

Yosse Ben Yosse's Avodah Liturgy: A Political Reading

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A Thesis
In the Department
of
Religions and Cultures

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Religion) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

November 2018

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Abstract

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In this dissertation, I examine the 15 piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse that have reached us from the fifth century CE. Few written Jewish historic records from late antiquity have survived the vicissitudes of time. The underlying assumption in this study is that piyyutic texts contain historically relevant information and can thus partially address this historiographic lacuna and disclose aspects of the diversity of Jewish practices in late antiquity. In Appendix A of this dissertation, I present a fully annotated translation of the Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim, considered here as literary works as well as historically significant texts.

Four of Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim deal with the Avodah, the scripted review of the sacrificial ritual that took place on Yom Kippur in the temple. The Avodah ritual was and remains ontologically central and spiritually imperative for Jewish practitioners as they beseech God for atonement. Whereas the destruction of the Second Temple made the bloody sacrificial ritual impossible, the ritual was transformed into a recitation and study of texts that, the sages assured, were as efficacious as the actual sacrifices. I dispute the attribution of one Avodah to Yosse ben Yosse, based on a morphological examination of his oeuvre.

The Avodah piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse are generally assumed, by scholars, to restate and mirror the rabbinic Avodah narrative in Mishnah Yoma. In this dissertation, I offer a different reading of Yosse ben Yosse as a priestly narrative that contested rabbinic claims to authority. In Appendix B of this dissertation, I present a full comparison of the two narratives.

Employing a methodology of comparative discourse theory, applied to both Yosse ben Yosse's poems and to Mishnah Yoma, has led me to identify the similarities and differences between the two narratives, to describe the socio-political power relations between the priestly caste and the rabbis, and to glean some information regarding the rise of rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic texts pertaining to the Avodah re-imagined the temple as a site for the political validation of rabbinic authority over the priestly caste, seeking to cement rabbinic claims to henceforth be the uncontested authority in Jewish life. Yosse ben Yosse's narrative on the other hand, focused on the re-enactment of Temple Avodah, with an eye to the restoration of the priestly authority over Jewish practice in the post-destruction era.

The power contest between the revolutionary rabbinic movement and the conservative priestly caste discloses new aspects of the cultural and religious diversity of Jewish responses to the destruction of the Second Temple, when Jews were redefining their political allegiances and religious loyalties in late antiquity. The study thus contributes to our understanding of Jewish religious and political developments that took place in late antique Palestine.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been long in the making and would not have been accomplished were it not for the help, support, and encouragement I received from many people. My health and personal life presented me with challenges that slowed the progress of my research and writing. I am elated to have completed the dissertation despite these obstacles and pray the fruit of my labours will indeed justify these travails.

It takes one good teacher to open a mind and turn around a soul. My first debt of gratitude is owed to my incomparable doctoral advisor, Professor Ira Robinson, chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and director of the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies at Concordia University. Professor Robinson has been my mentor from my first day in Concordia University's Religion Department. It has been my greatest privilege to be his student, to learn from his remarkable intellect, and to be guided by him. Professor Robinson introduced me to Yosse ben Yosse and inadvertently set fire to my passion. He carefully and steadily honed my investigative abilities, and through countless drafts and tribulations, he patiently showed me the way leading to this dissertation. If this dissertation possesses scholarly merit, it is because I was guided, by this wonderful and outstanding teacher.

I am indebted to my dissertation committee members for their many contributions to my thinking: Professor Naftali Cohn, whose work has inspired and guided my research, and Professor Carly Daniel-Hughes, who taught me much about Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity. Their insights and observations find expression in the dissertation, their encouraging comments and ongoing support strengthened my writing and enhanced the tenor of my arguments, and their invaluable questions improved the original versions of this dissertation.

My gratitude to Professor Lorenzo DiTommaso, who illuminated for me the world of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and who has helped shape my scholarly armamentarium. I have benefited from his counsel as a scholar, his critique as a researcher, and his inimitable example as a teacher. Many thanks to Professor Norma Joseph, professor of Religions and Cultures, and associate director of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies. Her compassionate support and encouragement, her wise counsel and abiding friendship, have inspired me to be a better version of myself.

I thank Professor Patrick James, professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, director of the USC Center for International Studies, and president of the ISA. He has been a constant counselor and guide since my days at McGill in the early 1980s. He has supported me, sought to advance my career, and kept watch over my academic progress despite the great distance that yawns between Montreal and Los Angeles.

I would particularly like to thank Tina Montandon, the graduate program assistant, and Munit Merid, assistant to the chair and undergraduate programs assistant, for their indefatigable assistance. They know how the Department of Religions and Cultures really works. I could not have navigated the seas of academic life without their constant, patient, guiding hands. They were my friends, my untiring champions, and the wind in my sails throughout this journey.

This dissertation would not have seen the light of day were it not for my excellent medical team of Dr. Howard Goldstein, Dr. Michael Starr, and Dr. Dan Fliss, who jointly and severally nursed me back to salubrity. Thank you. I am also grateful to my friends, Sheila Bruman, Jocelyne Peel, Spencer Melnick, and Luna, who parted the clouds for me. Their support and encouragement and their abiding friendship are a blessing.

Dedications

I gratefully and humbly dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my parents, Rivkah and Yitzchak Mayer, to whom I owe a debt that can only be paid by being a good sister to Effi Mayer and Chayahleh Mayer-Miller and by striving to emulate them and, thus, to be a good mother to my sons, Nathaniel and Gabriel. And to Robert.

"ואני ישבתי וקראתי את המלים הקדושות שנתן המקום ביד המשורר לפאר בהן את המצוות שנתן לעמו

ישראל."

שמואל יוסף עגנון. (1962). "הסימן", מתוך: "האש והעצים". תל-אביב: שוקן. עמוד 308



“And I sat and I read the holy words that the Lord had given to the poet, better to glorify God’s commandments given to His People Israel.”

Shmuel Yosef Agnon, [HEBREW]. (1962). *The Fire and the Wood*. [Tel Aviv: Schocken Books]. p. 308

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Thesis

A man named Yosse ben Yosse lived in late antique Palestine and wrote piyyutim, 15 of which have survived and reached us in varying states of intactness. Aharon Mirsky, thus far the principal Yosse ben Yosse scholar, offered an anthology of the oeuvre, and is the only scholar to have studied Yosse ben Yosse in depth.¹ In this dissertation, I present a wholly new annotated and complete translation of all the piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse. I examined the literary form and thematic characteristics of these piyyutim, debating the provenance of one piyyut in particular. The main thrust of the dissertation is a *punctum contra punctum* comparison between four piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbinic Mishnah Yoma text. The four piyyutim concern the Yom Kippur temple cult.

In this dissertation, I seek to highlight the hermeneutic thrust of piyyut by demonstrating its engagement with biblical texts in the tradition of midrash,² adding the new element of reading piyyut for evidence of relations of power. Both Yosse ben Yosse, who I argue is a priest, and the rabbinic authors of Mishnah Yoma re-imagined the temple rites of Yom Kippur, the Avodah, long after the Avodah had ceased after the destruction of the Second Temple. I argue that Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim concerning the Avodah, compared to Mishnah Yoma 1-7, disclose a discursive contest between Jewish elites in late antique Palestine. I contend that one can hear through a systematic comparison of texts, the faint echoes of a socio-religious competition for power and authority between the priestly caste and the rabbinic class. Their respective

¹ A case in point: The book by Yehuda Ratzaby *מגנני שירת הקדם* (Jerusalem: Misgav, 1991), which studies the origins of *piyyut* and the regional developments through history of integrating *piyyut* in communal prayer services, 45 *Paytanim* who had lived in Israel, Babylonia, Egypt, Syria, Spain, Persia, North Africa, and the Yemen. Yosse ben Yosse is absent from the list and from the 400-page compendium.

² Jacob Neusner, *Invitation to Midrash: The Working of Rabbinic Bible Interpretation*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

attestations as to the nature and content of the Avodah became the site for a formative and consequential contest whose effects still reverberate in the 21st century.

The Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre has, since 1977 been available to scholars, thanks to the efforts of Aaron Mirsky, who collected and annotated all the known piyyutim and all the attributable fragments thereof, in a single volume.³ Some Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim were remembered in prayer-books, others, in fragments, were found in the Genizah. Aaron Mirsky compiled a volume containing the only surviving evidence of Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre, a total of 15 piyyutim that are considered by most scholars to have been written by Yosse ben Yosse in Biblical Hebrew.⁴ He wrote about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and about the Avodah, the Yom Kippur cultic rituals that the Torah decreed be carried out at the temple, for the salubrity of Jewish individuals and indeed, the entire world. I argue here that one of the piyyutim ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse אַז בַּדַּעַת חֶקֶר, was not written by this paytan.

The fifth century paytan is a scion of the so-called Anonymous Period⁵ of piyyut. He neither signed his piyyutim nor did he embed his name in the acrostics.⁶ Yosse ben Yosse's works often employ the abecedarian acrostic, but never do they spell out his name. Some piyyutic manuscripts bear the name Yosse ben Yosse, added by scribes; some piyyutim are

³ Aharon Mirsky. *Yosse ben Yosse Poems* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: Keter, 1991.

⁴ Some Piyyutic manuscripts bear the name Yosse ben Yosse, some are mentioned in secondary works of other rabbis such as R. Sa'adya Ga'on, and others have been ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse because of their stylistic features.

⁵ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 7.

⁶ An **acrostic** is a poem or a prose text in which a set of letters- the first or middle letter of each line, word, or paragraph- spells out a word with special significance to the text. Acrostics can be used to spell out names or supplemental messages, rendering the text more meaningful, easy to remember, and aesthetically pleasing. There are four types of acrostics: **Telestich**, in which the last letters of each line spell a name or a message, such as Chanukah's piyyut that spells the name מַרְדֵּי חֹק in its acrostic מַעוּד צוֹרְכִים; **Mesostich**, in which the middles of words form a distinctive phrase, such as John Cage's poem "Overpopulation and Art" (<https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/acrostic>); **Double Acrostics**, in which both the first and last letters of each line form two phrases that can be read vertically on the left and right sides of the text, such as the poem "Behold, Oh God" by William Browne (<http://www.presscom.co.uk/leepriory/leebrownne.html> Retrieved 25 July 2018); and **Abecedarian** acrostics, in which rather than spelling a phrase or a name, the first letter of each line spells the alphabet, such as Psalm 34. (Bergman, Bennet. "Acrostic." LitCharts LLC, 5 May 2017. Web. 25 Jul 2018).

mentioned in secondary works of other rabbis and such as R. Sa'adya Ga'on;⁷ and others have been ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse because of their perceptible stylistic features. The 15 extant piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse⁸ constitute a body of religious poetry that is the subject of this study. The literary characteristics of these piyyutim, and a thorough classification of their thematic thrusts, have yet to be fully presented to the scholarly community. Aaron Mirsky presents a solid introduction of these topics, forming a scaffold around which the present study aims to construct a fuller depiction of the literary outline of the entire oeuvre. In this dissertation, I offer an overview of Yosse ben Yosse's work entire but focuses on the Avodah liturgy as a case study that examines power relations in Jewish antique Palestine.

We must clarify our interest in Yosse ben Yosse. Why does it matter? Why do we need to know all we can know about his, his work, his time, and his place? Why ought we devote time and effort to the investigation of the text and context of his oeuvre? Do we study Yosse ben Yosse as one would climb Mount Everest, because he is "there?" Does his work have intrinsic value beyond the obvious fact of its existence and survival? At this point, there are more questions than answers, but they are suggestive of the scale and extent of potential future study by scholars. The works of Yosse ben Yosse, I argue here, deserve our scholarly attention because they are historic documents that attest to Jewish life in late antiquity. His piyyutim are part of the patrimony, and we hold them in usufruct⁹ to gain something of significant value for collective cultural inheritance. It is our scholarly obligation to interrogate them, thus making them our own. I compare his extant piyyutim to the Mishnah, the quintessential, even foundational, Jewish text

⁷ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 12.

⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*.

⁹ נכסי צאן ברזל (usufruct), after Mishnah Yevamot 7:1 *inter alia*.

that reached us from late antiquity. Positing one document against the other, offers us a glimpse into the socio-religious and political contests that shaped Jewish life after the destruction of the Second Temple. My contribution through this dissertation to the state of knowledge regarding Jewish life in late antiquity will, in time, lead to even greater insights in the future. Thus, I envision my role as a scholar of late antique Palestine in a chain of scholars present, past, and yet to come.

This introductory chapter introduces the reader to the study parameters, its objectives and working hypotheses. I test two hypotheses that rest on a methodological presupposition that undergirds this dissertation – that piyyut can be studied as a source for historical data, whereas it has not yet been thus studied in reference to Yosse ben Yosse’s work. Hypothesis 1 (the Disparity Hypothesis) tests the proposition that the disparity between Yosse ben Yosse’s treatment of the Avodah and the rabbinic discourse in Mishnah Yoma point to power relations that affected the socio-religious course of Jewish history. Hypothesis 2 (the Identity Hypothesis), upon close reading of the Yosse ben Yosse literary body as a whole, proposes that one of the piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse was not actually written by him. Yosse ben Yosse did not appear *de novo*, his piyyutic style was rooted in early Jewish piyyutic tradition. He innovated stylistically, but based his liturgical poetry on established Israelite and Palestinian traditions¹⁰ that preceded him and were pillars of his cultural milieu.¹¹

Methodological Presupposition

My primary comparative endeavor in this dissertation rests on the assertion that piyyut contains historic information that can disclose social, political, and religious currents that

¹⁰ For instance, in Ben-Sira. See: Mirsky *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 73.

¹¹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 70.

characterized the period in which the piyyut was penned. Scholars such as Elizur,¹² for instance, focus on the proverbial trees – the structure and literary skeleton of the poetic oeuvre. In my dissertation, however, I seek to sketch the contours of the forest, to plumb the historiographic details woven into the literary artifact. One cannot know with absolute and unfalsifiable certainty that which transpired in antiquity. I agree with Ophir Münz-Manor who states: “piyyut ... is now recognized as (a) significant source for understanding classical Judaism.”¹³ One must rely on a variety of bearers of information for descriptions of the past, all of which are inherently fallible, and incomplete, whereas history is recorded by individuals whose myopic vantage point prevents them from seeing and recording the entirety of a situation. Epistemology – the theory of knowing – concerns knowledge by description¹⁴. Historical research aspires to indefeasible epistemology, to propositions that are defensible. If no antithetical propositions are presented, one can assume these propositions to be as true and plausible.¹⁵ Causality can be established by collecting relevant facts to the extent possible. Relevant “facts”¹⁶ are, of course, subject to the distortions of the mind, for they are regarded through a prism of bias and perception, not only regarding the original setting wherein these “facts” were recorded, but also regarding interpretation by

¹² Inter alia: Shulamit Elizur, *The Piyyutim of Rabbi El'azar Birabbi Qillar* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magness, 1988); Shulamit Elizur. "שרידיים נוספים של תקיעות בנוסח יוסי בן יוסי". Tarbitz, 5752, pp. 227-236.

¹³ Ophir Münz-Manor. "In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature," TheGemera.com, accessed December 13, 2017, <http://thegemara.com/in-praise-of-the-hasmoneans-chanukah-beyond-rabbinic-literature/>

¹⁴ Noah Porter (Ed.) *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G & C. Merriam Co., 1913).

¹⁵ Knowledge must be produced in a reliable process, which must be buttressed by a causal link between the propositions and the belief in the truth of these propositions. Alan H. Goldman, "Appearing as Irreducible in Perception," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 37, no. 2 (1976): 147–164.

¹⁶ Historical research cannot be assumed to be concerned with facts, as every “fact” is interpretive in its nature, and as no datum can stand alone without explanation. Every historical “fact” is an opinion, and every opinion is a potential locus for argument and interpretation. Historical research is essentially a mediated brain-storming endeavour, in which facts are repeatedly questioned given contemporary understanding and contemporary ideas regarding time, religion, society, and culture. The scholarship regarding Yosse ben Yosse, as part of the endeavour to conjure the concerns and thoughts of people, now gone for two millennia, must therefore be undertaken in the spirit of its historical underpinnings, as a work in progress, subject to subjectivity and therefore to scholarly re-evaluation and questioning.

historians and scholars.¹⁷ The way to approach the problem is therefore through methodological doubt, to regard all we know with suspicion and to examine the sources of information upon which our perceived knowledge rests, probing each source and problematizing its offerings.¹⁸ Because positive proof is impossible to obtain, one must aim for plausibility as the gauge of historical reasoning. Skepticism is the inescapable result and the only recourse for a student of history.¹⁹

Most historical knowledge is analytical, and not based on synthetic propositions (as with mathematics for example). The tendency for history as a discipline is to analyze the meaning and reasonableness of accepted pieces of evidence, derived from sense-based data that remain from persons long gone, who cannot be investigated beyond the texts they had written. Historical knowledge is constructivist, based as it is on inter-subjectivity rather than on objectivity, on viability instead of on truth. Knowing something about history, in other words, does not imply certainty. In this dissertation, I argue that piyyutic liturgy in general, and the piyyutim of Yosse ben Yosse in particular, can and ought to be interrogated as a valuable source of historical data, as part of the collective scholarly effort to better understand the history of Jews in late antiquity.

Hypothesis 1 – The Disparity Hypothesis

The first hypothesis rests upon this core presupposition and interrogates the differences and similarities between contemporaneous narratives, in order to enhance our understanding of these phenomena. The prevailing assumption among contemporary scholars is that piyyut, Jewish liturgical poetry, perfectly mirrors and draws from rabbinic literature. Swartz and

¹⁷ Kenneth Hoglund, "The Chronicler as Historian." *Journal for The Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, no. 238 (1997): 27-29.

¹⁸ John L. Pollock, *Knowledge and Justification* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975).

¹⁹ Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative, Art, Composition and Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 140.

Yahalom, in their epic anthology “Avodah – An Anthology of Ancient Poems for Yom Kippur” (2005), begin their discussion thus (my emphasis): “This volume is an anthology of the Avodah compositions... It begins with the simplest, *a prose retelling of the rabbinic narration of the sacrifice*...among them... אזכיר גבורות by the seminal poet Yosse ben Yosse.”²⁰ Yosse ben Yosse is “seminal” because he is the first of the known paytanim who wrote about the Avodah. But according to Swartz and Yahalom, his liturgy is a retelling of the rabbinic narrative. Swartz and Yahalom acknowledge the existence of contradictory narratives, whereas: “Rabbinic literature hints at encounters with priestly legislators whose rulings contradicted those of the rabbis.”²¹ Elsewhere in their anthology, Swartz and Yahalom again emphasize that this type of liturgy was intended “to impress the listener with its deep knowledge of biblical and *Midrashic exegesis*,”²² its only innovation being the use of language and rhythm. In fact, Swartz and Yahalom explicitly state: “This genre of poetry began as an *embellishment to the established liturgical order*,”²³ as narrated by rabbinic sages. Yosse ben Yosse’s contribution to this seminal anthology comprises only *two* piyyutim, and merits all but an afterthought. Indeed, Seth Schwartz states unequivocally: “The piyyut offers unambiguous evidence for the rabbinization of liturgical practice ... in Palestine ... All extant Hebrew piyyutim are constructed around the armature of the rabbinic liturgy as prescribed in (the) Mishnah.”²⁴

²⁰ Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom, *Avodah- Ancient Poems for Yom Kippur* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

²² *Ibid.*, 11 (my emphasis).

²³ *Ibid.*, 11 (my emphasis).

²⁴ Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 263 (my emphasis).

Avi Shmidman²⁵ is a rare scholar who regards piyyut as an “alternative” to the collective rabbinic creative effort, an alternate voice of historical validity. But even he assumes no fundamental difference (theological, legal, exegetical, or hermeneutical) between rabbinic literature and piyyut. Ophir Münz-Manor also maintains that “the paytanim were not merely singing rabbis. Although they shared many beliefs and practices with the rabbis, their social role, their artistic interests, and the synagogal context in which they functioned, were distinct from the rabbis and their study halls.”²⁶ Some piyyutim were recited in synagogues, others such as certain Amidah verses and Birkat Hamazon, were often recited in private settings.²⁷ Piyyut spans both the public and private realms of worship, thus opening a privileged window into the lives of Jews in late antiquity Palestine. My previous study of Yosse ben Yosse²⁸ has proven that one cannot take for granted an ideological, theological, historical, or legal parity between rabbinic literature and piyyut. Even in instances where piyyut offers a form of Midrashic exegesis, even when it seeks to inform and educate, even as it was penned by men who may have received rabbinic training in rabbinic academies or were exposed to rabbinic exegesis or were familiar with the body of rabbinic literature, and even as piyyut required rabbinic sanction to survive, the two modalities stand quite apart and cannot be considered seamlessly related to one another.

The symbolic baggage of the Avodah narratives written by Yosse ben Yosse and by the rabbis of Mishnah Yoma includes different understandings of the thematic function of the High Priest. For Yosse ben Yosse, as I will demonstrate in this dissertation, the High Priest denotes

²⁵ Avi Shmidman, “Developments within the Statutory Text of the *Birkat ha-Mazon* in Light of its Poetic Counterparts,” in *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into its History and Interaction* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 109-126.

²⁶ Münz-Manor, “In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature.”

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ It was the subject of my MA dissertation: “*Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine*,” Concordia University, January 2011.

perfection, while for the rabbis he is to be marginalized. The lens with which each “side” regards the Avodah discloses the strong symbolic bent of the authors. They are not describing in the Avodot a trivial incident that illuminates, illustrates, or integrates temple ritual in general; they are discussing the timeless nature of the temple cult, its universal importance for the salubrity of the world. Each “side” communicates the meaning of the rituals of the Avodah to reveal the spiritual scaffold upon which hangs the respective authors’ weltanschauung. I maintain that Yosse ben Yosse’s poetry reflects the social and political turmoil typical of the period. There are fifteen known Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim that have reached us;²⁹ of those, ten engage directly with the role of God in history.³⁰ His soteriological and eschatological understanding of the relationship between God and humanity differs from the Rabbis’ understanding, as the textual analysis of his piyyutim illustrates.³¹ The paytan was a sage – an educated, specialized, religious member of the intellectual elite of his era.³² The sages, including Yosse ben Yosse, composed their narratives with specific socio-religious and political intentionality, excluding both events and personages that did not fit neatly into the parameters of the Jewish world those sages represented and shaped.³³

By today’s measure, such sources are more mythic than historiographic,³⁴ bearing on issues of identity and theology more heavily than on the factual validity of stories.³⁵ The sages

²⁹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*.

³⁰ אמנם אשמינו, אתה כוננת עולם ברב חסד, אזכיר גבורות אלוה, אפתח שפתי, אתן תהילה, אפתח פה ברנן, אהללה אלוהי, אז לראש תתנו, אנוסה לעזרה, אפחד במעשי

³¹ My MA dissertation: “*Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine*,” Concordia University, January 2011.

³² Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 72, 90.

³³ Naftali S. Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 13, 119.

³⁴ Moshe David Herr, “The Identity of the Jewish People Before and After the destruction of the Second Temple: Continuity or Change?” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 216.

³⁵ Ze’ev Safrai, *The Jewish Community in the Talmudic Period* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Centre for Jewish History, 1995), 16-19 (particularly section 3, p. 17).

did not regard themselves as historians as they sought to unveil the mystery behind events and uncover the religious pattern of causality.³⁶ They looked at existing narratives for plausible explanations of reality, in keeping with their way of understanding the past. The sages' stories subordinate history to their didactic interests³⁷ and are often a composite of several intermingled narratives.³⁸ The myths and stories woven by Jewish custodians of memory were the means through which meaning was derived from events and served as a link with the ultimate reality of the covenantal relationship with the God of Israel, thus cementing the special relationship perceived as fundamental to the covenant. Ritualized memory, effectively an individual's place within the community as part of the transcendent trajectory of Jewish time, forges an integrated community. Ritualized re-enactments of the drama of Jewish memory, example, connect individuals with their ancestors and bind them with the shared legacy of Jewish memory.

When we speak of authority, we must distinguish between epistemic and deontic authority. The epistemic type of authority may be likened to the relationship between a teacher and his or her students, and the deontic type of relationship may be likened to the relationship between an employer and his or her employees. When I discuss authority in this dissertation, be it rabbinic or priestly authority, I speak of epistemic authority.³⁹ On the one side of the power contest stood the priests in the fifth century CE sought to recuperate some of their former and traditional epistemic authority as the guides of orthopraxy, given the biblical verse that invested this responsibility upon their caste. In matters of purity, for instance, with regards to the determination of leprosy, it was the priest who determined the ritual sanctity of bodies and

³⁶ Isa. Gafni, "Concepts of periodization and causality in Talmudic literature," *Jewish History* 10, no. 1 (1996): 21-34.

³⁷ Herr, "The Identity of the Jewish People," 230.

³⁸ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 119-122.

³⁹ Anna Brożek, "Bocheński on Authority," *Studies in East European Thought*, 2013, no. 65 (2013):115-133.

abodes and who ruled upon the appropriate corrective ritual action: *“And the priest shall look upon the plague in the skin of the flesh; and if the hair in the plague be turned white, and the appearance of the plague be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is the plague of leprosy; and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.”*⁴⁰ The priests had instructed kings and laypeople: *“And Jehoash did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.”*⁴¹ They even instructed King David, as 1 Samuel 21:1-5 narrates. Priestly authority extended even to the realm of military action. During the conquest of Canaan, the priests acted as the rallying forces that ritually made God take part in the battle: *“And seven priests shall bear seven rams' horns before the ark; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the horns. And it shall be, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the horn, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him.”*⁴² Priests were part of the sacred hierarchy, standing under the civic leaders and above the people: *“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people...”*⁴³ And as told in 2 Chronicles 23:2-5, indeed the nation itself was conceived of as a kingdom of priests: *“and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”*⁴⁴ In Yosse ben Yosse's work, the priestly claim to authority is teleologically charged, as he sketches a chain of succession from Levi to Aharon to the Second Temple priesthood and from the temple priesthood back to Moses.

⁴⁰ Lev. 13:3.

⁴¹ 2 Kings 12:3.

⁴² Josh. 6:4-5.

⁴³ Hag. 2:2.

⁴⁴ Exod. 19:6.

Some priests, according to Rachel Elijor, held separatist views, relying on divine authority as it is represented in the Pentateuch. They held that their wisdom was godlike, because it drew from supernatural wells by the chosen of the chosen.⁴⁵ Some priests sought to faithfully observe God's commandments, with particular emphasis on temple rite, the primacy of their caste, the election of Levi and his descendants, and to guide the everyday life of the people as they did in the past and well into the future.⁴⁶ Elijor writes: "Scattered here and there in rabbinic literature are reports of halakhic disputes between Sadducees and Pharisees, which essentially echo the struggle between the secessionist priests of the House of Zadok and their allies, on the one hand, and their opponents in the ruling circles – the Hasmoneans and their Pharisee supporters."⁴⁷ This takes us to the tendency of the Mishnah to record events – even those that did not happen – in order to assert rabbinic dominance over Jewish life in their time. My comparative textual analysis, guided by critical discourse theory, highlights some aspects of the socio-political religious contest for power in late antique Palestine. The priestly caste and the rabbinic class competed for leadership and authority over post-destruction Jewish life, and they used ontologically constitutive Avodah narratives as a coin of exchange. All these disputes concern the temple rites. The Yom Kippur Avodah thus became the site of contestation of power, the locus of consolidation of leadership,⁴⁸ old and new, and the stage upon which the contest was played. Much of the priestly literature was silenced and even censored by the ascendant rabbinic

⁴⁵ Rachel Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011), 201.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴⁸ Michael D. Swartz, "Sage, Priest, and Poet: Typologies of Religious Leadership in the Ancient Synagogue," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 101-117.

class.⁴⁹ We cannot assume that the texts that have reached us from late antiquity portray all that may have been on the minds of Jews at the time.⁵⁰

The rabbinic method was not one of inclusion but of exclusion.⁵¹ We must therefore train our ears and listen for the faint echoes that still reverberate through the proverbial cracks in the wall. I maintain that the Avodah piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse are faint echoes of this power relationship between the sunset of the priestly caste and the dawn of the rabbinic movement. Levi himself is a site of contestation. Rachel Elior explains: “This priestly preeminence was founded on a claim to hereditary sanctity, passed down from consecrated father to son and rooted in divine election, in natural law; it was an innate privilege of the descendants of Aaron, qualified by divine law to enter the Holy of Holies.”⁵² The priests were appointed by God at the time of creation, as a bulwark against chaos.

An example of this tendency may be found in Levi’s unique chosenness as it is represented by Yosse ben Yosse. It is the apex of creation, its very purpose designed by God to preserve the world He had fashioned through word. All of the paytan’s creation narratives culminate with the Levite sons, as a preface to the Avodah narrative. For instance, in *כוננתא* :

פְּרִי צְדִיק הַצְּמַחַת מְגֹזַע לְרִי : עֲמָרָם וְנִינִי כִגְפֹן וְשָׂרִיגִיהַ.

The Righteous Fruit⁵³ You made grow
From the staff of Levi:
Amram and his descendants⁵⁴
Like a vine⁵⁵ and its branches.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 37.

⁵¹ Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 295.

⁵² Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 227.

⁵³ Prov. 11:30.

⁵⁴ The Paytan uses the word נִינִים which in Modern Hebrew means “great grandchildren,” but here refers to the descendants of several generations, after Gen. 21:23.

⁵⁵ A reference to Aaron, Miriam, and Moses, after Gen. 40:10.

⁵⁶ Joel 1:7.

And in **אספר גדולות** he writes:

יּוֹפֵי מַטּוֹת עוֹז צָצוּ מִחֲלָצִיו בָּם לְמֶלֶךְ וּלְחֹזֶה לְשָׂרָת וּלְכַהֵן.

The striking and mighty tribes⁵⁷
Emerged from his loins
And from among them rose king⁵⁸ and prophet⁵⁹
And a servant to attend and to serve.⁶⁰

And in **אזכיר גבורות** he expands this:

כְּגֵפֶן אֲדָרַת יִפֹּת פְּרִי וְעֵנָף הַצְּמִיחַ עֲמֶרֶם מְשׁוֹרֵשׁ לְיָוִי,

Like a stately vine⁶¹
Heavy with fruit and branches
Amram grew
From the root of Levi,⁶²

כִּי שִׁלְחָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת שָׂרִיגֵי חֲמַד: מִכֵּהֶן וְרוּעָה וְאִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה.

And the vine⁶³ sent forth⁶⁴ three
Exquisite tendrils:
A priest⁶⁵ and a shepherd⁶⁶
And a prophetess.⁶⁷

The rabbis presented Levi in an unfavourable light,⁶⁸ reminding the people of Levi's sin after the rape of Dina: "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon

⁵⁷ A reference to the twelve tribes that hailed from Jacob.

⁵⁸ A reference to Moses, after Exod. 18:13.

⁵⁹ A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

⁶⁰ A reference to Aaron, the Priest, after Exod. 38:21.

⁶¹ Ezek. 17:8.

⁶² Exod. 6:18.

⁶³ A reference to Amram, after Ps. 128:3.

⁶⁴ Ps. 80:12.

⁶⁵ A reference to Aaron, after Exod. 28:1.

⁶⁶ A reference to Moses, after Exod. 3:1.

⁶⁷ A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

⁶⁸ Elijior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 205.

the city unawares, and slew all the males.”⁶⁹ Rabbinic literature consistently ignored Levi’s priestly status and privilege, denied the exclusive Zadokite claim to the High Priesthood, and their biblically mandated elevation to leadership. The rabbis contested hereditary authority in favour of a meritocracy of Torah learning under their gaze. The rabbis severed the prophetic line after Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi and thus denied the unbroken chain of divine revelation, minimized the role of the priests as conduits between God and His flock, and marginalized the descendants of Levi so as to magnify, assert, and defend their claim to authority after the destruction of the Second Temple.⁷⁰

The sacrificial cult henceforth could not be a communication device between heaven and earth, because the wellsprings of divine revelation had dried up. The rabbis envisioned themselves as the earthly interpreters of Torah, to the exclusion of former traditions of priestly preeminence. The rabbis after the destruction of the Second Temple, undertook a re-structuring of Jewish law with themselves at the helm. Mishnah Avot traces the transmission of the Oral Torah from Moshe to the rabbis, omitting the priests as a relevant class: “Moses received the Law on Sinai and delivered it to Joshua; Joshua in turn handed it down to the Elders (not to the seventy Elders of Moses’ time but to the later Elders who have ruled Israel, and each of them delivered it to his successor); from the Elders it descended to the prophets (beginning with Eli and Samuel), and each of them delivered it to his successors until it reached the men of the Great Assembly. The last, named originated three maxims: ‘Be not hasty in judgment; Bring up many disciples; and, Erect safe guards for the Law.’”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Gen. 34:25.

⁷⁰ Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 206.

⁷¹ Tractate Avot 1:1.

Everything was “up in the air” now that the temple was destroyed, along with the rituals associated with it that were the heart and body of Jewish life. The change of circumstance made necessary a fundamental alteration, a revolution of Jewish practice and theology, and that, in turn, required authorization from master texts, primarily the Masoretic texts. Each party argued for and claimed that their proposed alterations were in fact part of a chain of tradition stretching, unbroken, from the mythic past to the present.⁷² Both parties constructed their epistemic authority claims on a foundation of continued appropriation of wisdom tracing back to Moses and the word of God at Sinai. There could be no higher authority, it was uncontested, and therefore it extended to the power of those seeking to robe themselves with authority vis-à-vis the people. Priestly literature had over the millennia been silenced,⁷³ primarily by rabbinic claims to power and authority. Its echoes can be found in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and, I maintain, in carefully constructed priestly piyyutim such as Yosse ben Yosse’s.

Hypothesis 2 – The Identity Hypothesis

The second hypothesis of this study addresses concerns about the true provenance of some Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim. The Piyyut⁷⁴ **אז בדעת חקר** has, in my opinion, been attributed to the Paytan in error. Careful comparison between this Piyyut and the confirmed Yosse ben Yosse liturgies, has led me to conclude that it is implausible that this Piyyut was in fact written by Yosse ben Yosse. Yosse ben Yosse laboured during what we now call The Anonymous Period, during which paytanim did not sign their name to their works, nor did they include their name in

⁷² Simcha Fishbane, “No ‘Right’ of Passage? The Rabbinic Dispute Regarding the Propriety of Bat Mitzvah Celebrations,” in *Dynamics of Continuity and Change in Jewish Religious Life*, (New York: Touro College Press, 2017), 74-75. Even though Fishbane’s article deals with 21st century, contemporary Jewish organizations, the basic tenets of his theory apply to the period of history we are studying here.

⁷³ Elijah, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 231.

⁷⁴ Appendix A, (pages for In the Beginning He Scrutinized) pp. 446-470.

the acrostic structure of their poems, both customs that developed from the era of Yannai onwards.⁷⁵ Some piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse were specifically ascribed to him by copyists who wrote his name at the top of the manuscript, others are mentioned in subsequent anthologies and writings.⁷⁶

Status Quaestionis

To lay the foundation of my dissertation, I reviewed primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. The *status quaestionis* of the current scholarship of Yosse ben Yosse and his piyyutic works underscores contemporary scholarly disinterest in the piyyutim of Yosse ben Yosse. פוק חזי מאי עמא דבר The Aramaic phrase meaning: “Go see how the people practice this,” appears hundreds of times in Talmudic literature.⁷⁷ The refrain oft cited in cases where the halachah is unclear, directs one to observe the traditional customs practiced by the people. I hang my literature review on the scaffold of this refrain. People marginalize Yosse ben Yosse. He is often ignored. He is dismissed as a “primitive” paytan, a first draft of subsequent piyyutic gems. A case in point: the new anthology of piyyut that has been published in Israel in 2018, containing 101 piyyutim⁷⁸ penned by forty-three paytanim⁷⁹ between late antiquity and the late twentieth century.⁸⁰ Yosse ben Yosse is absent from this anthology. The compendium treats piyyut as תורה שבעל פה, a seamless tradition of rabbinic exegetical and prayerful literature.⁸¹ The question remains unanswered. The marginalization of Yosse ben Yosse may be linguistic, for his

⁷⁵ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology*, 11.

⁷⁶ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 82.

⁷⁷ For example: Bavli, Eiruv Tractate 14B; Bavli, Brachot Tractate 45A; Bavli, Shabbat Tractate, 35; Bavli, Ta’anit Tractate, 26; Yerushalmi, Pe’ah Tractate, 7:5; Yerushalmi, Yevamot Tractate 12:12.

⁷⁸ Uri Kroizer and Yair Harel (eds.), *101 Sacred Hebrew Songs* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Snunit Centre, 2018), 271-275.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 269-270.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

language is as dense as it is archaic. It is possible that rabbinic dominance sidelined non-rabbinic texts. The fact remains that Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre is, according to Zulai among others, somewhat less "memorable," less refined, less complex than subsequent paytanim. Zulai glosses over the distinctive characteristics of Yosse ben Yosse's piyyut, because the form of subsequent piyyutim by Yannai, Qillir, and their later disciples was more regular, more aesthetically pleasing and therefore more enduring.⁸² Avi Shmidman⁸³ regards piyyut as an "alternative" to the collective rabbinic creative effort, an alternate voice of historical validity. But even he assumes no fundamental difference (theological, legal, exegetical, or hermeneutical) between rabbinic literature and piyyut.

In an interesting departure from the mainstream, Ophir Münz-Manor asserts that "...the paytanim were not merely singing rabbis. Although they shared many beliefs and practices with the rabbis, their social role, their artistic interests, and the synagogal context in which they functioned, were distinct from the rabbis and their study halls."⁸⁴ Münz-Manor begins to differentiate between piyyut and other rabbinic texts, by identifying the locus of recitation as a relevant distinction. Some piyyutim were recited in synagogues, others such as certain *Amidah* verses and *Birkat Hamazon*, were often recited in private settings.⁸⁵ Münz-Manor further posits that: "It is possible that the figuration of the Hasmoneans in piyyut and their relative absence in

⁸² Menahem Zulai, *Eretz Israel and its poetry: Studies in Piyyutim from the Cairo Geniza*, (Jerusalem: Magness, 1995), 91, 521.

⁸³ Shmidman, "Developments within the Statutory Text of the *Birkat ha-Mazon* in Light of its Poetic Counterparts," 109-126.

⁸⁴ Münz-Manor, "*In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature.*"

⁸⁵ Münz-Manor, "*In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature.*"

rabbinic texts indeed reflects a different ideological stance... (and that) the paytanim belonged to or identified with priestly circles and therefore promoted priestly themes in piyyut.”⁸⁶

Piyyut spans both the public and private realms of worship, thus opening a privileged window into the lives of Jews in late antiquity Palestine. My own research into the work of Yosse ben Yosse⁸⁷ has revealed that one cannot take for granted an ideological, theological, historical, or legal parity between rabbinic literature and piyyut. Even in instances where piyyut offers a form of Midrashic exegesis, even when it seeks to inform and educate, even as it was penned by men who may have received rabbinic training in rabbinic academies or were exposed to rabbinic exegesis or were familiar with the body of rabbinic literature, and even as piyyut to survive, required rabbinic sanction – the two modalities stand quite apart and cannot be considered seamlessly related to one another.

Introducing Yosse ben Yosse

Why is so little known about Yosse ben Yosse? Why does scholarship marginalize his work? Does he not fit a particular paradigm of knowledge? What do we actually know about Yosse ben Yosse? How did we come to know it? What do we not know? Can we know what we don't yet know? Can we find other information-bearing sources than the ones hitherto employed? And finally, when we know what we know and what we do not know, what do we learn from it all? In this dissertation, I do not purport to answer all these and other epistemological questions, but to further articulate the problematic of established historical

⁸⁶ Münz-Manor, *"In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature."* See also: Yoseph Yahalom "Priestly Traditions Concerning the Miracle of Hanukkah," in *Was 70CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012). And see: Ze'ev Weiss, "Were Priests Communal Leaders in Late Antique Palestine? The Archaeological Evidence" in *Was 70CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012).

⁸⁷ It was the subject of my MA dissertation: *"Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine,"* Concordia University, January 2011.

accounts of Yosse ben Yosse, as a way of ordering future research. Everything we think we know about Yosse ben Yosse and his piyyutim must be skeptically confronted if we are to establish a base line of investigative rigour. The following are some preliminary questions that must be contended with if we are to advance our understanding of Yosse ben Yosse and his time.

How do we know about Yosse ben Yosse? How do we know this to be his name, and what does the perceived strangeness of the name imply? The formulation of a person's name being apparently similar to his father's name is today considered odd; was it an anomaly at the time in which Yosse ben Yosse lived? Does it divulge anything important about the texts we believe were written by Yosse ben Yosse?

Yosse ben Yosse's Name

Yosse ben Yosse's name presents contemporary scholars with a problem. It is rare today for a Jewish person to be named after his father, especially if the father is still living. Historically, Jews did not have permanent family surnames at all, instead employing patronymics, such as David ben (son of) Joseph or Miriam bat (daughter of) Sarah. The odd parity of his name and surname prompted scholars to speculate on its origins. Aharon Mirsky analyzes the strangeness of Yosse ben Yosse's name in view of the hypothesis that the paytan may have an orphan, given his deceased father's name as an honorific. We must examine the hypothesis for its plausibility and ask whether the question itself is materially relevant to the study of the piyyutim and of the historical period in which they are believed to have been written. Some scholars thought Yosse ben Yosse was an orphan, born after the death of his father.⁸⁸ Zunz thought the tradition concerning Yosse ben Yosse's orphanhood referred to his

⁸⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 13 – footnote 3: citing Shmuel David Luzzatto.

place of origin in Babylonia.⁸⁹ Others interpreted the tradition of orphanhood as an appellation suited to an entire generation of the bereft, those who have been orphaned of the temple in Jerusalem.⁹⁰

The preoccupation with the supposed irregularity of the paytan's name may indeed be a tempest in a tea cup, and an example of "now-ism," or "present-ism." Judging the past by the standards of today is inherently problematic. One must contextualize the phenomenon to better understand its features. During Talmudic times, naming a son after his living father may not have been "odd" or unusual, as Mirsky recounts a Tractate Sotah (49a)⁹¹ that describes how Rabba comes to his father Rabba to discuss issues of purity. The son and the father shared a common name, which may indicate that this onomatological form was not considered as unusual as it is today. One can only accept Yosse ben Yosse's name as a proper name bearing no biographical indications. Any speculation regarding the onomatology of Yosse ben Yosse cannot but be considered as speculative. In any event, the question of orphan-hood is moot, for it cannot be ascertained, in the absence of bureaucratic birth registrations, and it does not impact our reading of the liturgical oeuvre.

Aharon Mirsky tried to plumb the depths of tradition regarding Yosse ben Yosse's origins and biography. On the basis of manuscript evidence and textual criticism of the piyyutim, Mirsky suggests that Yosse ben Yosse was a Kohen.⁹² One must interrogate this claim systematically, however. Is it conjecture based on the salience of priestly concerns in the piyyutim? Is it a proposition that relies on other sources of information? And, if established as

⁸⁹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 13 – footnote 6: citing Zunz.

⁹⁰ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 13 – footnote 8: citing Eliezer Landhoste; footnote 9: citing S.J. Kaempf.

⁹¹ "Meanwhile [Raba's] son, Abba, came; [Rabba] took it and gave it to him. [R. Huna] said to [Rabba], 'My son, thou hast gladdened my heart and blunted my teeth.'" Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 13 – footnote 5.

⁹² Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 13-14.

plausible, does Yosse ben Yosse's priestly origins affect our reading of his piyyutim and our understanding thereof?

The piyyut **אזכיר גבורות** appears in a manuscript that is ascribed to "Yosse ben Yosse the Kohen," and some versions of the piyyut **אתה כוננת** further claimed on its manuscript margins that Yosse ben Yosse was a High Priest, a Kohen Gadol. The paytan's preoccupation with the Priestly Avodah may point to his personal provenance, but it may, historiographically speaking, be an erroneous assumption whereas the typical themes in any given author's work may just as well be an indication of the author's interests without allusion to biographical or onomatological references. Mirsky contends, with reason I believe, that even if one assumes, on the basis of his works, that Yosse ben Yosse was indeed a Kohen, the High Priest appellation was given by copyists and scholars who sought to glorify the paytan's origins and "ornament" him with an important pseudonym.⁹³

Intriguing hints rise from Flavius Josephus' "The Jewish War,"⁹⁴ where Josephus describes a popular uprising against Herod's appointed High Priests, perceived as ungodly and corrupt,⁹⁵ led by the elder High Priest *Chanan ben Chanan*. The same elder High Priest appealed to the political leadership of Jerusalem to help purify the temple of this desecration, and to reinstate the real High Priest who hailed from a verifiable line of High Priests, scions of Aaron himself.⁹⁶ It is possible, therefore, that the High Priests' genealogy was an important nomenclature, a marker of bred-in-the-bone rights to serve as High Priests at the temple.⁹⁷ When

⁹³ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 15.

⁹⁴ Flavius Josephus, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston, commentary Paul L. Maier, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999), "The Jewish War," Book 4, Chapter 3, Section 7 (151).

⁹⁵ Ibid., "The Jewish War," Book 4, Chapter 3, Section 8 (155).

⁹⁶ Ibid., "The Jewish War," Book 4, Chapter 3, Section 10 (162)-(192).

⁹⁷ One can also read Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah in this way, as well as Perek Asarah Yihusin of Massekhet Kiddushin.

such inherited rights were being challenged by political rulers and false claimants to the birthright, it may have become culturally and religiously acceptable to underscore a Priest's true claim by giving him the name of a known and undisputed High Priest, linking him to the rightful heirs of Aaron. This hint may perhaps attest to: (a) Yosse ben Yosse's hereditary status as a High Priest; (b) his claim to this status, be it real or assumed; or (c) later copyists' attempts to link Yosse ben Yosse to the undisputed Sons of Aaron. Any of these three possibilities would have been intended to underscore the veracity of Yosse ben Yosse's accounts of the Avodah.

Yosse ben Yosse's Kohanic origins, which may pass a test of plausibility, pending the discovery of new sources, but which cannot be corroborated with historical certainty, is important. The Kohen status of Yosse ben Yosse, if corroborated somehow (and it is not clear how this can be determined) affects not the way we read the piyyutim, but our analysis of their content and social-religious significance. Textual analysis reveals slight discrepancies, for instance, between the Avodah accounts in Mishnah Yoma and the Yosse ben Yosse account. In the piyyut **אזכיר גבורות אלוה** for example, Yosse ben Yosse says that the curtain between the High Priest and the people was made of fine linen called **שש**, but Mishnah Yoma (4) uses the word **בוץ** to describe the curtain. Even though both words are translated today as "fine linen," Yosse ben Yosse prefers to a different word than the one employed in the Mishnah. Today we translate both **בוץ** and **שש** as fine linen, but could there have been a difference in antiquity? Is the distinction between the two fabrics lost on us today? Did the two words denote two different types or colors of fabrics? Did Yosse ben Yosse draw information from a different source than did the Tana'im?

