shall we offer *Temidim*
 when the Tamid has been annulled?

the Temple

We have sinned ...

49. Israel is called "whole" because it once lacked nothing.

50. Cf. Lam 3:17. The stanza plays on *shalem*, "whole," *shilem*, "pay," and *shalom*, "peace."

ישראל

שְׁלָמִים הָאֲנָחוּ

שְׁלָמִים שְׁבָתוּ

וְאִידָּ נִשְׁלַם שִׁי

וּמִשְׁלוֹם זָנְחוּנוּ

שְׁבָעָה תְּמִימִים

תָּמוּ מֵאֲרָצָנוּ

וְאִידָּ נִהְלַל שְׁבַע

וַיִּסְרְנוּ בְּשִׁבְעַ

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

תִּפְלָה פְּסָקָה

מִבֵּית תִּפְלָה

וְאִידָּ נַעַן תִּפְלָה

וְסֹף בְּעַד תִּפְלָה

תְּמִידִים כָּלוּ

מִיַּעַר תְּמִידִים

וְאִידָּ נַעַשׂ תְּמִידִים

וּבְטַל הַתְּמִיד

חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

המקדש

CONCLUSION

The Avodah: Poetry, History, and Ritual

IN THIS VOLUME, we have presented the most important examples from the early history of the Avodah genre. In doing so, we hope to have conveyed something of the range, variety, and literary and historical significance of this poetry and, indeed, of ancient piyyut in general. These examples demonstrate considerable continuity of form and theme; on the other hand, the individual poems differ in how they handle forms and themes.

CONTINUITY AND DIVERSITY

In many ways the Avodah is a very stable genre, preserving a basic form, structure, and set of themes since the first poetic preamble to the recitation of the Mishnah in *Atah Barata* and the elaborations of the Mishnah's procedure in *Atah Konanta* *‘Olam Me-Rosh*. The genre retained its basic structure throughout the Middle Ages. All of our examples begin with praise of God and His planning of creation, continue with a narrative of the history of Israel, emphasizing God's selection of the Levites and Aaronites, and relate the procedure of the Yom Kippur sacrifice. In each of these examples, the historical preamble contains much of relevance to the theme of the Yom Kippur sacrifice. Some present biblical figures in terms of their fulfillment of their obligation to present offerings to God; some emphasize that the earth was created so that humanity could enjoy its fruits and observe the commandments; and most focus on Levi as the chosen clan. Moreover, all of the Avodah piyyutim engage in the valorization of the priesthood, presenting the high priest as a virtuous and skilled man and, in some cases, a splendid physical specimen.

At the same time, the poems exhibit a good deal of diversity in style, form, and theme. One variable is the degree of elaboration of historical details. For example, the anonymous piyyut *Atah Konanta* *‘Olam Me-Rosh* is quite concise and concerned with giving the most important details of the historical sequence from creation to the Temple service. This concern with choosing the most relevant details extends to the selection of Aaron, who is mentioned, while Moses is omitted. In

contrast, *Az be-ʿEn Kol* lavishes attention on each major stage of human and Israelite history, presenting a rich tapestry of myths and homiletics on the relevance of the Torah to creation, Adam and Eve, the patriarchy, and ensuing history. For its author, the Temple and sacrifice, while central to the program of the Avodah, do not eclipse the pageant of Israel's heroes in their complexity and grandeur.

Likewise, the poems differ in their use of metonymy and other poetic figures. These differences may be due to historical development. Over the centuries, piyyut became more elaborate and cryptic as it evolved from brief compositions embedded in Talmudic literature and the statutory liturgy¹ to the ornate classical style of Eleazar ben Qallir. Whereas *Atah Konanta ʿOlam Me-Rosh* uses terms for historical figures and objects that would have been understood by literate ancient Jews, *Az be-ʿEn Kol* and *Azkir Gevurot* use metonymy (*kinnui*) at every opportunity, to the point of referring to water as "that which is measured in His hollow," based on Isa 40:12. In addition, the midrashic interpretations are integral to *Az be-ʿEn Kol* and other later compositions but not to the earlier poems such as *Atah Konanta*. For example, *Az be-ʿEn Kol* alludes to the legend that Jacob was born circumcised. This is based on a midrash that interprets the biblical description of him as *ish tam* (Gen 25:27) to mean that Jacob was a perfect man. Likewise, an entire section of that piyyut is based on the myth found in Genesis Rabbah that the Torah was the blueprint for the world.