Poetically speaking, the two words are interchangeable in terms of rhyming and cadence; why then did Yosse ben Yosse consciously and purposefully choose a *different* word than the Mishnah did? Was he, as a Kohen and scion of the temple priestly caste, privy to guarded

information? Did Yosse ben Yosse access different evidence than did the rabbis of the Mishnah regarding the temple?

An interesting possibility is that the fabric named **בויץ** is in fact fabric woven of “sea silk,”⁹⁸ an extremely rare, fine, and valuable fabric, rendered out of silky filaments, called **byssus**, produced by a Mediterranean bi-valve mollusk *Pinna Nobilis*. These byssus or filaments are spun and, when treated with lemon juice, turn a golden colour that never fades.⁹⁹ It is entirely possible, therefore, that **שש** and **בויץ** describe different fabrics altogether, both luxurious and rare in the world of antiquity. In the act of re-imagining the temple, the rabbis and Yosse ben Yosse each re-imagine a different ‘look’, a different visual distinctiveness of the High Priest. The rabbis re-imagine him clad in scintillating golden garments, elevating themselves even above the person who wears the priceless garments. As Naftali Cohn states: “... in writing or talking about the temple and its rituals, the rabbis who created the Mishnah were arguing for their own authority over post-destruction Judaeen law and ritual practice.”¹⁰⁰ Yosse ben Yosse, on the other hand, re-imagines a fine linen-clad High Priest, elevated above his priestly brethren in function rather than in sartorial terms. It illustrates the difficulty of interpreting texts penned in antiquity, even when we assume contemporary meanings of words have remained unchanged for millennia. One

⁹⁸ “Chiara Vigo is believed to be the last person on Earth who still knows how to harvest, dye, and embroider sea silk into elaborate patterns that glisten like gold...” See: Eliot Stein, “The Last Surviving Sea Silk Seamstress, BBC, September 6, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20170906-the-last-surviving-sea-silk-seamstress>. Women in Mesopotamia used the exceptionally light fabric to embroider clothes for their kings some 5,000 years ago. It was harvested to make robes for King Solomon, bracelets for Nefertiti, and holy vestments for priests, popes, and pharaohs. It’s referenced on the Rosetta Stone, mentioned 45 times in the Old Testament and thought to be the material that God commanded Moses to drape on the altar in the Tabernacle.... It takes about 100 dives to harvest 30g of usable strands, which form when the mollusc’s secreted saliva comes in contact with salt water and solidifies into keratin. Only then is one ready to begin cleaning, spinning, and weaving the delicate threads. Known as *byssus*, or sea silk, it’s one of the rarest and most coveted materials in the world. ...It takes 15 straight days of extracting and dyeing raw byssus to create enough threads to weave just a few centimetres. Some pieces, like a 50x60cm cloth of pure sea silk weighing just 2g, take six years to stitch. “

⁹⁹ John E. Hill, *Through the Jade Gate to Rome: A Study of the Silk Routes during the Later Han Dynasty, 1st to 2nd centuries CE*, (Charleston, SC: BookSurge, 2009), Section 12 plus Appendix B – Sea Silk.

¹⁰⁰ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 3.

must accord the Mishnah scholars and Yosse ben Yosse alike, the faculty of choosing their words carefully, to mean precise things. The possible material difference between **שש** and **בוץ** indicates that the authors made very careful, conscious, and scholarly choices that we now must read as different indicators. The editing process affects the text, and when we as scholars engage with the text to plumb its meanings, our analysis must be focused on the content as it is, not as we wish it to be.¹⁰¹

In the same piyyut Yosse ben Yosse says that following the procedure the High Priests makes his first of many ablutions and dons a linen garment **כלי בד**, whereas the Mishnah (Yoma 4) describes the garment as **בגדי זהב**. Once again, Yosse ben Yosse appears to rely on a different account of the Avodah, at least of its sartorial aspects. One cannot dismiss the sartorial differences as superficial anecdotes. The very recitation, and re-recitation of every detail and gesture of the Avodah, is intended to recreate the real event, to re-enact it ceremoniously. Every detail matters. Much as Christian faithful re-enact the mass in precise order, with precise gestures, at prescribed occasions, so does recitation of the Avodah help bring the contemporary faithful to the temple, making him or her present at the Holy of Holies, walking side by side with the High Priest in the imagined, conjured temple, in the here and now. The details matter in this guided re-enactment of a seminal, foundational, and critical ceremony. The image of a High Priest in golden garb cuts quite a different picture than the image of the High Priest in simple white cotton or linen clothes. So why does Yosse ben Yosse disagree with the Tana'im? Where is he getting his information from, where are they getting their information from?

¹⁰¹ Avinoam Sapir, *The Secrets of Gen.*, (Rishon LeZion, Israel: Miskal, 2017), 14.

Yosse ben Yosse's Time

According to the earliest manuscript Siddurim, Yosse ben Yosse was among the paytanim of late antiquity, but scholars have debated the precise coordinates of time and place that would correspond to his life. Shlomo Yehuda Rappoport¹⁰² thought Yosse ben Yosse lived in Spain around the tenth century. Shmuel Luzzatto¹⁰³ thought Yosse ben Yosse had lived in the Ga'onic period (591-1038 CE). Zunz thought Yosse ben Yosse could not have written before the year 770¹⁰⁴ and Graetz appears to agree with him. Harkabi places Yosse ben Yosse in the seventh century, Yaabetz in the sixth, and Zulai in the fifth, given that scholars believe Yosse ben Yosse preceded Yannai by about 100 years. An Amora named Yosse ben Yosse is mentioned in the Palestinian Talmud (Tractate Brachot, Ch. 3:4; Folio 6:3) and Schirmann speculates that “our” Yosse ben Yosse is the very same person.¹⁰⁵ In another book, Schirmann places Yosse ben Yosse closer to the fourth century.

Mirsky cross-referenced these scholars' speculations with his own textual analysis of the piyyutim, studying the stylistic signature of Yosse ben Yosse compared to texts that are dated. Mirsky's assay, which he uses to determine the approximate date of texts, is the question of Midrashic references. If the texts in question make reference to the Midrash, he asserts, then they must have been written after the fourth century. Talmudic piyyutim such as רני רני השיטה¹⁰⁶ do not make any reference to Midrash. The typical fourth century piyyut made no reference to the

¹⁰² 225 ע' 1913 וורשה, תולדות ר' אלעזר הקליר, Cited in: Aharon Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1991 edition), p. 15.

¹⁰³ 10 ע' 1901 פראג, בתולדות בית יהודה, Cited in: Aharon Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1991 edition), p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 15. Citing Die Anfänge der neuhebräischen Poësie, MGWJ, VIII (1859), 410.

¹⁰⁵ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 16J. Citing: Schirmann, Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and Christian Hymnology, *JQR*, XLVI (1953), p. 144.

¹⁰⁶ Tractate Avodah Zarah, Folio 24, page 2.

Mishnah and the Talmud or to the Midrash,¹⁰⁷ whereas later piyyutim such as the ones penned by Yannai and Qilir make Midrash integral to their content and study. Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim straddle the two types of piyyutim. His Avodah works (such as **אין לנו כהן גדול** and **אזכיר גבורות אלוה**) resemble Mishnah Yoma, although as has previously been suggested, he may have had access to esoteric sources of information, which accounts for the variance exhibited in his Avodot; but his piyyutim that do *not* deal with the Avodah (such as **אהללה אלוהי**, and **אמנם** **אשמינו**), make no reference to the Mishnah or to the Talmud. Mirsky therefore extrapolates that Yosse ben Yosse endeavoured in the years before Rabbinic writings entered Jewish liturgy, immediately after the sealing of the Talmud, in the fifth century.¹⁰⁸ This seems like a plausible assertion given the state of knowledge today.

It is now commonly believed and agreed upon by most contemporary scholars that Yosse ben Yosse lived in the fifth century.¹⁰⁹ Most scholars shy away from pin pointing the precise dates of the paytan's oeuvre, but Aharon Mirsky argues that the fifth century is a reasonable assumption and it indeed appears to be a plausible argument. Determining the approximate time frame in which the piyyutim were penned is important in terms of obtaining a time line of Jewish history, of completing the image we have of the evolution of Judaism, and in terms of assessing the influences that impacted Yosse ben Yosse from within the Jewish community and from without.

The fifth century is a pivotal period in Jewish history but has nonetheless often been disregarded by scholars, primarily because of the paucity of historiographic information from

¹⁰⁷ אהרון מירסקי, **הפיוט**, ירושלים: מאגנס 1990 ע' 77-81

¹⁰⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Swartz. "Ritual About Myth About Ritual: Towards an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (1997): 141.

ancient textual sources. Competing Judaisms, or an array of expressions of a complex common Judaism,¹¹⁰ thrived in the diverse environment of Byzantine Palestine that was fertile ground for several forms of Jewish life, Christian life, and pagan life. Greco-Roman culture was inherently heterogenous. Regional variations, class distinctions, and the degree of contact between socio-religious communities contributed to religious variability between and amongst religious groups.¹¹¹ All Jews were Hellenized, to one degree or another.¹¹² People spoke Greek and Aramaic, they were familiar with Greco-Roman myth and culture, Greco-Roman architecture created and framed private and public spaces. In that cultural milieu, through a process of adoption and adaptation of Hellenism by Jews, created a fusion of Jewish and Greco-Roman culture. It became a distinctively Palestinian expression of Jewishness. The fusion was, however, uneven. Different degrees of assimilation, accommodation, acculturation, engagement, integration and interaction, produced Jewish variability.¹¹³

The pluralistic society of Byzantine Palestine created an impetus for the establishment of a “common Judaism” that would bind the disparate communities of Jews. This common ground may be regarded as the web of practices, beliefs, sacred stories, and cultural indicators out of which Jewish people forged their identity. These elements were given different weight by different groups within the Jewish community. But the characteristic elements common to all Jews regardless of their spoken language or traditional practices, created a super-identity that had particularly Jewish markers.¹¹⁴ Commonness and variability were two sides of the same coin.

¹¹⁰ Stuart S. Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique Eretz Israel* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

¹¹¹ Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, xiv.

¹¹² Richard Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity, 1995), 15-25, 249.

¹¹³ Mark Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 24-42.

¹¹⁴ E.P. Sanders, *Judaism, Practice and Belief: 63 BCE-66 CE*, (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 45-57. See also: Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches*, (London: Continuum, 2001), 646-648;

Commonalities such as the centrality of the Hebrew Bible, synagogue worship, life cycle and liminal events, symbols, festivals, conversion rites, and ritual purity, all created a distinctive group of people who regarded themselves and were seen by others as Jewish. They participated in a complex common Judaism.¹¹⁵ Stuart Miller viewed the rabbinic movement as an outgrowth of this common Judaism, not as its creator.¹¹⁶ Rabbinic Judaism was a “work in progress” for centuries after the destruction of the temple, but its momentum increased. Its authority and influence were the result of the insular nature of early rabbinism, which created an internal coherence and fostered a built-in resilience that, by the Middle Ages at last enabled it to respond creatively to the challenge of a truculent Christianity, based on a unity.¹¹⁷

Archaeology may be an important epistemological vehicle for cross-referencing textual evidence with material evidence, which when collated may offer a more complete theory of the context of Yosse ben Yosse’s life and work. The location, in turn, may disclose the social environment, the group to which Yosse ben Yosse belonged. There were several competing expressions and practices of Judaism in late antiquity, each with its own leadership and world view. Knowing something about the paytan’s social affiliation may offer insight into his concerns, his work, and the meaning of his piyyutim. Once we can identify a community with some measure of assuredness, we can speculate on the nature of the congregation Yosse ben Yosse wrote for. The social function of the piyyutim may thus be extrapolated.

Hayim Lapin, *Religious and Ethnic Communities in Later Roman Palestine*, (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 1998), 9-17.

¹¹⁵ Stuart Miller, “Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and other Identity Markers of Complex Common Judaism,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 41, no. 2 (2010): 214-243.

¹¹⁶ Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique Eretz Israel*, 14-20, 339-466.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-20, 163-178. See also: Lee Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

The thematic concerns in Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim disclose an irrefutable concern with exile from the temple, and one must therefore conclude that the piyyutim were post-destruction creations. It is relevant and important to identify with some measure of confidence the historical period in which Yosse ben Yosse laboured, in order to explore the known parameters of the ambient environment. This would avail us of contextual evidence about the concerns of Jews, and about the power relations they had with their non-Jewish neighbours and rulers. If we indeed accept the hypothesis that Yosse ben Yosse lived and laboured in the fifth century, we can with a measure of confidence examine the Byzantine period as the point of reference for comparative studies, between Yosse ben Yosse's liturgy and other Jewish writings, as well as between the paytan's works and non-Jewish texts written in and around the same period.

Yosse ben Yosse's Place

The architectural and agricultural evidence, combined with the fragmentary written evidence, of which Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim may be considered historic artifacts, can speak eloquently about the thoughts and concerns of Byzantine Palestinian Jews. Ethnicity and religiosity were considered a single unit for both individuals and communities. It is therefore through a combination of archaeological and textual analysis that we can glean relevant information regarding this formative period in Jewish life, and regarding the religious transformation of Judaism from a sacrificial cult to an exclusively synagogue-based form of Judaism. It has been assumed that Yosse ben Yosse was a Jew who lived in Byzantine Palestine. This assumption flows from several other propositions, but it must be examined more closely. How can we know that he lived and worked in Byzantine Palestine? What are the sources of this knowledge? And if indeed he did live there, where in Byzantine Palestine did he live? It has

often been implied that he lived in the Galilee, the setting wherein most Jewish inhabitants of Byzantine Palestine thrived at the time. Scholars such as Yosef Yahalom, Menachem Zulai, Ezra Fleischer, and others, rely on Mirsky's original study of Yosse ben Yosse and accept its suggestion that the Tiberian script of Yosse ben Yosse manuscripts found in the Cairo Genizah attest to a Galilean origin.

Mirsky builds the case for a Galilean origin by stages. First, he focuses on the paytan's name. He contends that the name Yosse was commonplace only in the Land of Israel¹¹⁸ and was not so common in Babylonia. Secondly, Yosse ben Yosse wrote in Hebrew, at a time when Greek and Aramaic competed for cultural centrality among Jews. Mirsky contends that writing in Hebrew is a clue that Yosse ben Yosse was removed from a completely foreign environment such as Babylonia, and that he resisted being influenced by foreign languages, placing him in a Jewish settlement in Byzantine Palestine. Moreover, the Tiberian vocalization and orthography typical of Yosse ben Yosse manuscripts discovered in the Genizah, are assumed to be copies of the original works, placing Yosse ben Yosse in the Galilee. Graetz thought that Yosse ben Yosse, obviously a sage who was familiar with the Talmud, could not have had this knowledge until the seventh century, and would not have been known to the Babylonian sages unless he lived in proximity to them. Harkabi and Yaabetz disagree with Graetz, especially give R. Sa'adya Ga'on's references to Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim as foundational to the Jewish piyyut.¹¹⁹

Mirsky only implies a Tiberian origin. He does not go further than this vague notion of place, and he does not delve into the regional location of Yosse ben Yosse in Byzantine Palestine. Why does he gloss over this important element? Could it be that he could not associate

¹¹⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 16.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

Yosse ben Yosse's writing with contemporary Rabbinic writings? The eastern Galilee was, in the fifth century, the centre of Jewish settlement and Rabbinic learning. Did Mirsky note a different tone in Yosse ben Yosse that did not fit with the prevalent notions common to his era? Could Yosse ben Yosse have dwelt in Byzantine Palestine in a non-Rabbinic settlement? Once again, even if we ascertain the historical period and the geographic locality wherein Yosse ben Yosse endeavoured with a measure of confidence, we still need to find plausible and reasoned evidence of the geo-social location of Yosse ben Yosse. How do we know where he is from? How can we find out? Could he have lived in another setting within Byzantine Palestine? Are there non-textual clues as to his possible whereabouts?

On the basis of my own reading of Yosse ben Yosse's literary corpus, I raise a defensible claim regarding the geographic location of Yosse ben Yosse in Byzantine Palestine. Yosse ben Yosse, I maintain, did not live and work in the Galilee among Jewish communities whose Rabbinic inclinations he appears to have disagreed with or, at the very least, diverged from. I think it is plausible that Yosse ben Yosse lived in South Judea, among a community such as the one at Sussya. This claim rests on disagreement with the fundamentally erroneous image of Byzantine Palestine as being virtually *Judenrein*.¹²⁰ Archaeological evidence¹²¹ indicates that the destruction in South Judea was not as devastating as it was in Northern Judea and that the Jewish community there, hailing back to the first century BCE, was revived and in every way continued to flourish. Galilean Jews, were for the most part led by Rabbinic authorities whose Patriarchate, established in 140 CE as the Yavneh Sanhedrin, had moved because of the

¹²⁰ Safrai, *The Jewish Community in the Talmudic Period*, 338.

¹²¹ S. Gutman, Z. Yevin and E. Netzer, "Excavations in the Synagogue at Horvat Sussya," in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 123-128.

vicissitudes of life under Byzantine rule to Usha, Shefar'am, Beit She'arim, Sepphoris, and finally to Tiberias.¹²² Settlements on the Golan, although in close proximity to the Galilee, developed a slightly independent way of Jewish practice about which we know very little indeed¹²³. In Southern Judea, a few Jewish settlements maintained a form of Jewish life that is also largely dismissed by Rabbinic sources as less relevant,¹²⁴ but for which archaeology,¹²⁵ as previously discussed, is an eloquent witness nonetheless.¹²⁶

Material culture that asserts a central preoccupation with body purification rites, archaeology that uncovered evidence of a community consumed with learning and with temple memorialization, textual evidence from Josephus and external sources, and some extrapolation from the substance and tenor of Yosse ben Yosse's liturgical poetry, would suggest that Sussya may be a plausible answer to the question of Yosse ben Yosse's geographic and community location in Byzantine Palestine. The Jewish residents of the town of Sussya, direct descendants of Second Temple Jews, enjoyed economic and cultural prosperity in the fifth century, coincidentally parallel to Yosse ben Yosse's written works, and continued to exist well into the eighth century.¹²⁷ Sussya's 3000 inhabitants, who supported an enormous synagogue, richly adorned with mosaic floors and exquisite inscriptions, also built over 30 ritual baths attesting to

¹²² Moshe David Herr, "The Roman-Byzantine Period: The Mishnah, the Talmud, and Byzantine Rule 70-640 CE," in *History of The Land of Israel*, vol. 5, (Jerusalem: Keter, 1985), 80.

¹²³ Zvi Maoz, "The Art and Architecture of the Synagogues of the Golan," in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 98-115.

¹²⁴ Uzi Leibner, *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee*, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 405. See also: Uzi Leibner, "Settlement Patterns in the Eastern Galilee: Implications Regarding the Transformation of Rabbinic Culture in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 269-295.

¹²⁵ Adam Zertal, *Sisera's Secret*, (Or Yehuda, Israel: Dvir Publishing, 2016). Or see: Yehuda: Devir Publishing, 2010 [Hebrew]. See also: Huqoq Excavation Project, last modified 2019, <http://huqoq.web.unc.edu/>

¹²⁶ Lee Levine, *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, (Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 116-132.

¹²⁷ Doron Sar-Avi, "Susya: History of a Jewish Town at the Edge of the Desert," October 2004. <http://www.atarsusya.co.il/pics/files/articles/%d7%aa%d7%95%d7%9c%d7%93%d7%95%d7%aa%d7%99%d7%94%20%d7%a9%d7%9c%20%d7%a2%d7%99%d7%99%d7%a8%d7%94%20%d7%99%d7%94%d7%95%d7%93%d7%99%d7%aa.pdf>.

their intense preoccupation with Jewish ritual ablutions and Jewish Law. They also appear to have observed pre-destruction burial rites unlike the Galilean Jews. Hebrew remained for them a spoken language. Willem Smelik contends that Hebrew retained its place as a spoken language well into the fifth century CE.¹²⁸ Sussya was a considerable settlement, it was both large and affluent, and it was situated on an important trading route from Judaea to Egypt and to the eastern lands of Edom and Moab, and yet it is barely ever mentioned in Rabbinic sources. The gap of silence can only be filled through archaeology and illustrates the problem of exclusive engagement with textual sources as a gauge for “what really happened” in history. Yosse ben Yosse “fits” a community such as Sussya, in his Priestly leanings,¹²⁹ in his insistence on the purity of Hebrew, in his apparently intimate knowledge of the Avodah, and in his non-Rabbinic understanding of history, of God’s role in it, and of the theological understanding of Time, History, and the dialogue between Heaven and Earth as ongoing and meaningful.¹³⁰ The way his manuscripts ended up in the Genizah is also quite commensurate with the access Sussya enjoyed to Egypt and its historic Genizah. It was not a privileged access, whereas all communities had similar access, but the proximity of southern Judea and Egypt suggests that access was possible and plausible.

Whereas rabbinic narratives valorize the role of the sages,¹³¹ Yosse ben Yosse goes to great length to humanize and valorize the High Priest. In Mishnah Yoma 1:5 the narrator describes a weeping High Priest who, after receiving instruction from the Pharisee sages feels a

¹²⁸ William Smelik, “The Languages of Roman Palestine,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Palestine*, ed. Catherine Hezser, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 126.

¹²⁹ Being a Kohen, according to Mirsky, Yosse ben Yosse expressed, I maintain, the reactionary Priestly caste’s claim to power as an alternative to Rabbinic leadership. See Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, p. 24 (analysis of the *אלוהי אהללה טעיקו*).

¹³⁰ Gafni, “Concepts in Periodization and Causality in Talmudic Literature,” 21-34.

¹³¹ Ephraim Urbach. *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. I. Abrahams, (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975).

sense of conflict between his ritual role and religious standing. The Tosefta adds: *Why does he turn aside and weep? Because he has to be adjured. Why do they turn aside and weep? Because they had to adjure him.*¹³² The Bavli explains that the High Priest weeps because the Pharisee sages suspected him of being a Sadducee.¹³³ And why, the Talmud asks, would they have suspected him of Sadducee ties? The Bavli recounts a supposedly historical incident in which a High Priest was a Boethusian partisan, who acted in a way that jeopardized the temple, his life, and the life of the congregation.¹³⁴ Yosse ben Yosse endeavors to create empathy with the heroic High Priest as a person, dramatically describing his every gesture as a reflection of the teleological order of the universe. His Avodah is part of the cosmic order, whereas the Presence of God comes through the priest's body. As Michael Swartz, citing Edmund Leach, states: "...the priest identifies himself with the bull, the people identify themselves with the priest, and they are all brought into that liminal place of contact with the other world."¹³⁵ The valorization of the priesthood offers an alternative pedigree of religious authorities. Sussya, standing in geographic proximity to the Dead Sea, may have had contact with the Qumran community, at least in part, further suggests the association between Yosse ben Yosse and the esoteric materials we now call the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran Community had a priestly theological outlook, may also be reflected in Yosse ben Yosse's approach to the Avodah.

The structure of Yosse ben Yosse's Avodot begins with accounts of the creation, leading to the eminent rise of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam,¹³⁶ the primogenitors of the priestly caste.

¹³² Tosefta Kippurim 1:8.

¹³³ Bavli Yoma 19B.

¹³⁴ Tosefta Kippurim 1:8.

¹³⁵ Swartz, "Ritual About Myth About Ritual: Towards an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period," 151.

¹³⁶ Karl Kuhn, "The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, (New York: Harper, 1957).

Teleologically inflected, history is theologically¹³⁷ read and is arranged to be the backdrop to the temple cult, history is a prelude to the Avodah,¹³⁸ and both have at their core the High Priest, the priesthood itself. Creation is also associated with eschatology, whereas history for Yosse ben Yosse, is a linear phenomenon¹³⁹ that begins and ends at God's pleasure. His narrative can be compared to the Zaddokite¹⁴⁰ writings found at Qumran.¹⁴¹ The Qumran community¹⁴² composed or housed writings¹⁴³ that highlight the worldview of the community¹⁴⁴ (such as The Rule of the Congregation,¹⁴⁵ and the Damascus Document),¹⁴⁶ poetical and liturgical writings

¹³⁷ Alex Deasley, *The Shape of Qumran Theology*, (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster). See also: J. Collins and R. Kugler, "Introduction," in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmann, 2000).

¹³⁸ Magen Broshi, "Predestination in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Bread, Wine, Walls, and Scrolls*, (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Jean Duhaime, "Determinism," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1, ed. L. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jörg Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on their Background and History," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995).

¹³⁹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Qumran and Predestination: A Theological Study of the Thanksgiving Hymns* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1975).

¹⁴⁰ Chaim Rabin, *The Zadokite Document*, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1954).

¹⁴¹ F. García Martínez and E. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998).

¹⁴² J. Collins and J. Daniel, "The Yahad and the Qumran Community," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006); Charlotte Hempel, "Qumran Community," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 2, ed. L. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴³ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, (London: Penguin, 2004); Frank Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995).

¹⁴⁴ Alan Avery-Peck, Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton, eds., "The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, (Leiden, Netherlands, Brill, 2001); Alex Deasley, "The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance," in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness*, ed. D. Dimnat and L. Schiffman, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995); Alex Deasley, "The Library of Qumran: Its Content and Character," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20-25, 1997*, ed. L. Schiffman, E. Tov and J.C. VanderKam, (Jerusalem: Shrine of the Book, 2000); Carol Newsom, "Knowing as Doing: The Social Symbolics of Knowledge at Qumran," *Semiotica* 59 (1992): 39-153; J.C. VanderKam and P. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*, (San Francisco: Harper, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ J. Collins, "The Construction of Israel in the Sectarian Rule Books," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alan Avery-Peck, Jacob Neusner and B. Chilton, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001).

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4.XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266-273)*, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1996).

praising God (Hodayot),¹⁴⁷ hermeneutic¹⁴⁸ and halachic texts (Pesharim),¹⁴⁹ calendrical, apocalyptic, and eschatological writings¹⁵⁰ (e.g. The War Scroll).¹⁵¹ Although the specific provenance of individual scrolls remains disputed, the thematic common denominators and the linguistic similarities attest to a commonly espoused *weltanschauung* at Qumran. The thematic valorization of the priestly caste¹⁵² presents a tantalizing possibility that Yosse ben Yosse may have had contact with this literature or with parts thereof,¹⁵³ or that he shared a similar worldview because of his own sectarian leanings.

¹⁴⁷ Esther Chazon, "A Liturgical Document from Qumran and Its Implications: Words of the Luminaries," PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1993; Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran*, (Aarhus, Denmark: Universitetsforlaget, 1960); Esther Chazon, "Hymns and Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, Vol. 1, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998); Esther Chazon, "Prayers from Qumran and Their Historical Significance," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1, no. 3 (1994): 265-284; Bilha Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994); Bilha Nitzan, "Repentance in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, Vol. 2, ed. J.C. Vanderkam and P. Flint, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1999); Elisha Qimron, "Times for Praising God: A Fragment of a Scroll from Qumran (4Q409)," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80, no. 3 (1990): 341-347; Stefan Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁴⁸ Steven Fraade, "Looking for Legal Midrash at Qumran," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, ed. M. Stone and E. Chazon, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998).

¹⁴⁹ Timothy Lim, *Pesharim CQS3*, (London: Continuum, 2002); Shani Berrin, "Qumran Pesharim, in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, ed. M. Heze, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Bilha Nitzan, *Megilat Peshar Hab.*, (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986); Joseph Baumgarten, "The Unwritten Law in the Pre-Rabbinic Period," in *Studies in Qumran Law*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1977) 7-29; Joseph Baumgarten, "Sacrifice and Worship among the Jewish Sectarials of the Dead Sea (Qumran) Scrolls," in *Studies in Qumran Law*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1977), 141-159; George Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context*, (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1985); Lawrence Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1975); Aharon Shemesh, "Halakhah at Qumran: Genre and Authority," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10, no. 1 (2003): 104-129.

¹⁵⁰ J. Collins, "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. C. Evans and P. Flint, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (London: Routledge, 1997); Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Dead Sea New Jerusalem Text: Contents and Contexts*, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Lawrence Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Study of the Rule of the Congregation*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); Elisha Qimron, *The Temple Scroll: A Critical Edition with Extensive Reconstruction*, (Beer Sheva, Israel: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1996); Craig Evans and Peter Flint, eds., *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Alex Jassen, "Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Religion Compass* 1, no. 1 (2007): 1-25.

¹⁵¹ J.C. Vanderkam, *The War Texts: 1QM and Related Manuscripts*, (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Hanan Eshel, "The Kittim in the War Scroll and the Pesharim," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, January 27-31, 1999*, ed. D. Goodblatt, A. Pinnick, and D.R. Schwartz, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001).

¹⁵² Alex P. Jassen, "Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls;" Lawrence Schiffman, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early History of Jewish Liturgy," in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine, (Philadelphia: ASOR, 1987).

¹⁵³ Timothy Lim, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

It would be a fruitful avenue for future research, to systematically compare Qumran literature with Yosse ben Yosse's works. Interestingly, the extant Dead Sea Scrolls display a communal focus on the biblical books of Deuteronomy, Psalms,¹⁵⁴ and Isaiah.¹⁵⁵ Yosse ben Yosse's works drew from the same pool of biblical sources, and focused on Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah.¹⁵⁶ Similar central texts may attest to an affinity of world views, although it may be an indication that accidents of history caused similar texts to be preserved and are therefore not indicative of any meaningful similarity. The Torah was the frame of reference for all sects.¹⁵⁷ The different emphasis each group gave particular texts may be characteristic of the independent features of the groups. The pro-Zaddokite thrust of biblical interpretation in Pesharim, of liturgical poetry in Hodayyot, and in eschatological scrolls such as The War Scroll of the Damascus Document, underscore the sect's priestly leanings.¹⁵⁸ The Damascus Document explores the laws of sacrifice in preparation for the days of redemption. This is a primary parallel motivation of the Avodot as well. The centrality of the temple, and the urgent need to find an alternative to sacrifices as expression of worship in prayer, hint at a similar leaning in Yosse ben Yosse.¹⁵⁹ God, both for Yosse ben Yosse and the Qumran Community, takes an active role in history, whereas everything is a manifestation of God's will. For Yosse ben Yosse, as for the authors of Peshar Habakkuk, the prophets spoke not only of their time but of all times yet to come. Moreover, in the 200 DSS liturgical texts the Qumran Community is described as the

¹⁵⁴ Peter W. Flint. *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1997).

¹⁵⁵ Deut.: 32 scrolls, Psalms: 39 scrolls, Isaiah: 22 scrolls. See: Jassen, "Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 2.

¹⁵⁶ Gen.: 14.01% of all his citations, Psalms: 13.37%, Isaiah: 9.13%. See: Appendix B, p. 466-467.

¹⁵⁷ An interesting albeit yet to be confirmed connection with Karaism. See: Naphtali Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism*, (London: East and West Library, 1962).

¹⁵⁸ Jassen, "Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 4.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 5. See also: García Martínez and Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. See also: the Damascus Document's reference to the Temple as the "house of prostration" wherein prayers coincided with the time of sacrifices made at the Temple.

keeper of pure temple rites: “While the Temple in Jerusalem remained defiled, the community envisioned itself carrying out the functions of the priesthood and other rituals associated with the temple.”¹⁶⁰ This is a thematic constant that is comparable to the impetus of Yosse ben Yosse, to preserve the “true” history of the temple cult, and to regard prophecy as applicable both to the past and to the eschatological future.¹⁶¹

It remains to be more rigorously defended, but I sense a plausible resolution of the question of Yosse ben Yosse’s location in Byzantine Palestine through my Sussya assumption, whereas other scholars have chosen to not address the question at all. I suspect they not study the problem because it may have clashed with their understanding of Yosse ben Yosse as a Rabbinic sage. Moreover, Sussya’s archaeological findings were unavailable to Mirsky, who passed away before Sussya was uncovered and studied. Given our contemporary access to such archaeological sites, a combination of textual analysis and archaeological study would, I maintain, offer this alternative route.

Piyyut and Identity

Studying the Jewish past is an intricate endeavour, made more complex in the case of late antiquity, whereas existing historically sound evidence is sparse, and its survival arbitrary. It is essential that history scholars utilize every piece of evidence and consider every text a potential contribution to our understanding of this formative period in Jewish history.¹⁶² “Poetry plays an indispensable role in every culture. In traditional, pre-modernist societies, poetry was part of one cultural polyphony including national myth, (and) identity.”¹⁶³ Hebrew language and Jewish

¹⁶⁰ Jassen, “Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 7.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁶² Münz-Manor, “In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature.”

¹⁶³ Benjamin Harshav, *Three Thousand Years of Hebrew Versification*, (Princeton: Yale University Press, 2014), ix.

culture have over the millennia evolved, both as a result on internal dynamics, and through encounters in time and place with other culture.

The interaction between synchrony and diachrony is a kinetic system of signification whose dynamics revolve on the variant texts.¹⁶⁴ I will clarify my meaning by using the Avodah narratives as an example. The rabbinic account of the Avodah in Mishnah Yoma, claiming synchronous existence with the Temple Avodah, cannot be considered as such by textual analysts. “No creation of the human mind springs to instant life and perfection without revision,”¹⁶⁵ and it is therefore a misleading editorial element purposely inserted into Mishnaic text to influence later analysis thereof. Claiming to be synchronous with the temple text-in-action, the Mishnah therefor ascribes itself perfection, ideality, and originality, and thus adumbrates all textual variations as deviations. In other words, the Mishnah dons synchronous airs in order to cast competing accounts as less-than, as a corruption of the ideal text through willful deviation of through transmissive variability. Competing texts are used to illustrate and enhance the quality of the work as an ideal state. The notion of ideality manifested as an ideal text is a critical assumption that strengthens, rather circularly, the editorial thinking that is derived therefrom.¹⁶⁶ We cannot regard the claim to synchronous creation of the Mishnaic Avodah text, and we must regard it as a diachronous variant that ensconces editorial assumptions that need command our attention. If we regard Yosse ben Yosse’s text as a variant of the Avodah, as a diachronic sediment of knowledge and of editorial assumptions at its core, then we must concede that the Yosse ben Yosse variant is not designed to be an “irritant,” but an integral

¹⁶⁴ Hans Walter Gabler, “The Synchrony and Diachrony of Texts: Practice and Theory of the Critical Edition,” in *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, Vol. 1, ed. D.C. Greenham and W. Speed-Hill, (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 309.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 308.

textual element of pivotal significance in the textual totality of the Avodah. The two versions thus become two discrete synchronous structures that correlate on the Avodah's axis of diachrony. Alternative expressions of meaning within the total structure are revealed by choices made manifest by that very variation. Both are integral to the structure of Avodah narratives, indeed of Jewish historiography. The variation between the two bodies of text forms patterns of opposition within each diachronous text, which then become central stimuli to interpretation.¹⁶⁷ Each body of text serves as a discrete textual state in temporal succession of the literary composition we call the Avodah. The discernible states of variability do not attest to privileging one body of text over another. It is imperative we study the editorial procedures that animated both bodies of texts in late antiquity, without succumbing to the notion of ideality of a single text that is purified of all variation. Differences cannot be assumed to be deviations from a perfect depiction of a reality neither groups of authors witnessed.¹⁶⁸ Each body of text could be a meaning-laden unit of information that was produced separately but still possessed of a synchronous structure.

Hebrew poetry, a subset of Hebrew literature, recorded each new phase, each new ideological metamorphosis, every contact with ambient cultures, and every articulated aspirational hope the people of the past held. Poetry is like a laboratory for the recurring and constant transformations of form and thought in the context of the vicissitudes of Jewish history. Poetry was an omnipresent feature of Jewish culture in all periods, in every community, and is therefore a rich vein of historical details that could not be gleaned from the Mishnah or the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 308-310.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

Talmuds, which are decidedly not historical texts.¹⁶⁹ That is not to say that there is absolutely no historiographically valuable information in the Mishnah and the two Talmuds. Ensclosed within their narratives lie historical “images,” but these are subverted to the ideological thrust.¹⁷⁰ These images, as every artifact that has travelled through the ages buffeted by the corrosive power of the wind and waters of human affairs, were distorted to serve a larger truth indeed, they were manipulated so as to aggrandize rabbinic authority and the validity of rabbinic halachic rulings.¹⁷¹ In reference to the memory of the temple and the Avodah, historical facts were the backdrop against which several entities who, in late antiquity, competed for leadership and authority.¹⁷²

Piyyut, a specialized type of Hebrew liturgical poetry, evolved out of the psalmic tradition, combined with Greco-Roman versification, and contact with other near-eastern cultures. Poetry and piyyut are not synonymous, whereas poetry can be penned for religious and secular purposes, while piyyut is exclusively religious, liturgical, and very popular across social groups of all levels of erudition.¹⁷³ Piyyut offers unique insights into the ideologically inflected religious and social metamorphoses of Judaism, because no matter where or when it was composed, it was grounded in the Bible and in the language of the Bible. Indeed, piyyut is a temporal record of the global network of versification, an echo of ontological developments, and evidence of power relations that shaped Jewish life and thought, Jewish religious practices, Jewish concerns across history and geography.¹⁷⁴ As such it is a repository of cultural

¹⁶⁹ Harshav, *Three Thousand Years of Hebrew Versification*, 64.

¹⁷⁰ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 122.

¹⁷¹ Safrai, *The Jewish Community in the Talmudic Period*, 17.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 16; Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 15.

¹⁷³ Zulai, *Eretz Israel and its poetry: Studies in Piyyutim from the Cairo Geniza*, 32.

¹⁷⁴ Harshav, *Three Thousand Years of Hebrew Versification*, 66-68.

sedimentation and can be a source of historical information.¹⁷⁵ Haviva Pedaya¹⁷⁶ connects Jewish liturgical poetry to the ambient cultures in which Jews had lived, as an organic part of the musicological and thematic cultural fabric in each geographic and temporal location. Piyyut as a religious and literary creation, was composed and performed in both the private and public domains from antiquity on to the rise of Chassidism and the establishment of the State of Israel in modern times. Piyyut as a socio-religious and cultural engagement with Judaism has become a popular pursuit among contemporary Israelis. Numerous books and audio discs appear every year, convivial singalongs take place in homes and in public venues, certain piyyutim even make it to the “Top of the Pops.”¹⁷⁷ Piyyut, Pedaya states, is at once a written culture and a performative culture, and in contemporary academic practices Piyyut has also become a tool of scholarly investigation.

The performative aspect of Piyyut records social characteristics, ways of life, culture itself. Writing the Piyyutic text, composing its musical accompaniments, weaving languages and linguistic customs... address several matters: issues of religiosity and secularization, the shift from religious poetry to secular poetry, cultural layers such as the communal culture, colonial culture, urban culture, high culture and so-called low culture, women’s culture versus men’s culture, as well as liminal ceremonies... Piyyut is a specific type of religious poetry designed to accompany people in the journey of life... It mediates between the transcendental and the social, between the position of Man before God, and the social position of these people.¹⁷⁸

Pedaya ascribes ontological importance to piyyut as a vehicle for the creation and preservation of identity. It can be studied horizontally or vertically, it can offer insights into the influence of the ambient culture on Judaism, and Jewish influence on the ambient culture. It affords a privileged view into the vicissitudes of the collective memory, into the socio-religious

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 66.

¹⁷⁶ Haviva Pedaya, *The Piyyut as a Cultural Prism: New Approaches*, (Jerusalem: Van Leer, 2012).

¹⁷⁷ See The National Library of Israel. “The Site of Piyyut and Tefilah.” Last modified 2018.

<http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/he/song/Pages/default.aspx>. Also see: Kreuzer and Harel, *101 Sacred Hebrew Songs*.

¹⁷⁸ Pedaya, *The Piyyut as a Cultural Prism: New Approaches*, 16-17 [my translation].

responses to historical calamities and to various “golden ages” visited upon Jews. and can be the basis for a new historiography of Judaism across time and space.¹⁷⁹ Piyyut encapsulates the collective voice of a community, its concerns, its ways of dealing with the world at the local and national levels, it is a textual and musical image of the aesthetic and the ethics of communities over time and space.¹⁸⁰ It is thus simultaneously a window to the outside and the inside of the Jewish experience over time. It contains the sediments of the past and as such is considered a “black box” of the cultural and religious Jewish journey over time and space, and as such a valid historiographic source.¹⁸¹ In this dissertation, I argue, therefore, that Piyyutic liturgy in general, and the piyyutim of Yosse ben Yosse in particular, can and ought to be interrogated as a valuable source of historical data, as part of the collective scholarly effort to understand better the history of Jews in late antiquity.¹⁸²

Guy Stroumsa¹⁸³ explored the religious and social transformations imposed by the destruction of the Second Temple and the abolition of the sacrificial cults. The sacrifices at the temple were public spectacles designed to preserve and strengthen collective identity.¹⁸⁴ The abolition of these practices, along with the Christianization of the Roman Empire during the Byzantine period, ended public rituals. While the temple stood, sacrifices were a public spectacle. One of the primary reasons for these public displays was to strengthen and preserve the collective identity of the people. The transformative shock of the destruction of the Second

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 380.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 367-384.

¹⁸² Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 74-88, 202-226.

¹⁸³ Guy Gedalia Stroumsa. *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l'antiquité tardive* [Hebrew translation], (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 2013).

¹⁸⁴ Fishbane, “No ‘Right’ of Passage? The Rabbinic Dispute Regarding the Propriety of Bat Mitzvah Celebrations,” 80; Mary Douglas, *In the Active Voice*, (Boston: Routledge, 1982) 36.

Temple ended the sacrificial cult, and thereby ended an important aspect of civic life.¹⁸⁵ Temples in antiquity were representatives of national groups, and as such were built in social and geographical locations like the Second Temple in Jerusalem, like the Acropolis in Greece.¹⁸⁶ The new circumstances brought about a revolutionary religious geography that operated around a new concept of community. “The synagogue as both a social and religious institution, a gathering-place for likeminded people who come together to acknowledge their God and read God’s word in scripture, and as an architectural reality, ranks as one of the signal achievements of the Jewish people...It was the design of the synagogue’s interior in particular that influenced...those traditions to locate scriptural readings in certain places and to elevate them in certain ways, so that the words could be proclaimed and heard in an authoritative and sacred setting.”¹⁸⁷

Whereas temples were restricted to prominent geographic loci that emphatically underscored their pivotal ontological role, and whereas the specialist classes were exclusively authorized to conduct ritual services,¹⁸⁸ the new congregational assemblies were to be located anywhere and everywhere, open to members of the congregation, and led by a meritocratic rather than hereditary elite corps, and accessible to both literate and less-literate individuals.¹⁸⁹

Prayer replaced sacrifices with texts that were to be said or sung by individuals, or sometimes led by specialist cantors and sermonizers.¹⁹⁰ Although precise historical corroboration

¹⁸⁵ Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l’antiquité tardive*, 90.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

¹⁸⁷ Eric Meyers, “The Torah Shrine in the Ancient Synagogue: Another Look at the Evidence,” in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, (New York: Routledge), 216.

¹⁸⁸ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 70.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹⁰ Moshe Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 2004), 3.

is absent, we know that Jews performed private and public prayers.¹⁹¹ There was a gradual process of religious specialization, which bound religious and political power with the new more private spiritual practices. Public prayers were increasingly conducted by leaders of communities or by particularly devout individuals whose “closeness” with God (in the popular imagination) attested to the efficacy of their supplications.¹⁹² Indeed efficacy was not guaranteed even at the temple, as Isaiah 16:12 narrates. Determinants of identity narrowed, whereas collective identity hinged on the particular community, even though communities formed a latticework of religious affinities. The public displays of worship gave way to an intellectual religiosity that was expressed in prayer rituals, as well as in hermeneutic activities.¹⁹³ The earliest prayer services were tailor made to each community and reflected a *Sitz im Leben* approach to worship.¹⁹⁴

Moshe Weinfeld found that prayer as a performance of worship was not uniquely a post-destruction phenomenon. Nehemiah describes public prayer and public readings of the Torah practiced among communities outside Jerusalem: “*And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place and read in the book of the Law of the LORD their God a fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed and prostrated themselves before the LORD their God.*”¹⁹⁵ Nehemiah’s prayer is not anchored in the temple. It is independent, and it resembles closely that which evolved into synagogue-based worship.¹⁹⁶ This form of religious practice began when the *Bamot* were abolished, the pagan sites of worship that were prevalent in

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁹² Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 72.

¹⁹³ Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l’antiquité tardive*, 93-96.

¹⁹⁴ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 17.

¹⁹⁵ Neh. 9:2-3.

¹⁹⁶ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 14 [citing Ismar Elbogen].

ancient Israel in the time of Hezekiah. It was also a valid diasporic practice for those who were geographically separated from the temple. In other words, the transformation from bloody sacrificial cults to an intellectual form of religiosity, preceded the fall of the Second Temple.¹⁹⁷ As Steven Fine states: “Communal meeting places that we can recognize as synagogues existed while the Temple still stood, at least by the mid first century B.C.E...The origins of the synagogue are shrouded in mystery, and scholarly opinions as to its beginnings vary. Some scholars trace its development to the First Temple period, others to the Exile in Babylonia, and still others (including the author) to the latter Second Temple period in Palestine...the synagogue was a well-developed institution at least a century before the Romans destroyed the Temple.”¹⁹⁸

Initially this transformation was intended as a comprehensive alternative to the sacrificial cult, and therefore the Avodah was not mentioned in the early prayers, such as narrated in Nehemiah 8-9. Already during the reign of the Second Temple, specific passages relating to the temple were added and even formed part of the “biophony”¹⁹⁹ of the temple. Numbers 6:7-22 narrates the Priestly Blessing of the congregation at the temple, Deuteronomy 26:1-12 describes a more personal prayer conducted by a temple priest but recited by a lay person. Such prayers sought communion with God. The Amidah prayer as we now know it was the result of several processes that evolved in response to political changes. The personal beseeching prayers were composed before the destruction of the Second Temple and are echoed in biblical prophetic texts. Shabbat and holiday prayers were composed in the Babylonian exile as a response to the physical distance from the centre of worship in the temple.²⁰⁰ It was the early expression of

¹⁹⁷ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*, xxiv.

¹⁹⁸ Steven Fine. “Did the Synagogue Replace the Temple?” *Bible Review* 12, no. 2 (1996): 18-26.

¹⁹⁹ Biophony: The collective soundscape of a biotope. Bernie Kraus, *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Muic in the World’s Wild Places*, (Columbus, GA: Little BrownWebster Dictionary, 2012).

²⁰⁰ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 47.

prayers that were unrelated to specific rituals. After the destruction of the Second Temple, prayers were composed so as to preserve the temple rituals in textual form. The remembrance of the temple cult was not a sudden rift, it was not an earthquake in Jewish worship, rather it was a gradual process that mirrored socio-political realities and the religious flexibility they mandated.²⁰¹

Participation in the new text-based, abstract, intellectual religiosity became increasingly complex and was therefore assigned to representatives of congregations.²⁰² By late antiquity the template of Jewish religious practice became solidified. Congregations coalesced around their synagogues, synagogues in turn became loci of hermeneutics and ritual, houses of study as well as places of communal worship.²⁰³ Steven Fine maintains that Second Temple synagogues were primarily houses of study, rather than houses of prayer: “The Temple was regarded as the center of the universe, the navel of the world—what the great historian of religion Mircea Eliade called the axis mundi between the sacred and the profane. Synagogues, on the other hand, were local places where Jews came together to study Scripture, through which they gained access to the revealed word of God. While the Temple still stood, the synagogue was a complementary not a competitive institution.”²⁰⁴

Synagogues gradually became houses of prayer during the first and second centuries CE, when thrice daily prayers mirrored the three times a day²⁰⁵ in which sacrifices were made at the now-destroyed temple.²⁰⁶ While the temple still stood, the daily Tamid sacrifices were brought

²⁰¹ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*, xxvii-xxviii.

²⁰² Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 31.

²⁰³ Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l'antiquité tardive*, 93.

²⁰⁴ Fine, “Did the Synagogue Replace the Temple?”

²⁰⁵ See: Mishnah Berachot 4:1; Bavli Berachot 26/B

²⁰⁶ Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From Sacrifice to Slaughterhouse: Ancient and Modern Approaches to Meat, Animals, and Civilization,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Working Papers from Hannover* 6, no. 2. (2014): 111-158.

twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon: “*And thou shalt say unto them: This is the offering made by fire which ye shall bring unto the Lord: he-lambs of the first year without blemish, two day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at dusk.*”²⁰⁷ Prayers were composed as celebrations of these sacrifices by Jewish practitioners who could not go to Jerusalem regularly, and after the destruction of the Second Temple, prayers were cast as commemorations of temple sacrifices. Shacharit, the morning prayer, celebrates and commemorates the morning Tamid, while Minchah, the prayer said in the later afternoon, celebrates and commemorates the Tamid that was offered in the temple at dusk. And Ma’ariv, the evening prayer, which initially was an optional prayer as opposed to the mandatory Shacharit and Minchah, was eventually given a special status by the Talmud.²⁰⁸ For much of the rabbinic period, the three services most likely only consisted of the Amidah and nothing else. However, by the beginning of the Ga’onic period, and with the assemblage of the first complete liturgy for the synagogue – Seder R. Amram Ga’on in the ninth century – the content of all three services expanded significantly in both breadth and depth.

In order to avert the danger that synagogues would displace the temple as the ontological heart of Jewishness, the rabbis instituted the reading of Avodot so as to insert the temple into the synagogue and retains its centrality.²⁰⁹ The rabbis, not the priests, invented the Avodah as text, as part of their revolutionary take-over of Jewish life and practice. Making the Avodah separate and distinct from its traditional geo-religious centrality, the rabbis thus also sidelined the priests as the legitimate authorities over Jewish practice vis-à-vis the communication between humans and

²⁰⁷ Num. 28:3-4.

²⁰⁸ Bavli Tractate Berachot 26:A; Mishnah Berachot 4:1.

²⁰⁹ Swartz, “Ritual about Myth about Ritual: Towards an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period,” 135-155.

God. Recitation of the Avodah was “not to recapitulate a historical event by ritual recognition, but to recall a ritual by recounting it verbally.”²¹⁰ The rabbis took care to bestow a measure of holiness on the synagogue, “borrowed” so to speak from the temple. But they went to great lengths to distinguish between the temporary centrality of the synagogue, and the eternal centrality of the temple, including the Third Temple that is yet to be built in messianic times: “The Torah ark was a holy object in the synagogue, an institution whose sacredness was this-world bound – pale in comparison to the eternally sacred “House of God.”²¹¹ The synagogue became a bridge between the present and the restoration of the cosmic *axis mundi* in a future yet to come, and liturgical compositions performed a “sacrifice of the heart” as an effective substitute for animal sacrifices until the messianic restoration of the temple.²¹²

The fecundity of religious expressions, be it in new religious movements or in new interpretations of the old, imposed the requirement for unifying forces that would tie disparate communities to a greater whole, and would help each community define its ontological parameters as being derivations of the whole. At the same time, religious practice moved from the public arena²¹³ to the realm of the home and hearth.²¹⁴ The democratization of worship matured gradually, especially after the destruction of the Second Temple.²¹⁵ A new religious authority, a new hierarchy of social, political, and religious leadership sought to fill the void left by the abolition of sacrifices and the destruction of the temple.²¹⁶ The organizing principal of religious communities were no longer socio-economic or political, but rather religious and

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

²¹¹ Fine, “Did the Synagogue Replace the Temple?”

²¹² Swartz, “Ritual about Myth about Ritual: Towards an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period,” 138.

²¹³ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 39-40.

²¹⁴ Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l’antiquité tardive*, 97.

²¹⁵ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 78-90.

²¹⁶ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 25.

theological. The immensely variegated mosaic of religious communities in Palestine required that each religious community define its ontological identity as apart from the others. This was achieved by the rising religious elites through turning their unique “*historia sacra*” into ritual, turning text into practice.²¹⁷ New orthodoxy pushed away independent religious thought as heretical. Jewish exclusivism guarded the borderlines between “us” and “them” and traced an internal line between “legitimate” and “illegitimate” religious thought.

The term “orthodoxy” does not denote the current division of Jewish practices, but a certain orthopraxy that made Jewish practice distinctive and separate from the ambient environment, an excluding apathy to the “religious other” that delineated the boundary around the community of Jews, and simultaneously allowed internal flexibility of expressions of Jewish practice.²¹⁸ One could debate and discuss theology and hermeneutics within the proscribed orthodoxy, but one could not breach this line without risking social and religious ostracism.²¹⁹ It was a gradual process. The rabbinic class arose not in a *coup de foudre*, but through struggle with other groups, such as the priestly caste, who vied a seat at the table, and for authority over Jewish life.²²⁰ Stefan Reif’s history of Jewish prayer²²¹ is an excellent review of the process of “rabbinization” in late antiquity through medieval centuries and beyond.

The prevailing assumption among contemporary scholars is that Piyyut, Jewish liturgical poetry, perfectly mirrors and draws from rabbinic literature. Benjamin Harshav reviews Hebrew poetic forms,²²² beginning with biblical poetry, moving on to post-biblical poetry, and moves

²¹⁷ Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice: Les mutations religieuses de l’antiquité tardive*, 99-102.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

²²⁰ Jacob Neusner, *The Four Stages of Rabbinic Judaism*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 78.

²²¹ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, Chapter 6, 164-216.

²²² Harshav, *Three Thousand Years of Hebrew Versification*, 70.

immediately to Qiliric rhymed poetry, ignoring the anonymous period, ignoring Yosse ben Yosse, glossing over a formative phase in Jewish religious versification. Shulamit Elizur,²²³ the renowned scholar of piyyut, considers Yosse ben Yosse a skilled poet and a gifted orator, but does not identify him as distinctive from rabbinic literature in any way. In her Qilir compendium²²⁴ she seamlessly connects piyyut and prayer as two sides of the same coin. Concerned with the literary characteristics of piyyut, Elizur ties the poetic forms used by Qillir to the “less evolved” forms used by Yosse ben Yosse,²²⁵ and clearly maintains that Yosse ben Yosse, Yanai, and Qillir are members of the same undifferentiated rabbinic tradition.²²⁶

Swartz and Yahalom treat piyyut in general and piyyutic narration of the Avodah as direct expressions of rabbinic thought.²²⁷ Yosse ben Yosse, according to Swartz and Yahalom, is the first of many who wrote about the Avodah, directly retelling Mishnah Yoma. Piyyut is conceived of as a “prettier” way of expressing rabbinic ideas, a more popular, palatable, and aesthetic form of expressing rabbinic hermeneutics and prescriptive halachas.²²⁸ An “embellishment to the established liturgical order,”²²⁹ piyyut is merely repackaged rabbinism. Piyyut, for them, is a continuation of the musical tradition of ancient musicality and dance that permeated temple services,²³⁰ or the mnemonically distinctive religious songs that were the assets of the unlettered congregants.²³¹ Swartz and Yahalom subvert piyyut to rabbinic texts.

²²³ Shulamit Elizur, *A Poem for Every Parasha: Torah Readings Reflected in Piyyutim*, (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1999), 361.

²²⁴ Shulamit Elizur, *Rabbi El'azar Berabbi Qillir: Liturgical Poems for Rosh Ha-Shana*, (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2014), 3.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

²²⁷ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*, 3.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 42.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

This may indeed be applicable to many a paytan's work, such as the piyyut²³² that is mentioned in the ninth century rabbinic prayer manual of Rav Amram Ga'on, not, I argue, to the Yosse ben Yosse Avodah piyyutim.

Menachem Zulai²³³ reviews the vast corpus of piyyutic literature and counts Yosse ben Yosse as the as of yet lone identified representative of the anonymous period.²³⁴ Discussing the chain of transmission of piyyutic traditions, however, he regards piyyut as a subset of rabbinic literature.²³⁵ Indeed, he regards piyyutic tradition as a fecund tradition of ornamenting prayer: "The creative mystery of the early paytanim ... (rests on) an ancient tradition that was handed down from person to person, from paytan to paytan ... In (Talmud) Yerushalmi Tractate Brachot [5:4] R. Acha (said) in the name of R. Yosse who taught that new elements in prayer ought to be daily practiced."²³⁶

Piyyut as prayer, is understood by Moshe Weinfeld, to be rabbinically designed and informed.²³⁷ Yehuda Ratzaby²³⁸ asserts that prayer is the creation of the rabbis, and piyyut was a more artistic and popular ornamentation of worship, but eventually the two branches united into a singular rabbinic body of work. He repeats the belief that piyyut grew out of necessity, as Byzantine (some say Persian) rulers forbade synagogue prayers as seditious but allowed prayerful singing.²³⁹ According to Ratzaby, the fundamental difference between prayer and piyyut is musical. Prayer led by a *Shaliach Tzibur*, cantor, is a more passive form of synagogue

²³² Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*, 53-67.

²³³ Zulai, *Eretz Israel and its poetry: Studies in Piyyutim from the Cairo Geniza*.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 33, 86.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 65 (my translation).

²³⁷ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*, 125, 168-169.

²³⁸ Yehuda Ratzaby, *Migginze Shirat Hakkedem: Texts and Studies in Orient Liturgical Poetry*, (Jerusalem: Misgav, 2001), 249-252.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.

worship or private worship, but piyyut is sung by the congregation entire, hence their enduring appeal to the people. Eventually piyyut merged with prayer, because its aims and ideas were rabbinic. Piyyut is a more palatable style of prayer, it does not possess an independent identity other than its unique delivery system of rabbinic thought.²⁴⁰ Moshe Spiegel²⁴¹ claimed that paytanim were erudite and learned men, who were fully versed in rabbinic literature and drew their core materials therefrom. Their audiences too were familiar with the Jewish literary legacy, and readily recognized images and verses that the paytanim employed. Piyyut was, according to Spiegel, a form of preaching, a different way of sermonizing, not a distinctive value-laden exegesis in its own right.²⁴²

Yahalom and Swartz²⁴³ have included some Yosse ben Yosse poems in their anthology of Yom Kippur Avodah poems, maintaining that the main topic of Yosse ben Yosse's liturgical poetry was the Avodah.²⁴⁴ God, in Leviticus, commands Moses to instruct Aaron to yearly perform the complex penitent ritual Avodah, the priestly Yom Kippur service at the temple. In post destruction Judaic literature there was a concerted effort to recreate and reimagine the Avodah, as a way of asserting religious-political authority over the People given a declarative continuity between Biblical accounts and contemporary understandings thereof. The ontologically constitutive importance of the virtual temple cannot be overstated. The creative strategies of reimagining the temple and of virtualizing its continued presence despite the destruction, were primarily intended to create a common Judaism, to establish common ritual,

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 250.

²⁴¹ Menahem H. Schmelzer, ed. *Moshe Spiegel- The Fathers of Piyyut: Texts and Studies Toward a History of the Piyyut in Eretz Israel*, (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1996).

²⁴² Ibid., 308-309.

²⁴³ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*.

²⁴⁴ The Avodah as it is used in this dissertation, is the term for the rituals of atonement pertaining to the priestly Yom Kippur service in the Temple, roughly translated as the "work," or the "worshipful action."

common memory, and common parameters for arbitrating the traditional way of life. Until post-modern theory ignited greater skepticism in Jewish historiographic scholarship,²⁴⁵ students of Jewish religion and history had come to think of the Mishnah as a historically authentic voice,²⁴⁶ and therefore Mishnah Tractate Yoma²⁴⁷ has become the constitutive and dominant discourse on the Avodah.

Yahalom and Schwartz compare Yosse ben Yosse to subsequent paytanim whose subject matter was the Avodah, but they implicitly suggest that Yosse ben Yosse was but a pale precursor to later, more sophisticated liturgists. Scholars who study early piyyutic works, such as Yahalom,²⁴⁸ Swartz,²⁴⁹ Zulai,²⁵⁰ Fleischer,²⁵¹ Spiegel,²⁵² Nitzan,²⁵³ Weinfeld,²⁵⁴ Elizur,²⁵⁵ and Ratzaby,²⁵⁶ among so many others, have more often than not chosen to minimize the historical and religious importance of Yosse ben Yosse, a fact that itself merits interrogation. Most contemporary scholars appear to categorize Yosse ben Yosse as an “un-evolved” and decidedly rabbinic liturgist, focusing primarily on the linguistic and grammatical characteristics of his texts

²⁴⁵ A case in point is the seminal work: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989).

²⁴⁶ Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 26; Some Orthodox rabbinic academies still promote the idea of the Mishnah as the exclusive authentic record of Jewish history and Law, but they are today a minority and certainly do not reflect modern academic scholarship on these topics.

²⁴⁷ Tractate Yoma (Aramaic: יוֹמָא, literally: "day") is the fifth Tractate of Seder Mo'ed ("Order of Festivals"), the second of the six Orders of the Mishnah and of the Talmud. Tractate Yomah is concerned mainly with the laws of the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur, on which Jews atone for their sins from the previous year. It consists of eight chapters (seven of which pertain to this study, whereas the eighth chapter contains practical regulations concerning fasting on the Day of Atonement, listing what may or may not be done by Jewish lay practitioners. Yosse ben Yosse is strictly preoccupied with the priestly soteriological role in the Temple) and has a Gemara ("Completion") from both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

²⁴⁸ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*; Yosef Yahalom, *Poetic Language in the Early piyyut* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 1985).

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Menahem Zulai, *The Land of Israel and its Piyyutim- Studies in Genizah Piyyut* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 2006).

²⁵¹ Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 1975); Ezra Fleischer, *Prayer and Prayer Practices in Eretz Yisrael during the Period of the Genizah* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 1988).

²⁵² Schmelzer, ed., *Fathers of piyyut: Texts and Studies Toward a History of the piyyut in Eretz Yisrael*.

²⁵³ Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*.

²⁵⁴ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*.

²⁵⁵ Elizur, *The Piyyutim of Rabbi El'azar Birabbi Qillar*.

²⁵⁶ Ratzaby, *Migginze Shirat Hakkedem: Texts and Studies in Orient Liturgical Poetry*.

that have reached us from late antiquity. They implicitly suggest that Yosse ben Yosse was but a pale precursor to later, more sophisticated liturgists. The Yosse ben Yosse scholarship has hitherto, as I hope to demonstrate, been insufficient, and it therefore became the focus of my study, as I seek to fill the lacuna. Scholars have yet to closely examine his poetic language and structures, consider broader questions of his exegetical, cultural, and societal importance. In turn, it becomes fascinating to then explore intriguing motifs in his worldview – the role of God in history, the covenant with the people of Israel, questions of religious authority over the practice of Judaism, and the eschatological horizon described in the piyyutim.

Since Mirsky, there has not yet been a scholarly study of Yosse ben Yosse, in the vein of Laura Lieber's study of Yannai on Genesis.²⁵⁷ Lieber studied Yannai and investigated precisely the topics that are still lacking concerning Yosse ben Yosse. Scholars have yet to examine his poetic language and structures, to consider broader questions of his exegetical, cultural, and societal importance, and then to explore intriguing motifs in his worldview – the role of God in history, the covenant with the people of Israel, questions of religious authority over the practice of Judaism, and the eschatological horizon described in the piyyutim. Lieber's book provides an excellent template for study, as she explores these very topics with reference to Yannai. In this dissertation, I seek to address these questions with reference to Yosse ben Yosse.

Scholars and academicians often tend to regard piyyut as an embellishment²⁵⁸, a fanciful and creative divergence that bears little validity as a source that can divulge historical information. As a result, Yosse ben Yosse's discourse, among a possible variety of other

²⁵⁷ Laura S. Lieber, *Yannai On Gen.: An Invitation To Piyyut*, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2010).

²⁵⁸ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*; Yahalom, *Poetic Language in the Early Piyyut*.

discursive treatments of the subject, has at best been marginalized, along with the worldview it encodes. As knowledge is the product of a process through which truth, power, knowledge and authority are constituted by dialogical power relations, some discourses were, over time, become privileged in terms of their presumed authenticity and relation to the truth, while other discourses were subjugated, marginalized and otherwise excluded. One of my goals for this dissertation is to demonstrate that Yosse should not be assimilated into the discourse of Yoma since it forms a somewhat separate discourse.²⁵⁹

Further Chapters

Chapter 2, entitled “Methodology” outlines the systematic parameters that facilitated this study. The chapter introduces the terminology and methodological and organizational framework, and the tools that facilitated the study before us. The power relations between Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbinic Avodah texts is examined through critical discourse.

Chapter 3, entitled “Structure and Substance: Thematic and Literary Contours,” offers a detailed and original survey of the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre. The so called “taxonomy,” or rather the formal considerations for the classification of the piyyutim in several categories, are my own. The textual analysis of the extant piyyutim that are attributed to Yosse ben Yosse offers an overview of the subjects that appear to have been important to the paytan. Textual and literary analysis also reveals a stylistic and material discrepancy between the piyyut אִז בְּדַעַת חֶקֶר and the

²⁵⁹ Sara Mills, *Discourse*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 7, 55, 107-108: One has to try to hear the echoes of the voices that have been effaced through the contestation of power, and one cannot accept at face value the dominant message alone, because the surface of discourse is not the sum-total of statements on a particular situation. Each discourse examined here makes statements that bear truth claims ratified by knowledge, and each side in the dialogue claims, this truth to be validated by authority.

rest of the Avodah works,²⁶⁰ with my analysis leading to the conclusion that the piyyut is falsely attributed to Yosse ben Yosse.

Chapter 4, entitled “Two Narratives: Mishnah Yoma and Yosse ben Yosse’s Avodah Liturgy,” summarizes the findings borne out of the methodical comparison of Mishnah Yoma to the Avodah piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse. I present the full comparison in Appendix B²⁶¹ of this dissertation and present a detailed comparison between Yosse ben Yosse’s oeuvre and Mishnah Yoma 1-7, seeking to highlight and underscore the similarities and differences between the two narratives. I discuss and contextualize these findings and point out the principal differences between the two narratives, making observations regarding the plausible reasons for discrepancies, as well as describing the socio-political implications thereof. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions drawn from this study. At the end of this chapter, I outline several areas of study that have not been included in this present study, but ought to be considered in future.

This dissertation includes two appendices that are presented here for the convenience of readers. Much of the content of these appendices appears in the body of the dissertation. In Appendix A of this dissertation, I offer a novel contribution in the form of a fully annotated and complete translation of the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre as we know it. Scholars such as Schwartz and Yahalom²⁶² presented partial and un-annotated translations of some of the piyyutim. This, however, is an improvement on the current state of knowledge, for it presents Yosse ben Yosse’s piyyutim as a single literary body of work. Moreover, the translation and annotation are the basis upon which this dissertation was written. It is characterized by the assumptions made here and

²⁶⁰ The Avodah piyyutim are: **אספר גדולות** (Appendix A, pp. 167-192), **אז בדעת חקר** (Appendix A, pp. 193-250), **אתה כוננת** (Appendix A, pp. 251-330), and **אזכיר גבורות** (Appendix A, pp. 331-446).

²⁶¹ Appendix B, p. 746

²⁶² Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*.

undergirds the comparative study of the piyyutim with Mishnah Yoma 1-7. At the end of the translation, I offer a statistical review of all the sources that appear to have informed Yosse ben Yosse's works. I offer these data to future scholars, as an investigative tool that could lead to a deeper interrogation of the texts.

Appendix B of this dissertation also consists of a new contribution, in the form of a detailed comparison of the four Avodot that are attributed to Yosse ben Yosse: אזכיר גבורות, , אספר גדולות, אתה כוננת, , אז בדעת חקר , with Mishnah Yoma 1-7. This detailed comparison has yielded promising avenues for further research into the contextual interplay between rabbinic and possibly non-rabbinic traditions within the overarching historical framework of the period.²⁶³

A salient and prominent feature of Jewish life is a reverence for tradition. This understanding undergirds every aspect of Jewish life be it intellectual or practical, economic, social, technological or political. The paradigmatic insistence on tradition contains its very antithesis in the form of institutions that guide the process of accepting or rejecting innovations over time. This mechanism hinges on receiving authorization from the ultimate master text – the Torah. "... the illusion is that the texts speak through a *rabbinic* authority rather than having the *rabbi* speak on his own ... (and thus) allows for subtle changes to occur as part of a chain of tradition from the past to the present ... (and) represents an unbroken chain to the past ... (as) a linkage of early, past generations and their traditions to the present generation."²⁶⁴ In our case, substitute the word "rabbinic" for "priestly," and you have thus charted the broad contours of the contest in late antiquity.

²⁶³ Amram Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," In *Rabbinic Texts and the History of Late Roman Palestine*, ed. M. Goodman and P. Alexander, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 102.

²⁶⁴ Fishbane, "No 'Right' of Passage? The Rabbinic Dispute Regarding the Propriety of *Bat Mitzvah* Celebrations," 74-75; Edward Albert Shils, *Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 14.

The shifting landscape in late antiquity caused an inevitable clash between two main schools of thought, two main organizational entities, pitting the rabbinic movement promoted change, against the priestly caste resisted change and religious innovation. Both groups provided platforms for meeting the revolutionary change imposed upon all Jews by the destruction of the Second Temple: the rabbinic class through religious innovation, and the priestly caste by insistence on the centrality of their role in shaping Jewish life. Both groups worried about survival and self-perpetuation, the people's and their own, and both sought to foster regularity, stability, security, continuity of Jewish life henceforth. Each group positioned itself as the authoritative arbiters and shapers of socio-religious life after the destruction.²⁶⁵ A new era of Jewish life unfolded, imposed by external and internal forces. The profound transformation required a different paradigm and mandated radical shifts, given the dislocation and new demographic reconfiguration of the nation. The transformational moment influenced Jewish demography, but it also threatened to change Jewish identity, both social and religious.²⁶⁶ Jewish life had to be reconstituted in the absence of the temple. The enormity of the revolution cannot be overstated. It affected every aspect of every facet on the full spectrum of Jewish civilization itself. The destruction of the temple was the proverbial stone cast into the waters of Jewish history, creating ever larger concentric eddies of transformation. The trick was to find a sustainable balancing of change and stability, of innovation and tradition, of the new and the old responses to the God of Israel and to reality. Jewish life was henceforth fragmented geographically and socially. It required legal and religious guidance that would preserve the

²⁶⁵ Eric Levine, "Introduction: Movements, Institutions and Organizations: Mobilizing for Religious Change." In *Dynamics of Continuity and Change in Jewish Religious Life*, ed. S. Fishbane and E. Levine, (New York: Touro College Press, 2018), 3.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

unity of the people cum nation, despite the variability and diversity of Jewish ecosystems in which the people cum individuals lived and laboured. In the absence of a central figure, a synthesis of insights was sought, in order to ensure the survival and continuity of Judaism itself.

The rabbinic class was a new organization, the priestly caste represented an older institution, and the two strove to emerge from the contest as the authoritative, authorized, sanctioned, and legitimate specialist authority in Jewish life, after the destruction. “Organizations are critical vehicles for pursuing collective and shared meaning, needs and purposes. They are carriers of tradition, platforms for maintaining social stability and continuity, while at the same time providing the framework for change ... (They are) collective enterprises... (that serve) as essential vehicles for social life.”²⁶⁷ As with every cultural upheaval, “the dialectic of forces pressing for stasis and transformation (were) in continuous tension.”²⁶⁸ Each group had to demonstrate its legitimacy and convince the common folk that its claim to authority was worthy of support. To do so, each group created narratives about itself, composed myths, used symbolic language, introduced new rituals, and fashioned ceremonial activities, to buttress its perception of the group’s inherent privilege and title.²⁶⁹ This was not only an ideological contest. It was an all-encompassing claim to lead, to adjudicate, to govern Jewish life in all its myriad of encounters with reality, through nothing short of the authoritative mantle of a biblical mandate.

The response to the “other” could have been of two methods. The first option was to negate the credentials of the rival claimants, to minimize the strength and influence by denying their authority and to criticize their influence. Each group could claim that the other group’s

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

mandate depended on an array of social realities that no longer apply. The second option was to portray the rival opinion as valid, virtuous, and grand, but henceforth an unobtainable pursuit because of the new reality.²⁷⁰ Both the rabbinic class and the priestly caste tried to co-opt the rival group, to convince its constituent members that they too can regard themselves as part of the Family of Israel and consider themselves demonstrably as members in the same grand Jewish enterprise.

A systematic approach was required so as to integrate the competing group and maintain the social fabric, while perpetuating the community as an indivisible ontological unit despite its diverse expressions.²⁷¹ It was a historic balancing act of unparalleled complexity, to foster communal cohesion while at the same time balancing the pressure for change or the demands for resistance. "...it reflects uneasiness with the influence of the authority base in the existing reality. This method ... is a common technique applied in traditional cultures as a way of neutralizing the active influence of elements sanctified by past generations, towards which there is a certain feeling of obligation, but that have been deemed undesirable under current circumstances.²⁷² The dramatic story of Yosse ben Yosse's resistance to rabbinic forces of transformation features a nuanced two-step of confrontation and consensus.²⁷³ This is a story that stands in eloquent testimony to the fecundity of expressions of Jewish life in late antiquity, the progenitor of a remarkable unfolding of Jewish history.

²⁷⁰ Benjamin Brown, "The Comeback of Simple Faith: The Ultra-Orthodox Concept of Faith and its Development in the Nineteenth Century," In *Dynamics of Continuity and Change in Jewish Religious Life*, ed. S. Fishbane and E. Levine, (New York: Touro College Press, 2018), 133.

²⁷¹ Fishbane, "No "Right" of Passage? The Rabbinic Dispute Regarding the Propriety of *Bat Mitzvah* Celebrations," 79.

²⁷² Brown, "The Comeback of Simple Faith: The Ultra-Orthodox Concept of Faith and its Development in the Nineteenth Century," 133.

²⁷³ Levine, "Introduction: Movements, Institutions and Organizations: Mobilizing for Religious Change," 131.

This dissertation represents a case study of an historical instance of tradition meeting transition head on, due to a revolutionary transformation of reality. The contest took place after the destruction of the Second Temple, between two types of intellectual frameworks – the rabbinic and the priestly. The appraisal of these forces in this dissertation should in no way be confused with idealization and/or admiration for one party or the other.²⁷⁴ I observe them both to the best of my ability as a dispassionate scholar, even as my own intellectual and emotional Jewish identity is well rooted in the rabbinic tradition.

²⁷⁴ Brown, "The Comeback of Simple Faith: The Ultra-Orthodox Concept of Faith and its Development in the Nineteenth Century," 76.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Descriptive Survey: Textual Analysis

Yosse ben Yosse wrote in a style we can imagine as a mosaic of biblical verses. The couplets of each line, or each strophe, of each statement, can be traced to specific verses in the Hebrew Bible. There are two lines of investigation that may be useful in the study of these sources. First is a quantitative analysis of the source material used by Yosse ben Yosse. Which books did he favour, and which did he ignore? What in those sources attract his attention? What about the other books that do not interest him and why? What can we learn from the types of sources and from the preponderance of some over others? Yosse ben Yosse is pivotal as a sage who re-imagined the Avodah and who contributed materially and significantly to the recitation thereof in the prayers of Yom Kippur. Beyond the content of his piyyutim, the literary form and source materials Yosse ben Yosse favoured are indicative of more than mere linguistic and poetic proclivities. Even as Mirsky has done a superb job of annotating the source materials for most verses in Yosse ben Yosse's works, more quantitative analysis must be done in order to study the tendencies and the reasons behind them; Yosse ben Yosse drew from Leviticus, Isaiah and from the Psalms more than from any other book in the Bible, and completely ignored other books. Knowing what he privileged may disclose something important about his world view and philosophy. Measuring the privileged sources and the sources he ignored, may reveal the subtext of his piyyutim, especially when analyzed contextually with the thematic content of the songs. This has not yet been done.

This chapter examines translation as a hermeneutic endeavor. It establishes the theoretical base upon which the scholarly edifice of this dissertation is founded. A brief discussion of the Avodah, the temple cult of Yom Kippur, is presented as the thematic infrastructure of the study.

In the effort to mine for meaning ensconced in the text, the chapter reviews the historical context of fifth century Byzantine Palestine, thus bracketing the literary analysis and the exploration of power relations within a defined historiographic period. The primary methodology chosen for this dissertation is Critical Discourse Analysis, given its engagement with texts that were, it is argued, written by competing socio-religious groups vying for ascendancy and authority at the time. Its corollary methodology is an exploration of the ontological uses of language. The chapter identifies seven component elements of rabbinic and piyyutic language use, that shaped Jewish reality. I do not wish to reiterate Mirsky's work, but to add another layer and to expand our understanding and knowledge of Yosse ben Yosse.

There are certain things we can say about Yosse ben Yosse with some measure of confidence, and there are many more things we have yet to learn. If indeed we adopt a skeptical epistemological approach to the body of work before us, we may be able to redress the problematic systemic disregard for Yosse ben Yosse among scholars of Jewish liturgy. We will not be able to ascertain where Yosse ben Yosse had lived, and whether he belonged to an alternative group of Priestly challengers. All we may be able to say, with careful methodology, will be but a plausible explanation supported by textual and archaeological evidence. There is no smoking gun, no incontrovertible positive proof to be found, only informed speculation about historical possibilities about the context in which Yosse ben Yosse wrote his piyyutim.

There are several questions before us: are the manuscripts in our possession evidence of an oral tradition, or were they copies of original written texts? Are the spelling and vocalization marks true to the original form, or were they scribal additions? Mirsky collects the known piyyutim ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse as well as the ones ascribed to him with a measure of doubt. He also offers an exhaustive list of variant versions of the piyyutim, relying on fragments

retrieved from the Genizah. He admits there may be others yet to be found, and that a possible unknown number of piyyutim have been lost over time.²⁷⁵ Citing several instances of alternative manuscripts, Mirsky does not however clarify the precise considerations that led him to determine which of the manuscripts is an “original” and which is an “alternative.” Do the nuanced differences between the manuscripts change the content and meaning of the piyyutim in question? What is the origin of the various versions and what does this variety disclose about piyyutic literature in general and about Yosse ben Yosse specifically?

One of the primary barriers to the study of Yosse ben Yosse has been his arcane Biblical Hebrew vocabulary. Even though Swartz and Yahalom offer a partial translation of some of the 15 known piyyutim, there remains a need to present the full body of work in its English translations, to facilitate wider scholarly work. Indeed, even Modern Hebrew speakers tend to find it difficult to plumb the linguistic challenge of these piyyutim. In Appendix A of this dissertation, I follow the translation of each piyyut with a summary of the source materials interrogated by Yosse ben Yosse. At the end of the full collection, I summarized the statistical data, not in order to present a predictive statistical model, but in order to avail future scholars with a phenomenological map, a scaffold upon which to construct new investigations.

Textual analysis of the piyyutim in relation to the biblical sources must explore the thematic trajectory of the piyyutim, and the use of language as it intimates these concerns in a specific historical context. How did Yosse ben Yosse regard history and time? What was his notion of the role of God in history? What were his eschatological, soteriological, and apocalyptic ideas, and how do they fit into our understanding of the state of affairs at the time?

²⁷⁵ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 62.

We have, thanks to the labour of Aharon Mirsky, a total of 15 piyyutim that are considered to have been written by Yosse ben Yosse. The provenance of three of these piyyutim is, according to Mirsky, in dispute. Some of the piyyutim were known to R. Sa'adya Ga'on, others were found in the Cairo Genizah. But how do we know that Yosse ben Yosse actually wrote them? On what basis have they been ascribed to him? How does one determine the provenance of the disputed piyyutim? Why are they disputed in the first place? Are there other piyyutim and is our inventory exhaustive? Could there be fragments and manuscripts that have yet to be catalogued and that may in fact have been penned by Yosse ben Yosse? For the purposes of this dissertation, I have not dived into the Genizah wells and have not sought more Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim that have escaped our attention. I have chosen to focus my efforts on the 15 existing piyyutim. I confine myself here to the collection of Yosse ben Yosse poetry, published by Aharon Mirsky. I do not concern myself with the various versions of the piyyutim for the time being.²⁷⁶

Mirsky contends that Yosse ben Yosse was an intensely nationalist paytan, and that he was concerned with the memory of Jewish sovereignty, with the aspirations for national reconstitution and imminent salvation.²⁷⁷ I subscribed to the same view when I wrote my MA thesis,²⁷⁸ but have subsequently revised my thinking on the subject. I now think, on the basis of my close reading of the liturgical poetry, that Yosse ben Yosse was focused less on a national

²⁷⁶ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 7-11. Bear in mind that texts have reached us after many centuries of scribal transmission, both rabbinic and non-rabbinic, one must treat them with some suspicion. The Yosse ben Yosse liturgy was saved from oblivion thanks to the inclusion of several piyyutim in the Jewish prayer book, some piyyutim were mentioned in the writings of R. Sa'adia Ga'on, and some were re-discovered thanks to the extraordinary good fortune of the discovery of the Cairo Genizah. Errors in transcription and transmission, have resulted in an array of fragmentary versions of the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, and it is possible that additional fragments still lurk unattributed to the Paytan in the archives of Genizah manuscripts yet un-catalogued. Shulamit Elizur studied the stylistic characteristics of Yosse ben Yosse's works and has found a few echoes in subsequent paytanim. See: Shulamit Elizur, "שרידי נוספים של תקיעות בנוסח יוסי בן יוסי" *Tarbitz* 5752 (1992): 227-236.

²⁷⁷ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 22.

²⁷⁸ Esther Mayer, *Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine*, (Montreal: Concordia University, 2011).

revival and more on a re-enactment of temple cultic practices, with an eye to the restoration of the priestly authority over Jewish practice in the post-destruction era, and in preparation for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in accordance with Torah law and in line with later prophecies,²⁷⁹ especially the prophecies of Isaiah. Was Mirsky speaking from a modern vantage point of a Zionist Israeli scholar whose own life expressed this modern political salvation of the Jewish Nation in the State of Israel?²⁸⁰

The Sacrificial Cult

Modern religious concepts do not easily absorb or ‘get the point’ of the sacrificial cult. Sacrifices do not “make sense” to us any longer. We often think of them as “primitive,” lacking in sophistication, barbaric, gory, and unintelligent. Israelites in antiquity, like their regional neighbours both near and far, sensed in sacrifices a material connection with the deity, affected through smoke that wafted to the heavens, carrying with it the prayers, hopes, and sorrows directly from the hearts of men and women. Sacrifices gave humans a way of mastering their spiritual and material lives. One could actually do something to ensure the continued salubrity of the people. One did not have to feel helpless and powerless in the face of the vicissitudes of fate and nature. And, most auspiciously, one could do it from God’s own House. There, one could foster a personal relationship with God, that could be enacted through the mediation of qualified and authorized priests. The Hebrew word קורבן speaks of the root קר"ב, come near, approach, be

²⁷⁹ A traditional taxonomy of prophetic works classifies the books of prophecies into two groups: The early prophets of the books Joshua, Judges, Samuel 1&2, Kings 1&2. These contain historic narratives about the events that shaped the national configuration of Israel and Judea, as well as a history of the monarchies. Their historic endpoint is the destruction of the First Temple in 586BCE. The later prophets are classified as the books of named prophets who spoke about the consequences of behaviour good and bad. They include the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezek., Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Hab., Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. See: Tosefta Sotah 13:2; Bavli Sotah 48:B; Mishnah Yoma 5:3; Mishnah Sotah 9:15; Michael Avioz, “On the Typology of ‘The First Prophets,’” *JSIS* 8 (2009): 1-7, <http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JS11/8-2009/Avioz.pdf>.

²⁸⁰Efraim Shmueli, “The Jerusalem School of Jewish History: A Critical Evaluation,” *American Academy for Jewish Research* 53 (1986): 147-178.

one with, whereas the ritual act of slaughtering animals brings the people closer to God. In English, the word Sacrifice speaks of sacrality, which is the result of this perceived rapprochement.²⁸¹ Mira Balberg's ground breaking book, *Blood for Thought*,²⁸² traces the evolution of rabbinic thought on the topic of sacrifices before and, more intensively, after the destruction of the Second Temple. Even while the temple stood, sacrifice was sporadically experienced by most Jews, most of whom resided in places located at considerable distances from Jerusalem. Biblical rituals, the symbolic set of actions that "are intrinsically valued and... repeated (by) ritual actors trying to behave in keeping with expected character and roles by using stylized gestures and words,"²⁸³ stand at the fulcrum of rabbinic efforts at solidifying their religious and political power amongst Jews. It focused on the drama of sacrificial rituals whose communicative character had religious and ontological intent writ into them.²⁸⁴ But it also sought to displace the priestly caste as the biblically mandated principal actor in the sacrificial drama, and become the "ultimate authorities in interpreting scripture, and in translating scripture into a way of life"²⁸⁵ through engagement with the definitive ritual of biblical practices.

Any ritual must follow carefully scripted words and gestures in ways that honour and indeed valorize the original texts.²⁸⁶ Whereas the bible identified the priests as the actors who carry out the sacrificial rituals on Yom Kippur,²⁸⁷ the rabbis sought to insert themselves as the progenitors of the precise script. The bible mandated sacrifices, but it was the rabbis of Mishnah

²⁸¹ Jacob Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics- A Continental Commentary*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004), 19.

²⁸² Mira Balberg. *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017).

²⁸³ Frederick B. Bird. "Ritual as Communicative Action," In *Ritual and Ethnic Identity, A Comparative Study of the Social Meaning of Liturgical Ritual in Synagogues*, ed. J. Lightstone and F. Bird with Simcha Fishbane, Victor Levin, Marc Lalonde, Louise Mayer, and Madeleine Mcbrearty, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1995), 23-52.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 23

²⁸⁵ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 14.

²⁸⁶ Bird, "Ritual as Communicative Action," 26.

²⁸⁷ Lev. 16.

Yoma who unpacked the edict into its components and instructed the priests on the correct stylized words and gestures necessary in fulfillment of the biblical instruction. This is central to the rabbinic revolution, whereas rituals are ontologically constitutive, they signify the social group of which they are part, and they “bring about states of consciousness that are integral to and necessary condition for”²⁸⁸ the social group’s sense as a living organism. Jews understood the social organism to be a part of God’s creation, so the ritual act of sacrifices was an imperative act that assured them of their continued existence through God’s grace. The Mishnah’s rabbis carried out nothing short of a revolution as they undertook to be the principal mediators of practices that regulate Jewish life.²⁸⁹

Whereas biblical sacrifice was attended by blood and gore, the revolutionary sacrificial ritual transformed into a verbal recitation and exegetical study of the acts which, the rabbis insisted, were still efficacious. The Bavli Talmud Tractate Berachot 8A recounts that there were 13 synagogues in Tiberias, and that the great rabbis each prayed only in their own place of study. It is an instructive conflation of prayer and study, that renders them equal in importance and efficacy. Moreover, prayer took second place to the study of Torah’s preeminence. The true heir to the Avodah of the temple, according to the Talmud, was study.²⁹⁰ The communion now flowed directly from the lips of the individual in prayer and in study directly to God’s Grace itself through the ritual recitation.²⁹¹ Worshippers and scholars could henceforth transmute payment to God from blood to words, as in: שפתינו פרים ונשלמה²⁹² without the mediating agency

²⁸⁸ Bird, “Ritual as Communicative Action,” 30.

²⁸⁹ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 19.

²⁹⁰ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 111.

²⁹¹ Bird. “Ritual as Communicative Action,” 39.

²⁹² Hosea 14:3.

of the priests. The rabbis assured Jewish practitioners that provide self-representation and establish a good fit between the scripted texts and the participants:²⁹³

Master of the worlds, You commanded us to bring the continual offering at its set time, and that the Kohanim, be at their assigned service, the Levites on their platform, and the Israelites at their station. But now, through our sins, the Holy Temple is destroyed, the continual offering is discontinued, and we have neither Kohen at his service, nor Levite on his platform, nor Israelite at his station. But You said: "Let our lips compensate for the bulls," therefore may it be Your will, Lord, our God and the God of our forefathers, that the prayer of our lips be worthy, acceptable, and favourable before You, as if we had brought the continual offering at its set time and we had stood at its station.²⁹⁴

The new egalitarian sense of connectedness and connection changed Judaism forever from a caste-structured society of un-equals, to a meritocratic association before God. The priests meanwhile, through texts such as Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim, sought to defend their social position through the traditional interpretation of the biblical rules of engagement. They defended their status no less than expounding their theological convictions.²⁹⁵ Each party put into words its perception of the faithful historical reconstruction of the temple cults, arguing for its exclusive position in the power structure of Jewish society.

One of the means through which the rabbis intentionally usurped the biblical role of the priestly caste as the conduits of atonement, is through the notion of פיגול (pigul), the ritual rejection of sacrificial meat.²⁹⁶ The rabbis instituted a disqualifying factor that rendered sacrifices invalid because of improper thought at the time of the slaughter of the offering.²⁹⁷ The halachah is based on Exodus 29:33: "*And they shall eat those things wherewith atonement was*

²⁹³ Bird, "Ritual as Communicative Action," 47.

²⁹⁴ Scherman, Nosson, *The Complete ArtScroll Siddur: Weekday/Sabbath/Festival (ArtScroll Mesorah)*, ed. Meir Zlotowitz, (New York: Mesorah Publication, 2008), 40.

²⁹⁵ Bird, "Ritual as Communicative Action," 49.

²⁹⁶ See: "Rejected Sacrificial Meat ('Pigul'): Negative Commandment 132." Last updated 2019. Chabad.org. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/961776/jewish/Negative-Commandment-132.htm

²⁹⁷ Maimonides, *Hilchot Psulei HaMukdashin*, 13:4.

made, to consecrate and to sanctify them; but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.” Only priests are allowed to eat from the sacrificial meat. But then the rabbis invoke Leviticus 7:18: *“And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be at all eaten on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it; it shall be an abhorred thing, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity.”* The rabbis declare the offering invalid as a result of a thought, and one who eats from it after having such a thought is punished severely.²⁹⁸ The notion of Piggul is unrelated to the manner in which a sacrifice is performed, but hinges on the thoughts that reverberated unspoken, unheard, and inherently unknowable, in the mind of the priest who performed the act.²⁹⁹ The rabbis alone determine what the improper thought might be, they police even the inner voices in the priests’ minds, they therefore are the sole arbiters of correct conduct in the service of God. In so doing the rabbis downplayed the priestly role as inconsequential to the desired spiritual effect of atonement. What remained was the Avodah, the procedural rendition of the ritual, performed by anonymous, nameless priests who were guided by rabbis who are identified in Mishnah Yoma by name.³⁰⁰ In the fourth century already synagogue worship included recitation of the Avodah. The Avodah is mentioned in the Talmud (Yoma 36:B).³⁰¹

Mystery and myth were and still remain intermingled with reality. All monotheistic religions worship an unseen God,³⁰² He, having been intellectualized from mystery and

²⁹⁸ Bavli Tractate Zevachim 28B; Bavli Tractate Nedarim 36; Yerushalmi Tractate Orla 2:9.

²⁹⁹ The Hebrew is a concise encapsulation of the idea. I found the Hebrew to be a better “fit” with the idea.

³⁰⁰ Examples: Mishnah Yoma 1:1 Rabbi Yehoudah; Yoma 2:3 Ben Azai, Rabbi Akivaj, Rabbi Yehoshua.

³⁰¹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 27.

³⁰² Some tend to think of Christian religious art as an expression of an Imaged God. This is a common fallacy born of a misunderstanding of visual piety in Christian devotional practices. The icons, sculptures, and other images of the divine are not the subject of veneration but rather vehicles that help the worshippers commune with an omnipresent and invisible God. They facilitate worship, but they do not negate the mystery of God’s incorporeality. Visual piety is a conduit to the divine and does not replace Him. “What is more real? The images of Jesus? The historical Jesus? Or the essence of Christ, the idea or spiritual

integrated into reality, the ultimate reality of religious faith.³⁰³ Rabbinic literature at times dwells upon the mystery, as a way to affirm the efficacy of prayer as a conduit of human worship of God. The tales of Honi the Circle Maker, or of Nakdimon ben Gurion, who appealed to God's grace and found it effective as a means of changing reality for the better, are examples of magical acts performed by God and achieved through the mediating power of prayer.³⁰⁴ These tales are a commentary on prayer, on its power, on its merit, on its ability to reach God and mitigate chaos in the world. The Avodah is an example of the intermingled ultimate reality with human reality, whereas the slaughtered meat becomes sacred through a series of gestures and words, that transform it from a daily meal around the hearth, into a sacred entity that is able to negotiate the finality of death, to expiate sin and avert its punishment. The Leviathan is a colourful example of this intermingling of realities. There exists only one Leviathan. Created on the fifth day of creation, it is lord of all marine creatures, possessed of enormous strength,³⁰⁵ and clad in magnificent skin from which, at the End of Time, God will erect a shelter for the righteous, so they may celebrate a banquet of redemption.³⁰⁶ The Leviathan can be understood³⁰⁷ as a giant of the sea, the huge whale³⁰⁸ that for the Creator appears as a plaything,³⁰⁹ but regardless of its "true" nature, this mythic creature is eschatologically linked to the post-redemption period, creating a linear super-historic association that transcends time. The mythic

reality that corresponds to the believer's recognition of the picture and reaffirming utterance? Believers don't have to choose among these; instead they compile the in their devotional gaze." See: David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 43, 21-58.

³⁰³ Lawrence S. Cunningham and John Kelsay, *The Sacred Quest- An Invitation to the Study of Religion*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 22.

³⁰⁴ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 116.

³⁰⁵ Isa. 27:1.

³⁰⁶ Bava Batra, 74-B.

³⁰⁷ Rashi, for Psalm 104:26.