POETRY AND HISTORY

The Avodah stands in a long history of Hebrew literature that portrays the saga of Israel and its heroes as precedents for later holy men. The most prominent example of this motif is the long section in praise of the ancestors in Ben Sira chapters 44–50. There, as in the Avodah piyyutim, the patriarchs, lawgivers, and progenitors of the priesthood are praised for their loyalty to God and assiduousness in building the nation's fundamental institutions. There too the sacred history culminates

1. On the earliest stages of piyyut, see Aaron Mirsky, "Gidre ha-Piyyut shel ha-Payetanin Alume ha-Shem," *Peraqim* 1 (1969): 109–14; idem, "Ha-Shirah bi-Tequmat ha-Talmud," *Yerushalaim: Shenaton le-Divre Sifrut ve-Hagut* 3–4 (1970): 161–70; idem, *Maḥšavtan shel šurot ha-Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1968–69); and idem, *Reshit ha-Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Ha-Sokhnut ha-Yehudit, 1965). On the development of the forms of piyyut in general, see Fleischer, *Shirat ha-Qodesh*.

in the high priest's offering of the sacrifice on behalf of the people and emerging radiant from the divine presence.

Likewise the Avodah is organized according to the succession of ancestors. However, in this case the individual ideal figures are chosen unambiguously in keeping with the themes of Yom Kippur, especially the Temple cult and the theme of reward and punishment. From the standpoint of the holiday's drama of repentance and expiation, the story of humankind is the story of its moral failures and their rectification. At the same time, in the Avodah piyyutim, human history culminates in the chosen priest and the moment when he enters the holy of holies once a year to offer the incense that purifies Israel of its sins. We can see how selection of ideal figures reveals the author's conception of sacred history in the earliest full Avodah piyyut, *Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh*. While its narrative begins with the creation of the earth, humanity is presented as the crown of this creation, created from the choice portions of the earth:

Also from [the earth]
 You formed Adam
 and You caused his descendants to thrive
 like the sands of the sea.

The chain of tradition continues according to a pattern in which a moral hero is chosen after the failure of a generation. Thus, after the wicked generation of the Nephilim,

Then there arose among them
 a small remnant:
 this is Noah
 whom You called "righteous."

After the flood (which is not described in *Atah Konanta*), the succession continues with Abraham:

From his descendants You produced
 a pure and upright man:
 Abraham, who loved You
 with all his heart.

The divine plan seems on the brink of collapse with the binding of Isaac—a sacrifice that is not a sacrifice—but is set right with the birth of Jacob:

From him You produced
a beloved from the womb:
this is Jacob
whom You called firstborn.

From here the saga proceeds to the selection of Levi and Aaron, the progenitors of the priesthood.

Similar narratives of succession, known as chains of tradition, appear elsewhere in Jewish literature of the same period. The best-known example is the opening of the tractate Avot, known as the “Sayings of the Fathers.” This tractate of the Mishnah, which constitutes a kind of rabbinic manifesto, presents a history of Torah whereby it is handed down from Moses at Sinai to the prophets, elders, “men of the great assembly,” through a succession of Second-Temple sages, to the rabbis of the Mishnah’s day.² In the Avodah, however, the chain of tradition emphasizes the cult and priesthood. *Atah Konanta* again serves as an excellent example. Its narration of the saga of Israel from Jacob’s sons to the establishment of the cult omits Moses and proceeds directly to Levi and Aaron:

You distinguished a treasure
from among his children:
this is Levi,
the third from the womb.