³⁰⁸ The Biblical Museum of Natural History, "Newsletter 22," July 2018, <https://mailchi.mp/biblicalnaturalhistory/news-from-the-biblical-museum-of-natural-history-3lie5so4sg?e=09e2f1f612>.

³⁰⁹ Psalm 104, Psalms 24-26.

Leviathan³¹⁰ thus unifies categories such as the eternal and the fleeting, the monstrous and the magnificent, grammatically linked to the dragon, the profane and the holy, and the mythic and the earthly, beyond human perceptions of time and space, defying all human conceptions of the natural world.

Unseen, the Leviathan stretches human perspicacity and inspires faith and devotion, while igniting poetic and artistic expressions such as Job's elegy³¹¹ that underscore God's eternal might. It stands in an evocative contrast with the fragility of man,³¹² whereas "... (man) is likened to a broken shard, to withering grass, to a wilting flower, to an evanescent shadow, to a dissipating cloud, to blowing wind, to billowing sand, and to a fleeting dream."³¹³ The Leviathan is a symbolic elegiac creature that glorifies God's eternal, supernatural might, His ever renewed and eternal creation, and man's dependence on God's grace within the harmony of Life. Man regards creation, and contemplates the time and space that predate creation, linking the past with an exalted future. Both the mythic past and exalted future are beyond human perspicacity. Both demand a leap of faith in a limitless God who transcends time, nature, and all attempts at categorization: "*Who didst establish the earth upon its foundations, that it should not be moved for ever and ever*" Myths are not factual, as they have to do with things we do not know and yet

³¹⁰ A second mythical creature, the Behemoth, occupies the same mythic time-defying and faith-inspiring space as the Leviathan. It too is mythic, unrelated to the hippopotamus, whose modern Hebrew appellation: בהמות (Bahamot) is reminiscent of בהמות (Behemoth). It is mentioned in Job 40:15-19: "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the stays of his body. He straineth his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are as pipes of brass; his gristles are like bars of iron. He is the beginning of the ways of God; He only that made him can make His sword to approach unto him."

³¹¹ Job 26:12-14: "He stirreth up the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through Rahab. By His breath the heavens are serene; His hand hath pierced the slant serpent. Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways; and how small a whisper is heard of Him! But the thunder of His mighty deeds who can understand?"

³¹² All humans – male, female, and other – are encapsulated here in the general category "man."

³¹³ Menachem Davis, *Machzor for Yom Kippur =: Mahazor Le-Yom Kipur Simhat Yehoshu'a (Artscroll)*, (New York: Mesorah Publications, 2004), 23. "Bars of iron. He is the beginning of the ways of God; He only that made him can make His sword to approach unto him."

cannot dismiss.³¹⁴ Myths narrate a sacred history, of creation, of the Creator that fashioned the world, and are therefore held to be true and paradigmatic for all significant human acts.³¹⁵

The sacrificial cult in general and of the Yom Kippur rituals that took place in the temple, resembles the Leviathan and the Behemoth in its evocative mystery. The mystery here concerns not only the improbable zoology of these creatures, but it makes reference to the *mysterium tremendum* of God.³¹⁶ It is a re-enacted myth. It gives shape to the creation mythology and re-establishes the Creator's order on earth.³¹⁷ It is a system that communicates meaning, values, what the community is, what it stands for, what it hopes to express. It intrudes upon the daily routines of people and calls them to take heed of the ultimate reality that is enmeshed in their private and collective lives.³¹⁸ The sacrificial myth discloses the Jewish perception of the ultimate truth concerning cosmic and human origins. It serves to "define the community and its relationship to the world... (and) its power comes from the fact that it is remembered and re-created in the community."³¹⁹

The term "community" is a flexible, multi-valent construct that can be contextual and unchanging at the same time: "The term community can simultaneously refer to a group of people, a social system, a shared geographical space, or certain characteristics, rituals, or behaviours that a group of people has in common."³²⁰ Jews throughout their history lived under multiple and competing systems of governance, civic and religious, Jewish and foreign, local and

³¹⁴ Psalm. 104:5.

³¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, "Myths and Mythical Thought," in *The Universal Myths*, ed. Alexander Eliot, (New York: Meridian, 1990), 23.

³¹⁶ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 124.

³¹⁷ Eliade, "Myths and Mythical Thought," 25.

³¹⁸ Cunningham and Kelsay, *The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion*, 88.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³²⁰ Dean Phillip Bell, "Community and Sacrality: Jewish Customs and Identity in Early Modern Worms," in *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, ed. Ira Robinson, Naftali Cohn and Lorenzo DiTommaso, (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016),119.

national. Rabbinic law gradually became increasingly codified as a super system of governance, whereas its precepts were intended to forge an unvaried collective that shared a single system of authority – the rabbis’ own.³²¹ Jewish practice could be both variable and flexible. It expressed local socio-economic and political variability, but Jews were also united in sacred time through ritual and liturgy.³²² “...Jews often understood the past typologically, through rituals and liturgy,”³²³ they interpreted contemporary reality through a lens polished by myth and history. Their collective memory became the gauge, the template for reality. Local communities attacked during the crusades were cast in the same vein as the temple’s destruction. Local communities became distinctive, sacralized, through ritual that transgressed local variability in the form of a local community; a common thread of ritual and liturgy afforded a sense of constituting a super-community that encompassed all Jews everywhere and gave them a collective identity by following the rabbinic tradition.³²⁴ The rabbinic enterprise fashioned a guide for a model society of Jews, a non-sectarian, unified society of adherents to the orthopraxy of Judaism, as defined by the rabbis.³²⁵ The Yom Kippur liturgy that described the Avodah was fundamental and constitutive to the sense of the Jewish super-community. The shared memory of the temple could integrate personal, local, and national narratives into a single story of the community of Jews.³²⁶

³²¹ Ibid., 126.

³²² Ibid., 129.

³²³ Ibid., 133. Paraphrasing: Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*.

³²⁴ Bell, “Community and Sacrality: Jewish Customs and Identity in Early Modern Worms,” 146.

³²⁵ Naftali Cohn, “Sectarianism in the Mishnah: Memory, Modeling Society, and Rabbinic Identity,” in *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, ed. Ira Robinson, Naftali Cohn and Lorenzo DiTommaso, (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 39; Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 17-37.

³²⁶ Jack Lightstone, “Power and the (re)Creation of Collective-Cultural Memory in Early Judaism: The Case of the Mishnah.” In *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, ed. Ira Robinson, Naftali Cohn and Lorenzo DiTommaso, (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 88.

The liturgy about the ritual had become ontologically constitutive, precisely as the rabbis of the Mishnah had hoped would happen.³²⁷

It is a mysterious choreography. Priestly actions are to be undertaken in precise ways at the temple, for the purpose of ordering the relationship between man and God.³²⁸ Ritual and performance³²⁹ lies ensconced in that choreography, rendering transcendent the slaughter of animals in the physical realm. The actions and attendant recitations fall like autumnal foliage, yearly and forever renewing the cycle of flowering and decay, of sin and mercy. As Jacob Milgrom puts it: “Ritual is the poetry of religion that leads to a moment of transcendence ... A ritual must signify something beyond itself, whose attainment enhances the meaning and value of life.”³³⁰ The mythic cosmology, re-affirmed through narrative recitation, is at once a performance of remembrance and ritual re-actualization of the essential order of the world, and of human beings in it. The Avodah, Yom Kippur rituals, is akin to healing rituals, whereas at its core rests an exemplary model for all creation, and the return to origins gives the means of rebirth. Recounting events makes their power real once again.³³¹

The priestly chapters of Leviticus (1-16), and the chapters dealing with sanctity (17-27) are laden with ethical and moral significance that are enveloped in rituals that often defy explication, particularly for a modern observer, such as the purpose of the complex order of sacrifices described in chapters 1-7, and the fundamental reason for the death-defying Yom Kippur cult led by the High Priest at the temple, as described in Leviticus 16. Death defying

³²⁷ Cohn, “Sectarianism in the Mishnah: Memory, Modeling Society, and Rabbinic Identity,” 33.

³²⁸ Balberg. (2017). *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 17.

³²⁹ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008). See also: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Vol. 2, (London: Routledge, 1996).

³³⁰ Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics – A Continental Commentary*, 1.

³³¹ Eliade, “Myths and Mythical Thought,” 29.

because the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies but once a year, in great trepidation. It is a forbidden zone, he who enters does so at his peril. Indeed, when the high priest emerges therefrom after having completed the complex ritual cleansing by blood, he and the congregation as one breathed a sigh of relief: “And he (the High Priest) would make a feast for those close to him, for having exited the Holy of Holies in peace.”³³²

Sacrifice is not a transaction, a tribute of offering to God made by His subjects, as they would give their rulers. The biblical understanding of sacrifice is not of a system of religious taxation and tithes, but a “vector of communication between the offerer and the deity, both of whom manifest their presence and agency in the process in different symbolic ways.”³³³ The communicative and mutually constitutive act could, while the temple stood in Jerusalem, have been imagined as a vertical axis between the human and the deity that he or she worshipped. After the destruction of the temple, and largely through rabbinic manipulation of the concept along prophetic lines, the paradigm of sacrifice along a horizontal axis “centered on the collective “Israel” and its constitution and formation through accurately performed sacrificial procedures.”³³⁴ The emphasis we seek to investigate is the formulation of what precisely constitutes “accurately performed sacrificial procedures,” especially in the post-destruction era of late antiquity. Who decides what is accurate? Will recitation of sanctioned texts, the study thereof, and the ritual imagining of the mythic past be as efficacious as the sacrifices of old in communicating with God and in constituting Him and the Community?

³³² Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³³³ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 23.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

The original, temple-based ritual comprised an offering of meat, some of which is reserved for God, and some of which is consumed by the faithful. Consuming the meat creates, according to Durkheim, an artificial kinship bond between the worshippers and God, it is a communion in flesh that established the kinship bond between them. The efficacy of the sacrifice does not only depend on the shared meal, but on a series of preliminary operations – washing, anointing, changing clothes, praying – transform the meat of the slaughtered animal into a sacred, holy thing. That holiness is communicated to the faithful, and they too can be ritually cleansed by the act.³³⁵ Mesopotamian religious rites featured pagan notions of mediating the demonic world through ritual and magic, designed to assuage the malevolence of demons and gods and in order to ensure their protective care, lest humans be expelled from the canopy of the gods' attentive grace. Judaic priestly monotheistic theology posits a singular supreme God who has no demonic equals. Priestly ritual was conceived as a means of mediating the ill effects of human deeds in defiance of God, lest God be expelled from the temple as a result of the defilement attendant to human sin. "All that the priests can do is periodically purge the sanctuary of its impurities and influence the people to atone for their wrongs."³³⁶ The temple, site of God's Presence, requires priestly intervention in order to remove all the polluting traces of human sin. Some rituals required sacrifices as a means of actively imbuing purity,³³⁷ but some rituals were merely symbolically conceived as vessels that remove impurity.³³⁸ The intense preoccupation with issues of purity and impurity defined the "in group" of adherents to the complex

³³⁵ Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 249.

³³⁶ Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics- A Continental Commentary*, 9.

³³⁷ The [burnt offering] עולה, מנחה [the offering of cereals], שלמים [the well-being offering], חטאת [the purification offering], אשם [the guilt offering].

³³⁸ Such as the He Goat that was destined to Azazel. See: Lev. 16:10.

significations of purity,³³⁹ and the “out group” comprising the others who did not adhere to the same codes.³⁴⁰ It was a way of life, an orthopraxy, that prevailed among Jews before, during, and after the existence of the temple. The codes were body-centric and regulated food, ablutions, clothing, and the physicality of the home both its structure and the vessels within.³⁴¹

The notions of sanctity and purity were, by biblical edict, the exclusive domain of the priestly caste, and they were spatially delineated. Purity could be accrued to a person’s body, clothes, and abode,³⁴² whereas this type of purity ensured continued salubrity and Life. Purity of the temple was different from personal purity and enacted through ritual. Temple purity also had a life-sustaining force, as in the case of the corners of the High Altar that conferred immunity to any person who touched them while fleeing from their pursuers, acting as *a sanctum contagion*.³⁴³ Temple sanctity varied in intensity from one temple ward to the other, peaking in the space of the Holy of Holies where it could even be a lethal force, should an unauthorized person breach its sacred space.³⁴⁴ Only the priests were empowered to mediate sanctity and purity, and only the High Priest could mediate the ultimate purity conferred upon Israel, only on Yom Kippur, and only through the ordered performance of tightly scripted gestures.

And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and set them before the Lord at the door of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer him for a sin-offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before the Lord, to make atonement over him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness. And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and

³³⁹ Yair Furstenberg, *Purity and Community in Antiquity: Traditions of the Law from Second Temple Judaism to the Mishnah* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness, 2016), 31.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15, 31.

³⁴² Lev. 11-15, 18, 20-22.

³⁴³ Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics- A Continental Commentary*, 61; Furstenberg, *Purity and Community in Antiquity: Traditions of the Law from Second Temple Judaism to the Mishnah*, 14-21.

³⁴⁴ See instances: Exod. 19:12-13; Num. 4:15-20; Lev. 10:1-2; I Sam. 1:6; 2 Sam. 6:6-7.

shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself.³⁴⁵

Like the mythic Leviathan, who is possessed of enormous destructive power and yet whose skin confers sanctity for the righteous, sacrificed flesh, ash, and blood have the power to overcome Death and guarantee Life. Ritual pollution is the antithesis of ritual purity, dependent on priestly mediation on behalf of Israel. Sin pollutes, righteous obeisance to God's commandment purifies and sanctifies, and only the priests can facilitate the transition from pollution to purity, from death to life. *"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."*³⁴⁶

Ritual is the alchemy that transforms pollution into purity and the sacrificial cult is the agent of transformation as long as it is performed by the priests, at the temple, in the correct manner.³⁴⁷ Priestly temple rituals were intended to separate pollution from purity through a system of symbolic actions interpreted by the priests, in order to secure God's presence in His temple abode, and vis-à-vis Israel to reject death and choose life. The height of this eternal tension between the forces of pollution and purity reach their zenith on Yom Kippur. On that day the High Priest and his companion priests ritually remove pollution, accrued through human sin on the very walls of the temple, restoring balance in God's house. On that day the High Priest also removes pollution from the very hearts of men and women, bringing about a cathartic restoration of sanctity and Life whereas God can reside in His temple and spread His protective canopy over the people of Israel.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Lev. 16:6-11.

³⁴⁶ Deut. 30:19.

³⁴⁷ Bird, "Ritual as Communicative Action," 23-52.

³⁴⁸ Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics- A Continental Commentary*, 16.

Yom Kippur

On the tenth day of the seventh month, Tishrei, the people of Israel celebrated the advent of the New Year, having commenced the festivities on Rosh Hashanah, the first of the month.

Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, “Never were more joyous festivals in Israel than the fifteenth of Av and the Yom Kippur, for on them the maidens of Jerusalem used to go out dressed in ... and danced in the vineyards, saying, Young men, look and observe well whom you are about to choose [as a spouse]; regard not beauty [alone], but rather look to a virtuous family, for ‘Gracefulness is deceitful, and beauty is a vain thing, but the woman that feareth the Lord, she is worthy of praise’ (Prov. 31:3)... ‘the day of the gladness of (the) heart,’ was that when the building of the Temple was completed.” May it soon be rebuilt in our days. Amen!³⁴⁹

Yom Kippur began its journey as a celebration of Life, and continued evolving toward the Yom Kippur we would recognize in the 21st century as a day of fasting, prayer, and rituals intended to confirm atonement on individuals and upon the nation entire.³⁵⁰ At the end of the Yom Kippur temple rites, the High Priest would emerge from the Holy of Holies in peace, and in one piece, and then make a feast for his kinfolk celebrating both Life and atonement that he helped usher through the correct execution of the rituals as prescribed in the Torah.³⁵¹

In the case of the Yom Kippur Avodah, there are biblical, Mishnaic, Talmudic, apocryphal, and Piyyutic texts that seek to describe what really happened at the temple on the holiest of days on the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. Of course, one must read the literature with caution, for each version of the Avodah, each unit of text, was penned by people who sought to express and communicate specific religious, social, political, and ontological messages. There exists no single incontrovertible Avodah text that describes what took place at the temple. Every author has an ideological lens, an axe to grind, something meaningful he or she seeks to convey.

³⁴⁹ Mishnah Tractate Moed, Seder Ta’anit 4:8.

³⁵⁰ Milgrom, *Lev.: A Book of Ritual and Ethics- A Continental Commentary*, 162.

³⁵¹ Mishnah Tractate Moed, Seder Yoma 7:4.

Michael Swartz and Yossef Yahalom have amply demonstrated in their seminal book,³⁵² that the biblical account has over the centuries been expanded and modified, to suit the religious-political interests of competing religious authorities.³⁵³ Swartz identifies the “ongoing tension between the Zadokite High Priest and the (presumably Pharisaic) [proto-rabbinic] sages, who, in the rabbis’ telling, are essentially in charge of the sacrifice.”³⁵⁴ Swartz reads the Yosse ben Yosse Avodot as a literary religious piece with a certain “aesthetic merit,”³⁵⁵ and he notes that Yosse ben Yosse’s High Priest has more volition than Mishnah Yoma appears to describe. Yosse ben Yosse, according to Swartz, goes to great length to imbue ‘his’ High Priest with purity, virtue, proper pedigreed spiritual bearing. The High Priest in Yosse ben Yosse’s Avodot is physically magnificent, stupendously attired, but that he, like the poet, revered the rabbi’s understanding of Torah and was learned in rabbinic law.³⁵⁶ Swartz does not, in my opinion, go far enough, and Swartz asserts that it “clearly follows the Mishnah.”³⁵⁷ He asserts that Yosse ben Yosse valorizes the High Priest, but does not contradict any of the facts (his term) of the Mishnah or even their interpretation in the Talmud.³⁵⁸

The narrative of the Avodah availed the rabbis of a locus in which to establish and defend their claims to authority.³⁵⁹ In keeping with the thrust of my dissertation, I contend that the ritualized texts of poetry “provide a site where things happen, where power is declared or

³⁵² Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur*.

³⁵³ Ze’ev Safrai and Chana Safrai. “To What Extent Did the Rabbis Determine Public Norms? The Internal Evidence.” In *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, edited by Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2009), 172-194. See also: Swartz, “Sage, Priest, and Poet: Typologies of Religious Leadership in the Ancient Synagogue,” 104-105.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 105.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁵⁹ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 122.

invoked, where issues of importance in a society are defined and contested.”³⁶⁰ The stories people tell, their narrative accounts of the past, do not merely decorate their mental world. They help constitute their world, shape their world, and give it meaning. Poets and rabbinic scholars alike, undertook to be the keepers of the nation’s collective memory, the social memory. They recorded history and myth, they articulated and shared experiences that gave ontological contours to the community of the faithful, their identity, and they helped shape that identity over time.³⁶¹ As Niles asserts: “Weak poets imitate. A strong poet appropriates the preexisting materials of literary expression and stands against, subverts, or even wrecks them, not in a paroxysm of rejection, but so as to fashion these materials into bold new creative shapes.”³⁶² Yosse ben Yosse, the first named individual to create such an Avodah,³⁶³ was a strong poet according to this definition. He claimed the same locus to contest rabbinic claims to power, so as to re-assert priestly preeminence in the performance and adjudication, even textually, of the atonement rituals after the destruction of the Second Temple.³⁶⁴ “Josephus reminds us that sacrifice was a tool through which communal relations were formed and political alliances were expressed, and that Jews – both as recipients of sacrificial gifts and givers of sacrificial gifts – regularly partook in sacrificial exchanges that were constitutive of the social fabric of the ancient Mediterranean.”³⁶⁵

Narrative accounts of the Avodah are therefore laden with political signification and meaning. For instance, Esther Rabbah, composed in the fourth century CE, tells the tale of the

³⁶⁰ John Niles, *Homo Narrans: The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 66.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁶³ Swartz, “Sage, Priest, and Poet: Typologies of Religious Leadership in the Ancient Synagogue,” 104.

³⁶⁴ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 242.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

“argument” between varieties of trees, as to who will bear the body of the evil Hamman who is to be hanged for his crimes against the Jews of Persia. The fig, for instance, refuses, because it claims that the people of Israel are likened to fig trees,³⁶⁶ as do the grapevine,³⁶⁷ the olive tree,³⁶⁸ the almond,³⁶⁹ pomegranate,³⁷⁰ apple,³⁷¹ acacia,³⁷² date palm,³⁷³ cedar, and myrtle.³⁷⁴ The deed is finally accomplished on the bough of the lowly thorn. It echoes a similar botanical argument regarding the wood upon which Jesus would be crucified. He is pinned to a lowly thorn, according to the Aggadic midrash.³⁷⁵ In the fourth century there raged a real contest between Judaism and the newly distinguished Christianity, so the midrash, by equating Hamman to Jesus, paints them both as evil men worthy of scorn. It is a didactic message, born of a political agenda.³⁷⁶

Turning the Avodah into language and symbols as place holders for practices and ideas, was the site for religious and political change in late antique Judaism.³⁷⁷ The political agenda that animated the Avodah served two aims, one aimed outwardly, the second internally. First, it is a Jewish counter-argument to Christian arguments that the new religion superseded Judaism as the divinely sanctioned path to God; and secondly, it is a constitutive text that unites the super-community of Jews. Rather than substituting sacrifices, the rabbis formulated a method of

³⁶⁶ Hos. 9:10.

³⁶⁷ Psalm 80:9.

³⁶⁸ Jer. 11:16.

³⁶⁹ Song of Sol. 6:11.

³⁷⁰ Song of Sol. 4:3.

³⁷¹ Song of Sol. 2:3.

³⁷² Psalm 92:13.

³⁷³ Song of Sol. 7:8.

³⁷⁴ Lev. 23:40.

³⁷⁵ Esther Rabbah, 9:2.

³⁷⁶ Elliott Horowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2006), 81-106; Elliott Horowitz, “The Right to Be Reckless: On the Perpetration and Interpretation of Purim Violence,” *Poetics Today* 15, no. 1, (Spring 1994): 9-54 ; Eliahu Hacoen, “Hebrew Nizmara: Songs for the encouragement of Hebrew speech,” August 22, 2018, http://onegshabbat.blogspot.com/2018/08/blog-post_18.html?m=1.

³⁷⁷ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 227.

keeping the ritual in place, but transformed the gore for letters, the blood for thought, thereby ensuring continuity with temple rituals, for the benefit of Jews and indeed the world entire.³⁷⁸ The authors of Avodah narratives infused their accounts with religious-political intent, for the most convincing voice would carry the day in the diverse biophony of Palestinian late antiquity. The persuasive conversation on sacrifices,³⁷⁹ that became nonreciprocal and noninteractive after the destruction of the Second Temple, revolved around a political core. The more persuasive the discourse, the more political power will be accrued its authors and partisans. Priestly voices and rabbinic voices rang in late antique Palestine. The rabbis won the day, but the battle remains telling, as it describes and discloses important aspects of the religious diversity in late antiquity.³⁸⁰

The Avodah

In this dissertation, I survey some of the major extant sources that have reached us regarding the Avodah. The Avodah, literally translated as the “work,” or the “worshipful action,” is the term for the rituals of atonement that took place on Yom Kippur service in the temple. God, in Leviticus 16, commands Moses to instruct Aaron to yearly perform the complex penitent ritual Avodah. It is a vital ritual that, through the carefully choreographed actions of the High Priest, assures atonement for Israel and elicits God’s grace for the salubrity of the world, and it is “a law for all time.”³⁸¹ After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Avodah transformed from a sacrificial cult to a prayerful re-enactment of the High Priest’s ritual. The temple transformed

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 233.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 239.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 249.

³⁸¹ Lev. 16:34.

into an ontological marker, as an anchor of Jewish identity.³⁸² The original precise choreographed ritual became text, whose precise verbal depiction of the Avodah became henceforth the eternal key to atonement.

I examine three primary sources of the Avodah as text: Biblical account of the Avodah, Tractate Yoma of the Mishnah,³⁸³ and Yosse ben Yosse's Avodah liturgy. Yosse ben Yosse is the earliest known Paytan who probed the constructed memory of the Avodah³⁸⁴ and, as I will aim to demonstrate in this dissertation, his uncommon rendition represents an interesting if subtle discrepancy between his and the familiar rabbinic narrative. My methodology rests on the hypothesis that Yosse ben Yosse's account differs materially from Mishnah Yoma, indicating a socio-political and religious contest between the rabbinic movement and the priestly caste for the hearts and minds of Jewish practitioners in fifth century Byzantine Palestine. In this dissertation, I confine myself to the original Biblical account, as the foundational text on the Avodah, and then move to a comparison of Yosse ben Yosse's rendition with the rabbinic text of Tractate Yoma.³⁸⁵ There are other renditions of the Avodah, which have been neatly summarized as a body of Jewish liturgy by Swartz and Yahalom, but in the interest of training a beam of scholarly laser on Yosse ben Yosse in this dissertation, I refrain from studying the broad field of Avodah narratives in its entirety.

³⁸² Steven D. Fraade, "The Temple as a Marker of Jewish Identity Before and After 70 CE: The Role of the Holy Vessels in Rabbinic Memory and Imagination," In *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 237-265.

³⁸³ Swartz, "Ritual about Myth about Ritual: Towards an Understanding of the Avodah in the Rabbinic Period," 135-155.

³⁸⁴ See: Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*.

³⁸⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation, I limit my discussion to Mishnah Yoma as the constitutive rabbinic narrative. I do not "branch out" to Tosefta Yoma here, but future research may explore it.

The Language Barrier: Translating Yosse ben Yosse

The piyyutim in our possession are all written in Hebrew. This is not a contestable proposition, but we can probe the language aspect for further information. Is it possible to extrapolate from his liturgy that Yosse ben Yosse was fluent in Hebrew, understood its biblical version, and could craft his liturgy from it with ease. He may or may not have spoken it, but for him it is clear that Hebrew was not a “dead language,” at least for religious expression. Of course, one can be fluent in a “dead language,” but there is a material linguistic difference between “dead” and “living” languages, whereas the synergetic linguistic exchanges within a social context, renders the use of language more engaged with the social determinants. Similar words can gain and lose signification and meaning over time, because of the constant friction with social artefacts, much like pebbles rub against one another on a riverbed, shifting positions and meanings constantly. For example, the Hebrew word תולדות, of the root יל"ד, in Modern Hebrew means “consequence,” or “result” or impact or influence of one event on another, one person or another; whereas in biblical Hebrew תולדות can often mean “history,” or “tradition.”³⁸⁶ Writing in a “living language,” in one’s native language, affords the writer the myriad of meaning-laden faculties that otherwise would be inaccessible.

The translation of Yosse ben Yosse’s works is annotated and carefully recorded in Appendix A of this dissertation. There is a table at the end of each piyyutic translation that summarizes the specific sources cited by Yosse ben Yosse. At the end of all the translations there is a table that summarizes all the sources of all the piyyutim. The table reproduced³⁸⁷ here as Figure 1 below shows the number of times each book of the Hebrew Bible was cited in each

³⁸⁶ Sapir, *The secrets of Gen.*, 24.

³⁸⁷ Appendix A, pp. 466-467.

piyyut. I offer the reader a descriptive summary of Yosse ben Yosse's cited biblical sources. I point only to the evident use of sources, whereas the data does not have any statistical predictive characteristics. As the table indicates, Yosse ben Yosse's verses were drawn from most of the 24 books of the bible, with the exception of Haggai and Ruth. In Yosse ben Yosse's liturgy, the audience recitations are well established and known as verses, prayers, things the people already know and recognize. It feels organic. The *sotto voce* PR campaign uses different strategies, to the same end. Through a deliberate strategy of dynamic inclusion and exclusion of biblical verses, Yosse ben Yosse transmits a priestly weltanschauung to his audiences.

Several scholars, such as Swartz and Yahalom,³⁸⁸ have since translated portions of these piyyutim, attending to their research requirements. To the best of my knowledge, no scholar has, as yet, offered a complete and annotated translation into English of all the Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim. In Appendix A of this dissertation, I redress this lacuna and offer the complete annotated translation. The arcane biblical Hebrew vocabulary has created a linguistic barrier to the study of Yosse ben Yosse. Indeed, even Modern Hebrew speakers tend to find it difficult to plumb the linguistic challenge of these piyyutim. With this dissertation, I aim to redress this lacuna. The translated piyyutim are offered to future scholars, on both sides of the Hebrew/English divide, in the hope that the texts will excite new investigations into a unique and very rare window to Jewish religious culture from late antiquity.

³⁸⁸ Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology Of Ancient Poetry For Yom Kippur*.

| | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | P 6 | P 7 | P 8 | P 9 | P 10 | P 11 | P 12 | P 13 | P 14 | P 15 |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | אור עולם | אפתח שפתי | אפתח פה ברוך | אז לראש תתנו | אברהם אברהם | אין לנו כך גדול | אתן תהילה | אלהיה האלה | אנוסה לעזרה | אפחד במעש | אשמנו אמנם | אספר גדולת | אז בדעת חקר | אתה כוננת עולם | אזכיר גבורות |
| STANZAS | 1 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 23 | 44 | 44 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 138 | 176 | 243 |
| Genesis | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | - | 5 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 30 | 119 | 81 | 126 |
| Exodus | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 9 | 3 | 20 | 6 | 12 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 46 | 56 |
| Leviticus | - | - | - | 1 | - | 13 | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | 14 | 27 | 39 | 52 |
| Numbers | - | - | - | 1 | - | 5 | 2 | 9 | - | 5 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 22 | 28 |
| Deuteronomy | - | - | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 8 | - | 16 | 13 | 18 |
| Joshua | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Judges | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| I Kings | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| II Kings | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| I Samuel | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| II Samuel | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Isaiah | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 26 | 30 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 6 | 30 | 36 | 65 |
| Jeremiah | - | - | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 17 |
| Ezekiel | - | - | - | - | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 10 | 21 |
| Hosea | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 7 | - | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Joel | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | - |
| Amos | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Obadiah | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jonah | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | 1 |
| Micah | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Nahum | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Habakkuk | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| Zephaniah | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | - |
| Haggai | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Zechariah | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Malachi | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 5 |
| Psalms | 1 | 9 | 20 | 9 | 19 | 10 | 42 | 30 | 25 | 15 | 15 | 9 | 47 | 44 | 77 |
| Proverbs | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | - | 10 | 4 | 20 | 17 | 27 |
| Job | - | 1 | - | 4 | 5 | - | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 12 | 30 |
| Song of Songs | - | - | 1 | - | - | 10 | - | 2 | 11 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Ruth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Lamentations | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 6 | - | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Ecclesiastes | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 4 |
| Esther | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Daniel | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 5 | 7 | - | 1 | - | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Ezra | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| Nehemiah | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | 1 |
| I Chronicles | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| II Chronicles | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Figure 1. Summary of the biblical sources cited in the Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim³⁸⁹

³⁸⁹ The full table presenting all the sources cited in Yosse ben Yosse's writings can be found in Appendix A, p. 725

Every translation is a re-writing endeavour. Most translators are familiar with the expression “*traduttore, traditore*” meaning “translator, traitor” and have their own personal experiences with the difficulties in translation. Translation involves much more than simply transferring the words into another language. It requires research, thorough understanding of both the original and target languages, cultural knowledge, and specific training on the topic one is translating. And even then, there are still inherent problems with the language itself that lend themselves to numerous interpretations and glaring mistakes. Some phrases are so connected to cultural context that it is next to impossible to provide an equivalent translation of the text that also bears the same meaning.

A single word misinterpreted can have ripple effects on the surface of perceived reality.³⁹⁰ At times I wrestled with specific words whose Modern Hebrew meaning, in all likelihood, no longer reflects the meaning as it was construed in fifth century Palestine. Language and meaning change over time, and Modern Hebrew and biblical Hebrew, while close, are no longer identical languages. Translating poetry is further complicated, because one strives

³⁹⁰ “Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli: Italian Astronomer.” January 3, 2018. Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Giovanni-Virginio-Schiaparelli>. The 19th century astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835-1910) had identified straight lines traversing the Red Planet. He called them “canali,” Italian for “channels.” American astronomer Percival Lowell (1855-1916) whose discoveries earned him a place of honour in the halls of science, translated Schiaparelli’s “canali” as “canals,” man-made artificial structures rather than forms that appear in nature as forms cut into rock by the flow of water. Lowell, whose scientific credentials were golden, therefore believed that some ancient civilization had carved the “canalli” on Mars. See: Paul Chambers, *Life on Mars: The Complete Story*, (London: Blandford, 1999). Ripple effect: Lowell published three scientific books in defense of his theory that Mars had in the past sustained intelligent life forms. Ripple effect: the New York Times announced that there is life on the planet Mars. See: David W. Dunlap, “Life on Mars? You Read It Here First,” *New York Times*, October 1, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/insider/life-on-mars-you-read-it-here-first.html>. Ripple effect: countless rivers of ink and celluloid have since been spent on fleshing out those “little green men,” until incontrovertible proof of the “canalli” being “channels” was obtained in 1971 by the High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. See: Alfred McEwen, “Could This Be the Soviet Mars 3 Lander?” April 11, 2013, University of Arizona Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, http://uahirise.org/ESP_031036_1345. See also: “PhotoJournal: PIA16920: Could This Be the Mars Soviet 3 Lander?” April 11, 2013, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, <https://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/catalog/PIA16920>. The existence of canals had been refuted by NASA’s Mariner 4, 6, 7, and by the Mariner 9 orbiter. Examination of the images revealed that the “canalli” were neither canals nor channels, but craters on the surface of Mars. The “canalli” were an optical illusion that echoed for decades because of poor translation. See: Matthew Sharps, “Percival Lowell and the Canals of Mars,” *Skeptical Inquirer* 42, no. 3 (2018): 41–46.

to echo the original cadence, if not the rhymes of the original work, and maintain “poetic sense” in the translated and transformed text. The following example illustrates the *exegetical* aspect of translation, whereas the original Hebrew text can have several interpretations. The Genesis 6:16 verse, for instance, describes the *צוהר* in which Noah was instructed to build in the Ark:

צוהר תעשה לתבה, ואל-אמה תכלנה מלמעלה, ופתח התבה, בצדה תשים; תחתים שנים ושלושים, תעשה.

Translating the word *צוהר* appears at first glance to indicate that the ark had an opening to allow some light into the otherwise enclosed space, but each successive translation imagines the opening differently in form, function, and placement. In modern Hebrew,³⁹¹ the word *צוהר* means a small window, an aperture, a skylight, a wicket, or an opening. In Biblical Hebrew, the word indicates a small slanted opening in a building that allows daylight to enter and that prevents rain from entering. Onkelos, the translator-exegetes of the Hebrew Bible [35-120 CE], translated the verse into Aramaic,³⁹² interpreted it as “light.”³⁹³

גיהור מעביד לתיבתא, ולאמתא תשקלנה מלעילא, ותרעה דתיבתא, בסטרה תשוי; מדורין ארעאין תנינין ותלימתאין,
מעבדנה

³⁹¹ “Genesis 1,” BibleGateway.com,
https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=genesis&qs_version=CJB

³⁹² “Genesis 1,” BibleGateway.com,
https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=genesis&qs_version=CJB

³⁹³ If light indeed it was, then where did it come from? The architectural aspects of the Ark concerned the Sages as well. They wondered what light could possibly penetrate the Ark, whereas the sky was heavy with impenetrable clouds for months on end. They “resolved” the conundrum with an Aggadic addition of gem stones that were set in the opening in the Ark, thus “supplying” illumination to the Ark even in the absence of sunlight or moonlight. See: Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, 108:B.

There are 49 official English versions of the same verse.³⁹⁴ Some insist that צוהר is a window,³⁹⁵ others translate it as an opening,³⁹⁶ some change the optics entirely and call the צוהר a roof,³⁹⁷ and yet some translators opt for translating צוהר as light.³⁹⁸ In French, the צוהר is the light of day.³⁹⁹ In German⁴⁰⁰ and in Spanish,⁴⁰¹ it is a window. Each different linguistic iteration offers different answers, and each solves the architectural quandaries differently, so upon reading the different translations, one would imagine each time a different Ark with different apertures that had different functions.⁴⁰² This, in a nutshell, is the work of a translator, the complexity of the task further compounded by the poetic, exegetical nature of the Piyyutic texts. After all, Yosse ben Yosse wrote with intentionality, consciously and carefully choosing his words, setting them in a particular context. It is our duty as scholars of his liturgical poetry to uncover *his* meaning, not to create our own.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁴ See the complete list of English translations (as well as translations in 64 languages). See: "Gen. 6:16 in All English Translations," BibleGateway.com, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen.+6%3A16&version=KJ21>

³⁹⁵ Gen. 6:16: in the King James Version: "A window shalt thou make to the ark;" the Amplified Bible: "You shall make a window for light and ventilation for the ark;" the Young's Literal Translation: "A window dost thou make for the ark;" the Wycliffe Bible: "Thou shalt make a window in the ship."

³⁹⁶ Gen. 6:16: the International Children's Bible: "Make an opening around the top of the boat;" the Expanded Bible: "Make an opening around the top of the boat;" the New American Bible (revised edition): "Make an opening for daylight;" the Modern English Version: "Make an opening;" the Complete Jewish Bible: "You are to make an opening for daylight in the ark."

³⁹⁷ Gen. 6:16: The New International Version: "Make a roof for it;" the Good News Translation: "Make a roof for the boat;" the Christian Standard Bible: "You are to make a roof;" the Orthodox Jewish Bible: "A roof shalt thou make to the tevah (ark);" the Christian Standard Bible: "You are to make a roof."

³⁹⁸ Gen. 6:16: the Darby Translation: "A light shall you make to the ark;" the American Standard Version: "A light shalt thou make to the ark."

³⁹⁹ Tu donneras du jour à l'arche, que tu réduiras, vers le haut, à la largeur d'une coudée; tu placeras la porte de l'arche sur le côté. Tu la composeras d'une charpente inférieure, d'une seconde et d'une troisième.

⁴⁰⁰ Ein Fenster sollst du daran machen obenan, eine Elle groß. Die Tür sollst du mitten in seine Seite setzen. Und er soll drei Boden haben: einen unten, den andern in der Mitte, den dritten in der Höhe.

⁴⁰¹ Una ventana harás al arca, y la acabarás á un codo de elevación por la parte de arriba: y pondrás la puerta del arca á su lado; y le harás piso bajo, segundo y tercero.

⁴⁰² Was the צוהר, whatever one imagines it to be given the language in which one learns of it, on the roof or on the wall of the Ark? Was it transparent? Was it intended to supply illumination or ventilation? What was the source of the light?

⁴⁰³ Eric Mechoulam, "What Is the Meaning of Jewish History? A brief history of Jewish history-writing reveals an abundance of partial and competing narratives, all too often missing a key ingredient," August 6, 2018, Mosaic, <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2018/08/what-is-the-meaning-of-jewish-history/>

Major literary figures offer cautionary statements for the type of work carried out here: “Translation is that which transforms everything so that nothing changes,” said Günter Grass, and Robert Frost added that “Poetry is what gets lost in translation.” Umberto Eco is even harsher in his judgment, saying that: “Translation is the art of failure.” Not all literary giants, however, are so pessimistic. Upon embarking on the considerable endeavour of translating Yosse ben Yosse’s poetry into English, I drew inspiration from Goethe, who stated that: “Say what we may of the inadequacy of translation, yet the work is and will always be one of the weightiest and worthiest undertakings in the general concerns of the world.” I cannot reproduce the inimitable style of Yosse ben Yosse; I am a crafts person possessed of some skill, while Yosse ben Yosse is an uncontested master artist, so I cannot but offer a pale reproduction of his genius. Translating is re-writing and one must take care not to allow one’s own voice to overpower the original text. My own writing style gives rhythm and nuance to the newly crafted English rendition of the piyyutim, which could not otherwise have been reconstituted by piecemeal imitation. But my humble task was to be like the author, not to outdo him in any way. In rewriting the piyyutim, I listened to Yosse ben Yosse carefully and observed him closely, ever mindful of the interpretive pitfalls that can easily ensnare an unwary reader. I tried to keep my interpretive translation to a minimum, conceding to the translations of the original sources.

Mining for Meaning

The process of deriving meaningful observations from the extant Yosse ben Yosse writings is akin to archaeological excavation of layer after layer of hidden meaning. Knowing where the Paytan found his inspiration can point us in interesting directions that can offer plausible answers to vexing unknowns. Whom did he write for? What ideology did he champion? Which religious thought did he advance? What was his agenda? Did he conform to

the supposed majority? Was he a maverick voice? How and why has his work survived? My work cannot but offer a preliminary attempt at finding plausible answers to these and many other questions. Four layers of textual excavation ensue.

The first step⁴⁰⁴ was to find the organizing principle that permits an unbiased presentation of the piyyutim. Since there is no information about the date in which each Piyyut was written, I could not present the piyyutim in order of their age. Organizing the piyyutim according to their topics and subject matter is inherently interpretive, and I wanted to avoid characterizing the piyyutim in any way that may influence future readers. I therefore chose a functional rule, presenting the piyyutim in ascending order of length. Some of the piyyutim are complete, others are fragments of larger pieces, but the extant material is presented here unchanged.

The second step in the process was to note the formal characteristics of each Piyyut. In the introductory page for each piece the reader can find a summary of the number of stanzas, the acrostic system, and some notes regarding the main topic and nature of the Piyyut. It is, in effect, a short-hand map of the Piyyut in question, as it ushers the reader into the text with some appreciation of its contours. The data is not intended to explain the text or interpret it, but to flag its relevant literary and structural features and the pertinence thereof.

The third phased stemmed from my perception that in addition to translating the piyyutim, there is a determined scholarly need to note the sources, biblical and other, that Yosse ben Yosse appears to have consulted. One cannot ignore the socio-religious and socio-political context of fifth century Palestine, the putative reality in which Yosse ben Yosse laboured.

⁴⁰⁴ I began the translation project as I was writing my MA thesis: "Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine," Concordia University, 2011. I subsequently translated the entire body of work again, and annotated it, as it appears in Appendix A of this dissertation, p. 283.

Mirsky presents some annotations in his seminal book, but standing on the shoulders of a giant, I scoured the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature: the Mishnah, the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds, Tosefta, and more, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the apocrypha, Josephus, and a variety of other sources, seeking evidence for the specific lexical choices the paytan made. Yosse ben Yosse was, in the best of Byzantine aesthetic mores, a mosaic artist of words. He painstakingly collected a tile here and a stone there, a phrase from here and an allusion from there, a verse from here and an epithet from there, and synergistically created something new and meaningful. I carefully annotated the source materials upon which Yosse ben Yosse appears to have drawn in writing his piyyutim, under the assumption that the source material provides useful clues about the *weltanschauung* that animated the poet.

The reader will note the multiple footnotes peppered across the English translation of the piyyutim, where I cite the apparent and plausible sources that may have inspired Yosse ben Yosse. Furthermore, at the end of each translation I offer the reader a table of source materials that the paytan appears to have consulted, better to contextualize both the original and the English texts. I do not cite exegeses of the original citations, unless the paytan himself appears to have incorporated them into his work. The collected phenomenological data point to a preponderant reliance on verses from Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms, and in the case of the piyyutim that speak of the Avodah, on Mishnah Yoma as well.⁴⁰⁵ Some piyyutim display a slightly greater or lesser reliance on this source or another, but they all display a similar pattern, compared to the overall plot of citations. I am as yet unsure what this collected data may or may not suggest and I present it here for future consideration by myself and other Yosse ben Yosse scholars. This raw

⁴⁰⁵ See Appendix B. p. 746, for a complete and thorough exploration of the differences and commonalities between the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre and Mishnah Yoma.

data may or may not reveal useful information, but some future erudite mind may see in it that which is yet to be explored as the subject for future research. The overall picture that emerges is of a rabbinically trained Paytan who was also familiar with non-rabbinic and apocryphal texts. The questions are: why does this matter? What is the meaning and religious agenda of the specific Piyyut and the body of work itself?

The fourth and deepest layer in this textual excavation method is the interpretation and explanation of the latent meaning enfolded in the Piyyutic verses. Given my own pre-existing research interests, I compare the Mishnaic narrative of the Avodah in Tractate Yoma with the Yosse ben Yosse narrative as it appears in these piyyutim. Critical discourse analysis that evaluates texts from an avowedly politically committed perspective,⁴⁰⁶ discloses important information regarding the interaction of a variety of Byzantine Palestinian Judaic traditions in the fifth century.

All post Biblical, temple ritual narratives describe events that had taken place centuries before they were described.⁴⁰⁷ They rely on second and third hand sources that were “massaged” centuries after the destruction, through extrapolation and exegesis that fit particular worldviews and promoted particular agents of power in Jewish society. The rabbis of the Mishnah in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Talmudic scholars in Babylon and Palestine, and Yosse ben Yosse the fifth century, responded to their own conceptions of authentic Judaism. Each side hitched its

⁴⁰⁶ Mills, *Discourse*, 24, 116-143, citing Norman Fairclough.

⁴⁰⁷ There is not, as Michel Foucault states, “a seamless narrative which we can decipher underlying history” [Mills, *Discourse*, 23, citing Michael Foucault.] There is no grand narrative, no seamless account of the past, and indeed there is no account that has reached us of the Temple rituals which we can categorically define as a truer depiction of reality. All the knowledge we currently have about Yom Kippur Temple rituals is the result of a literal power struggle between the Hebrew Bible, the Mishnah, and other competing discourses. In fact, no record has survived of firsthand accounts of Temple rituals. Indeed, the earliest account we possess was written by Josephus, an outsider both religiously and culturally, who may or may not have witnessed Temple rituals with his own eyes, and account itself is the result of a purposeful redaction of information, designed to subvert certain ideologies and privilege others [Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 33, endnote 77 on 156].

proverbial wagon to the leaders it deemed authoritative, correct, and binding, producing competing discourses in the process.⁴⁰⁸ The discourse on temple ritual was a vehicle for asserting legitimacy and authority over post-destruction Jewish law and ritual practice, with emphasis on the prescriptive nature of the various narratives.⁴⁰⁹ By composing temple ritual narratives, both Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbis sought to mold collective Jewish memory, and to assert the political-religious authority of their worldview on the people entire.⁴¹⁰

Contemporary scholarly consensus is to regard Piyut as aesthetically pleasing religious poetry and liturgy, as an important evolutionary element in the development of Jewish prayer and liturgy, and as a concrete example of the evolution of Hebrew grammar leading to the linguistic standardization of Hebrew. The field today is typified primarily with research that gazes at the literary form of Piyut. But in order to alter the trajectory of scholarly discourse, and in order to elucidate aspects of Byzantine Judaic thought that have hitherto been marginalized, I set the stage for the study by uncovering the layers of meaning ensconced in the piyyutim, and by examining their ontologically constitutive and religious, soteriological significance.⁴¹¹

The destruction of the temple created a vacuum of religious authority, pulling the rug from under the practical and theological underpinnings of Jewish life. Urgent reform was required of religious practices and religious institutions, to preserve Jewish life through its fundamental restructuring. I propose to study Yosse ben Yosse's liturgical poems using Discourse Analysis,⁴¹² which involves consideration of the ways in which language enacts social and cultural identities: Critical discourse analysis seeks to engage with politics. Critical discourse

⁴⁰⁸ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 33.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴¹¹ Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*.