2. Elie Bickerman, “La chaîne de la tradition pharisienne,” *Revue biblique* (1952): 44–54, repr. in *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*, ed. Henry A. Fischel (New York: Ktav, 1977), 127–37; Anthony Saldarini, “The End of the Rabbinic Chain of Tradition,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 97–106; Steven D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 69–70; Henry A. Fischel, “The Uses of Sorites (*Climax, Gradatio*) in the Tannaitic Period,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973): 119–51; Moshe David Herr, “Ha-Resef she-be-Shalshet Mesiratah shel ha-Torah; Le-Verur ha-Historiografiyah ha-Miqra’it be-Hagutam shel Hāzal,” *Zion* 44 (1979): 43–56. On variations of this motif in early Jewish magical and mystical literature, see Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 173–99.

You looked favorably
on those who came forth from his loins:
this is Aaron,
the first holy man.

Aaron, not Moses, is given pride of place in the chain of transmission. The rest of the piyyut concerns the service performed by “one of [Aaron’s] clan,” who stands “in his place.” The creation of earth, human prehistory, and Israel’s patrimony therefore culminate in the selection of Aaron and the latter-day priests. The effect of this progression is to place the Temple and its priesthood at the center of all existence.

THE AVODAH AND THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM

Yet the Avodah piyyutim arose at a time in history in which the Temple was destroyed and priests did not in fact hold a central place in Jewish society and religion. These piyyutim were recited in the synagogue, that place known in rabbinic literature as the “smaller sanctuary.” This paradox seems to have inspired the synagogue poets of late antiquity to create an epic literature in which the lost rituals are reconstructed in finely crafted words. By his use of the imagery of the Temple and his poetic skill, the poet sought to evoke in the listener a vivid sense of the experience of the high priest as he prepared for his role, carried out the sacrifice, entered the holy of holies, and emerged luminous with the splendor of his encounter with the divine.

The Avodah therefore stands as testimony to several features of Jewish society in Palestine in late antiquity that deserve the attention of historians and students of Judaism. It is testimony to the persistence of the prestige of the priesthood, even when rabbinic sources such as the Mishnah reveal a deep ambivalence toward the priests as a class. It also testifies to the persistence of the notion of sacrifice as an activity with deep resonance for a community whose main form of worship was verbal prayer. It attests as well to Israel’s consciousness of its history as theologically and ritually meaningful. Overall, the Avodah piyyutim serve as fine examples of the literary creativity of the Jewish community of Byzantine times.

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GLOSSARY

Avodah: Literally “service,” the sacrificial procedure in the Temple. In Jewish liturgy, the prayer service recited at Yom Kippur describing the sacrifice for the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus 16.

Azazel: According to Rabbinic interpretation of Leviticus 16:8–10, the precipice in the wilderness from which the scapegoat was cast. Also identified as oq.

Ḥata’at: The purification ceremony or “sin-offering” described in Leviticus 16.

Ḥazan: A synagogue official who in antiquity served as a prayer leader, composer of piyyut, or schoolteacher.

Kinnui: Metonymy; a poetic device used in piyyut whereby a word or phrase, often based on a biblical verse, stands for another.

Midrash: Rabbinic interpretation of the Bible.

Minḥah: A sacrificial offering (see Genesis 4:3–5), especially a grain offering (Leviticus 2:1–16).

Payetan: A composer and performer of piyyut.

Piyyut: Hebrew and Aramaic liturgical poetry, which began in the first centuries of the Common Era and flourished in Palestinian synagogues from the third to eighth centuries C.E.

Shamir: An extremely hard stone, or perhaps a living creature, which was used to hew stone in the Temple and engrave the names on the stones of the High Priest’s breastpiece according to rabbinic legends.

Tamid: The daily sacrificial offering as described in Exodus 29:38–42 and Numbers 28:1–8.

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