⁴¹² James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, 4th ed., (New York: Routledge, 2014).

analysis deals with (the question) whose “interests” are represented, helped, or harmed, when people speak and write.⁴¹³ The multiplicity of conversations, debates, ideas, and revolutionary attempts in the post-destruction era may be called a Super Discourse,⁴¹⁴ as these debates raged within society among and between specific social groups, each seeking to transform Jewish life and imbue the new with meaning, despite the existential void created by the removal of the temple. James Paul Gee calls this “big C Conversation,” a term I find somewhat confusing, especially in historiographical terms, because naming one conversation a Big C conversation entails judgement with regards to the Small C conversations of which no records have survived. I instead termed the multiplicity of conversations, debates, ideas, and revolutionary attempts in the post-destruction era Super Discourse in order to describe the web of conversations in society or within specific social groups that large numbers of people recognize in terms of what “sides” can be taken in such debates and in terms of what sorts of people tend to be on each side.

In 63 BCE the Romans arrived in Israel, hitherto ruled by the Hasmonean dynasty, and quickly became the dominant culture in the Middle East. Roman rule came on the heels of Alexander the Great, the Ptolomeic rule, and Selucid Judea, the penultimate force in what we now call the Greco-Roman period. Despotic Roman governance weakened Jewish self-rule and contributed to ongoing internal divisions that led to sectarianism, whereas a multiplicity of groups vied for ascendancy. Groups such as the Sadducees, principally the Priestly Caste that rejected Oral Law and disputed the concept of the afterlife; Pharisees, the forerunners of the Rabbinic class, led by Hillel, Shamai, and Avtalyon, who were alienated from Roman government; Essenes, pietists who withdrew to the Judean desert in anticipation of the End

⁴¹³ Ibid., 225.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 222.

Times; Revolutionary Zealots, a radical group dedicated to the violent destruction of the world in anticipation of a messiah; and Christian Jews, whose gradual development of a New Testament eventually parted from Judaism- each claimed to be the true and divinely elected religious authority of Jews.⁴¹⁵

Common Judaism emerged out of this sectarian strife, aided by the Pax Romana approach to the Pharisee-born Rabbinic Class as the primary legal authority that mediated between Roman rulers and the Jewish commonwealth.⁴¹⁶ The idea that there existed a common form of Judaism that transcended sectarian differences is now widely accepted. Diversity characterized first century Judaism, but it flourished under an umbrella of common practices and beliefs.⁴¹⁷ Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, and other special groups,⁴¹⁸ shared a common core of practices that characterized any Jew qua Jew.⁴¹⁹ The term “common Judaism” describes the beliefs and practices of the majority of Jews in the Second Temple period, who did not affiliate with any sect and did not engage with practices and beliefs of differentiated groups. “(The term) common Judaism reflects the lives of the common Jews, those who were often referred to as the *ammé ha-áretz*, as well as ordinary priests, as distinct from “the powerful,” including the chief priests as well as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.”⁴²⁰

Scripture was a common ground. It was encountered regularly in synagogues. All Jews believed in the God of Israel and accepted the Hebrew Bible as the expression and revelation of

⁴¹⁵ Hayim Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100-400 CE*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 64-97.

⁴¹⁶ Sanders, *Judaism, Practice and Belief: 63 BCE-66 CE*.

⁴¹⁷ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 49-100.

⁴¹⁸ The precise number of sects is not known. The Palestinian Talmud [Sanhedrin 10:6, 29C] claims that there were no less than 24 ‘heretic’ sects at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. This cannot be corroborated. See: Albert Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1997), 2-3.

⁴¹⁹ Adele Reinhartz and Wayne O. McCready, eds., *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 2.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

God's will, they observed their ancestral Mosaic law,⁴²¹ and identified themselves with the history of the Jewish people.⁴²² Initially this common Judaism was Torah- and Temple-centered,⁴²³ and despite regional differences that Jews of Roman Palestine had "largely internalized some version of the ideology that was centrally constitutive of Judaism."⁴²⁴

Common Judaism was the scaffold upon which sectarian Jewish movements hung. There flourished a diversity within unity.⁴²⁵ It was a system of one God, who had given His singular law in the Torah, and who could be served by the one chosen people in the one chosen location – the temple.⁴²⁶ The three largest sects- the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes- had an almost official status and enjoyed a measure of legitimacy, recognition, and respectability.⁴²⁷ These groups were rooted in common Judaism, but they differed in their interpretation of scripture. Consequently, these sects held little sway over the lives of the *hoi poloi* Palestinian Jews,⁴²⁸ even though teachers and scribes did their best to persuade Palestinian society of the rightness of their sect's interpretation.⁴²⁹ Each of the diverse systems produced by Jews in ancient times constituted a world-view and way of life for a circumscribed social group. While these various Judaic systems drew upon common Scripture and referred to the same themes, they sufficiently differed from one another to be regarded as essentially distinct social-religious constructions.⁴³⁰

⁴²¹ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 55; Ed P. Sanders, "Common Judaism Explored," in *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism*, ed. Adele Reinhartz and Wayne O. McCreaty, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 120.

⁴²² Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 49-51. See also: Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 63 BCE-66 CE.

⁴²³ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 59; Sanders, "Common Judaism and the Synagogue in the First Century," 1-17.

⁴²⁴ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 52.

⁴²⁵ Sanders, "Common Judaism Explored," 14.

⁴²⁶ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 63.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴²⁸ Sanders, "Common Judaism Explored," 16.

⁴²⁹ Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 98.

⁴³⁰ Sanders, "Common Judaism Explored," 14.

Pharisaism turned from a sect among several, into the hegemonic orthodoxy, to the Jewish mainstream. Until the destruction of the temple the Priestly Caste remained an elite group in Jewish society. After the destruction, priests retained their dynastic social elite status, but were gradually displaced by the meritocracy-based Rabbinic class.⁴³¹ From the multiplicity of Jewish forms of life and forms of exegetical relationships to the Torah, there emerged two relatively broad representatives of elite groups who claimed religious authority over the people. The Rabbinic Class and the Priestly Caste effectively sidelined the smaller sects. As each group claimed exclusive power to interpret revealed Law, a power relationship developed between the two principal groups.⁴³² As Naftali Cohn states: “Each sub-group... seems to have tied its identity to a particular view of correct practice and so must have had its own ritual authorities and experts to determine what this practice should be.”⁴³³ The issue of identity comprises a complex weave of several categories that influence one another and are influenced by external factors as well.⁴³⁴

Relations of power were influenced by discourse and shaped discourse at the same time. Foucault’s notion of “discourse”⁴³⁵ as a coherent body of writing, speech, and practices

⁴³¹ Inter alia: Eric Myers, “Jewish Culture in Greco-Roman Palestine,” In *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, edited by D. Biale, (New York: Schocken, 2002),135-179; Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100-400 CE*, 98-125; Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* 1-36; Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE*, 103-161; Herr, “The Identity of the Jewish People Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple: Continuity or Change?” 211-236; Leibner, *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee*, chap. 6, 307-390; Michael Avi-Yonah, *In the Days of Rome and Byzantium* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1970), 99-105, 117-135, 192; Josephus, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, Book 5-6, 843-908; Safrai, *The Jewish Community in the Talmudic Period*, 243-285.

⁴³² Myers, “Jewish Culture in Greco-Roman Palestine,” 168; Neusner, *The Four Stages of Rabbinic Judaism*; Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 12, footnote 50, 25-28; Martin Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee: 132-212 AD*, 2nd ed., (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2000),107; Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique Eretz Israel: A Philological Inquiry into Local Traditions in Talmud Yerushalmi*.

⁴³³ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 33. Also: regarding “... the status of priests remained meaningful,” see footnotes 77 and 78.

⁴³⁴ Lee Levine, “Jewish Identities in Antiquity: An Introductory Essay,” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009),13.

⁴³⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: Vintage, 1990), 11.

pertaining to a given subject, which has an impact on the ways people think and act, is useful here. Discourse became the site of resistance to and the means of negotiating relations through the contestation of power. Power relations between rabbinic groups and the priestly caste shaped the production, interpretation, and reception of texts, which were enacted within the social context and were determined by the social context, contributing to the way the social context evolved in late antiquity.⁴³⁶

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis seeks to discover in texts the embedded beliefs and values comprising a particular worldview and ideology.⁴³⁷ Both the Mishnah and Yosse ben Yosse's liturgical poetry may be analyzed as a discourse whereas, according to Roger Fowler, "Discourse is speech or writing seen from the point of view of the beliefs, values and categories that it embodies ... (which) constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of experience ... (whereas) the source of these representations is the communicative context within which the discourse is embedded."⁴³⁸ Governed by their own rules and structures, and with their own method of using words that presume authority and authenticity, the two texts seek to affect ways of thinking and behaving. Both use language systematically with specific effect on the way identity and ideology are encoded, thereby reflecting the power relations that shaped the production and reception of these discourses.

⁴³⁶ See: Mills, *Discourse*, 10.

⁴³⁷ I am using Louis Althusser's definition of 'ideology' as cited by: Mills, *Discourse*, 146. Specifically: "A representation of the way things are, which does not accord with reality but which does work in the interest of the dominant classes, groups or institutions in society." My primary reference for Discourse Analysis is: Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*.

⁴³⁸ Mills, *Discourse*, 5 (citing Roger Fowler); Jeremy Hawthorn, *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), 48.

Why does it all matter? Because we are all affected by discourse, as Louis Althusser explains in his concept of interpellation: “Individuals are called upon by texts to recognize themselves as particular types of individuals,”⁴³⁹ and we as scholars of Jewish history can learn a great deal about those individuals of antiquity through the texts they produced, valued, read and preserved over time. Commentary, according to Foucault, is a process by which books are kept in circulation;⁴⁴⁰ it is important to preserve the variability of historic Jewish traditions, and furthermore, through critical analysis, to keep Yosse ben Yosse’s discourse from fading into the margins of contemporary scholarship, because of its inherent epistemological merit. Piyyut in general, and Yosse ben Yosse’s oeuvre in particular must, as I maintain in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, be part of the discursive structures⁴⁴¹ with which Jewish culture thinks about itself and with which it formulates ideas about God, reality and history.

Discourse, explains Michel Foucault, is a device that enables people to bear up against events. Discourse is what enables people to face reality, as its primary claim is to be true and rational.⁴⁴² Discourse, in other words, is the “equipment we need in order to confront the future”⁴⁴³ by defining the contours of power relations between the producer disseminators of the narrative and the consumer recipients thereof. Rabbinic control and mastery over the representation of the past is central to the political-religious aims of the rabbis. The voice of the master, in other words, is the voice of truth and therefore must be obeyed,⁴⁴⁴ not just regarding

⁴³⁹ Mills, *Discourse*, 39 (citing Louis Althusser).

⁴⁴⁰ Mills, *Discourse*, 60-62 (on Foucault).

⁴⁴¹ Mills, *Discourse*, 43-68.

⁴⁴² Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, (New York: New Press, 1997), 99.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

the Yom Kippur traditions, not only as regards daily and festival rituals and worship, but in every aspect of religious life of Jewish persons.

Each discourse examined here makes statements that bear truth claims ratified by knowledge,⁴⁴⁵ and each side in the dialogue claims, this truth to be validated by authority.⁴⁴⁶ One has to try to hear the echoes of the voices that have been effaced through the contestation of power, and one cannot accept at face value the dominant message alone,⁴⁴⁷ because the surface of discourse is not the sum-total of statements on a particular situation. Knowledge is the product of a process through which truth, power, understanding, and authority are constituted by dialogical power relations. Over time, the rabbinic discourse was privileged in terms of its presumed authenticity and relation to the truth, while other discourses were subjugated, marginalized and excluded.⁴⁴⁸ Defining the past in effect defines present and future power relations.⁴⁴⁹

Jewish society in late antiquity was multi-confessional, variable, diverse, and its members lived with and by competing, overlapping sources of legal authority.⁴⁵⁰ Echoes of this complexity can be heard through the muffling presence of history and tradition, if one listens

⁴⁴⁵ Mills, *Discourse*, 7 (citing Mikhail Bakhtin).

⁴⁴⁶ Mills, *Discourse*, 55 (citing Foucault).

⁴⁴⁷ Mills, *Discourse*, 107-108 (citing Dipesh Chakrabarty and Gayatri Spivak).

⁴⁴⁸ Tropper, *"The state of Mishnah studies,"* 94-97.

⁴⁴⁹ Using language of verisimilitude, iterativity, and crafting a coherent plot that is interspersed with rabbinic opinions and arguments, the rabbis of the Mishnah succeeded in promoting and establishing rabbinic claims to authenticity. They sought in their narrative to validate rabbinic memory, and thereby to argue for rabbinic authority and asserting rabbinic versions of all elements in the Jewish ritual system as correct and binding. Furthermore, the rabbis retrojected their forerunners into the Temple ritual itself, claiming the Great Court's, the Sanhedrin's, material and crucial involvement in the Avodah performance and oversight thereof. The rabbis intruded on the past priestly domain, through a narrative that is intended to fashion a distinct type of collective memory, and thus claimed authority over the priests whom the bible describes as principals of Temple ritual. By narrating a past and recalling it in a specific way, the rabbis sought to legitimize their desired leadership role in the present they lived in. Asserting that rabbis have "always" been central and materially important to the correct ritual practice, affirms rabbinic authority to uphold traditions. The crafted memory of the past provided the rabbis with roots in antiquity, thus claiming that in the post-destruction period rabbinic ruling must be followed. See: Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 41-43, 56-58.

⁴⁵⁰ Bell, "Community and Sacrality: Jewish Customs and Identity in Early Modern Worms," 122.

attentively to the voices of rabbis and men such as Yosse ben Yosse. Their narratives appear on the surface to disclose undifferentiated memory, but upon close examination one can discern the differences that arise from competing sources of authority. Piyyutic sources must be used with caution of course, but they intimate the diversity of late antiquity, and as such as worthy of our scrutiny. I treat the concept of rabbinic discourse as a whole, not as a differentiated body of texts. My approach to the notion of discourse here refers to the overall thrust, the preponderant idea that inform the rabbinic body of politically negotiated works. For the purposes of this dissertation, I engage only with Mishnah Yoma as the preeminent rabbinic Avodah text. The political theory woven between the threads of the Mishnah can be discerned elsewhere in the massive body of rabbinic thought. Mishnah Yoma is one of the most accessible of these fabrics, and it stands as the obvious counterpoint to Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutic Avodot.

Power relations define the strategies of situatedness, and perforce define potential disagreement with the reigning discourse as resistance, as negative and subversive anti-establishment and anti-normative allegations.⁴⁵¹ The Mishnah became the central literary composition for the rabbis who interpreted it in the two Talmuds. The Tosefta too is a supplement to the Mishnah, written as it was by contemporaries, before or right after the Mishnah was redacted. Rabbinic texts therefore must be viewed as comprising a single literary continuum, rather than a series of independent texts that emerged from a common "soup" of sources. They constitute a single textual tradition, a singular fabric of interwoven knowledge, that has been redacted, annotated, and studied continuously since antiquity and continue to be thus developed to this day. I therefore treat the Mishnah in this paper as the essential core text

⁴⁵¹ Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 168.

and compare it to the works of Yosse ben Yosse, occasionally adding supplemental materials from the Tosefta and Talmuds.⁴⁵² The rabbis attempted to reformulate the denominators of authority for Jewish society in late antiquity. They changed the vectors of power from a hereditary model to a meritocratic model, better to unify the people and instruct them in the ways of traditional life. In order to achieve this transfer of power, the rabbis entered into a discursive dialogue with the priestly discourse that had hitherto been dominant. Even as the rabbis tried to distance their halachic body from Pharisee halacha, as they sought to override the sectarianism of antiquity,⁴⁵³ there remained sectarian voices even in the fifth century. Shaye Cohen discusses the differentiation between Pharisee, Zaddokite, so called Qumranic, and later on Karaite legal bodies of thought.⁴⁵⁴ My interest rests with rabbinic discourse as it negotiated religious and political power vis-à-vis the priestly caste in late antiquity.

New ways of reading and understanding scripture were developed as law making had to adjust to new socio-political and religious realities. Rabbinic discourse in general is thus transformed into an ethos, a binding and collectively shared fundamental character or spirit of Jewish culture. It undergirds the scaffold of traditional life with a normative set of beliefs, customs and practices of individuals within a society. The dominant assumptions of the people become inscribed as the character of the community and on its disposition toward time, space, and meaning.⁴⁵⁵ The rabbinic ethos becomes a principle of correct observance and practice of Judaic tradition and unifies the people in the process. The rabbis become teachers, and the people

⁴⁵² Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," 94-97.

⁴⁵³ Furstenberg, *Purity and Community in Antiquity: Traditions of the Law from Second Temple Judaism to the Mishnah*, 10.

⁴⁵⁴ Shaye Cohen, "The Judaean Legal Traditions and the Halakhah of the Mishnah," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121-143.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

become their students, in a mutual affirmation of the power structure that is predicated on the acts of writing and reading, of forming normativity and following it.⁴⁵⁶ Foucault calls this interdependence “Technologies of power” whereas the rabbis, in this case, determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination.⁴⁵⁷ The temple narrative becomes the site of meeting between past and present, between the master and the subject, in relation to a religious truth.⁴⁵⁸

The High Priesthood had always been a hereditary position⁴⁵⁹ and with enhanced ritual status and ecclesiastical authority that translated to political power. The priesthood was granted by God exclusively to the Sons of Aharon,⁴⁶⁰ therefore legitimacy of birth was essential. Each priestly family traced its lineages, and therefore its legitimacy, to Aharon, and to Zadok. When a High Priest died, the position was bequeathed to his eldest son, or to his brother if he had no sons. It was an appointment for life,⁴⁶¹ and it was ushered by a complex ceremony of consecration that gave a seal of sacrality to the appointment.⁴⁶² This tradition came to an end during the Hasmonean rule, during which priests were appointed even if they were not related to Zadok. In the last years of the Second Temple, as Josephus recounts, the High Priesthood went to the highest bidder, often to ignorant men of avarice and pretense.⁴⁶³ The corruption rampant in the last years of the temple made the hereditary model of leadership controversial, contributing

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 215.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 298.

⁴⁵⁹ Lev. 6:15.

⁴⁶⁰ Exod. 28:1-2, 29:4-5.

⁴⁶¹ Num. 35:25, 28.

⁴⁶² Exod. 28-29; Exod. 29:29; Lev. 7:36; Lev. 8; Num. 3:3; Num. 20:28; Psalm 133:2.

⁴⁶³ Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Alberta, Canada: Okitoks Press, 2017), 12, 9:7; An excellent example of a High Priest appointed to the post despite his ignorance, in: Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, (City, ST: Publisher, xxxx), 4, 3:147-156; For an enumeration of all the High Priests, from Aaron to the destruction, see: Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20, 10:1; For an example of the priestly power struggles, see: Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 1, 1:31.

to the social and religious unrest that tore Jewish society apart. After the destruction of the temple, new models of religious and social leadership were sought, whereas social, political and religious authority was gradually transferred to men of learning and sagacity, even if they were not scions of the priestly caste. The Mishnah presents the rabbis as legal authorities who teach, debate and issue rulings with exclusive agency to determine how all Jews ought to practice biblically based traditions and rituals.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, they cast the Sanhedrin as the sole body that had the right to appoint and consecrate High Priests. Their presumed authority was prescriptive; it was not merely an abstraction, as it encoded practice.⁴⁶⁵

There is not, as Michel Foucault states, “a seamless narrative with which we can decipher underlying history,”⁴⁶⁶ there is no grand narrative, no seamless account of the past, and indeed there is no account that has reached us of the temple rituals that we can categorically define as an accurate depiction of reality. The Avodah discourse on temple ritual was a vehicle for asserting rabbinic legitimacy and authority over post-destruction Jewish law and ritual practice, with emphasis on the prescriptive nature of rabbinic narratives;⁴⁶⁷ while for Yosse ben Yosse the Avodah was a trope that claimed as compelling his call for a return to priestly stewardship of the nation, based on such biblical pronouncements as Ezekiel 44:15, 23-24 : *“But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok ... they shall come near to Me to minister unto Me ... And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in a controversy, they shall stand to judge; according to Mine ordinances shall they judge it; and they shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My*

⁴⁶⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 17.

⁴⁶⁵ Eior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 203.

⁴⁶⁶ Mills, *Discourse*, 23 (citing Michel Foucault).

⁴⁶⁷ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 3.

appointed seasons, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.” Each side, therefore, expressed its group sense of self, gave meaning to the present, and argued for the group’s legitimacy and for the authenticity of its voice. By composing temple ritual narratives, both Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbis sought to mold collective Jewish memory, and to assert the political-religious authority of their worldview on the people entire.⁴⁶⁸ The rabbis’ assertion as stated in Tractate Avot, that the chain of tradition stretching from them back to Moses, was a justification of authority. Jack Lightstone quotes George Orwell’s maxim that “Who Controls the past ... controls the future; who controls the present controls the past”⁴⁶⁹ Competing claims for and to power, to legitimacy, authenticity and authority are therefore the backdrop to the variety of temple ritual texts, and ought to be considered.

Super Discourse and Meta Discourses

Figure 2 below illustrates the political context of the contest for power, leadership, and authority, between the rabbinic class and the priestly caste.⁴⁷⁰ The rabbinic class arose about 200 years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, as the most successful learned class of sages who engaged with biblical texts exegetically, to formulate specific prescriptive instructions for conducting Jewish life. A Pharisee-Sadducean coalition formed in 66 CE, wherein power was shared by members of the priestly caste and the Pharisee sages who preceded the rabbinic movement.⁴⁷¹ The rabbis, generally associated with the Pharisee sect, reached a peak of their power around the second century CE, during the Bar Kochba revolt, ebbing during the Byzantine

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁶⁹ Lightstone, “Power and the (re)Creation of Collective-Cultural Memory in Early Judaism: The Case of the Mishnah,” 55, 89.

⁴⁷⁰ I developed the diagrammatic representation of the power relations between the rabbinic class and the priestly caste, based on my readings. It is my own illustration, used to summarize the historical processes over time.

⁴⁷¹ Herr, “The Identity of the Jewish People Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple: Continuity or Change?” 222.

period, only to rise as the definitive religious authority during the Ga'onic period, and remaining the uncontested authority to this day. The priestly caste, drawing its mandate from the bible, tried to regain its position as the rabbinic class weakened, but its lack of innovation in the face of new realities that transformed Jewish life, left it weak. Yosse ben Yosse worked at the cross-point of this contest. His liturgy can, I maintain, be read politically, to offer a glimpse of this balance of power shift in Jewish religious, social, and political life.

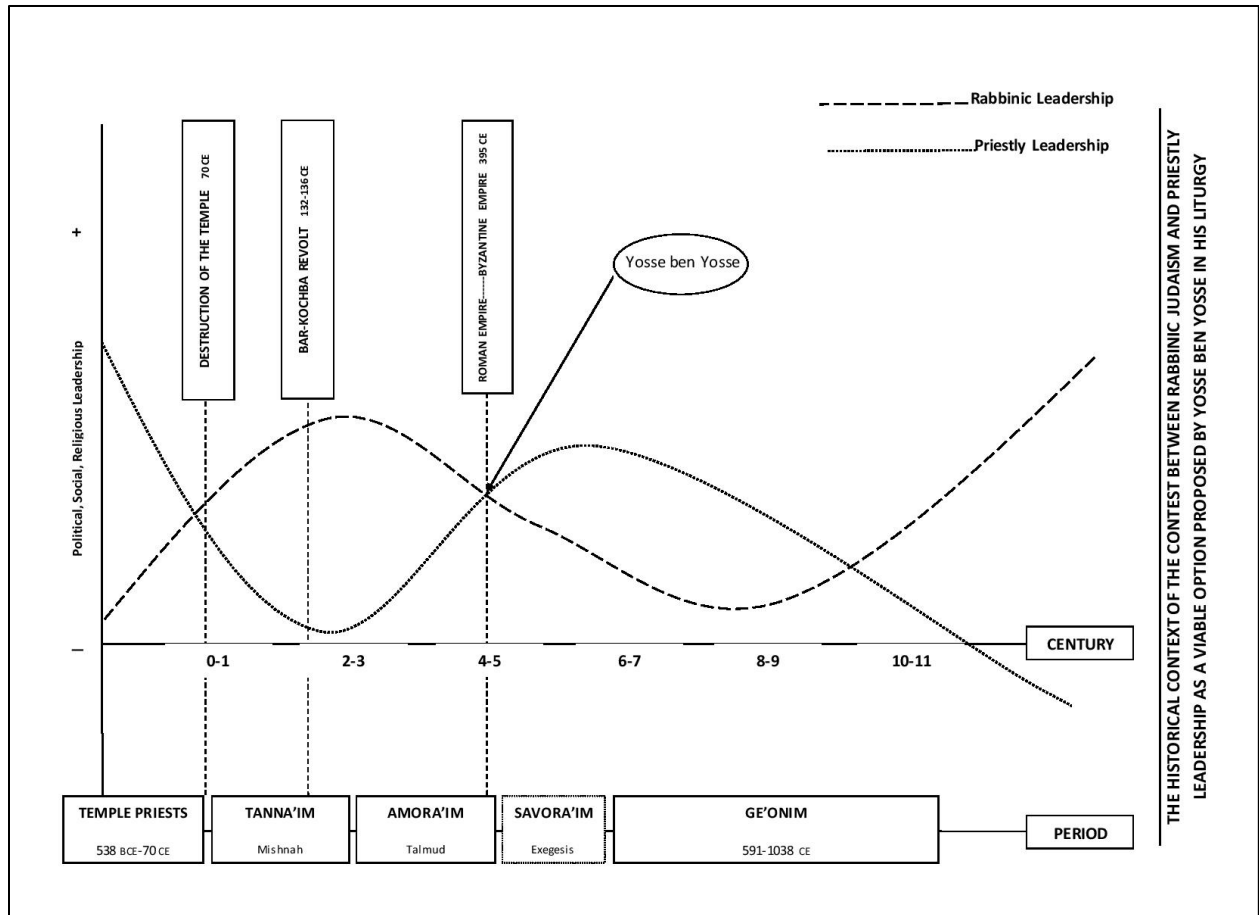


Figure 2. The dynamic the dynamic historical contest for religious pre-eminence between the rabbinic class and the priestly caste

The Super Discourse in Jewish society sought to enact new socially-situated identities that would henceforth govern- authoritatively and authentically- the Jewish people's observance of the Torah, and thus to preserve them as a socially and religiously distinct people with roots embedded in Antiquity. New ways of thinking, new interactions, new belief systems, even new calendars- all had to be established in such a way that guaranteed the cloth of Jewish life would be regarded a seamless continuation of the old cloth. One had to weave the old into the new, the new into the old, to make them seam as one, even as this transformation was fundamentally revolutionary. Scholars needed to build new significant and authoritative institutions, credible practices, identities, relationships, and political structures that would henceforth afford Jewish life a chance of survival despite the atomized condition of the social body of Judaism in exile. Language, articles of speech and texts, was used to enact the revolutionary apparatuses. Writers and speakers could reach readers and listeners, who would follow their guidance to build what was required. New patterns of "being Jewish" were proposed, but they would all come to naught for the people would reject them as inauthentic and as anathema to the old ways of "being Jewish."

The context of this Super Discourse forced the debate to be enacted in written textual form, given the physical setting in which communication with the people took place. Direct contact with people, the semiotically charged speech complete with eye contact, movements, intonation, and other message-laden articles of communication, were challenged by the exilic condition, by dislocation, by the absence of physical venues for personal encounters with the majority of the people who called themselves Jewish. The written word became a vehicle for revolution, an article of tradition-making conversations, and thus facilitated the creation of new

conventions, new rules and practices of devotion, new organizational institutions of authority.⁴⁷² It is as though a massive PR campaign was launched by scholars of all stripes and affiliations, to win the hearts and minds of a dispersed, weakened nation. New conventions were, per force, forged, recombinant with the old conventions, mutations thereof; and old conventions were given new meaning, better to weave them into the new cloth of Jewish life. A new social order was produced through written texts.

Religious literature, and specifically religious poetry is often studied as literary expressions of mainstream, ideology, supporting mainstream power structures and leadership claims. Literary works are used to buttress, to support, to socially validate the power structure with the loveliness of verse and rhyme. The methodology proposed here, as it is applied to Yosse ben Yosse's liturgy, suggests that political intrigue and arguments about vocality, identity, authenticity, all lurk behind and between the lines. It is indeed possible to read religious poetry in the context of the Super Discourse in Judaism over the authority and hierarchical legitimacy in the post-destruction era. The Super Discourse contains and frames two or more Meta Discourses, in Yosse ben Yosse's case the rabbinic and the priestly. Contemporary Judaism fully privileges the rabbinic Meta Discourse over the priestly Meta Discourse. But the past, as always, is in politically charged flux. The historiographic lens alters what we perceive to be an accurate representation of reality.

The "Eye" and the "I" of the Beholder

Piyyut is an artform. Art does not operate in a vacuum. It is part of reality, which is complex, incomplete, contextual, and an interpretive bricolage of fragmented meanings rather

⁴⁷² It is well to bear in mind that orality was very strong in that era and that even "published" texts like the Mishna were ordinarily recited from memory and not read from a physical text.

than an objective factual record.⁴⁷³ Reality is a construct, an articulation of perceptions that depend on the attitudinal prism of the “I of the beholder,” on who is doing the looking, their way of seeing things, what they know, and what they believe.⁴⁷⁴ Reality is, therefore, not monolithic. It is subject to influences that can be formative, subtle, extraneous, or internal. What a person does is, at some level, an expression of the historical era in which he or she operates, a figuration of the values, aesthetic norms, and cultural considerations. Using art as a cultural diagnostic is complicated by the fact that art is a multifaceted medium, whose embedded messages often depend on the interpretive skills of the recipients. The term “medium” refers to the vehicle that carries messages, to the arena in which those messages operate, the socio-political interactions that produce the artistic artifact.⁴⁷⁵ Art can be the medium through and upon which public discourse may be conducted, and upon whose scaffold hang meaning and identity.

The “eye” and “I” of the beholder create meaning, contour a perception of reality, and rephrase it as fact. The following, an example drawn from the world of visual art,⁴⁷⁶ illustrates the Marshall McLuhan edict that “the medium is the message.”⁴⁷⁷ The phrase means that the form of a medium embeds itself in any message it would transmit or convey, creating a symbiotic relationship by which the medium influences how the message is perceived. The social implications of a cultural product are not only illustrated by the surface meaning but are in effect embedded in the form in which it is conveyed.

⁴⁷³ Terry Barrett, “Modernism and Postmodernism: An Overview,” in *Art Education: Content and Practice in a Postmodern Era*, ed. J. Hutchens and M. Suggs, (Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 1997), 27.

⁴⁷⁴ Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 37-39; Ken Wilber, *To See a World: Art and the I of the Beholder*, (Boston: Shambala, 2000), 9, 243-251.

⁴⁷⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 11.

⁴⁷⁶ Soloveichik, Meir, “How Rembrandt Understood the Destruction of Jerusalem (and Poussin Didn't): A tale of two paintings and one city,” July 12, 2018, Mosaic, <https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/2018/07/how-rembrandt-understood-the-destruction-of-jerusalem-and-poussin-didnt/>

⁴⁷⁷ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 9-13.

Begging the reader's indulgence for what appears to be a detour, I present an example from the Western artistic legacy illustrates the *visual consequences* of reading the same text with different vantage points, as a way of referencing the literary differences in the bodies of text before us. Two seventeenth-century masters, Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), painted what are now considered to be world heritage paintings depicting the same historical event – the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem. Careful examination of the two paintings reveals some dramatic differences that may have escaped notice by a cursory viewing. Rembrandt's temple is the First Temple, sacked by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, and Poussin's temple is the Second Temple sacked by the Romans. But the real difference between the two paintings is deeper, as they convey diametrically opposite *weltanschauung* regarding Judaism and Jewish people. In Poussin's painting,⁴⁷⁸ the temple looks like the Greek Parthenon; the main characters in the painting aren't the Jews but the Romans. Poussin's painting illustrates a Judea destroyed by Roman forces, and a Judaism destroyed, supplanted by the Christian Church. Poussin lived in Catholic Rome and was familiar with the Arch of Titus: "...with its famous sculpted relief of the Temple's treasures, the great menorah most prominent among them, being carried in triumph through the streets of Rome. Built by pagans but revered by Christians, the arch symbolized the destruction not only of Judea but also of Judaism, now superseded by the Church ... (For Poussin) a Jerusalem without Jews was... the perfect gift for ...the Church, bespeaking a world in which the light of Judaism had been extinguished ... once and for all."⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁸ "Nicolas Poussin: The Destruction and Sack of the Temple of Jerusalem." The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/199789>.

⁴⁷⁹ Soloveichik, "How Rembrandt Understood the Destruction of Jerusalem (and Poussin Didn't): A tale of two paintings and one city."

Poussin, on the other hand, was a Protestant man who lived in Amsterdam's Jewish quarter. He had experienced Judaism as a living faith, and thus his painting gives us a Judea that has been destroyed but a Judaism that remains alive. His painting⁴⁸⁰ depicts Jerusalem being destroyed in the last days of the First Temple; the marauders are the invading troops of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and that the man in the center of the scene is the most famous of all mourners of Jerusalem: the prophet Jeremiah.

The painting can be seen as portraying not only one man at one moment in time but also the Jewish people, centuries later, having undergone the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Second Temple by the Roman legions under Titus, and all of the Jews in all of the lands of exile throughout the ensuing millennia, mourning the loss of their sacred land, yearning to return, and sustained in that hope by the word of God.⁴⁸¹

Rembrandt's work was informed by his Protestant faith, by his illustrated Bible, and by his copy of Josephus Flavius's book *Antiquities of the Jews*.⁴⁸² His aesthetic decisions, affected by the different environment in which he lived and worked, were entirely different from Poussin's artistic choices, which were informed by Catholicism and by his residence in Rome, where Jews were segregated in ghettos. Poussin experienced Judaism as a dead religion, and his painting depicted this perception by removing Jews from the scene. Rembrandt's experience of Judaism as a living religion, and his painting depicted a prophet mourning the destruction of the temple but insisted on remaining in Jerusalem.

⁴⁸⁰ Rembrandt did not give his paintings titles. This particular painting, now known as *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem*, was also created in the 1620s.

⁴⁸¹ Soloveichik, "How Rembrandt Understood the Destruction of Jerusalem (and Poussin Didn't): A tale of two paintings and one city."

⁴⁸² Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, particularly 52:5-11.

We turn back to the literary works before us. Indeed, it is possible to examine liturgy and religious literature in the context of the competing voices that rang and were expressed textually, if one is attuned to the distribution of social goods by socially significant actors who enact practices and significant identities and social relationships in their texts. Through a systematic comparison of Yosse ben Yosse's work and rabbinic texts one can identify sites of contestation of meaning that reveal something of the intricate nature of the multiple religious and ontological expressions of Judaism that coexisted in Palestine in the fifth century. Competing claims for and to power, to legitimacy, authenticity and authority are therefore the backdrop to the variety of temple ritual texts. Both Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbis responded to their own present realities, and their writings served socio-political and religious functions in their present. Each side, therefore, expressed its group sense of self, gave meaning to the present, and argued for the group's legitimacy and for the authenticity of its voice. My research aims to demonstrate that that Yosse should not be assimilated into the discourse of Yoma but rather forms a somewhat separate discourse⁴⁸³. Piyyut in general and Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre in particular, must, I maintain, be part of the discursive structures⁴⁸⁴ with which Jewish culture thinks about itself and with which it formulates ideas about God, reality and history.⁴⁸⁵ It has thus far revealed that one cannot take for granted an ideological, theological, historical or legal parity between rabbinic literature and Piyyut. Even as Piyyut is a form of Midrashic exegesis, even as it seeks to inform and educate, even as it was penned by men who have received rabbinic training in rabbinic

⁴⁸³ Mills, *Discourse*, 7, 55, 107-108. One has to try to hear the echoes of the voices that have been effaced through the contestation of power, and one cannot accept at face value the dominant message alone, because the surface of discourse is not the sum-total of statements on a particular situation. Each discourse examined here makes statements that bear truth claims ratified by knowledge, and each side in the dialogue claims, this truth to be validated by authority.

⁴⁸⁴ Sarah Mills, (2009). *Discourse*. (London: Routledge), pp. 43-68.

⁴⁸⁵ It was the subject of my MA dissertation: "Yosse ben Yosse: The Social Function of Liturgical Poetry in Fifth Century Palestine," Concordia University, January 2011.

academies, or were exposed to rabbinic exegesis or were familiar with the body of rabbinic literature, and even as Piyyut, in order to survive, required rabbinic sanction- the two modalities stand quite apart and cannot be considered seamlessly related to one another.

Ontological Uses of Language

Language was used by sages and paytanim alike, to create seven new elements in the new Jewish reality:

1. significance,
2. practices,
3. identities,
4. relationships,
5. political power,
6. connections, and
7. authority (anchored in antiquity).

Significance

The term refers to the things in life that everyone agrees are significant, important, and central in Jewish life. Language signaled how to view the significant things, once language had rendered them important. The temple, once central to Jewish life, had through its rhythms and rituals defined time, and provided a proven, tested and true vehicle that could access the Divine on behalf of the people of Israel. In its absence, Jewish society had to decide what, if any, institution would henceforth equal in significance, what would be the engine that would drive Jewish life into the future. The rabbinic class proposed its own institutions as the arbiters of signification. Their reconstructed memory of the past, or its re-imagining, placed them as religious authorities even at the heart of the temple, as the arbiters of law even in antiquity:

Moses received the Law on Sinai and delivered it to Joshua; Joshua in turn handed it down to the Elders (not to the seventy Elders of Moses' time but to the later Elders who have ruled Israel, and each of them delivered it to his successor); from the Elders it descended to the prophets (beginning with Eli and Samuel), and each of them delivered it to his successors until it reached

the men of the Great Assembly. The last, named originated three maxims: "Be not hasty in judgment; Bring up many disciples; and, Erect safe guards for the Law."⁴⁸⁶

The priestly caste, on the other hand, proposed a return to biblical conservatism, a return to the old ways that placed priests at the apex of the social-religious hierarchy, pursuant to God's own Word, rather than the establishment of a de-novo class of halachic arbiters. The Priestly Caste drew its claim to power from the Pentateuch. They were strict literalists who denied the notion of reward and punishment in the afterlife, and who ascribed complete free will to men and women, thus rejecting the idea of divine involvement in human affairs. After the Great Revolt, some priests distanced themselves from the nascent rabbinic movement, unable to tolerate the Hasmonean usurpation of the priesthood in 152 BCE.⁴⁸⁷ Others joined the Pharisees, and yet others became Boethusians in opposition to the Pharisees. After 70 CE, however, the Priestly Caste declined because of its inherent inability to adapt strict literalism to the new political and social reality of a disempowered and dispersed nation.⁴⁸⁸ Yosse ben Yosse, however, appears to have belonged to the minority who still held that there can be no replacement for "the real thing," and he writes:⁴⁸⁹

אין לנו כהן גדול לכפר בעדנו ואיד יתכפר לנו על שגגותינו

We have no High Priest
To atone for us
And how shall we find atonement, to
Expiate our errors

⁴⁸⁶ Tractate Avot 1:1

⁴⁸⁷ Herr, "The Identity of the Jewish People Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple: Continuity or Change?" 222.

⁴⁸⁸ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple Rabbinic Judaism*, (Brooklyn, NY: Ktav, 1991) 98-119; See also: Miller, *Sages and Commoners in Late Antique Eretz Israel*; Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*; Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*; Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200BCE-640CE*; Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Judaism: Structure and System*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995); Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine*, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

⁴⁸⁹ Appendix A, p. 320 (אין לנו כהן גדול) verses 1-2).

אֵין לָנוּ אִוְרִים וְתוֹמִים לְשֹׂאֵל בָּהֶם וְאֵיךְ יֵאָר לָנוּ וְאִוְיֵינוּ מֵאֹפֶל.

We have no Urim and Thumim⁴⁹⁰
 To inquire for judgment
 And how shall we find a light⁴⁹¹
 While the object of our desire is in darkness.

Practices

Thinkers had to choreograph new socially recognized and culturally supported endeavours that would involve sequencing or combining actions in certain specific and meaningful ways.⁴⁹² What, if anything, could replace the temple cult? What mechanism would possibly proffer national and individual absolution from sin and pardon from inequities? What would henceforth expiate the transgressions of Israel? New variants of the old practices had to be developed, while maintaining the practices of the past as an effective template. Prayer, recitation, spoken words would replace animal sacrifices. But whose memory best approximated the temple reality? Was it the rabbinic class or the priestly caste, the two most dominant religious and social elites?

Identities

The temple was no more. more was lost than mere bricks and mortar. The destruction caused a collapse of the social order itself, the infrastructure, the scaffold of Jewish life itself. Gone was the cadre of priests who, through precise and scripted movements could redress sin. Gone was the mediated route to pardon, national and personal. Language was therefore

⁴⁹⁰ Num. 27:21.

⁴⁹¹ PT, Yoma 7:3 explains the origin of the term Urim and Thumim, based on the root אור. They lit the way for Israel. The Piyyut contradicts Mishnah Sotah 9:12 which states that since the passing of the First Prophets the Urim and Thumim were no longer needed or in use. Yosse ben Yosse harks back to early times, seeking to re-enact the First Temple sacral judgment, in opposition to the rabbis who seek to enact a new form of Judaic legislative system.

⁴⁹² Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 32.

recognized as the mechanism for enacting new leaders, specifying their new roles and responsibilities; language also enacted new identities for the people themselves, so as to preserve the social cohesion and communal life, as God's people who live in light of the Torah, with personal and communal avenues to the Divine.

These elements had to consider the recipient design, and to give due consideration for the recipients of articles of speech. The position design of these articles would guide the recipients to be, to think, to feel, and to behave in specific ways, and thus assume a particular identity that would lead to new and different beliefs and actions. Speakers and writers sought to persuade, motivate, even manipulate their readers and listeners, to foster a new social and religious definition of Jewish life. Utterances had to be constructed so that the relevant, salient messages could be actively promoted and clearly apprehended.⁴⁹³

The texts pertaining to the Avodah had to impress upon the readers and listeners that they authentically depict the historical record, that by saying the words the community can re-enact the actions in virtual space and enjoy the same benefits. Each textual account had to impress upon the community that the account is authoritative and therefore its authors merit the position of leadership. The rabbis created and deliberately construed an historic account of the temple that attributed to them a central and decisive role in the Yom Kippur rituals, inevitably implying that their claim to authority in the post-destruction era is valid. Rabbinic accounts created an intellectual lineage back to Moses, claiming ancient roots in order to establish credibility and authority. Their religious and political legitimacy instilled in their writings an aura of incontestable veracity. As Naftali Cohn asserts⁴⁹⁴ the Rabbinic account of temple rituals

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁹⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 122.

facilitated the consolidation of rabbinic power, based on a self-styled legal authority. Even as the rabbis imagined themselves as material actors in the temple, they created a past for themselves that authorized their claim to power. They created a myth of origin by narrating temple rituals none of them had actually witnessed. That account has over the centuries become the uncontested “record” of temple rituals.⁴⁹⁵ By inserting the rabbinic court into the temple ritual, the Mishnah imbued the rabbis with authority over the procedure, intruding on the exclusive Torah mandated priestly preserve.⁴⁹⁶ According to Mishnah Yoma, the rabbinic elders undermine the priestly power by declaring themselves critical to the proceedings: “Though their involvement is ultimately peripheral to the larger ritual performance, their limited role establishes and demonstrates that they have authority over the entire ritual.”⁴⁹⁷ The rabbis command the High Priest. The rabbis instruct him, the rabbis supervise and monitor his actions. The High Priest therefore is merely an extension of rabbinic power. Indeed, if one considers Mishnaic and Talmudic texts as historiographically relevant, one must presume that these sources are inflected by hyperbole and by literary flights whose aims conformed to the ideological template imposed by political considerations in the post-destruction era.⁴⁹⁸ “He is attended by some elders of the Beth Din, who read to him [out of Lev. xvi.] concerning the ceremonial of the day (of Atonement), and say to him: My lord the high-priest, say it aloud, lest thou hast forgotten, or not studied this. On the morning of the day preceding the Day of Atonement, he is placed at the eastern gate, and bulls, rams, and sheep are passed before him, that he should get a knowledge of the service.”⁴⁹⁹ And: “The Elders of the Beth Din left him to

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 237-265.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁹⁸ Safrai, *The Jewish Community in the Talmudic Period*, 17.

⁴⁹⁹ Yoma 1:3.

the attendance of the Elders of the priesthood, who took him up to the house of Abtinas, made him swear, took farewell, and went away. They said: My lord the high-priest, we are delegates of the Beth Din, and thou art our delegate and the delegate of the Beth Din; we conjure thee by Him who has made His abode in this house, that thou shalt not alter one thing about which we have spoken to thee. He took farewell weeping, and they parted weeping.⁵⁰⁰

The design of Yoma considers the recipients and the response, in order to buttress rabbinical authority. The Mishnah is designed as a record of internal deliberations between and among rabbinic elites (Yoma 1:1). It reads like minutes of an executive meeting. There is no room for audience participation, deletion, addition, or innovation. The minutes of the meeting become immutable Torah themselves, appropriating the ultimate authority and legitimacy for the rabbis. Yosse ben Yosse, on the other hand, crafts his liturgy so as to encourage audience participation. Whereas priestly temple ritual required an audience, it did not require the audience's active participation beyond witnessing the procedures. Yosse ben Yosse's poems were recited centuries after the destruction of the temple. The memory of the temple had by then become a distant memory, enacted through texts by Jewish worshippers in their every diasporic community, affirmed by each individual in an act of ontologically critical remembrance. Yosse ben Yosse's account fashioned the role of the audience as one that is writ into the primary text, in responsive readings that affirm, reaffirm, and re-reaffirm the biblical quotes. Indeed, the audience cannot add or omit any word, nor can they innovate. But the paytan deliberately assigns the audience a speaking role, he acknowledges them, he breaks the so called fourth^h dimension, he involves the audience in the dramatic re-enactment of the Avodah, as in the Piyut אָמַנְם אֵשְׁמִינוּ

⁵⁰⁰ Yoma 1:5.

in which he writes in the people's voice, and adds responsive readings for the audience, involving the people at two complementary levels.⁵⁰¹

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| עֲצָמוּ מִסֵּפֶר | אֲמָנָם אֲשֶׁמִּינוּ |
| רְבוּ מִלְדָּבָר, | אֲנַחֲוֹת דּוֹרֵינוּ |
| גְּעָרָה כְּמִבֵּין | אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִקְשַׁבְנוּ |
| כְּכֶסֶל הַדּוֹרֵנוּ. | אֲפֹנְנוּ מִכּוֹת |

Indeed, our transgressions
Are too grave to be recounted
The sorrows of our generation
Are more numerous than can be spoken of,⁵⁰²

For we have not hearkened
Your rebuke,⁵⁰³ as we ought to have understood
Even as we are enveloped by tortures
Like a rebellious man,⁵⁰⁴ we have deliberately done evil.

It is Your manner, our God
To suspend Your anger
Against the iniquitous and the just
And that is Your renown.

The responsive readings Yosse ben Yosse assigned his audience acknowledges the education and the memory stores of the “non-literate” class, putting them on the same plateau as himself, and thus implies that the *vox populi* has merit, that the claim of the priestly caste for leadership is rooted in what the community already knows, in the Torah. He need not construe a re-imagined revolutionizing past in order to substantiate a claim to religious authority.

⁵⁰¹ Appendix A, p. 424 (אמנם אשמינו verses 3-4).

⁵⁰² Psalm 40:6.

⁵⁰³ Prov. 17:10.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

Yosse ben Yosse does not forge a *de novo* social identity for the priests or for the community. His picture of the social stratification is part of the armature of creation itself. His poems “spend” time and space on retelling the stories of creation, the biblical recounting of the evolution of social stratification in Antiquity, implying that the priestly claim to the proverbial throne is nothing short of the fulfillment on earth of God’s design. In Yosse ben Yosse’s liturgy identities do not need to be renegotiated or made fluid as a result of the destruction. Social roles and social identities are part of the scaffold upon which hangs the totality of God’s created world, implying that the Yom Kippur temple cult is fundamental to the salubrity of the universe entire. Human proclivity to sin endangers the universe and creation. The only authentic remedy must therefore be God’s prescription- priestly mediation on behalf of the people. Priests are part of the Big Plan, they are the agents assigned by the Torah to maintain balance, to attain God’s grace and His mercy. They were the heart within the throbbing heart, the temple. In the temple’s absence, they ought to remain the beating heart of Israel.

The Mishnah, however, positions itself above the populace, and privileges rabbinic knowledge over popular memory. The rabbis, by virtue of their learned wisdom and deep knowledge, by dint of their scholarship, imply that they know best, that the complexities of Torah and Jewish life require erudition they alone possess. The structural framework and configuration of the Mishnah creates social distance between the rabbis and members of the community. The Mishnah speaks of different socially significant groups that are at once constructed and constituted. It enacts the socially significant rabbinic group as rooted in meritocracy and divine wisdom.

The different social languages are rooted in fundamentally different perceptions of human communion with God. Both Yosse ben Yosse as a priestly partisan, and the rabbis, form

political speech, drawing on different sources of language to enact political identities.

Interestingly, the Mishnah uses the vernacular language of its day, a mix of second century Hebrew and Aramaic, the spoken language of the people. Archaeological evidence in the form of inscriptions that date back to late antiquity in Palestine, shine a light on the linguistic variety and variability that prevailed in Palestine among Jews: “Many of them are written in cursive Hebrew script, some in Aramaic, others in square script, still others in Paleo-Hebrew ... Greek was also used.”⁵⁰⁵ people from all walks of life were familiar with biblical stories, as they heard weekly sermons that accompanied Torah readings. Sermons were typically delivered in Aramaic, the daily language of Palestinian Jews. Piyyutim of the period cited biblical allusions and used biblical figures as “short hand” for embedded political assertions.⁵⁰⁶ The Mishnah purports to record real conversations that had taken place between real people, in the language of real people. The rabbis buttress their political claims by saying that they came from among the people, they *are* the people, only more learned, and erudite having received proprietary knowledge from Moses at Sinai.

Yosse ben Yosse, on the other hand, weaves divine utterances into a new cloth that bears old designs. His artistic genius is recombinant artistry writ in God’s own words forming a divine liturgy. He masterfully cites biblical verses in innovative, meaning-laden ways. The words are God’s, the new combinations are the poet’s own. The recruitment of biblical verse communicates a political meaning. I maintain that Schwartz and Yahalom’s assessment of Yosse ben Yosse’s piyyut as a rabbinic and derivative restatement of Leviticus 16, intended to impress the listeners

⁵⁰⁵ Jürgen K. Zagenberg, “Archaeology, Papyri, and Inscriptions,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins and Daniel Harlow, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 219.

⁵⁰⁶ Schwartz and Yahalom. *Avodah: Anthology of Ancient Ooems for Yom Kippur*, 13.

with the paytan's artistry is incomplete. They emphasize the linguistic artistry as one that seeks to dazzle, and to overwhelm the senses with the brilliant mosaic of words, that are as colourful and evocative as so many floor mosaics that adorned houses of worship and communal halls.⁵⁰⁷ They say: "... it is the nature of Piyut to overwhelm the listener with images from Israel's culture... so the subtleties of the paytan's handiwork may not have prevented the ancient Jew from appreciating this craft."⁵⁰⁸ Yosse ben Yosse was embedded in the socio-religious community, he imbibed the prevalent aesthetics of his age, and he benefited from the cultural exchanges in the Byzantine marketplace.⁵⁰⁹ As Jodi Magness said:

In general, there was some interaction between Jews and Christians, as well as Judaism and Christianity, in the sense that both religions laid claim to the same tradition and called themselves the 'true Israel,' ... It is not coincidental that the same biblical themes appear in both forums... There is clearly some sort of dialogue, broadly speaking... A lot of what we see at Huqoq can be understood on the background of the rise of Christianity.⁵¹⁰

For example, the works of fourth century Christian liturgist and hymnographer Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 CE), are characterized by use of the acrostic, using biblical verses as prooftexts, they are didactic, and mnemonically fashioned to easily be carried across time and place.⁵¹¹ Richly ornate mosaics that have survived from this period, such as those discovered by Jodi Magness at the Huqoq excavation,⁵¹² tell the story of Byzantine art in Jewish Palestine as

⁵⁰⁷ Huqoq Excavation Project, last modified 2019, <http://huqoq.web.unc.edu/>.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ David Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, (London: Thames and Hudson Press, 1997), 18, 31-33; Cyril A. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire: 312-1453*, (Toronto, Canada: Toronto University Press, 2009), 31-39.

⁵¹⁰ Borschel-Dan, Amanda, "Mind-blowing 1,600-year-old biblical mosaics paint new picture of Galilean life: With its rich and vivid finds, Byzantine-period synagogue at Huqoq busts scholars' earlier notions of a drab Jewish settlement in decline," July 9, 2018, *The Times of Israel*, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/mind-blowing-1600-year-old-biblical-mosaics-paint-new-picture-of-galilean-life/>.

⁵¹¹ Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 35-39, 261, 443.

⁵¹² Huqoq Excavation Project, last modified 2019, <http://huqoq.web.unc.edu/>. See also: results of Google search of the term "Huqoq" under "images," <https://www.google.ca/search?q=huqoq&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwik4fPq7ezcAhVLjKkHa3hA1QQ7A16BAgCEA0&biw=1298&bih=847>

narrative based. Biblical themes are given shape in mosaic form,⁵¹³ verses are illustrated, there is a sense of “one-ups-manship” in the extravagant details and colours. “Ancient Jewish art is often thought to be aniconic, or lacking images. But these mosaics, colorful and filled with figured scenes, attest to a rich visual culture as well as to the dynamism and diversity of Judaism in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods.”⁵¹⁴ Aside from the visual complexity and rich detail, Byzantine art sought to convey meaning, significance. It was essentially expressionist, to borrow a modern terminology. Symbols laden with signifiers, coded nuances, imparted deeper meaning than was superficially gleaned.⁵¹⁵ Yosse ben Yosse’s piyyutic craft is a mosaic of words that paints vivid images of creation, of the Jewish journey through history, and particularly of the temple. He dazzles. He teaches. He ‘one-ups’ himself with each iteration of the Avodah. His mosaic stones are words and biblical verses, laid together to depict new meaningful constructions. His piyyutic language stands apart from spoken language, even today. Each of his utterances conveys meaning, deeper than the meaning perceived upon a cursory reading. Aesthetically speaking, Yosse ben Yosse is a Byzantine artist.⁵¹⁶

Piyyut as decoration is not, I maintain and agree with Münz-Manor,⁵¹⁷ the goal of Yosse ben Yosse’s craft. His poems are not straight forward recitations. They are politically charged, and they differ from the Mishnaic narratives in significant ways. His liturgy does not enact the priestly identity in the vernacular language, for priests are not “every-day people.” They are the

⁵¹³ Meir Ben-Dov and Yoel Rappel, eds., *Mosaics of the Holy Land*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 1987); Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 212.

⁵¹⁴ Borschel-Dan, Amanda, “Mind-blowing 1,600-year-old biblical mosaics paint new picture of Galilean life: With its rich and vivid finds, Byzantine-period synagogue at Huqoq busts scholars’ earlier notions of a drab Jewish settlement in decline.”

⁵¹⁵ Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, 35.

⁵¹⁶ Sandro Sproccati, *Guide to Art: A Handy Reference to Artists, Their Works, and Artistic Movements from the Fourteenth Century to the Present Day*, (Milano, Italy: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2000), 52.

⁵¹⁷ Münz-Manor, “In Praise of the Hasmoneans: Chanukah Beyond Rabbinic Literature.”

elect, the chosen ones, since creation. Their authority to lead derives gravitas from Leviticus. His narrative, as well as the Mishnah's, are politically charged discourses that are recognizable to the community. The rabbis claim authentic authority because of the Antiquity of their knowledge and because of their divinely inspired extrapolations; Yosse ben Yosse, as a spokes-person for the priestly caste, disputes the political aspirations of this new social class, and cites the ultimate authority's words as prooftext.

In the matter of enacting identity of religious leadership, one has to be rooted in the glorious past of Israel, but in the matter of the Yom Kippur narrative, one's memory is the key. Of course, language cannot enact and recognize identities on its own. It must be melded with other things, in the right way, at the right time. "To enact identities, people have to talk the right talk, to walk the right walk, behave as if they believe and value the right things, and wear the right things at the right time and the right place. Identity is a performance. Like all performances, it will not work unless at least some people recognize what you are and what you are doing in your performance... the actors and the audience both need to know who the actors are supposed to be, what they are supposed to be doing, and what it all portends."⁵¹⁸

Both the "actors" in the play and the audience recognize the elevated, divinely mandated role of the High Priest on Yom Kippur at the temple. It is the key to right atonement. The carefully choreographed "dance" of the High Priest were so designed as to convey political relevance and exclusive importance of the priests. Yosse ben Yosse makes it abundantly clear that the High Priest knew his lines, that he was able to consult other priests, that he was a learned leader. He knew the precise orchestration of words, movements, costume changes and ablutions,

⁵¹⁸ Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 24.

gestures, the placement of bodies in the temple space,⁵¹⁹ the props, the tools. He knew his stuff, as did his kin priests, and he performed it at the right time and in the right way.⁵²⁰

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| כְּבִירֵי שֶׁבֶט | יַעֲלֶטוּ בְּגוֹרֵל | אִישׁ כּוֹחַ לְבַיִת אָב | סָגְוּ כְּחֹק מִיְלֻוּאִים |
| כִּיהוֹן יִלְמְדוּהוּ | תַּחֲכַמוּנֵי שַׁבָּת | לְהַכִּין בְּיוֹם זֶה | עֲתִים לְכָל־פְּעֻלָּה. |

The great ones from the tribe of the chosen⁵²¹
 Will rejoice when the lot is cast⁵²²
 For the commanding man of their household
 To serve Him in turns,⁵²³ in accordance with His Commandment

He will be instructed in the art of being a High Priest
 By the elders of the tribe⁵²⁴
 To prepare the daily orders
 And keep the appropriate times for each of the works.

The Yosse ben Yosse Avodah narratives convey that this choreography was part of the social display of beliefs and values, that constitute the priestly meta-discourse. It stands in stark opposition to and in conversation with the rabbinic meta-discourse that construes the temple rituals as dependent on rabbinic supervision:⁵²⁵

They provided for him elders from the elders of the [high] court who would read before him the order of the service [for Yom Kippur]. They would say to him: My master the High Priest, memorize the order of the service; perhaps you forgot or never learned. On the day before Yom Kippur in the morning they stood him in the eastern gate of the Temple and passed before him all the bulls, rams and lambs [that would be used the next day in the service] so that he would recognize and be familiar with the service [of offering each of them].

The rabbis recruited a new identity, a new role for their social group. They assert that their predecessors, the Sanhedrin, were at the heart of the temple, orchestrating the execution of

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 24-26.

⁵²⁰ Appendix A, אספר גדולות, verses 21-22

⁵²¹ A reference to the Priests, after Lev. 21:10. See also DSS 11QT LVII 8.

⁵²² Prov. 16:33.

⁵²³ Lev. 8:34. See also I Chron. 26:13.

⁵²⁴ In Tractate Yoma 1:3, the Mishnah claims that the rabbinic sages instructed the High Priest; here the Paytan claims that the elders of the tribe, from which the High Priest hails, instructed him.

⁵²⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

the rituals and thereby ensuring its redemptive efficacy. They in effect claim authority in the post-destruction Jewish world on the basis of a re-imagined leadership role.

Relationships

The relationships signaled by the priestly partisan Yosse ben Yosse, and those signaled by the rabbinic class, differ. Each side strive to be the ultimate authoritative voice in post-destruction Judaism. This is not a dialogue. Each side claims a position that invalidates and excoriates the other side's claim. It is not a negotiation. The rabbis seek a working relationship with the people of Israel, they speak of Halacha, they state the unequivocal voice of authority on all the different "how to" of Jewish life. For instance, Yoma 8:1 states: "On Yom Kippur, it is forbidden to eat, to drink, to wash, to anoint, and to wear leather shoes and to have sexual relations. The King and the bride may wash their faces, and the newly delivered mother may wear leather shoes: the words of Rabbi Eliezer; and the sages prohibit this."

Yosse ben Yosse is less prescriptive. He emphasizes the relationship between God and His people, as mediated by priests. The paytan does not concern himself with the "how to" of Yom Kippur; he is solely concerned with the spiritual aspects of the day. Nowhere in his existing liturgy would one find reference to what Yoma 8 prescribes.⁵²⁶ But despite the intentional exclusion of prescriptive information, Yosse ben Yosse's works persist in asserting an uncontested leadership role for the priests:

⁵²⁶ Yoma 8 cannot be regarded as a direct continuation of Yoma 1-7. It is a separate elaboration of Lev. 16:28-30 and is but the first of a large Halakhic body of prescriptive rules for Yom Kippur. Yosse ben Yosse is not claiming to legislate Halakhah. His account of the Avodah is not legalistic but religio-historic and laden with implied claims to authority and authenticity.

אֶהְלֵלָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲשִׁירָה צִוּוֹ אֶסְפְּרָה כְבוֹדוֹ אֶאֱפָדְנֵנוּ מִלּוֹכָה

I praise⁵²⁷ my God⁵²⁸
I sing of His glory⁵²⁹
I speak of His grace⁵³⁰
I robe⁵³¹ Him with Majesty

גְּדִלְוֵהוּ אִתִּי וּנְרוֹמְמֵנְהוּ יַחַד וְאֵל תִּתְגָּאוּ בְּנֹזֵר הַמְּלִיכָה.

Declare⁵³² His greatness with me
And let us exalt His name together⁵³³
And do not adorn yourselves
With a crown of Majesty.

Any claim, other than the priestly claim, is a usurpation, a distortion of God's blueprint for the world. Do not presume to don a crown of majesty over the people of Israel, for this contravenes God's exclusive and absolute majesty over the world entire. Stick to the Pentateuch, he effectively tells the rabbis and their supported, do not presume to lead, do not presume to replace the Priestly Caste.

Political Power

The distribution of social goods is at the heart of critical discourse theory. Social good can be defined as anything a person or a group in society strives for, wants, and values, things like status, respect, money, influence, and political power.⁵³⁴ The rabbis and the priestly partisans all vied for the ultimate prize- the power to lead and to adjudicate Jewish life after the

⁵²⁷ Appendix A, אהללה אלוהי Verse 1.

⁵²⁸ Psalm 69:31.

⁵²⁹ Psalm 59:17.

⁵³⁰ Psalm 96:3.

⁵³¹ Exod. 29:5 speaks of the High Priest's vestments. The **אפוד** is a unique item of clothing reserved only for the High Priest. Here the Paytan turns the object into a future-tense verb **אאפדנהו**. The implication is that God is robed with an **אפוד**, with the High Priest's vestments; or, alternatively, that the Priestly vestments are worthy of God, thus imbuing the High Priest with a measure of God's glory.

⁵³² Appendix A, אהללה אלוהי verse 6.

⁵³³ Psalm 34:4.

⁵³⁴ Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 233.

destruction of the temple. Language is used to convey a particular perspective on the nature of the social goods and their distribution among socially significant actors. “Social goods are potentially at stake any time we speak or write in a way that states or implies that something or someone is... “good,” or “acceptable (or the opposite), in some fashion (that is) important to some group in society or society as a whole. (The) perspective on the distribution of social good (may be defined) as politics.”⁵³⁵

Narratives reveal the underpinning of this perspective, whereas they define who is worthy of leadership, who is authoritative, who is the “right” and who is the “wrong” type of leader. Social goods are the politics of who gets what in terms of status, power, and acceptance. So, when the Mishnah recounts a semi-literate High Priest needed rabbinic instruction at the temple, they are in fact telling the community that authentic leadership requires deep knowledge the rabbis alone possess. When Yosse ben Yosse describes an independent, erudite High Priest, directly and indirectly guided by other priests and not by “outsiders,” he is in fact allocating political power to the priestly caste and, at least by implication, treats the rabbis as usurper wannabes.

Connections

“We use language to render certain things connected or relevant (or not) to other things.”⁵³⁶the rabbinic use of the vernacular, and Yosse ben Yosse’s use of biblical language, both focus the reader and listener on the importance and relevance of the Yom Kippur temple rituals. For the rabbis, the site of the temple was the locus of their power and authority. They

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 35.

were there. They orchestrated the proceedings.⁵³⁷ Now, after the destruction, this authority continues where it had left off, it continues to be highly relevant. This authority is underscored by the, possibly apocryphal,⁵³⁸ tales of rabbinic supervision. Henceforth, prayer and recitation of the rabbinic account, the rabbinic inflected memory of the temple, would be the transubstantiated stand-in for the real deal. The miraculous effect of the spoken word would render the verbal recitation of the Avodah efficaciously exculpatory, just as the real Avodah performed at the temple once did. But the spoken word had to be the right spoken word. The words of the Mishnah. Exclusively. This was the essential core of the revolution that transformed Jewish life and potentially empowered each individual, to affect changes in reality through speech.

“The pre-classical period of the 4th and 5th centuries, was the golden age of the Avodah.”⁵³⁹ Yosse ben Yosse is the only identified paytan who wrote about the Avodah in late antiquity. After him there is an odd silence about the Avodah. Qilir did not write about the Avodah; Yannai has only one fragmentary Avodah. Only Saadia Gaon revived the genre, centuries later and in a new style that departed from the word-play style of Qilir. Subsequent paytanim such as Solomon ibn Gabirol, Judah Halevi, Moses ibn Ezra, and Meshullm ben Kalonymos continued to write Avodot. In modern times the last paytan to write an Avodah was Samuel David Luzzatto, as the sacrificial temple cult came to be regarded as too bloody and too un-enlightened for modern Jews to mull.⁵⁴⁰ Yosse ben Yosse remains, therefore, late antiquity’s singularly formative voice other than the Mishnah. He espoused the revolutionary idea just as the rabbis did, that prayer and recitations held power, they could transform reality itself. He too

⁵³⁷ Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

⁵³⁸ Cohn, *The Memory of The Temple and The Making of The Rabbis*.

⁵³⁹ Schwartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient poems for Yom Kippur*, 19.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

subscribed to the power of human speech to affect changes in reality. He too advocated recitation of the Avodah as an effective technique to achieve absolution from sin on Yom Kippur. It was the next best thing, given the destruction of the temple. But his narrative differs from the Mishnaic narrative. He sticks to the biblical narrative, he adheres to a different memory, a different re-imagining of the temple. In his account no rabbis choreographed, no rabbis orchestrated. The Avodah was strictly a priestly affair. The High Priest and the lesser priests did not require outside assistance or instruction as they performed the complex array of atonement rituals. He therefore excludes, even banishes the rabbis from the temple courtyard, in effect pulling the rug from under their claim to authoritative leadership in the post-destruction Jewish world.

Authority

The use of language varieties serves to privilege ideas. Defining the contest between the rabbinic class and the priestly caste in terms of power and privilege, allows us to read Yosse ben Yosse in a new light. No longer is the liturgy a mere recitation in verse of the Yom Kippur temple rituals, no longer is the Rosh Hashanah prayer liturgy a beautification of existing ideas; this now is a historical record of linguistic battle between competing elites who vie not only for the future of the Jewish people, but redefine its past, in order to cement present interests. Each contestant side adopts a unique semiotic system that communicates messages about power and status, about relevance and authority. History, like reality, is socially constructed. He who controls the past, controls the future. And he who controls the future lays claim to religious, social, and political authority in the present time as well. The different languages, the two competing varieties of Hebrew dialects, render the Mishnaic vernacular appear less authoritative, because of the greater distance it opens between the vernacular and the biblical origins. It stands

in contrast with Yosse ben Yosse's biblically-inflected verses, that claim authority by basing the creative text on the original language of the ultimate author- God. Privileging the biblical dialect, Yosse ben Yosse in effect signals the different prestige of the actors. Those who "speak bible" are regarded as inherently and materially superior to those who speak in the vernacular of the day, whose fleeting nature signals the fleeting ideology it attempts to communicate. The choice of language is a choice in the value added to semiotic systems of religious texts. Yosse ben Yosse's way of making knowledge-claims about the world, privileges the biblical literalism promoted by the priestly caste and its biblically based claim to power.

Intertextuality, characteristic of Yosse ben Yosse's liturgy, imbues his texts with implies, uncontestable authority. On the other side of the discourse divide, the rabbis' conversations, encoded in the Mishnah, more rarely buttress texts with allusions to specific biblical verses. They define their conversations as equal to biblical verses in validity and sanctity:⁵⁴¹ The rabbis enacted a new political-religious identity for themselves, as the bulwark of the Mosaic Law, as protectors of the realm, even though the biblical narrative itself intimates no such identity. The potential audience of the two narratives interprets them in the context of this sotto-voce political currency.

The wider notion of language as a vehicle for enacting the identity of leadership must consider the people, objects, values, times, and places that convey and negotiate contextual elite claims. The work of Wieder and Pratt⁵⁴² on the perception of Native Americans, concerning the question of who is a "real Indian," is useful here. The verbal sparring between the two competing

⁵⁴¹ Tractate Avot 1:1.

⁵⁴² D. Lawrence Wieder and Steven Pratt, "On Being a Recognizable Indian Among Indians," in *Cultural Communication and Intercultural Contact*, ed. Donal Carbaugh, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1990), 45-64.

agents requires that each participant establish his own Cultural competency in the eyes of the other, and especially in the eyes of the people whom they both purport to lead. Both the rabbis and the priestly caste, as it is cast in the Yosse ben Yosse narrative, make the claim that they, and not the others, are the “real Indians,” the rightful religious authority. It is, I maintain, a political act. Being the “real Indians” is a participatory act, whereas “one cannot be a “*real Indian*” unless one appropriately recognizes other “*real Indians*,” and gets recognized by others as a “*real Indian*.”⁵⁴³ Recognition is consequential, whereas “making visible and recognizable who we are and what we are doing, always involves a great deal more than ‘just language.’”⁵⁴⁴

Claiming a pivotal role at the temple, claiming the authority to mediate atonement through the Yom Kippur ritual, are the *sin equa non* of legitimate religious authority. Being the right kind of “who” (identity) at the right kind of “where” (the temple in this case), performing the right kind of “what” (activity), through the right kind of symbols, objects, and tools- confer real politically charged status regarding the past, at present, and concerning the future. The innovating “technology” of prayer that replaced the blood and gore of the sacrificial cult still draws its legitimacy and power from history. The question of the Super Discourse as to who is the rightful “carrier” of the ritualized atonement authority, is answered through a conscious reconfiguration of history, meant to cement present political claims to leadership.⁵⁴⁵ The claimed agency in the historic context becomes both assay and building block of post-destruction leadership in Jewish life. There are no final, indisputable, uncontestable, and definitive definitions of who is “real.” The “realness” of protagonists is always settled provisionally and

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 51.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

continuously, in relation to the audience, as well as in the practice of historically defined narratives that frame authority.⁵⁴⁶ The borders and contours of “history” are in fact limitless. No one can definitively describe their limits and shape, and their synergetic effects.

Meaning is not merely apprehended through grammar. Meaning can be apprehended through analysis of the webs of signification drawn from utterances that are socially embedded and enacted. They are the products of historical disputes between and among different discourses.⁵⁴⁷ It is important to study each discourse on its own, as it evolved through and over time, but it is equally important and significant to study the interactive characteristics of and clashes between discourses. The tools of inquiry are, as James Paul Gee says, “thinking devices that can guide us to ask certain sorts of questions, when we are studying oral and textual language artefacts.⁵⁴⁸ We ask what social languages are involved. We ask which socially situated identities are enacted by these languages. We ask what discourse or discourses are involved, and whether and how they interact. We ask what sorts of relationships are involved between the discourses, and what conversations are relevant to the understanding of this linguistic sparring. Which conversations are relevant to understanding texts, and to what conversations do they contribute? We finally ask how intertextuality operates in the text, and what function it has in defining the socially constructed webs of significance, power, and authority.⁵⁴⁹

The critical discourse analysis analytical tools here outlined could, I argue, be applied to other related texts and sorts of data. Critical discourse analysis is based on the analyst’s prefiguration of how “language, contexts, and interactions world in general and in the specific

⁵⁴⁶ Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 50.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-75.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

context being analyzed... (it concerns) theoretical entit(ies).”⁵⁵⁰ The validity of one’s analysis depends on how transcripts work together with the elements of analysis, to create a plausible description of historical social contexts, and of the ideological contests animated by long ago actors. Validity is not a denominator that reflects “reality” in a simple way. The use of language to interpret the world, renders it socially meaningful, A critical discourse analysis is itself an interpretation of the interpretive work that people had in the past made in historical contexts that continuously changed. Validity is therefore not a “once and for all” solution to the vexing unknowability of history. The critical discourse analysis presented here is, inherently and inevitably, open to further dispute, as other analysis, discussions, and challenges to the work.⁵⁵¹ The validity of this particular critical discourse analysis will be tested as it is applied to other sorts of data. Of course, “no piece of work can, or should, ask all possible questions, seek all possible sources of agreement, cover all the data conceivably related to the data under analysis, or seek to deal with every possibly relevant ... detail.”⁵⁵² Having said that, the methodology practiced here, on the subject of Yosse ben Yosse’s liturgy, out further to be tested and refined, and ultimately applied to other sets of data.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 143.

Chapter 3: Structure & Substance – Thematic & Literary Contours

This chapter deals with the descriptive and thematic characteristics of the extant piyyutim, as a necessary step that must precede the comparative exercise with Mishnah Yoma. Indeed, any scholar seeking to study the works of Yosse ben Yosse must familiarize him/herself with the literary features that constitute this body of work. There are 15 existing piyyutim that are generally attributed to Yosse ben Yosse. The body of work consist of 931 stanzas, and 189 lines of quoted texts, forming 15 piyyutim that have reached us in varying configurations. I divided the piyyutim, for the purposes of this study, into five theoretical categories, according to the literary characteristics and thematic contents of each Piyyut⁵⁵³. The categories and classification considerations presented here are my own. In the course of conducting this survey, I have come to debate, and seriously doubt, the attribution of one piyyut to Yosse ben Yosse. My arguments are presented here, backed up by examples from the original text.

The theory of piyyut as a poetic form is based primarily but not exclusively on Mirsky's seminal study of the origins of poetic forms evident in early piyyutim,⁵⁵⁴ and on Zulai's exhaustive study of piyyutim from the Cairo Genizah.⁵⁵⁵ Whereas Mirsky divided the piyyutim into two groups, based on the assumed provenance of these texts, I divided the piyyutim into five categories, depending on their principal thematic thrust. The categories are:

1. the Fragmentary Piyyutim;
2. the Rosh Hashanah Piyyutim;
3. the Yom Kippur Piyyutim;
4. the Avodah Piyyutim; and
5. the piyyutim whose attribution to Yosse ben Yosse is in doubt

⁵⁵³ Several Piyyutim can clearly fall into more than one category, as the categories employed here are artificial and arbitrary, whereas some are thematic and others morphological. For the purposes of this discussion, the Piyyutim that do fall into more than one category, are discussed more than once, as per the parameters of the categories.

⁵⁵⁴ Aharon Mirsky, *The Origin of Forms of Early Hebrew Poetry* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Magness 1985).

⁵⁵⁵ Zulai, *Eretz Israel and its Poetry: Studies in Piyyutim from the Cairo Genizah*.

The Fragmentary Piyyutim

Three piyyutim have reached us in clearly fragmentary form. They are truncated, their text is incomplete, often arresting a thought mid-sentence. It may be that the Genizah trove holds additional fragments that have not yet been identified as works of Yosse ben Yosse, but given the state of science today, we can only address the piyyutim that have already been ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse by Aaron Mirsky.⁵⁵⁶ The fragmented piyyutim are:

⁵⁵⁷ אור עולם

⁵⁵⁸ אפתח שפתי

⁵⁵⁹ אז לראש תתנו

⁵⁵⁶ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*.

⁵⁵⁷ Appendix A, p. 285

⁵⁵⁸ Appendix A, p. 228

⁵⁵⁹ Appendix A, p. 299

אור עולם – Eternal Light

The Piyyut⁵⁶⁰ **אור עולם** has reached us in the most fragmentary state possible, as a single stanzaic line.⁵⁶¹

אָמַר נִיְהִי. אֲוֹרֹת מֵאֶפֶל אֲוִצֵר חַיִּים אֲוֹר עוֹלָם

Eternal Light⁵⁶²
 Fountain of Life⁵⁶³
 Effulgence drawn from tenebrosity⁵⁶⁴
 He spoke,⁵⁶⁵ and it came to be.

Its singular line begins with the letter א, meaning all the possible permutations of acrostic constructions the stanzas for ב-ת are missing. There is no way to know whether the original Piyyut featured a single stanza per letter, or multiple stanzas for each. The fragment conforms with the typical acrostic design employed by Yosse ben Yosse, whereas each couplet in the Piyyut begins with the letter א, recalling the method of the piyyutim:⁵⁶⁶ **אכרעה ואברכה**,⁵⁶⁷ **אהללה**,⁵⁶⁸ **אפהד במעשי** and **אלוהי**. This piyyut also displays no apparent effort at rhyming, although its fragmentary nature does not preclude the possibility that the original work was at least partially rhymed. The Piyyut fragment appears to be an elegiac introduction to a larger work, and it is not known whether it was intended for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, or as a general doxology.

⁵⁶⁰ Appendix A, p. 285

⁵⁶¹ Appendix A, p. 286

⁵⁶² An epithet for God, after Isa. 60:19.

⁵⁶³ An epithet for God, after Psalm 35:10.

⁵⁶⁴ God created light out of darkness, after Gen. 1:3.

⁵⁶⁵ Creation was effected by the Word of God: Gen. 1:3 [light from darkness], Gen. 1:6 [separating the firmament from the waters], Gen. 1:9 [dividing land from sea], Gen. 1:11 [plants], Gen. 1:14 [the sun, moon, and stars], Gen. 1:20 [birds and fish], Gen. 1:24 [beasts and crawling things], Gen. 1:26 [man and woman], Gen. 1:29 [the Law]. Creation brings the world into being, but also affords the world with divine order and purpose.

⁵⁶⁶ Appendix A, p. 357

⁵⁶⁷ Appendix A, p. 308

⁵⁶⁸ Appendix A, p. 404

אפתח שפתי –I Open My Lips

In the Piyyut **אפתח שפתי**⁵⁶⁹ the extant acrostic system ends with the letter ה, meaning that the complete array of stanzas for ט-ת is missing. The existing strophes end with rhymed words: תורוּת, תהילוּת, תשבחוּת, but within the strophes themselves there is not apparent effort to construct rhymed verses. For instance:⁵⁷⁰

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| לְבוֹרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם | אֶפְתַּח שְׁפָתַי |
| בְּרוּב תּוֹשִׁבְחוֹת. | בְּרִנּוֹ אֶהְלֵלֵנוּ. |

I open my lips⁵⁷¹
 To Him, who created utterance
 I glorify Him in joyous song⁵⁷²
 With praises unending.

The embodied elegiac theme is underscored by the construction of opposing verses that make reference to the same body part: לבוּרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם / אפתח שפתי in the first stanza; גם בפי / הלא לשוני ימלל / לנותן מענה לשון in the opening verses of the second stanza; and למי שם פה in the third stanza. This play on words suggests that the human body has divine templates writ upon it, and that its function is inherently designed to praise God and serve Him, with emphasis on the mouth, the tongue, the vocal chords, all organs that facilitate speech. The paytan thus binds human expressivity with divine judgment, whereas human vocality can and does influence rulings by the divine. Thematically, the Piyyut fragment features a personal appeal for

⁵⁶⁹ Appendix A, p. 288

⁵⁷⁰ Appendix A, p. 289

⁵⁷¹ Job 32:20; Psalm 51:16-17.

⁵⁷² 2 Chron. 20-22; Psalm 106:47.

forgiveness, and may be an introduction to a Piyyut for Yom Kippur, given the last words that appear in the fragment:⁵⁷³

חֲנוּן סוֹלֵחַ וּמְכַפֵּר - - -

We sing hymns (composed)
For the King,⁵⁷⁴ in⁵⁷⁵ my throat,
He is Gracious and Compassionate⁵⁷⁶
And He pardons⁵⁷⁷ [...]

אז לראש תתנו In the – In the Early Days You Had Made Us the Head

The Piyyut **אז לראש תתנו**⁵⁷⁸ has also reached us in fragmentary form, comprising only sixteen stanzas. The acrostic system ends abruptly with the letter ע, which suggests that the stanzas for the letters פ-ה may be missing. Like the Piyyut **אפתה שפתי**, this Piyyut deals with an embodied approach to elegiac versification. The paytan repeats the same foil as in the previous Piyyut, whereas each stanza repeats the same word that alludes to a specific body part, making allowances for Hebrew's mellifluous ability to sound the same and mean otherwise. For instance, the first stanza reads:⁵⁷⁹

אֶז לְרֹאשׁ תִּתְּנֵנוּ וּנְמַנְנוּ: נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ עַד [לֹא] נִכּוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ רְוִינוּ מִי רֹאשׁ

In the early days⁵⁸⁰ You had made us the head⁵⁸¹
And we said, somnambulant: Let us return⁵⁸²
Until the Temple was rent from the mountaintop⁵⁸³
And we were punished with poisonous waters⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷³ Appendix A, p. 299

⁵⁷⁴ An epithet for God

⁵⁷⁵ Can also be translated as "through."

⁵⁷⁶ Neh. 9:17.

⁵⁷⁷ Psalm 65:4.

⁵⁷⁸ Appendix A, p. 288

⁵⁷⁹ Appendix A, p. 299

⁵⁸⁰ The word **אז** appears as the opening for many biblical songs, such as Song of Sol. 1:6; Psalm 126:2; I Kings 8:12.

⁵⁸¹ Deut. 28:13.

⁵⁸² To Egypt, referring to defiant behaviour, which denies the Ten Commandments. Num. 14:4.

⁵⁸³ Mic. 4:1; Isa. 2:2.

⁵⁸⁴ Jer. 8:14.

The first instance of the word ראש refers to the human head, but the second line makes reference not to the anatomy, but to a turn of phrase meaning ‘to return’. The third iteration of the word ראש refers to the crown, or top, of the mountain, the top of Moriah where the temple once stood, and the last instance of the word ראש would more commonly be spelled as רויש⁵⁸⁵ meaning bitter poisonous waters. This *wortspielerei* displays the virtuosity of the paytan and his ability to artfully manipulate the language and the biblical source materials in order to forge together new meaning.

The Rosh Hashanah Piyyutim

The thematic distribution of the extant piyyutim is quite clear from the context of each Piyyut. Four piyyutim deal with Rosh Hashanah:

אפתח פה ברנן⁵⁸⁶

אהללה אלוהי⁵⁸⁷

אנוסה לעזרה⁵⁸⁸

אפחד במעשי⁵⁸⁹

Traditionally, the Rosh Hashanah prayer service is divided into three sections: The first order is מלכויות, which contains verses that praise God and His majesty; the second order is זכרונות, which consists of verses that invoke God’s memory of the binding of Isaac, and His grace in remembering Israel’s good deeds; the third order is שופרות, which comprises verses that speak of the ram’s horn, the soundtrack of Rosh Hashanah that reminds the congregation of God’s

⁵⁸⁵ After Deut. 32:32.

⁵⁸⁶ Appendix A, p. 292

⁵⁸⁷ Appendix A, p. 657

⁵⁸⁸ Appendix A, p. 383

⁵⁸⁹ Appendix A, p. 404

might.⁵⁹⁰ Yosse ben Yosse was evidently aware of this ancient practice, as we can see in the structure and themes of his Rosh Hashanah piyyutim.

אפתה פה ברנן – I Open My Mouth in Prayer

The Piyyut ⁵⁹¹אפתה פה ברנן appears to be complete. It comprises eleven strophes, each of which ends with the word מלך (king), referring to God's majesty.⁵⁹²

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| אֶהְלֵל לְשֵׁם פֶּה | אֶפְתֶּה פֶּה בְּרִנָּן |
| גֹּדְלֵי אֱתֹן לְמֶלֶךְ. | בְּשִׁפְתֵי רִנָּנוֹת |

I open my mouth⁵⁹³ in prayerful song,
I extol Him, who gave us a mouth,⁵⁹⁴
My lips are abundant with praise⁵⁹⁵
As I glorify the King.⁵⁹⁶

The absence of historic proof-texts is dissimilar to the more detailed doxology in the Piyyut ⁵⁹⁷אהללה אלוהי and the other confirmed Rosh Hashanah works that all share a similar stylistic and poetically evocative thrust. The Piyyut employs embodied references, albeit not as consistently as in אפתה שפתי. The Piyyut may be viewed as a first-person meditation on the glory of God, or as a contemplation of the poet's gift come from God, or as an adoration of God that is achieved through the human body that was made in God's image. The repeated attestation of God the King may suggest that the Piyyut was written as part of the Rosh Hashanah order of זכרונות, ושופרות, מלכויות, hence its inclusion in this group.

⁵⁹⁰ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond Scheindlin, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993). See also: Meir Bar-Ilan, "Changes in the Rosh Hashanah Prayers: Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:7," *Sidra* 13, no. 5757 (5757): 25-46.

⁵⁹¹ Appendix A, p. 292

⁵⁹² Appendix A, p. 293

⁵⁹³ Dan. 10:16.

⁵⁹⁴ Exod. 4:11.

⁵⁹⁵ Psalm 63:6.

⁵⁹⁶ Deut. 32:3.

⁵⁹⁷ Appendix A, p. 357

אהללה אלוהי – I Praise My God

There is another Piyyut on the same מלכויות theme: אהללה אלוהי, whose literary form and style more closely conform to the confirmed Yosse ben Yosse works. The Piyyut אהללה⁵⁹⁸ is complete, featuring 46 stanzas, a form that appears most frequently in Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre. Its subject is God's victory over successive historic enemies of Israel through miraculous intercession and direct involvement in human history. It is part of the מלכויות order of Rosh Hashanah,⁵⁹⁹ whereas each stanza ends with the word מלוכה (Majesty).⁶⁰⁰

אֶהֱלֵלָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲשִׁירָה צִוּוֹ אֲסַפְּרָה כְבוֹדוֹ אֲאִפְרְנוּ מְלוּכָה

I praise my God⁶⁰¹
 I sing of His glory⁶⁰²
 I speak of His grace⁶⁰³
 I robe⁶⁰⁴ Him with Majesty

The Piyyut presents no obvious effort at rhyming, and at the end of the historic review there are responsive readings woven into the text. The historic review appears to be a didactic lesson about the past, whereas the second half of the Piyyut focuses on a possible future of divine historic intercession, which is contingent on Israel's penitent return unto God. It is interesting to note that the verses Yosse ben Yosse chose for the congregation to recite, are even today set to

⁵⁹⁸ Appendix A, p. 357

⁵⁹⁹ Traditionally, the Rosh HaShanah service is divided into three sections: The first order is מלכויות which contains verses that praise God and His majesty; the second order is זכרונות which consists of verses that invoke God's memory of the binding of Isaac, and His grace in remembering Israel's good deeds; the third order is שופרות which comprises verses that speak of the ram's horn, the soundtrack of Rosh Hashanah that reminds the congregation of God's might.

⁶⁰⁰ Appendix A, p. 358

⁶⁰¹ Psalm 69:31.

⁶⁰² Psalm 59:17.

⁶⁰³ Psalm 96:3.

⁶⁰⁴ Exod. 29:5 speaks of the High Priest's vestments. The אפוד is a unique item of clothing reserved only for the High Priest. Here the Paytan turns the object into a future-tense verb אאפדהו. The implication is that God is robed with an אפוד, with the High Priest's vestments; or, alternatively, that the Priestly vestments are worthy of God, thus imbuing the High Priest with a measure of God's glory.

music and well known to any synagogue goer, such as Deuteronomy 23:5. This verse marks the turning point in the Piyyut, whereas the prior verses speak of past instances of God's miraculous intercession on behalf of the people of Israel, and the verses henceforth speak of hopes for future salvific miracles.

אנוסה לעזרה – I Flee for Help

The Piyyut **אנוסה לעזרה**⁶⁰⁵ is also complete and it too features 46 stanzas. It shares the same scaffold as אהללה אלוהי, whereas the responsive reading begins midway through the Piyyut, at the end of the review of past events, and at the beginning of a prayerful appeal for the future. This Piyyut is part of the שופרות order of Rosh Hashanah, and each strophe ends with the word קול (translated as God's Voice). Even in the absence of rhyming, commonly used in the centuries after Yosse ben Yosse to adorn poetic works, there is an evocative and beautiful aural quality to this Piyyut. The paytan peppers the verses with references to noise-making instruments: the human voice as in שופר ; the sound of the⁶⁰⁶ בקול לו אצפצף as in the Psalm 47:6 verse recited by the congregation;⁶⁰⁷ sounds made by animals such as ויהשמיע כארי / וכנחש קול⁶⁰⁸ ; sounds of natural phenomena, like the resonant and overwhelming thunder and lightning at Sinai, described in Exodus 19:16.⁶⁰⁹

אָנוּסָה לְעִזְרָה אִמְצָא נְגִדִי אֵל קְרוֹב לִי בְּעֵת קוֹרְאֵי בְקוֹל

I flee for help⁶¹⁰
And, there, next to me, I find
God, who stands by me⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁵ Appendix A, p. 383

⁶⁰⁶ Appendix A, p. 384, end of the second stanza.

⁶⁰⁷ See also: Appendix A, p. 396, stanza 34.

⁶⁰⁸ Appendix A, p. 390, stanza 20.

⁶⁰⁹ See also: Appendix A, p. 400, stanza 45.

⁶¹⁰ Isa. 10:3.

⁶¹¹ Deut. 4:7.

When I call out with my Voice

The human voice musical instruments, and nature itself, all serve God in adoration and in mimetic vocalization of His voice. The paytan suggests that the human voice, when it rises to glorify God and to atone for human misdeeds, in other words the שופרות segment of the Rosh Hashanah order,⁶¹² will prompt a favourable divine response:⁶¹³ מִשָּׁה יְדַבֵּר, וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְקוֹל⁶¹³

אֶפְחָד בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי – I am in Dread Because of My Deeds

The Piyyut **אֶפְחָד בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי** is thematically part of the זכרונות portion of the Rosh Hashanah order⁶¹⁴. Each strophe ends with the word זכרון (remembrance):⁶¹⁵

אֶפְחָד בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי אֲדַאֵג בְּכָל־עֵת אִירָא בַיּוֹם דִּין בְּבֹאֵי לְזִכְרוֹן.

I am in dread because of my deeds,
I am troubled all the time,
I tremble in fear of the Day of Judgment
When I come forth for Remembrance.

It features 45 stanzas that speak of atonement and an appeal for God's mercy. The enormity of Israel's sins is proffered as an explication of the catastrophic disaster that has befallen the people of Israel with the destruction of the temple and the subsequent exile. Now that the temple has been destroyed, the biblical means for atonement in the form of the High Priest's ritualistic intercession on behalf of the people is no longer available.⁶¹⁶ The Piyyut is a prayer for the restoration of Israel's past good fortune. Once again, as part of this Rosh Hashanah series, the responsive reading begins midway through the Piyyut, at the end of a section on fear

⁶¹² The Paytan recites a verse directly from the Rosh Hashanah prayer book: לַיּוֹם חָגְנוּ, תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בְּבִסָּה, from Psalm 81:4

⁶¹³ Exod. 19:19.

⁶¹⁴ Appendix A, p. 404

⁶¹⁵ Appendix A, p. 406

⁶¹⁶ Appendix A, p. 407, stanza 7.

of the consequences of sin and the abandonment of God's edicts, and at the beginning of a prayerful appeal for the future. This is the essence of זכרונות : The paytan suggests that if the People will again remember God on Rosh Hashanah, if they repent audibly, God will again remember with favour His People: וישמע אלהים, את-נאקתם; ויזכר אלהים את-בריתו, את-אברהם את-יצחק ויא-יעקב⁶¹⁷

The Yom Kippur Piyyutim

Yosse ben Yosse is often regarded as the quintessential Paytan of Yom Kippur. His work is always analyzed in the context of Yom Kippur and the Avodah,⁶¹⁸ whereas the preponderant number of extant piyyutim attributed to him deal with the Day of Atonement. There are six piyyutim that deal with personal or communal confession of sins, and with personal or communal appeals to God for forgiveness. They are:

אפתח שפתי⁶¹⁹

אז לראש תתנו⁶²⁰

אכרעה ואברכה⁶²¹

אין לנו כהן גדול⁶²²

אתן תהילה⁶²³

אמנם אשמינו⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁷ Exod. 2:24.

⁶¹⁸ See in particular: Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poems for Yom Kippur*, 35.

⁶¹⁹ Appendix A, p. 288

⁶²⁰ Appendix A, p. 299

⁶²¹ Appendix A, p. 308

⁶²² Appendix A, p. 320

⁶²³ Appendix A, p. 338

⁶²⁴ Appendix A, p. 424

אפתח שפתי – I Open My Lips

The last word of the fragment of **אפתח שפתי**, suggests a Yom Kippur theme, with a personal appeal for absolution. The verbs in the Piyyut are all spoken in the first person, singular, the voice of the “I.” The paytan opens with:⁶²⁵

אֶפְתַּח שְׁפָתַי

I open my lips⁶²⁶
 To Him, who created utterance
 I glorify Him in joyous song⁶²⁷
 With praises unending.

Even as the thematic tone is doxological, the embodied reflexive verbs comprise a personal plea to the Creator. The lips, the mouth, the tongue, and the throat all belong to the paytan. The appeal is made to the King who imbued the human body with a voice. The last word of the Piyyut however, places this Piyyut in the group of Yom Kippur liturgies, whereas God’s attribute that concerns the paytan here is that God is the Forgiver, the Atoner, the Merciful Exculpator.⁶²⁸

חֲנוּן סוֹלֵחַ וּמְכַפֵּר – – –

He is Gracious and Compassionate⁶²⁹
 And He pardons⁶³⁰ [...]

⁶²⁵ Appendix A, p. 288

⁶²⁶ Job 32:20; Psalm 51:16-17.

⁶²⁷ 2 Chron. 20-22; Psalm 106:47.

⁶²⁸ Appendix A, p. 289

⁶²⁹ Neh. 9:17.

⁶³⁰ Psalm 65:4.

אז לראש תתנו – In the Early Days You Had Made Us the Head

In contrast, the fragmented Piyyut **אז לראש תתנו** reads as a communal appeal to the Merciful One. The verbs in the Piyyut are spoken in the first person, plural, the voice of the “We.” The embodied approach speaks of the collective ear of the nation, the communal faculties of humanity as a whole:⁶³¹

בְּנוּ טַעַתָּה אֶזְוֹן וּבֵל אֶזְוֹן הַטִּינֹו עַד לֹא שָׁמוּעָה תִּצְלִינָה אֶזְוִינֹו.

You bestowed us with ears⁶³²
 But we had not listened⁶³³
 Until the calamity was heard
 And our ears rang.⁶³⁴

Responsive refrains turn the collective into a single body of confessors. This Piyyut also features a recurring riposte: **לְנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ** possibly indicating that the Piyyut was read in gatherings of the community, and that the congregation may have read out loud the repeating verses, borrowed from the confessional **סליחות** prayers in the contemporary Yom Kippur prayer book.⁶³⁵ The same responsive verse appears in a Piyyut **אֶלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה** by the paytan we know only as Yehudah,⁶³⁶ where the refrain **לְנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ** appears as a responsive verse. A similar device is employed by Yosse ben Yosse in his piyyut **גְּדוּל כְּהֵן לְנוּ אֵין**⁶³⁷ where the very same responsive verse **לְנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ** serves as the communal refrain. One can assume with

⁶³¹ Appendix A, p. 299

⁶³² Psalm 94:9.

⁶³³ Prov. 5:13.

⁶³⁴ 1 Sam. 3:11.

⁶³⁵ See: Menachem Davis, *Machzor for Yom Kippur =: Mahazor Le-Yom Kipur Simhat Yehoshu'a (Artscroll)*, 114. See also: Psalm 86:5.

⁶³⁶ See: The National Library of Israel, “The Site of Piyyut and Tefilah,” last modified 2018, <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/he/song/Pages/default.aspx>. The Paytan is thought to be one of the Paytanim who wrote during the Anonymous period in Piyyutic history. Nothing else is known of him. This Piyyut, whose subject is the ten martyrs who died while consecrating God’s Name and Glory, is nowadays sung in Ashkenazi congregations at the end of **סדר העבודה** on Yom Kippur; Sephardi communities sing it on Tisha Be’Av.

⁶³⁷ Appendix A, p. 320.

some degree of confidence that this particular verse was well known among Jewish communities and that it was highly evocative for the people.

In late antiquity, there were three types of sites that vied for supremacy with regards to the most auspicious and authorized loci for prayer. The home, site of daily activities that are guided by and informed by fulfillment of Mitzvot, with the table as a *מקדש מעט* could have been a natural choice for daily prayers; the *בית מדרש* the site where men studied the Torah and Mishnah daily, where the prayer texts and their progenitors were on everyone's lips, could have been chosen; and the synagogue, purpose-built for a site in which men and women gathered to give praise to God and to be His benevolent intercession in their lives, was also a candidate, whereas the socio-religious structure of the community could be reinforced, while immersing each member of the congregation in the rituals actively.⁶³⁸ There is evidence to suggest that communal gatherings were already gaining popularity before the destruction of the Second Temple. Public expressions of piety, particularly occasioned by a perceived need for atonement, took place outside the temple, for the benefit of the non-cultic classes.⁶³⁹ Making Torah reading more accessible to the masses, while mirroring the Hellenistic custom of reading culturally important texts out-loud, transformed public prayer sites into more participatory loci, meaning that the "simple person," unspecialized and possibly unschooled, could take part in the prayers. Responsive verses, familiar and recurring, and a gradual democratization of worship⁶⁴⁰ altered the format of worship from a passive, observational exercise, to a more active, participatory

⁶³⁸ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, 31.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁶⁴⁰ M. Haran, "Priesthood, Temple, Divine Service," *Hebrew Annual Review* 7 (1983): 121-135.

model, which in the post-destruction era became vital for the preservation of Jewish texts and practices.

Communal service required a theatre of worship, infusing old religious texts with music and local inflections of artistry, better to connect the audience with the words. The act of removing prayer from the home and structuring it as a communal exercise, in effect fashioned communities, created the community, and crafted ontological building blocks of Judaic practices for millennia. Indeed, as Joseph A. Levine notes: "...the Hebrew Bible has been transmitted and received for centuries primarily through the medium of chant and musical intonation, showcasing a living religious musical tradition that originated in the Middle East and is still thriving throughout the world over two millennia later."⁶⁴¹ In the fifth century, when Yosse ben Yosse is presumed to have lived, the synagogue had already become institutionalized as the religious equivalent of the temple as the site of supplication before God, as prophesied by Hosea 14:3. Acrostics helped congregants and cantors⁶⁴² remember prayers in the centuries before the codification of the prayer book,⁶⁴³ and music became a language of human emotion, expressing the inexpressible within a framework of congregational expression.⁶⁴⁴ In the case of this Piyyut, the recurrent refrain is an elegiac petition to God the eternal Creator: קָטְאָנוּ צוֹרְנוּ סֵלַח לָנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ – an ancient all but universal prayer for the atonement of sin. It recurs as a responsive verse in several Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim, as we shall see. It is important to note that one cannot with certainty determine whether the refrain was originally added by Yosse ben Yosse, or added later, as an embellishment by copyists or other enthusiasts.

⁶⁴¹ Joseph A. Levine, "Judaism and Music," in *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions*, ed. Guy L. Becak, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006),29.

⁶⁴² Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 55.

⁶⁴³ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, 93, 96, 124.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

אכרעה ואברכה – I Bow and Kneel

The Piyyut ⁶⁴⁵אכרעה ואברכה appears to be complete, even though some words appear to be missing from the manuscripts uncovered by Mirsky. It comprises 23 stanzas, in a complete alphabetic acrostic, whereas each letter of the alphabet heads each canto in the stanzas. For instance, the fifth stanza, of the letter ה has four cantos, and each begins with that letter:⁶⁴⁶

הִצִּיב רָקִיעַ הַכְּפִיף וְהָרָקִיעַ
הִבְהִיק וְהִבְקִיעַ הוּא יָסַד וְהִשְׁקִיעַ

He hath placed the firmament⁶⁴⁷
And curved it and placed it above
He created light and broke the abyss to bring forth water⁶⁴⁸
He founded⁶⁴⁹ and submerged⁶⁵⁰

God imbued the paytan's body with a conscious body:⁶⁵¹

פְּתַחְתִּי בִּינִיתָהּ פְּנִינֹת גּוּף הִכְנַתָּהּ
פְּ... קָרְבִי בְּחַנְתָּהּ אֶתָּה כּוֹנְנָתָהּ.

I opened my heart, and You have understood,⁶⁵²
The pearls⁶⁵³ hidden in the shell of the body, You hath arranged,
[...] You have examined my innards
Which You hath arrayed.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁵ Appendix A, p. 308

⁶⁴⁶ Appendix A, p. 310

⁶⁴⁷ Gen. 1:6.

⁶⁴⁸ Prov. 3:20.

⁶⁴⁹ A reference to the land, to Earth, after Prov. 3:19.

⁶⁵⁰ A reference to the pillars of the earth submerged in the waters, to bear the weight of creation, after PT Tractate Chagigah, Folio 12, page 2, which cites Amos 4:13 and Psalm 136:6.

⁶⁵¹ Appendix A, p. 316

⁶⁵² The sentence could also be read, in agreement with the rest of the stanza, as: "You have constructed the openings of my body." See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי, p. 244, no. 16.

⁶⁵³ Could also be understood as פנימיים in reference to the innards of the body. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי, p. 244, no. 16.

⁶⁵⁴ The verse אתה כוננתהּ is the title for the eponymous Piyyut which recounts the Avodah.

The Piyyut has a confessional tone of a single supplicant who, after extolling the virtues of the Almighty, laments his own iniquity and seeks mercy from above.⁶⁵⁵

רְצֵה קוֹלִי רְאוּתְךָ פִּילוּלִי

Hearken my voice
As I pray to see You⁶⁵⁶
The High and Lofty One who is my strength⁶⁵⁷
I speak, that I may find relief.⁶⁵⁸

This line and similar verses in the Piyyut, suggest a connection to the Yom Kippur group.

אין לנו כהן גדול – We Have No High Priest⁴⁴

The Piyyut⁶⁵⁹ אין לנו כהן גדול comprises 44 stanzas that, in a double acrostic system, lament the loss of the temple and the nation's inability to achieve atonement on Yom Kippur through the performance of the Avodah by the High Priest. The tenor of the Piyyut is a collective, communal lamentation, bemoaning the destruction, weeping for the direct avenue for God's mercy, now forever closed.⁶⁶⁰

אין לנו כהן גדול לכפר בעֲרֵנו ואיך יתְכַפֵּר לָנו על שגגוֹתֵינוּ

We have no High Priest
To atone for us
And how shall we find atonement, to
Expiate our errors

The Piyyut posits elements of the priestly Yom Kippur cult as the emblems of perfect routes to atonement and creates a dynamic parallel of sins and forgiveness through those cultic

⁶⁵⁵ Appendix A, p. 316

⁶⁵⁶ 1 Kings 8:28.

⁶⁵⁷ Psalm 138:6; Hab. 3:19.

⁶⁵⁸ Job 32:20.

⁶⁵⁹ Appendix A, p. 320.

⁶⁶⁰ Appendix A, p. 321

instruments. The Avodah is a scaffold upon which the entire piyyut hangs. For instance, the אורים ותומים that are derived from the word 'אור' were instruments of achieving enlightenment, or rather an illumination of the darkness of transgression, and the paytan asks: ואיך יאור לנו, how shall we find a light, using a phrase that mirrors the word אור in the first arm of the canto.⁶⁶¹

אִין לָנוּ אִוְרִים וְתוּמִים לְשִׂאוֹל בְּהֵם וְאִיךְ יֵאוֹר לָנוּ וְאוֹיֵינוּ מֵאוֹפֵל.

We have no Urim and Thumim⁶⁶²
To inquire for judgment
And how shall we find a light⁶⁶³
While the object of our desire is in darkness.

The responsive reading that appears at regular intervals (reminiscent of אז לראש תתנו discussed above) creates a vigorous, growing urgency in the repetitive, rhythmic performance or recitation of the Piyyut, as the responsive readings are unrelenting throughout: קָטָאנוּ צוֹרְנוּ סָלַח לָנוּ יוֹצֵרְנוּ

There is extensive use of wortspielerei in this Piyyut, such that in addition to the mirroring effect of transgression and instruments of cultic atonement, each stanza toys with the acrostic letter and verbs. For instance, for the letter ב the paytan chose the verb עב"ד, which recalls the Avodah that took place in בית העבודה, the temple, and the paytan asks: איך נעבוד how shall we worship God, while a foreign power enslaves us, turning us to עבדים, slaves.

The neat play on words repeats throughout the Piyyut, without “lapsing” into rhyming, while maintaining a distinctive aesthetic of poetic exuberance. The rhyming that does occur is

⁶⁶¹ Appendix A, P. 321

⁶⁶² Num. 27:21.

⁶⁶³ PT, Yoma 7:3 explains the origin of the term Urim and Thumim, based on the root אור. They lit the way for Israel. The Piyyut contradicts Mishnah Sotah 9:12 which states that since the passing of the First Prophets the Urim and Thumim were no longer needed or in use. Yosse ben Yosse harks back to early times, seeking to re-enact the First Temple sacral judgment, in opposition to the rabbis who seek to enact a new form of Judaic legislative system.

inconsistent, as in all Yosse ben Yosse's works, befitting the artistic norms of the Anonymous Period in which he had labored.⁶⁶⁴ The Piyyut does not end with a citation of additional verses, but with the recurring riposte *לְנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ סֶלַח לְנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ* sung by the congregation in communal prayer on Yom Kippur.

אתן תהילה – I Give Praise

The Piyyut⁶⁶⁵ **אתן תהילה** also consists of 44 stanzas, that comprise an elegiac appeal by the paytan in person, for forgiveness in a double acrostic system. This is perhaps the most archetypic Yosse ben Yosse liturgical poem. It is unrhymed, it is formed of couplets or strophes, it features some wortspielerei, albeit inconsistently exercised, and it ends with a Psalm verse. Its thrust is to glorify God, to emphasize His essential attribute of Mercy:⁶⁶⁶

חֲפֵז לְהַצְדִּיק יְצוּרֵי כַפְיוֹ, תְּמִיד יִשְׁקוֹד בְּטוֹבַת בְּחִירָיו.

Benevolent in all His deeds,⁶⁶⁷
 And merciful to all who flee toward Him⁶⁶⁸
 Righteous in all His ways
 And close to His seekers⁶⁶⁹

In addition, it urges the congregation to repent and return unto God so that His judgment, on the Day of Judgment, He will find favour with the People:⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁴ Lieber, *Yannai on Gen.: An Invitation to Piyyut*, 7; Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 10, 89, 124, 169.

⁶⁶⁵ Appendix A, p. 338

⁶⁶⁶ Appendix A, p. 344

⁶⁶⁷ Psalm 145:17

⁶⁶⁸ The verse is evocative of the Piyyut **אנוסה לעזרה**. It can also be translated as: "Those who are tested by Him," after Deut. 8:2.

⁶⁶⁹ Psalm 26:6.

⁶⁷⁰ Appendix A, p. 354

רְחוּם וְחַנוּן, שְׁפִטֵינוּ בְרַחֲמִים צְדָקְנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ עֶפֶר וָאֶפֶר

Merciful and compassionate,⁶⁷¹
Please judge us with kindness,
Acquit us in judgment
For we are but dust and ashes⁶⁷²

אמנם אשמינו – Despite Our Transgressions

The last of this group, the Piyyut⁶⁷³ אמנם אשמינו comprises 46 stanzas and appears to be complete. Its first two stanzas constitute a formal introduction. They then turn into a responsive riposte, that repeats regularly at the end of a letter section in the quadruple acrostic. Stanza 1 appears as the riposte after the letter א section,⁶⁷⁴

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים
לְהַאֲרִיךְ אֶפֶד
וְהִיא תִהְלָתֶיךָ.

It is Your manner, our God
To suspend Your anger⁶⁷⁵
Against the iniquitous and the just
And that is Your renown.⁶⁷⁶

Stanza 2 appears after the section for the letter ב,⁶⁷⁷

לְמַעַן, אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידָתְנוּ
עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לְנוּ,
דְּלִים וְרִקִּים.

For Your sake, our God,
Act, not for our sake,⁶⁷⁸
Look upon us standing before you,
Inadequate and empty-handed.

⁶⁷¹ Exod. 34:6.

⁶⁷² Gen. 18:27.

⁶⁷³ Appendix A, p. 424

⁶⁷⁴ Appendix A, p. 426

⁶⁷⁵ Exod. 34:6.

⁶⁷⁶ Isaa. 48:9.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Psalm 115:1.

And then again, the first stanza is read responsively after the λ section, until the end of the Piyyut. This dynamic system affords the audience with a participatory role in the prayer, and imbues the text, which is written in the first person plural, with a particularly unifying congregational air:⁶⁷⁹

תְּשַׁלֵּיךְ חַטָּאיִנוּ וּתְחוֹן בְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ
תֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ עָשָׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה.

Please cast our sins⁶⁸⁰
And pardon Your creatures⁶⁸¹
Look at us, bereft of intercessors⁶⁸²
And treat us with kindness.

The Piyyut explains human suffering as being the result and byproduct of sin:⁶⁸³

אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִקְשַׁבְנוּ גְּעָרָה כְּמִבִּין
אֶפְפוֹנוּ מִכּוֹת כְּכִסִּיל הוֹדְנוּ.

For we have not hearkened
Your rebuke,⁶⁸⁴ as we ought to have understood
Even as we are enveloped by tortures
Like a rebellious man⁶⁸⁵, we have deliberately done evil.

The prayerful appeal for forgiveness is communal, on behalf of the entire people, stretching beyond the walls of the prayer site. The Piyyut features no rhyming, and it seldom toys with words, perhaps because of its oral and public nature. There is less room for puns and word games when the Piyyut is recited by the entire congregation. The simple dialectic of sin and

⁶⁷⁹ Appendix A, p. 444

⁶⁸⁰ Mic. 7:19.

⁶⁸¹ Job 14:15.

⁶⁸² Isa. 59:16.

⁶⁸³ Appendix A, p. 446

⁶⁸⁴ Prov. 17:10.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

suffering leaves no room in this Piyyut for the mystery of the Avodah. Prayer replaces the cult, in a rare sidelining of the priestly leadership role in achieving national and personal atonement.

The Avodah Piyyutim

The piyyutim that deal specifically with the Avodah may be regarded as constituting a sub-group of the Yom Kippur liturgy. The detailed account of the Avodah, however, makes this group stand out as unique. Previous mentions of aspects of the Avodah,⁶⁸⁶ or of the High Priest at the temple, leave out the gory details. In this group of piyyutim, the paytan delves into the High Priest's every movement in space and time, making these piyyutim long and challenging. There are interesting comparisons between this group of piyyutim and the Avodah narrative in Tractate Yoma. This will be the subject of Chapter 4 of this dissertation. My focus here is to describe the literary characteristics of the piyyutim. There are four piyyutim that, while dealing with Yom Kippur like the previous group, take the audience to the inner most rooms of the temple, and describe in minute detail the Avodah, the Yom Kippur cultic rituals performed by the High Priest. They are:

⁶⁸⁷אספר גדולות

⁶⁸⁸אז בדעת חקר

⁶⁸⁹אתה כוננת

⁶⁹⁰אזכיר גבורות

⁶⁸⁶ **אין לנו כהן גדול** stands out as a piyyut that alludes to the Avodah but does not delve into its "gory" details. See Appendix A, p. 320; **אנוסה לעזרה** makes oblique references to the "biophony" of the Temple on the Days of Awe. See Appendix A, p. 383; **אפחד במעשי** celebrates the efficacy of the High Priest's intercession but does not provide details of the atonement rituals. See: Appendix A, p. 404

⁶⁸⁷ Appendix A, p. 446

⁶⁸⁸ Appendix A, p. 471

⁶⁸⁹ Appendix A, p. 529

⁶⁹⁰ Appendix A, p. 608

אספר גדולות – I Speak of Great Works

The Piyyut **אספר גדולות** resembles the typical Yom Kippur Piyyutim structurally. It comprises 46 stanzas, written in a double acrostic, and is thus the shortest account of the Avodah among the extant Yosse ben Yosse works. The priestly service at the temple on the Day of Atonement is tied to creation itself, intimating that the cultic practice is foundational to the salubrity of the entire world, indeed vital for creation itself. The story of creation is recounted, reaching its apex with the birth of Levi, the progenitor of the priestly caste who is charged with maintaining the balance of life through the Avodah.⁶⁹¹

יּוֹפֵי מִטּוֹת עוֹז צָצוּ מִחֲלָצִיּוֹ בָּם לְמֶלֶךְ וְלַחֹזֶה לְשָׂרָת וְלִכְהֵן.

The striking and mighty tribes⁶⁹²
 Emerged from his loins
 And from among them rose king⁶⁹³ and prophet⁶⁹⁴
 And a servant to attend and to serve.⁶⁹⁵

The piyyut features no obvious rhyming and, while it is written in “high verse,” does not resort of wortspielerei too often. The verses appear to be a narrative that is spoken to the congregation, rather than a communal text recited in unison. At the point where the narrative reaches the actual account of the Avodah, biblical verses are recited that would have been familiar to the congregants as the Bible-based prayers recited by the High Priest on Yom Kippur. The piyyut follows Mishnah Yoma quite consistently, with minute deviations, as outlined in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁶⁹¹ Appendix A, p. 454

⁶⁹² A reference to the twelve tribes that hailed from Jacob.

⁶⁹³ A reference to Moses, after Exod. 18:13.

⁶⁹⁴ A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

⁶⁹⁵ A reference to Aaron, the Priest, after Exod. 38:21.

אז בדעת הקר – In the Beginning He Scrutinized

The Piyyut⁶⁹⁶ אז בדעת הקר can stand on its own as the subject of research. In the context of this dissertation, I have occasion to touch upon its unique characteristics on several occasions, intending to highlight its uniqueness and lead the way for future scholarship. A detailed comparison with the other Avodah piyyutim yielded results that support the claim that this piyyut was not written by Yosse ben Yosse, but by another anonymous paytan, in the style of Yosse ben Yosse. This is an interesting corollary to the “Teqi’ata” fragments studied by Shulamit Elizur,⁶⁹⁷ who examined fragmentary piyyutim, reviewing their literary form, their use of motifs, and the order of citations in the piyyut, drawn from the Torah, Prophets, and Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible. She concluded that although written in the style of Yosse ben Yosse, they were most probably not written by him. One must conclude therefore that the style in question was popular, widely known, and not unique to Yosse ben Yosse.⁶⁹⁸

I maintain that אז בדעת הקר is an example of such a piyyut. The Piyyut appears to be complete, apart from a few missing phrases that have not yet been clearly identified in the manuscripts. Interestingly, many of the missing phrases appear contextually to refer to the preeminent position of Aaron. For instance, in the second array of acrostics, for the letter כ, the phrase that clearly refers to Aaron is incomplete:⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁶ Appendix A, p. 471

⁶⁹⁷ Shulamit Elizur, “Teqi’ata Fragments in the Style of Yosse ben Yosse” [Hebrew], *Tarbitz* 53, no. 4 (July-August 1984): 547-558.

⁶⁹⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 49-50.

⁶⁹⁹ Appendix A, p. 497

כ... ברית לקרושיו היות לו משרתים ולצ...

As [...] ⁷⁰⁰
 A covenant to His consecrated people
 To be His servants ⁷⁰¹
 To [...]

Aharon Mirsky does not discuss this literary anomaly. ⁷⁰² It does, however, raise some interesting questions: Is this evidence of tampering or of the ravages of time? We cannot know, of course, but the clues are tantalizing. The main thrust of the Piyyut is the Avodah.

This Piyyut is the first of the extremely long piyyutim that deal with the Avodah in excruciating details. Comprising 138 stanzas, it features a full set of double acrostics from א to ת, then it swings back with a full array of double acrostics running backwards from ת to א, and for a third time exhibits an array of double acrostics in the ת-א direction, culminating with a six-fold repetition of the letter ת at the end of the piece. The last canto may be a truncated remain of a longer epilogue, but the overall tenor of the Piyyut appears to be intact. The Piyyut ends with the High Priest revealing the now white cord that had been crimson prior to the performance of the supplication in the Holy of Holies: ⁷⁰³

תיקנות חוט שני הילבינה, ציר הנאמן לשולחיו יצן.

The cord of our hope
 From crimson is now white,
 The loyal emissary
 Responds to those who dispatched him. ⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ The first letter is translated here as the כ that indicates a simile. It could very possibly be a כ that forms the first letter of a verb such as כר"ת which would render the first word differently. Since the verse is erased, it is impossible to translate it with any measure of confidence.

⁷⁰¹ Deut. 18:5.

⁷⁰² Mirsky, *Yasse ben Yasse Poems*, 231.

⁷⁰³ Appendix A, p. 525

⁷⁰⁴ Mishnah Yoma 6:8.

The erstwhile detailed account of the Avodah stands incomplete here, suggesting there may have been originally additional stanzas that describe the conclusion of the day's proceedings and the return of the High Priest to his abode. Notwithstanding, the Piyyut is a marvel of poetic skill, it is a formidable display of poetic artistry and word-craft. There are several literary and narrative inconsistencies that make **אז בדעת הקר** quite atypical in the context of Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre, as I discuss below in the section dealing with piyyutim whose provenance is doubtful.

אתה כוננת – You Have Created the World

The Piyyut⁷⁰⁵ **אתה כוננת** stretches across 176 stanzas and appears to have reached us in a complete state. The quadruple acrostic (four stanzas each begin with the same letter, in alphabetic order) repeats twice. The Piyyut features no rhyming and displays limited wortspielerei especially at the end of the Piyyut.

The narrative structure of the piyyut begins with the creation story, continues with pivotal biblical events and heroic personalities, leading to the High Priest's performance of the world-saving Avodah at the temple on Yom Kippur. God's Law is the scaffold of creation, it is implied, and the dialectic of transgression leading to suffering hinges upon observance of the Law as well as on the correct performance of every detail of the Avodah.

There are very few cited verses that serve as familiar texts, possibly for responsive readings, and their situation within the narrative is carefully chosen. The first appears after the tale of the Akkeda, the binding of Isaac, in the first set of ט stanzas, following the word **כופר**, meaning ransom:⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁵ Appendix A, p. 529

⁷⁰⁶ Appendix A, p. 554

שְׁמַתְּ כִפְרוּ אֵיל וְנִחַשְׁב לּו צֶדֶק, בְּיוֹם זֶה נִקְשִׁיב: מִצָּאתִי כּוֹפֵר.

כְּכַתּוּב בַּתּוֹרַתְךָ וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם הַמְּקוֹם הַהוּא יִי יִרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֵר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר יִי יִרְאֵה.

You found a ram in his⁷⁰⁷ stead⁷⁰⁸
 But the deed was counted as his⁷⁰⁹ merit,
 On this Day⁷¹⁰ we will hear You say:
 I found a ransom in your stead.⁷¹¹
 As it is written in Your Torah: “And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-Yireh; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the LORD is seen.'”⁷¹²

The second reading appears after the letter **צ** group, where the narrative reports on the special eminent status awarded to the Levites as the conduits, the instruments of salvation appointed by God to offer כַּפֶּרֶה, atonement:⁷¹³

צוֹיִתֶם שָׁבֵת פְּתַחֵי אֹהֶלֶיךָ לְמִלֵּא יָדָם יָמִים שְׁבַעֲהָ.

כְּכַתּוּב כֹּאשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה צוּה יִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם.

You found a ram in his⁷¹⁴ stead⁷¹⁵
 But the deed was counted as his⁷¹⁶ merit,
 On this Day⁷¹⁷ we will hear You say:
 I found a ransom in your stead.⁷¹⁸

⁷⁰⁷ A reference to Isaac who was bound to be sacrificed in a faith-full offering to God.

⁷⁰⁸ Gen. 22:13.

⁷⁰⁹ A reference to Isaac.

⁷¹⁰ A reference to the Day of Atonement.

⁷¹¹ Job 33:24. The word “ransom” is **כּוֹפֵר**, meaning a covering of something, like the coating of Noah’s ark, after Gen. 6:14. It thus means a ransom, or a payment in the stead of a person. The root **כּוֹפֵר** is transformed into the name for the Day of Atonement, **יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים** in which God covers up the sins of Israel who repent, and Israel through prayer and fasting “pay” the ransom for their sins and are thus saved from God’s wrath.

⁷¹² Gen. 22:14.

⁷¹³ Appendix A, p. 554

⁷¹⁴ A reference to Isaac who was bound to be sacrificed in a faith-full offering to God.

⁷¹⁵ Gen. 22:13.

⁷¹⁶ A reference to Isaac.

⁷¹⁷ A reference to the Day of Atonement.

⁷¹⁸ Job 33:24. The word “ransom” is **כּוֹפֵר**, meaning a covering of something, like the coating of Noah’s ark, after Gen. 6:14. It thus means a ransom, or a payment in the stead of a person. The root **כּוֹפֵר** is transformed into the name for the Day of Atonement, **יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים** in which God covers up the sins of Israel who repent, and Israel through prayer and fasting “pay” the ransom for their sins and are thus saved from God’s wrath.

As it is written in Your Torah: “And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-Yireh; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the LORD is seen.’”⁷¹⁹ Thereafter, the extra-Piyyutic readings are the cited verses of the High Priest’s prayer that the Bible recounts were spoken as part of the Avodah service, especially at the כַּפֹּרֶת, the covering of the Holy Ark. It is the essential nature of Yom Kippur itself, that is echoed in the literary form and structure of this Piyyut:⁷²⁰

תָּן לָנוּ מוֹפֵת שׁוֹלְחֵינוּ יֵאֱמִירוּ בְּמָה נִדְרַע כִּי כּוֹפֵר פֶּשַׁע.

Give us a sign
Those who dispatched him⁷²¹ say
How shall we know
That the sin has been atoned.

Through the device of strategic insertion of responsive readings, or at the very least of familiar verses, that hinge on the root כַּפ"ר, a root that has to do with covering up a physical object, or the symbolic covering up of transgressions leading to forgiveness of sin. The Avodah narrative appears to follow quite closely the narrative order of Mishnah Yoma, as charted in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

אֶזְכִּיר גְּבוּרֹת – I am Reminded of the Great Deeds of God

The last of the Avodah Piyyutim is **אֶזְכִּיר גְּבוּרֹת**, a mammoth 243 stanza piece.⁷²² It features a ten-fold acrostic system, whereas each letter crowns the first line of ten consecutive stanzas. The piyyut ends with 22 repetitions of the last letter of the alphabet, the letter ת, mirroring the total number of letters in the alphabet and thus intimating wholeness. It is the

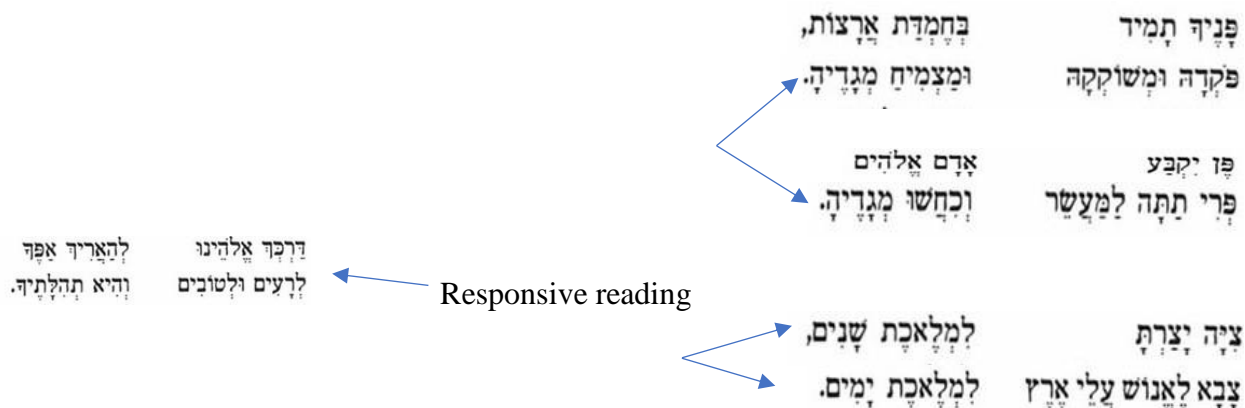
⁷¹⁹ Gen. 22:14.

⁷²⁰ Appendix A, p. 526

⁷²¹ The High Priest is the People’s emissary.

⁷²² Appendix A, p. 608

longest work attributed to Yosse ben Yosse, and it, like most, does not employ rhyming and seldom indulges in wortspielerei. In the piyyut **אמנם אשמינו**, which involves responsive readings and therefore suggests a popular piyyut that was meant to be sung by the congregations, there appear a few instances of rhyming:⁷²³



In this instance the rhymes are incidental to the subject of the piyyut, they are not intentional poetic decorations, the phrases are meant to educate rather than dazzle the reader. It is a veritable tour de force of an accomplished wordsmith and Torah scholar. There are ten instances where stanzas appear to have been added to the original text by later scribes.⁷²⁴ Mirsky made note of scribal additions and “improvements” that intended to “correct” rhythmic irregularities. For example, in **אנוסה לעזרה** line 29 in a late manuscript reads: שוש ישיש / לבי בקרבי / . In this version the third verse is long and twice inflected. In another earlier version the same line reads: שוש ישיש / לבי בשמעי / דודי דופק / על פתחי קול / . Here the word **בקרבי** is missing, but the verse reads more fluidly and resembles the usual cadence of Yosse ben Yosse’s writings. Mirsky concluded that the additional word in the later version was drawn from

⁷²³ Appendix A, p. 440

⁷²⁴ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 52.

biblical sources⁷²⁵ in order to render the line more “splendid.”⁷²⁶ The unusual verses, which even confounded Mirsky, feature atypical rhyming and orthography.⁷²⁷ The narrative proffers a review of creation, and of central figures from Adam to Jacob, who imbued meaning and purpose into creation:⁷²⁸

דִּימָהוּ בְּצֶלֶם חָקְקוּ בְּתַבְנִית הֵיטָב בְּרוּק וְחָלָד פָּחַד מוֹרְאוּ.

He created Man in His image⁷²⁹
And shaped⁷³⁰ him in His form
So that both in the mists of the firmament and on the earth
The fearful⁷³¹ glory of Him will be made manifest.

The story leads to the pivotal elevation of the priestly caste to serve as God’s envoys and emissaries for atonement, to preserve creation through the Avodah:⁷³²

יִיחַד שְׁלִישִׁי לְרֵאוֹת פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ לְשׁוֹרֵר לְשֵׁרֶת לְבוֹא חֲדָרָיו.

The third son⁷³³ was chosen especially⁷³⁴
To see the countenance of the King⁷³⁵
To sing and to serve⁷³⁶
And enter the King’s holy Chambers.

The indispensable role of the High Priest in ensuring life itself, in underscored by the incredibly detailed account of every gesture and utterance made by the High Priest at the temple on Yom Kippur. Indeed, even as the Piyyut follows quite closely the order of Mishnah Yoma, it adds nuanced and evocative descriptions (as outlined in Chapter 3), that imbue the account with

⁷²⁵ Inter alia: Jer. 23:9, Psalms 39:4.

⁷²⁶ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 52.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 135, footnote 49; 160, footnote 180.

⁷²⁸ Appendix A, p. 625

⁷²⁹ Gen. 1:26.

⁷³⁰ Ezek. 4:1.

⁷³¹ Ben Sira 17:3.

⁷³² Appendix A, p. 655

⁷³³ A reference to Levi, after Gen. 29:34.

⁷³⁴ A reference to Aaron and his priestly scions who were chosen to serve God at the Temple, after Lev. 21.

⁷³⁵ Num. 8:5-26.

⁷³⁶ 1 Chron. 6:16-32.

a feeling of “being there” and a sense of witnessing the Avodah in person. The extra-Piyyutic verses that intersperse the liturgy recall the biblical verses spoken by the High Priest during the Avodah. Indeed, the last strophe is a citation from Psalm 144:15 is integrated seamlessly into the structure of the Piyyut, asserting the seamless connection of the Piyyut with scripture, in the spirit of ⁷³⁷אלו ואלו דברי אלוהים חיים

The paytan thus appears to insinuate that creation and the Avodah are essentially linked to the salubrity of the world, that God’s Law is the underpinning of existence and the primary causal link to suffering lies in abrogating this Law, and finally that scripture as well as the cultic Avodah are materially linked to the words of this Piyyut, constituting a seamless fabric, a whole.

The Piyyutim with Attribution to Yosse Ben Yosse that is in Doubt

Yosse ben Yosse laboured during what we now call “the anonymous period,” during which paytanim did not sign their name to their works, nor did they include their name in the acrostic structure of their poems, both customs that developed from the era of Yannai onwards. Some piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse were specifically ascribed to him by copyists who wrote his name at the top of the manuscript, others are mentioned in subsequent anthologies and writings, some were erroneously ascribed to Rabbi Yossef ibn Abitour.⁷³⁸ Mirsky maintains that there are three such piyyutim:

⁷³⁹אפתח פה ברנן

⁷⁴⁰אכרעה ואברכה

⁷⁴¹אז בדעת חקר

⁷³⁷ BT, Tractate Eruvin, Folio 13 B.

⁷³⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 82.

⁷³⁹ Appendix A, p. 292

⁷⁴⁰ Appendix A, p. 308

⁷⁴¹ Appendix A, p. 471

אפתח פה ברנן – I Open My Mouth in Prayer

Mirsky includes ⁷⁴²אפתח פה ברנן in this group, but I disagree with his assessment and do not consider this Piyyut an oddity. Mirsky points out that, unlike most Yosse ben Yosse works, this Piyyut does not portray God's engagement in human history, or historic instances that reveal God's plan for humanity,⁷⁴³ which began at creation and will conclude at the end of time. Stylistic similarities, however, between אפתח פה ברנן and אפתח שפתי suggest a common hand, for instance: In אפתח פה ברנן the paytan writes:⁷⁴⁴

אֶהְלֵל לְשֵׁם פֶּה
גֹדֵל אֲתָן לְמִלָּךְ.

אֶפְתַּח פֶּה בְּרִנָּן
בְּשִׁפְתֵי רִנְנוֹת

I open my mouth⁷⁴⁵ in prayerful song,
I extol Him, who gave us a mouth,⁷⁴⁶
My lips are abundant with praise⁷⁴⁷
As I glorify the King.⁷⁴⁸

And in the Piyyut אפתח שפתי he writes:⁷⁴⁹

לְמִי שֵׁם פֶּה

גַּם בְּפִי נְרוֹמִים

I open my lips⁷⁵⁰
To Him, who created utterance

Mirsky notes that biblical references woven into confirmed Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim follow a distinctive pattern that appears to confirm a common poetic writer.⁷⁵¹ Moreover, the

⁷⁴² Appendix A, p. 292

⁷⁴³ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 56.

⁷⁴⁴ Appendix A, p. 293

⁷⁴⁵ Dan. 10:16.

⁷⁴⁶ Exod. 4:11.

⁷⁴⁷ Psalm 63:6

⁷⁴⁸ Deut. 32:3.

⁷⁴⁹ Appendix A, p. 289

⁷⁵⁰ Job 32:20; Psalm 51:16-17.

⁷⁵¹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 84.

Piyyut אהללה אלוהי features a similar thrust to אפתה פה ברנן the lack of rhyming is consistent with other confirmed works by the paytan, the embodied elegiac *wortspielerei*, and the recitation of verses appending stanzas evokes other works as well. The orthographic resemblance of full vowel markings (ניקוד מלא), typical of Yosse ben Yosse's style may be attributable to the scribal methods of the time but may suggest Yosse ben Yosse's hand. Lastly, the sources cited in this Piyyut are not dissimilar to other piyyutim. I therefore maintain that אפתה פה ברנן is probably a Yosse ben Yosse Piyyut, and I do not include it in this group. Since there are so few piyyutim, we cannot know whether the Piyyut אפתה פה ברנן is part of a separate group of piyyutim, or whether it is indeed the work of a capable imitator of Yosse ben Yosse.

The Piyyut does not feature polished rhyming, it proffers some *wortspielerei*, which emphasize the embodied elegy, and it displays a definite resemblance of style. A recitation of verse appends the Piyyut, in the same manner that most Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim are constructed.

There are orthographic similarities between this Piyyut and others, but those may be attributable to scribal norms and methods. Even though it is a tenuous assumption that similar word choices attest to a shared pen, and that stylistic similarities confirm the provenance of poems, and even though it is impossible to attribute this Piyyut with absolute certainty to Yosse ben Yosse, I tend to argue that this is indeed a Yosse ben Yosse original. I therefore conclude that there are only two piyyutim that cannot be attributed to Yosse ben Yosse. I cannot determine who did write them, but on the basis of research I maintain they were not penned by Yosse ben Yosse. They are:

אכרעה ואברכה⁷⁵²אז בדעת חקר⁷⁵³**אכרעה ואברכה – I Bow and Kneel**

The Piyyut ⁷⁵⁴אכרעה ואברכה is problematic, for several reasons. I contend that it was not written by Yosse ben Yosse. The first oddity appears in the eighteenth stanza, of the letter ק, whereas it is the only stanza that employs a first person, plural form in the entire Piyyut.⁷⁵⁵

קולות יְחֻנְנֵנוּ קֹהָ אֵל יְכַוְנֵנוּ
קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹכֵנוּ אֲדִיר אֲדוֹנֵינוּ.

He bestowed us with voices⁷⁵⁶
He who strives for Him will be strengthened by God
The nearness to God is enfolded within us⁷⁵⁷
Our Lord is mighty.⁷⁵⁸

All other cantos speak in the first person, singular voice. This stanza appears to have been cobbled into the Piyyut at a later date by a different pen. We are unable to determine the authenticity and originality of the stanza in this case.

The second, perhaps most pronounced oddity of this Piyyut, is that it features pronounced rhyming and rhythmic cadence that stand in contrast with the other piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse. Mirsky expresses doubt as to the provenance of אכרעה ואברכה noting that even as the manuscript of this Piyyut bears a notation that ascribes the verses to Yosse ben Yosse,⁷⁵⁹ the

⁷⁵² Appendix A, p. 308

⁷⁵³ Appendix A, p. 471

⁷⁵⁴ Appendix A, p. 308

⁷⁵⁵ Appendix A, p. 315

⁷⁵⁶ The sentence can also be read as: "He will respond with mercy to our supplicating voices," after Deut. 2:23.

⁷⁵⁷ Psalm 73:28

⁷⁵⁸ Psalm 8:2

⁷⁵⁹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 86.

attribution to Yosse ben Yosse may be in doubt. Mirsky explains that the stanzas here are divided into four cantos, as per usual in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, but while other piyyutim cleave the stanza into two, this Piyyut cleaves each stanza into four parts. Moreover, the pronounced rhyming is characteristic of later Piyyutic styles, mostly employed by Qilir.⁷⁶⁰ Mirsky included this Piyyut in his compendium of Yosse ben Yosse's works, but he does not fully explain his reasons. I have found two piyyutim that are confirmed to be Yosse ben Yosse's, in which the verb צר"ח appears. This word is rare, appearing once in the Bible in Zephaniah 1:14

קרוב יום-יהוה הגדול, קרוב ומהר מאד קול יום יהוה, **מר צרַח שם גבור**

It is mentioned in **אכרעה ואברכה** in the ninth stanza:⁷⁶¹

יְהִי סֵלָה רוּחִי יִקָּר בְּצַרְחִי

I howl to the Dear One
To revive my soul Selah⁷⁶²

The rare word appears again in the twelfth stanza of **אז לראש תתנו**:⁷⁶³

לֹא כִפְפָנוּ יָצָר לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל עַד לֹא צָרְחָנוּ רַבַּת צָרְרוּנוּ.

We did not bend our will⁷⁶⁴
To Him, who hath created all
Until we howled in agony
For our enemies distressed us so gravely.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁰ Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 154.

⁷⁶¹ Appendix A, p. 313

⁷⁶² Hab. 3:9.

⁷⁶³ Appendix A, p. 304

⁷⁶⁴ Jer. 10:16.

⁷⁶⁵ Psalm 129:1

And it appears in the twenty fourth stanza of **אנוסה לעזרה**:⁷⁶⁶

לֵאלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי מְשִׁינֵי בְרוֹזְלֵי שִׁוְעָתִי וּמְרַגְלֵי עַב טֵיט הִצְרַחְתִּי קוֹל.

To God, who is my saviour,
From within the iron teeth⁷⁶⁷ I implored,
As my legs sank in thick mire,⁷⁶⁸
I shouted with my Voice.

The rarity of the verb צר"ה in the Bible and its prevalence in Yosse ben Yosse's writings may indicate that either it was employed in **אכרעה ואברכה** by this specific articulate pen, or that whoever sought to emulate his artistry copied the expression from Yosse ben Yosse's other works. We may never know. The הפעיל form of the verb appears in Isaiah 42:13, where the prophet says: "*The LORD will go forth as a mighty man, He will stir up jealousy like a man of war; He will cry, yea, He will **shout aloud**, He will prove Himself mighty against His enemies.*" The Hebrew verb relating to this shout is: אף-נצרות--על-; ריע, קנאה; קרע, אף-נצרות--על- "ה' כגבור יצא, כאיש מלחמות יעיר קנאה; קרע, אף-נצרות--על- and it attributes the shouting to God. The verb therefore has, in its original form, a warring connotation. It does not convey a sense of supplication by a human agent. The employment of this rare verb in an attempt to convey its biblical opposite, is untypical for Yosse ben Yosse.

This odd Piyyut further features creative treatments of verbs, unusual for Yosse ben Yosse. The verb להנאות appears to be stylistically related to later paytanim,⁷⁶⁹ to later poetic fashions, and stands quite apart from Yosse ben Yosse's more faithful rendition of Biblical

⁷⁶⁶ Appendix A, p. 383

⁷⁶⁷ A reference to Rome, after Dan. 7:7.

⁷⁶⁸ Hab. 2:6.

⁷⁶⁹ Qilir: see Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 126.

verses. One such paytan was Qilir,⁷⁷⁰ who in the interest of rhyme and form, “manipulates” standard Hebrew verbs and forces them into unusual בניינים.⁷⁷¹ For instance:⁷⁷²

אֶאֱבֹךָ בַּיּוֹם מִבֶּרֶךְ עֶגְלָה חֲצִי גֵרְנִי
 אֶאֱטֵמָה כָּל שְׂפָה מַעֲנוֹת בְּגֵרוֹנִי
 אֶאֱלֵם כָּל פֶּה כִּי לֹא שָׁח חֲרוֹנִי
 אֶאֱבִין תְּשַׁע מֵאוֹת וְעוֹד כִּי לֹא דָשׁ בֶּן גֵּרְנִי
 5 אֶאֱקִיץ חֲבֵרוֹנִי
 אֶאֱשֶׁר חֲבֵרְנִי
 אֵיכָה יִגְעֵתִי בְּקֶרְאֵי נַחַר גֵּרוֹנִי

אֶבְקֹוּ בְּקִינּוֹת בְּכָל שָׁנָה שְׁלוֹחֵי
 אֶבְכוּ בָּהּ פְּנִים בְּפְנִים עַד כְּלוֹת שְׁלוֹחֵי
 10 אֶבְכֶה חֶדֶר קוֹלֵי מְלָהֲרִים קוֹל גִּיהֵי
 אֶבְלָה בּוֹכִיָּה עַד יַעֲשֶׂשׂוּ נִגְהֵי
 אֶבְכֶה, וְלִחֵי
 אֶבִי שְׁלֵחֵי
 אֵיכָה כָּלוּ עֵינַי מִיַּחַל לְאֱלֹהֵי

The acrostic system employed by Qilir is far more sophisticated than Yosse ben Yosse’s system. Yosse ben Yosse’s acrostic method uses the first letter of the first word in a given line as the “anchor” for the sequential system; Qilir’s acrostic in the above citation manipulates verbs such as אֶקִיץ (I shall awaken) and adds an א before the standard form of the verb making it read אֶאֱקִיץ, similarly treating the entire stanza with אֶאֱבִין, אֶאֱלֵם, and so forth. The following stanza centers on the second letter of the verb, now a ב denoting the next letter in the order of the alphabet, and the second stanza of the piece. In the seventh stanza the canto reads:⁷⁷³

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 125-126.

⁷⁷¹ אֶבְכֶה, אֶאֱטֵמָה, אֶאֱלֵם, אֶאֱבִין, אֶאֱקִיץ

⁷⁷² Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 126

⁷⁷³ Appendix A, p. 311

זָכַר לְהִנְאוֹת

זָכַר נִפְלְאוֹת

In remembrance of His wonders⁷⁷⁴
His gift⁷⁷⁵ [given] in order to adorn⁷⁷⁶

The manipulation of the verb להנאות is atypical for pre-Qilirian piyyutim. I am therefore unable to disregard my reservations as to the attribution of this Piyyut to Yosse ben Yosse. Even though the Piyyut features a singular rare verb צר"ה that Yosse ben Yosse was “fond” of, and despite the obvious literary oddity of the Piyyut, I include it here as a Yosse ben Yosse piece. Mirsky bound this piyyut with the other known Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim, on the strength of a single inscription on the manuscript of this Piyyut, but I strongly suspect it is not a Yosse ben Yosse original.

זָכַר נִפְלְאוֹת – In the Beginning He Scrutinized

The Piyyut⁷⁷⁷ זָכַר נִפְלְאוֹת has, in my opinion, been attributed to the paytan in error. Careful comparison between this Piyyut and the confirmed Yosse ben Yosse liturgies, has led me to conclude that it is implausible that this Piyyut was in fact written by Yosse ben Yosse. The Piyyut consists of 138 stanzas, and is structured around a double acrostic system from the letter א to the letter ת; it then reverses direction from ת to א in a double acrostic; and features a six-fold repetition of the letter ת at the end of the Piyyut. There may have been additional verses at the end of the Piyyut. The narrative ends with the High Priest telling his congregation about the red cord that had miraculously turned white in the Holy of Holies:⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁴ Psalm 105:5; Psalm 77:12.

⁷⁷⁵ Gen. 30:20.

⁷⁷⁶ The people of Israel.

⁷⁷⁷ Appendix A, p. 471

⁷⁷⁸ Appendix A, p. 526

תיקנות חוט שני הילבינה, ציר הנאמן לשולחיו יצו.

The cord of our hope
From crimson is now white,
The loyal emissary
Responds to those who dispatched him.⁷⁷⁹

In several other piyyutim the paytan concludes the Avodah with the joyous celebrations that followed the return of the High Priest to his abode, at the conclusion of the Day of Atonement. It is conceivable that these lines may have been lost. This Piyyut stands out among all the other works in Mirsky's compendium, for being the most polished and the most rhymed. It also features more pronounced and more frequent use of wortspielerei. Moreover, the orthography here stands out as less polished and less consistent than in any other Yosse ben Yosse works. The letter "Yod" is liberally sprinkled even where it does not serve a function of ניקוד מלא as in stanza 103:⁷⁸⁰

חש לשער איתון שהוא צפון למזבח וסגן וראש בית אב מיפו ומיפו

He hastens to the Itton Gate
Which is north of the Altar
And his Deputy and the Head of the Household⁷⁸¹
Are one this side and on that side⁷⁸²

This tendency appears in virtually every line of the Piyyut, for the sounds of "Chirik" and the sounds of "Tzereh" alike, and at times for no aural reason at all.⁷⁸³ In stanza 111, for instance, the orthography appears to be untypical, whereas the word כלי appears 17 times in

⁷⁷⁹ Mishnah Yoma 6:8.

⁷⁸⁰ Appendix A, p. 514

⁷⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

⁷⁸² Meaning "on either side of the High Priest." The orthography used here מיפו ומיפו is unusual, whereas the letter *Yod* is superfluous and the word has to end not with a *Vav* but with the letter *Hey*. Similar orthography [although without the excessive *Yod*] appears in Ezek. 40:34. It is the only iteration of this phrase in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre.

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Yosse ben Yosse's works, always as כלי and never except here as כילי [read KEYLI]. Similarly, in the last line of this Stanza, the author writes רובייד [read ROVEYD] instead of the typical רובד [read ROVED]. Another example of the creative orthography is found in Stanza 4:⁷⁸⁴

בְּלִבְדוֹ הוּא אֲדוֹן רִבּוּתִים מֶלֶךְ עַל צְבָאוֹ וְעַמּוֹ הַמְּשִׁל.

He is alone an unparalleled
Master of two multitudes⁷⁸⁵
King of His Hosts⁷⁸⁶
Master of His Dominion.⁷⁸⁷

The word ריבויים denotes two measures of ריבוא, a word that denotes 10,000, or a synonym for multitude. In Ezra 2:64 the prophet counts the multitude of returnees from the Babylonian exile, and in Nehemiah 7:66 the prophet counts the multitude of priests who returned to Jerusalem, thus making two ריבוא, or here, in the creative orthography of this Paytan, the singular *wortspiele*: ריבויים denoting two distinct multitudes who return from exile to rebuild the temple. In several instances the paytan toys with words, as in stanza 29, where he uses the Deuteronomy 28 :8 verse and turns the word אסם, granary, into a verb: איסמו. This is rather unusual for Yosse ben Yosse. Another instance of creative word games appears in stanza 104:⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁴ Appendix A, p. 473

⁷⁸⁵ The word ריבויים denotes two measures of ריבוא, a word that denotes 10,000, or a multitude. In Ezra 2:64 the prophet counts the multitude of returnees from the Babylonian exile, and in Neh. 7:66 the prophet counts the multitude of priests who returned to Jerusalem, thus making two ריבוא, or in a creative and singular *wortspiele*: ריבויים denoting two distinct multitudes who return from exile to rebuild the Temple.

⁷⁸⁶ Isa. 47:4.

⁷⁸⁷ Job 25:2.

⁷⁸⁸ Appendix A, p. 514

חֲלֵשֵׁי פֶז שֵׁם יִמְצָא בְּכֵלִי מוֹכְנִים צֶדַח שְׁעִירֵי עֵם.

Golden lots⁷⁸⁹
He finds in a vessel
Prepared to snag
The People's he-goats.⁷⁹⁰

The author uses the word חֲלֵשׁ [read as CHELESH] to denote the lots. It is the only such use in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre. It does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. The Mishnah refers to them as גורלות as does Yosse ben Yosse in **אזכיר גבורות** Stanza 195. In stanza 125 he again uses a unique expression:⁷⁹¹

קָצַב מַעֲשֵׂה פְּנִימָה עָשָׂה בַחוּץ וְכֵן בְּדָם שְׁעִיר וּבְלֵלָם בְּעֶקֶב

TIn the manner of the slaughter⁷⁹² that ~~what~~ he had performed inside
He performs outside
And he does the same with the blood of the he-goat
And then he mixes them together at the end⁷⁹³

Whereas the word קָצַב [Ketzev], referring to the act of slaughter but in fact using a noun that depicts musical rhythm. This is the only instance of this noun's use in the entire compendium. Similarly, in stanza 128, the paytan uses the word לחומם, meaning "their flesh," after Zephaniah 1:17. It is the only instance in the entire oeuvre that this rare word makes an appearance.

In stanza 132 the phrase תָּאָר לִיפְנֵימֵי appears, meaning "he turned." Aside from its *Yod*-rich spelling, it too is singular, whereas the verb תָּאָר does not appear elsewhere in Yosse ben

⁷⁸⁹ The author uses the word חֲלֵשׁ [read as CHELESH] to denote the lots. It is the only such use in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre. It does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. The Mishnah refers to them as גורלות as does Yosse ben Yosse in **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 195.

⁷⁹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

⁷⁹¹ Appendix A, p.524

⁷⁹² The word קָצַב [read KETSEV] appears only once in the entire Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, here. I read it in reference to the verb that denoted slaughter, rather than the more modern, contemporary reading of the verb as a reference to rhythm.

⁷⁹³ Mishnah Yoma 5:4. The phrase here is בעקב literally "at the heel," meaning "at the end," after Gen. 25:25; Gen. 27:36.

Yosse's work. Mirsky cites Joshua 15:9 where the word תאר translated as “drawn” (drawing of an outline),⁷⁹⁴ but this does not fit the context of the Stanza or the Mishnaic narrative, which is why I disagree with Mirsky on this point. It appears to me that the word תאר as it is written here is based on the word תר [read TAR], which is translated as “walked, moved, ambled” with an added *aleph*, as in Stanza 123, where one encounters interesting orthography, quite unlike any orthographic characteristics of Yosse ben Yosse's writings. In the Piyyut אזכיר גבורות, Stanza 216, and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3, the stand is called כן [read as KAN]. The word כאן [also read as KAN] as it appears in אז בדעת חקר, stanza 123:⁷⁹⁵

צַעַד נִתְּנוּ בְּכַאן וְשָׁחַט שְׁעִיר עֵם וּבָא וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּמִשְׁפֵּט דָּם פֶּר

He walks over and places it on a Stand⁷⁹⁶
 And he slaughters the People's he-goat
 And he returns and does with it
 As he has done with the blood of the bullock⁷⁹⁷

The word ought to be translated as “here” because of the additional aleph. Such orthography appears in Nehemiah 13:16 where the word דג [fish] appears as דאג with the extra *aleph*. And then in stanza 124 the paytan reverts to the standard spelling כן:⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁴ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 238, footnote 137.

⁷⁹⁵ Appendix A, p. 520

⁷⁹⁶ The interesting orthography becomes problematic here. In the Piyyut אזכיר גבורות stanza 216 and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3 the stand is called כן [read as KAN]. The word כאן [also read as KAN] as it appears here ought to be translated as “here” because of the additional aleph. Such orthography appears in Neh. 13:16 where the word דג [fish] appears as דאג with the extra *aleph*.

⁷⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

⁷⁹⁸ Appendix A, p. 521

צָעַד וּנְתָנוּ בְּכֹן וְהִמִּירוּ בְרֵם פֶּר וְחוּץ נִתְיָצַב מוֹל הַפְּרוּכָת.

He walks over and places it on a Stand⁷⁹⁹
 And replaces⁸⁰⁰ it with the blood of the bullock
 And he exits and stands⁸⁰¹
 Before the Ornamental Curtain.⁸⁰²

This sloppy orthography cannot be found in any confirmed Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim. In stanza 33, the paytan “plays” with the sounds of words here: פתן [serpent], פוּתָהּ [guileless woman], פתי [thoughtless man], a style that became more fashionable in subsequent Piyyutic genres, and is atypical of Yosse ben Yosse’s writings:⁸⁰³

פַּח שֵׁם פֶּתֶן לְרַגְלֵי פוּתָהּ וְהִיא מְשַׁכָּה לְפִתֵּי יַחַד לְמַדְחִיפּוֹת

He laid a serpent trap⁸⁰⁴
 At the feet of the guileless woman⁸⁰⁵
 And she lured⁸⁰⁶ to thoughtless⁸⁰⁷ error⁸⁰⁸
 Together they were burdened⁸⁰⁹

In stanza 34 he does similarly with the root יצר first to denote the evil inclination of man יצר [yetzer], and then to denote the Creator יוצר [Yotzer]. The creative wortspielerei has at times more significance than being a stylistic choice. In stanza 54, for instance, referring to Abraham:^{810,811}

⁷⁹⁹ Here the Paytan uses the more common orthography, spelling the word for Stand as כֹּן [read KAN].

⁸⁰⁰ The *yod*-rich orthography is noted.

⁸⁰¹ The Mishnaic Hebrew form of the verb is noted.

⁸⁰² Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

⁸⁰³ Appendix A, p. 484

⁸⁰⁴ Gen. 3:1.

⁸⁰⁵ Prov. 9:13.

⁸⁰⁶ Job 31:9; Job 31:26.

⁸⁰⁷ Prov. 14:15.

⁸⁰⁸ The Paytan “plays” with the sounds of words here: פתן [serpent], פוּתָהּ [guileless woman], פתי [thoughtless man]

⁸⁰⁹ Referring to the burden of God’s rebuke and punishment of Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, after Psalm 140:12; Gen. 3:14-

19.

⁸¹⁰ Psalm 107:41; Psalm 148:13; Psalm 73:12; Prov. 18:10; Deut. 2:36.

⁸¹¹ Appendix A, p. 494

צוֹרֵף בְּאֵשׁ וְנִרְדָּף בְּמִלְחָמָתוֹ הָאוֹמֵר לוֹ: לֵךְ לָהּ, לְעֵד סִיגְבוֹ.

Forged in a trial of fire⁸¹²
 And persecuted in war⁸¹³
 God told him: Go forth, for your sake,⁸¹⁴
 And He forever exalted⁸¹⁵ him.⁸¹⁶

The paytan writes סיגבו using non-standard orthography [with the letter Samech], whereas the standard spelling is שיגבו [with the letter Sin]. The root is often associated with God. Thus the paytan ties Abraham's elevated status to his abiding faith in God. In stanza 63, referring to Moses, Aaron and Miriam,⁸¹⁷ he replaces the standard שריגים with an unusual סריגים, creating new meaning. The original word means branches. The word as it appears means woven or knitted cloth. Some verses in the Piyyut are copied, almost verbatim from the Piyyut אזכיר גבורות. In גבורות the penultimate stanza reads:⁸¹⁸

תֵּן לָנוּ מוֹפֵת בְּאָזְנוֹ יֹאמִירוּ בְּמָה נִירְדַע כִּי יִכּוּפֵר עוֹוֹן?

Give us a sign⁸¹⁹
 They say in his ears
 How shall we know
 That our transgressions have been forgiven?⁸²⁰

⁸¹² Referring to Abraham who was thrust into the crucible fire by Nimrod, after Gen. Rabba 38:13.

⁸¹³ Gen. 14:14-15.

⁸¹⁴ Gen. 12:1.

⁸¹⁵ Psalm 107:41; Psalm 148:13; Psalm 73:12; Prov. 18:10; Deut. 2:36. The Paytan writes סיגבו using non-standard orthography [with the letter *Samech*], whereas the standard spelling is שיגבו [with the letter *Sin*]. The root is often associated with God. Thus, the Paytan ties Abraham's elevated status to his abiding faith in God.

⁸¹⁶ Gen. 12:2-3.

⁸¹⁷ After Gen. Rabba 88:5; Gen. 40:10; Joel 1:7.

⁸¹⁸ Appendix A, p. 526 [The punctuation addition of a question mark is an obvious late addition. The modern question mark was only invented in the 16th century].

⁸¹⁹ Exod. 7:9.

⁸²⁰ This is an almost verbatim copy of the אזכיר גבורות text in stanza 239.

And in **אזכיר גבורות**, stanza 239 reads:⁸²¹

תֵּן לָנוּ מוֹפֵת בְּאָזְנוֹ יֵאמְרוּ, וְנִדַּע בְּמָה יְכוּפֵר עֲוֹן.

Give us a sign⁸²²
They call in his ears,
So we know how
The sins are forgiven.

Note the additional “Yods” sprinkled in the text of **אז בדעת חקר** as an example of the above observation. In stanza 121, the orthographic oddity of this Piyyut is once again noted whereas the paytan writes **הממריס** instead of **הממרס**, adding a *Yod*. The same occurs in the following lines with the word **הגיש**, which becomes **היגיש**, and the word **נתייצב**, which becomes **ניתייצב**. The verb **נתייצב** is written in Mishnaic Hebrew, rather than the Biblical form of **התייצב**.

In the Yosse ben Yosse Avodah liturgies, there is a fundamental departure from the description of the Avodah in Mishnah Yoma. Yosse ben Yosse excludes Rabbinic presence from the Azarah on Yom Kippur, whereas Yoma 1:3 insists the Rabbis were not only present at the Azarah, but that they were the veritable authority and the High Priest deferred to the Rabbis at all times. **אז בדעת חקר** is the first instance in which the liturgy appears to conform fully with Mishnah Yoma and does not assert full priestly authority over the proceedings.⁸²³ In the above-mentioned stanza 29, the paytan virtually cites Genesis Rabba 16:6 and Tractate Avot 4:26 without alteration. This too is unusual for Yosse ben Yosse, who normally adheres most closely to the Biblical texts and seldom cites Mishnahs. Figure 3 below displays the summary of non-Biblical rabbinic sources in Yosse ben Yosse’s works. The sparsity of rabbinic sources is instructive and speaks of a unique voice. Most scholars conceive of piyyut as a restatement of Midrash or

⁸²¹ Appendix A, p. 721

⁸²² Exod. 7:9.

⁸²³ Stanza 73; stanza 77; stanza 84.

Agada,⁸²⁴ but as Mirsky suggests and my research confirms, Yosse ben Yosse does not echo rabbinic thought. He may occasionally use it, but just like his rhyming technique, the references to rabbinic sources is incidental to the subject at hand.

| | אור עולם | אפתח שפתי | אפתח פה ברן | אז לראש תתנו | אכרעה ואברכה | אין לנו כהן גדול | אתן תהילה | אהללה אלוהי | אנוסה לעורה | אפחד במעשי | אמנם אשמינו | אספר גדולות | אז בדעת חקר | אתה כוננת | אזכיר גבורות |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Genesis Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.18 | 0.77 | 0 | 0.50 | 0.62 | 0 | 0.63 | 2.17 | 1.47 | 1.13 | 3.10 |
| Exodus Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.28 | 0.19 |
| Leviticus Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.38 |
| Esther Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.14 | 0.09 |
| Song of Songs Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.62 | 1.60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ecclesiastes Rabba | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.09 |
| Tosefta/ Mechilta | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.50 | 0.62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.16 | 0.43 | 0.94 |
| Sifre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.65 | 0 | 0.38 |
| Mishnah | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.54 | 0 | 0 | 0.62 | 0 | 1.26 | 25.00 | 15.52 | 14.61 | 11.10 |
| P. Talmud | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.18 | 0.77 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.80 | 0.63 | 0.54 | 0.82 | 3.69 | 1.51 |
| B. Talmud | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.77 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.65 | 1.13 | 2.07 |

*Numbers represent the percent ratio of a given rabbinic source in a given piyyut

Figure 3. Non-biblical rabbinic sources in Yosse ben Yosse's piyyutim.

In stanza 84 the paytan here goes even further, and commands the High Priest to be humble, to lower his gaze אל יגביה לב and to be diffident in submission to the Rabbis. Moreover, the paytan spends three full stanzas iterating and reiterating the stupidity of the High Priest,

⁸²⁴ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 16, 25.

calling him *צפון משכל* [obscured from wisdom], *בער* [an unschooled fool], and *לא למד לקה* [a man who is bereft of Torah learning]. All other Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim in the Avodah genre describe a learned High Priest who laments the possibility that others may regard him as a *פתי*,⁸²⁵ a simpleton, even as he is fully versed and literate. The exaggerated depiction of the High Priest as uncouth serves to underscore the wisdom and authority of the Rabbis, something that Yosse ben Yosse normally shies from. Thus, in stanza 90, for instance:⁸²⁶

אֲבִירִים שָׂרוּ הֲרִיפֹת שָׁבַר וְהִכִּינוּ פִּיִּים מִי יָרִים דָּשָׁן.

The chiefs⁸²⁷ witnessed
The pushing and breaking of limbs
And so they⁸²⁸ prepared a lottery
To decide who will clear the ashes from the altar.

The paytan refers to the rabbinic elders of the Beth Din as *אבירים*, after Mishnah Yoma 2:2 and after I Samuel 21:8. This is another departure from the usual Yosse ben Yosse narrative that minimizes, excludes and negates rabbinic presence at the temple elsewhere, but follows the Mishnah closely in this particular Piyyut.

In the Mishnah Yoma 1:7 account, and in every Yosse ben Yosse Piyyut, the High Priest is kept awake by novice priests. Here, the author recounts Levites, the singers at the temple after I Chron. 6:17, are in charge of keeping the High Priest awake:⁸²⁹

⁸²⁵ "כי נחשב כפתי." אתה כוננת; and in "פן יהתל" אספר גדולות; in "כי הורשע כפתי: אזכיר גבורות in In all those instances, the High Priest is potentially defined in error as a simpleton from the outside. In this Piyyut the stupidity of the High Priest is asserted as fact, as an incontrovertible reality, not as an opinion.

⁸²⁶ Appendix A, p. 508

⁸²⁷ Referring to the elders of the Beth Din, the rabbis, after Mishnah Yoma 2:2 and after 1 Sam. 21:8 This is another departure from the usual Yosse ben Yosse narrative which minimizes, excludes and negates rabbinic presence at the Temple elsewhere, but follows the Mishnah closely in this particular Piyyut.

⁸²⁸ The rabbinic sages.

⁸²⁹ Appendix A, p. 508

אִם תִּגְבֹּר עָלָיו שְׁנָה וּבִקֵּשׁ לְהִתְנַמֵּן בְּחֵיד נֹעַם צְרָדָה מְשׁוֹרְרִים יְעוֹרְרוּהוּ

Should slumber overtake him
And if he wishes to doze
With the snapping of fingers
Singers⁸³⁰ waken him

In stanzas 94 and 98, the narrative describes the fine cloth of the High Priest's vestments. The Mishnah calls this fine linen בויץ [Boutz],⁸³¹ and Yosse ben Yosse in all his other piyyutim calls the fabric שש [Shesh].⁸³² In this Piyyut, for the first and only time, the paytan remains silent about the type of fabric entirely. Indeed, in all other Avodah works, Yosse ben Yosse takes great pain to describe every detail of the High Priest's vestments, linking each element to specific particular attributes. In **אז בדעת חקר**, however, as in stanza 130, the paytan uses uncharacteristic short-hand narration regarding the ablutions and vestments.

In stanza 101 the paytan employs the expression זיו פניו, meaning: his glowing and beautiful countenance. The word זיו is an Aramaic word that appears but once in the Bible, in I Kings 6:37 to denote the name of the seventh month. It appears four times in *Targum Onkelus*, the Aramaic translation of the Bible, but never in any of the other Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim, which, as has been noted, are conspicuously devoid of foreign words and are written in Hebrew. In the same stanza 101, the High Priest is said to have placed both his hands upon the bullock's head.⁸³³

⁸³⁰ In the Mishnah Yoma 1:7 account, and in every Yosse ben Yosse Piyyut, the High Priest is kept awake by novice *priests*. Here, the author recounts *Levites*, the Singers at the Temple after 1 Chron. 6:17, are in charge of keeping the High Priest awake.

⁸³¹ Yoma 3:6.

⁸³² See אזכיר גבורות stanza 190

⁸³³ Appendix A, p. 516

זֵי פָּנָיו יְפוּ הָעַם פְּנֵי פָרוּ גֵשׁ וּסְמָךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו בְּכוֹבֵד

The glow of his face⁸³⁴ is beautiful for the People
He approaches his bullock
And puts his two hands⁸³⁵
Solemnly upon the bullock

Mishnah Yoma 3:8 and Mishnah Menachot 9:8 claim the High Priest placed *two* hands on the bullock, based on Leviticus 16:21. The paytan, however, claims in **אזכיר גבורות** [Stanza 193] that the High Priest place *one* hand on the bullock. Here the paytan adopts the Mishnaic account unchanged. In stanza 116 the paytan introduces a new element to the usual Yosse ben Yosse narrative:⁸³⁶

נִכְנַס בְּהִיכָל וְהִכְנִיס בְּפָרְכוֹת וּבֵא מִצַּד וּמָשׁ בְּקִיר צָפוֹן.

He enters the Sanctuary
And enters the space between the Ornamental Curtains⁸³⁷
And he enters from the side⁸³⁸ and reaches to touch
The northern wall.

Mishnah Yoma 5:1 debates whether there was a single ornamental curtain or two, but concludes that there were two. The paytan only mentions one in [**אזכיר גבורות** stanza 207,

⁸³⁴ The Paytan uses the words **זֵי פָּנָיו** to denote the High Priest's beautiful countenance. The word **זֵי** is an Aramaic word, which appears but once in the Bible, in I Kings 6:37 to denote the name of the seventh month. It appears four times in *Targum Onkelos*, the Aramaic translation of the Bible, but never in any of the other Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim which, as has been noted, are conspicuously devoid of foreign words and are written in Hebrew.

⁸³⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:8 and Mishnah Menachot 9:8 claim the High Priest placed *two* hands on the bullock, based on Lev. 16:21. The Paytan claims in **אזכיר גבורות** [stanza 193] that the High Priest place *one* hand on the bullock. Here the Paytan adopts the Mishnaic account unchanged.

⁸³⁶ Appendix A, p. 518

⁸³⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 debates whether there was a single Ornamental Curtain or two, but concludes that there were *two*. The Paytan only mentions *one* (**אזכיר גבורות** stanza 207, footnote 685, for example), but here the author *harmonizes his narrative* with the Mishnah. This is the only instance in the entire Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre that the Paytan mentions two Ornamental Curtains. In all the other Piyyutim he consistently mentions only a single Ornamental Curtain.

⁸³⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 recounts that the High Priest walked between the two Ornamental Curtains going north, then he turned south and walked to his left along the Ornamental Curtain to the Ark. Here the Paytan says that the High Priest came from "the side," which refers to the right side, after the *Aramaic Targum* for Deut. 31:26. In Psalm 89:13 the right side is equal to the north. This is a convoluted way of referring to the north, but it works, although in other piyyutim Yosse ben Yosse does not rely on Aramaic Targum and bases his narrative on the Bible.

footnote 685 for example], but here the author harmonizes his narrative with the Mishnah. This is the only instance in the entire Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre that the paytan mentions two Ornamental Curtains. In all the other piyyutim, he consistently mentions only a single Ornamental Curtain.

Further accentuating the oddness of **או בדעת הקר**, consider the movement of the High Priest during the performance of the Avodah in the Holy of Holies. Mishnah Yoma 5:1 recounts that the High Priest walked between the two Ornamental Curtains going north, then he turned south and walked to his left along the Ornamental Curtain to the Ark. Here the paytan says that the High Priest came from “the side,” which refers to the right side, after the *Aramaic Targum* for Deuteronomy 31:26 In Psalm 89:13 the right side is equal to the north. This is a convoluted way of referring to the north, but it works, although in other piyyutim Yosse ben Yosse does not rely on Aramaic Targum and bases his narrative on the Bible.

At times, this Piyyut asserts de novo additions to the Mishnaic narrative and to the usual Yosse ben Yosse texts. In stanza 106:⁸³⁹

טוב לב ומשׁושׁ ינתן לדור בעלות בימין גורל שׁעיר עם.

Joy and happiness⁸⁴⁰
 Are granted to the generation
 As the right hand raises
 The lot of the People’s he-goats.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁹ Appendix A, p. 514

⁸⁴⁰ Isa. 60:15.

⁸⁴¹ This stanza appears to be de novo, whereas the Mishnah does not recount this, and Yosse ben Yosse follows the Mishnaic narrative and also makes no mention of the delight cited here.

Nowhere is such delight mentioned, but in **אז בדעת הקר** and it is not clear where the paytan drew his information from. Similarly, in stanza 129 the paytan adds to the Biblical and to the Mishnaic narrative:⁸⁴²

שִׁלַּח שְׂעִיר לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר שִׁנֵּן סִדְרֵי יוֹם בְּמִיכָתֵב, עַל פֶּה

He sends the he-goat
To the edge of the desert⁸⁴³
And he reviews the order of the Day⁸⁴⁴
From the written text, by heart⁸⁴⁵

The High Priest, according to all known accounts, reads from a written text. But in **אז בדעת הקר** the High Priest adds a recitation **על פה**, by heart, from an unwritten text. It is not clear where the paytan draws this information. It relates awkwardly with the statements regarding the High Priest's lack of erudition in stanza 86.

This carelessness is atypical for Yosse ben Yosse for whom every phrase and every word are carefully drawn into a priestly discourse of great subtlety and mastery. Similarly, the paytan of **אז בדעת הקר** refers to the Cover of the Ark in a unique expression that I have not encountered elsewhere: **מיצחה**, forehead⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴² Appendix A, p. 523

⁸⁴³ Mishnah Yoma 6:5.

⁸⁴⁴ Mishnah Yoma 7:1.

⁸⁴⁵ The High Priest reads Scripture from the written text. In this particular Piyyut the Paytan adds the **על פה** recitation. It is not clear where he draws information from, but it may be related to the beginning of the Piyyut where the Paytan discusses the lack of erudition of the High Priest in stanza 86, footnote 282.

⁸⁴⁶ Appendix A, p. 521

פַּעַם לְמַעַלָּה בְּמִיִּצְחָהּ וְשִׁבַּע לְמַטָּה בְּפָנֶיהָ בְּמִסְפַּר הַזֵּוּיֹת בְּאַצְבָּע יִצְלִיף.

Once upward at its forehead⁸⁴⁷
 And seven times downward on its face⁸⁴⁸
 Counting the sprinkles
 As he whips⁸⁴⁹ the blood with his finger.

The phrasing here repeats the poetic reference to the Ark Cover as a human face.

Mishnah Yoma 5:3 only mentions that the blood was sprinkled downward, as does Yosse ben Yosse in his accounts, but here the phrase is **למטה בפניה**, a singular such poetic expression in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre. The order of the sprinkling of blood is mentioned in Leviticus 16:14, and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3 The phrasing in this Stanza is unique and appears only in this Piyyut, referring to the top of the Ark Cover as **מיצחה** meaning “her forehead,” with the odd extra *Yod* added.

In terms of the form and content of this piyyut, I find sufficient evidence to assert that the provenance of the piyyut called **אז בדעת הקר** ought to be further investigated. As things stand, I doubt it was penned by Yosse ben Yosse. The literary observations, coupled with the annotated translation of all the works attributed to Yosse ben Yosse, lead me to study the narrative itself, in comparison with Mishnah Yoma. In Chapter 4, I outline the similarities and differences between the Mishnah and Yosse ben Yosse’s Avodah works and draw conclusions regarding the veiled power struggle ensconced in the discourse.

⁸⁴⁷ The order of the sprinkling of blood is mentioned in Lev. 16:14, and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3. The phrasing in this stanza is unique and appears only in this Piyyut, referring to the top of the Ark Cover as **מיצחה** meaning “her forehead” (with the customary extra *yod*).

⁸⁴⁸ The phrasing here repeats the poetic reference to the Ark Cover as a human face. Mishnah Yoma 5:3 only mentions that the blood was sprinkled downward, as does Yosse ben Yosse in his accounts, but here the phrase is **למטה בפניה**, a singular such poetic expression in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre.

⁸⁴⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

Chapter 4: Two Narratives – Mishnah Yoma & Yosse Ben Yosse’s Avodah

Introduction

The literary products of any historical era reflect the topics of discussion, the issues that concerned the people of that time, the prevailing debates that reverberated among the various groups at the time, and even the mode of expression and linguistic preferences and idiosyncrasies that echoed in conversation. Piyyut was written in late antiquity by men who were religiously privileged, in both their education and in their social status. Their poetry was a creative act that produced order, reaffirmed an existing order, or contested it seeking to substitute it for another.⁸⁵⁰ It also reflects some of the extant power relations that defined an era. Power in the religious-historical context was not wholly in the hands of one person who could wield it upon his subjects unhindered. As Foucault explains: “(Power) is a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised ... Power is not identified with an individual who possesses ... it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns.”⁸⁵¹ Piyyut is one such historiographically relevant literary product.

This chapter presents the results of my comparative study of Yosse ben Yosse’s Avodot, with Mishnah Yoma 1-7. Its first part clarifies the nature and purpose of the sacrificial cult, forming the scaffold upon which hangs the comparative endeavour. Stating the precise parameters of the study, as well as the exact terminology that animated the research is, I think a crucial tool, if one is to extract historiographically useful information from texts that were written in late antiquity. There follows a brief reminder of the Yom Kippur theology that lies

⁸⁵⁰ Bauman Zygmunt, *Culture as Praxis*, (London: Routledge, 1973), 115.

⁸⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, (New York: Random House, 1977), 156.

behind the pomp and circumstance, hidden amongst the details of the performance of the ritual in the temple. The chapter then unfurls the highlights of the characteristics of the two narratives under study, citing examples and summarizing the findings that are presented in their unprocessed form in Appendix B of this dissertation.

Historical events are not subject to proof in the same manner as a mathematical equation, a logical proposition, or a scientific experiment that can be reproduced in a laboratory. Rather, historical “proof” normally emerges through the cumulative accretion of reliable witnesses or attestations. Those attestations may take the form of textual or literary similarities, of two or more texts sharing a similar structural presentation that overall fits best in the period under consideration. They may also take the form of details that, in their totality and singularity, provide persuasive attestation of their own. Together, the two forms combine in an account that suggests authentic and reliable witness to the period under consideration.

The historic records that have reached us from the fifth century of the Common Era are sparse, both in written and in archaeological remains. Piyyut thus becomes even more crucial to a student of Jewish history and of religious history in general, as a source of valuable historiographic material. It is not an ideal source of such information, given centuries of redaction, reproduction, and editing that have altered the original text in more or less meaningful ways, but it is a record that deserves our attention nonetheless.⁸⁵² A careful student of history can glean relevant data about the period in question, study the ways texts have been modified, and learn much from this investigation about the historic processes that shaped Judaic expression over time.

⁸⁵² Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 86.

Two Narratives

Leviticus 16 describes the Yom Kippur temple rituals that were attended by priests and lay people, all trembling in awe before God. The High Priest presided over the rituals, known as the Avodah, roughly translated as the “work,” or “worshipful action.” A formal, complex and highly choreographed ceremony, the Avodah, if correctly performed, yearly ensured the salubrity of the world.⁸⁵³ After the destruction of the temple, new models of religious rituals were fashioned, in order to maintain the relationship between God and Israel. In order to achieve this, the rabbis devised new ways of reading and understanding scripture, adjusting to the new socio-political and religious realities. Prayer and recitation of the Avodah became the surrogate Day of Atonement ritual, and *saying* the words came to replace the blood and gore of yore. But, as Naftali Cohn clarifies in the second chapter of his book, “*The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*,”⁸⁵⁴ in the act of telling the past lay a *re-invention* whose raison d’être was firmly rooted in the power relations of the present. The rabbis composed the Avodah texts aiming to affirm their own leadership role. They expanded on the biblical narrative, inserting rabbinic presence at the temple, adding gestures and details regarding speech and actions, as well as spatial and choreographic information absent from Leviticus but asserted as historically accurate. Asserting the past became a strategy for affirming rabbinic leadership claims.

A mere thirty biblical verses upon which the fate of the world rests, and rituals that were witnessed by few and recorded only as hearsay, make fertile ground for exegetical elaboration. The Leviticus account leaves open questions as to the precise manner of every action it mandates. The type of animals to be sacrificed, the nature and array of priestly vestments, the

⁸⁵³ Lev. 16:29-33.

⁸⁵⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 39-56.

precise spatiality of the High Priest and the sacred vessels, the composition and manner of offering of the incense, the place wherein ablutions are to be performed, the manner of casting lots on the he-goats, and more. Rabbinic sages of the Mishnah, even as they lacked direct eye-witness accounts of the Avodah, labouring as they did some 200 years after the destruction of the temple, sought to fill gaps in the narrative and paint a more vivid picture of the Yom Kippur events. The rabbis debated in minute detail the order of events, the scene in a verisimilitude that promoted and created memory.⁸⁵⁵

As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi explains, the recording of history as a collection of verifiable evidence, is “by no means the principal medium through which the collective memory of the Jewish people has been addressed or aroused.”⁸⁵⁶ Historical time intermingles with mythic time, is imbued with meaning through repetition of rituals, as previously discussed here, and through recitation and re-enactment of myth. Jewish historiography is a “bulwark against the inexorable erosion of memory engendered by the passage of time.”⁸⁵⁷ Jewish memory is the meaning-laden aspect of historical writing. Evoking the historical past is mediated by the religious imperative to remember: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past.”⁸⁵⁸ It is not an injunction to remember the details of past times, but to selectively recount only that which took place and is meaningful and worthy of recollection.⁸⁵⁹ The assay for that which is worthy of remembering is its relationship to God as the lord of history, and to the bible as the sacred and organically whole narrative that embraces all time. The rabbis used the chronicles of Jewish history and played with it “as though with an accordion, expanding and

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁵⁶ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 5.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁵⁸ Deut. 32:7.

⁸⁵⁹ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 10.

collapsing it at will.”⁸⁶⁰ Rabbinic literature cannot therefore be considered history, rather “they were engrossed in an ongoing exploration of the meaning of history bequeathed to them, striving to interpret it in living terms for their own and later generations.”⁸⁶¹ History has a purpose, it has discernable patterns, and both are subservient to the relevance accrued to them by the rabbis. The fundamental link to history is, through the metaphysics of selective memory, a mediated, agenda driven body of memory.⁸⁶²

All temple ritual discourses rely on second and third hand sources that were composed centuries after the destruction,⁸⁶³ through extrapolation and exegesis that fit particular worldviews and promoted particular agents of power in Jewish society.⁸⁶⁴ The rabbis of the Mishnah in the second and third centuries, and Yosse ben Yosse in the fourth/fifth century, responded to their own conceptions of authentic Judaism. Each side hitched its proverbial wagon to the leaders it deemed authoritative, correct, and binding, producing competing discourses in the process.⁸⁶⁵ History is not a chronological record of reality, but an interpretative version of events, written with intent. Legal documents, sacred documents and foreign texts, all provide prooftexts that speak of the past. Texts offer an intellectual record of a social intellectual environment with particular characteristics. Readers over time have accepted certain texts as part

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁶² Ibid., 26.

⁸⁶³ There are many Avodah texts and they vary between the various Judaic traditions of Ashkenaz, Sefarad, Yemen, and Italy for example. The earliest version was recited in French communities in the early Middle Ages. See: Adin Steinzaltz, *The Siddur and Prayer*. It was based on the Yosse ben Yosse Piyyut **אתה כוננת** [Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 172-199] which was brought over from the Galilee to French shores with the exiles.

⁸⁶⁴ In my understanding, Josephus (*The Jewish War*, Book 5: 184-237) mostly describes the appearance of the Temple, and has very little information pertaining to the details of ritual performance. It appears from the text that Josephus may have seen the Temple, may have seen the priestly garments, and may have witnessed several religious rituals. As for the Yom Kippur ritual, I interpret the relative silence as indicative of Josephus being an outsider, not a member of the inner core of priests who were in actual attendance at the Temple on the Day of Atonement. His account of the ritual is limited and intimates a second-hand knowledge rather than eyewitness account.

⁸⁶⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 33.

of their social background, for these books are deemed to have been written about them, for them, to be read and studied by them with the purpose of learning important ontological and historical information about the Jewish ethos. Texts reflect the time in which they were penned, they tend to cohere events and ideology through a rationalizing discourse. The rabbis were indifferent to historiography.⁸⁶⁶ They did not describe historical events as they occurred, but as they wished those events to be interpreted in their own time and in the future. They took license to re-present biblical stories and to synchronize the present with those stories, making history subservient to their didactic agenda.⁸⁶⁷

This tendency is ongoing even in the 12th century and is in evidence in Israeli school books that deal with the festival Chanukah. Israel supports two parallel education networks, one secular and one religious. Interestingly, secular school books teach pupils about the unlikely military conquest by the Hasmonean few against the Greek armies, whereas the religious school books emphasize the miraculous pot of oil that remained despite all efforts to eradicate the sacred liquid. Its oil was used to light the temple candelabra, the Menorah, and usher a period of Jewish independence. Religious educational authorities do not necessarily wish to embolden the magical over the factual, but they bow to parents who do want to teach their children a history that is intermingled with a nationally constitutive myth.⁸⁶⁸ Rachel Haverlock's essay is instructive on the matter of exegetical use of biblical texts, intended to bolster a political claim. She describes the ontologically loaded interplay between the biblical Joshua and Ben-Gurion's understanding of the Zionist enterprise in the mid-twentieth century. Ben-Gurion utilized myths

⁸⁶⁶ Gafni, "Concepts of Periodization and Causality in Talmudic Literature," 23.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁶⁸ Gil Slovic, "The Miracle of the Oil Jug Has Disappeared From History Books." December 18, 2017. YNet News. <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5058533,00.html>.

of conquest and national unity to transform the social reality and the very boundaries of the nascent State of Israel. "... the first generations of Zionists sought to build a new, secular Jewish national identity. And with this new identity came a new Zionist view of Jewish history... Ancient sages and medieval martyrs were brushed aside and denigrated, their heroic place taken by modern-day pioneers and kibbutzniks."⁸⁶⁹ Israeli Jews created a national collective understanding of the memory woven into their history, forging identity politics that animated the Zionist enterprise.⁸⁷⁰ "Water, war, and national myth were all on the mind of David Ben-Gurion when he convened his study group on Joshua in 1958... (which was) held on Friday mornings at the prime minister's residence... Tinged by recent memory, the exegesis expressed in the study sessions... brings a decidedly military framework to bear on the biblical book."⁸⁷¹

The two narratives that concern me here are Mishnah Yoma's account of the Avodah,⁸⁷² and Yosse ben Yosse's Piyyutic renditions⁸⁷³ of the Yom Kippur atonement rituals enacted at the temple. Yosse ben Yosse's existing oeuvre comprises three Avodot that can be confidently attributed to him, and one whose provenance is in doubt. A detailed comparison of the Yosse ben Yosse Avodah narrative with rabbinic Avodah narratives, specifically in Mishnah Yoma would, I maintain, yield important observations that are germane to this discussion. The following is a comparison between Mishnah Yoma and the piyyutim whose subject is the Avodah that Mirsky

⁸⁶⁹ Mechoulán, "What is the Meaning of Jewish History? A Brief History of Jewish History-Writing Reveals an Abundance of Partial and Competing Narratives.

⁸⁷⁰ Rachel Haverlock, "Rallying All of Israel: David Ben Gurion and the Book of Joshua," in *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, ed. Ira Robinson, Naftali, Cohn and Lorenzo DiTommaso, (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 336.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 327; Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 221.

⁸⁷² Please note that Mishnah Yoma 7:5 and the entire Chapter 8 are missing from this comparison, because the Paytan makes no reference to these legalistic texts. Unlike the rabbis of the Mishnah, Yosse ben Yosse focuses entirely on the Avodah and excludes all references to the lay people's duties on Yom Kippur.

⁸⁷³ אבדעת חקר, אתה כוננת, אספר גדולות, אזכיר גבורות

attributes to Yosse ben Yosse.⁸⁷⁴ Even as I contest the provenance of **אז בדעת הקר**, I include it in my analysis, to further illustrate the piyyut's oddity vis-à-vis the rest of the oeuvre.

I treat the three Yosse ben Yosse Avodot as a singular body of text that is to be compared and contrasted Mishnah Yoma. I do so with caution. Yosse ben Yosse's three Avodot are three iterations of the same theme. There are certain similarities between the piyyutim, and one can discern several differences. Even as each Avodah conveys the same narrative thread, each also features distinctive characteristics that set it apart from the other Avodot. There is an observable escalation of detail from **אספר גדולות**⁸⁷⁵ through **אתה כוננת**⁸⁷⁶ to **אזכיר גבורות**⁸⁷⁷. I state this with caution, because this escalation is perceived only through the arbitrary descriptive taxonomy that classifies the piyyutim according to their length. With each iteration, the narrative emerges with ever greater permutations of its elements. We move from the simple, reportage-style narrative of **אספר גדולות** (46 stanzas, with a double ה-א acrostic, to the increasing complexity of **אתה כוננת**, with its 176 stanzas and a quadruple ה-א acrostic times two, culminating with the most complex and longest of the Yosse ben Yosse Avodot- **אזכיר גבורות** with its astonishing 243 stanzas and a ten-fold ה-א acrostic plus a single acrostic at its end. This is characteristic of the creation narrative as well as the Avodah narrative in each piyyut.

The Avodot all hang on a similar thematic scaffold. Creation is the base upon which stands the biblical story of the Jewish family tree. The genealogical review culminates with the true aim and crowning achievement of creation - the sanctification of the priestly caste as the

⁸⁷⁴ Please note that some citations of Piyyutim refer to the text in Appendix A of this dissertation and some to the original Aharon Mirsky text. My apologies to the reader.

⁸⁷⁵ Appendix A, p. 446

⁸⁷⁶ Appendix A, p. 529

⁸⁷⁷ Appendix A, p. 608

communication facilitators between humans and God, on the vertical axis. Each creation segment of the Avodot ends with the three arch-priests: Moses, Aharon, and Miriam, leading to the tribe of Levi, and from there to the priestly caste as a whole. From the genealogical discussion the paytan draws legitimacy and authority for the Avodah. He frames the Avodah as a divine service that is rooted in creation, and therefore the performers of the Avodah as God's hand-made material on earth. He thus clothes the High Priest with sacrality that cannot be usurped, compared, or denied.

The most salient and important distinction between the Avodot is the tone of each piyyut vis-à-vis God in the creation narrative. **אספר גדולות** and **אזכיר גבורות** both refer to God in the third person. He created. He decided. He assigned. In **אספר גדולות**:

אִימָץ דּוֹק לְכֶסֶם וְתִבֵּל לְהֵרוֹם אֹר גִּילָה לְיוֹם וְאוֹפֵל הַחֲבִיּא לְנֶשֶׁף.

He has strengthened the thin veil of firmament,⁸⁷⁸ turning it into His throne⁸⁷⁹
 And He has fashioned the world as his foot-rest
 He uncovered the light for use during the day
 And he has secreted the darkness as eventide for the festive ball.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁸ Isa. 40:22.

⁸⁷⁹ Isa. 66:1.

⁸⁸⁰ The word **נשף**, depicting the evening, with an insinuation that evening is a social gathering time of the day, appears in several stances in the Bible, as follows: Jer. 13:16; Job 7:4; Job 24:15. In other biblical sources, the root **נשפ** usually pertains to issuing a puff of wind in anger. My understanding is that the chosen root here implies a divinely mandated darkness, often initiated in anger, as light is reserved for the worthy.

And in גבורות אזכיר:

בִּירַר עַל־מַיִם עֲמוּדֵי הַלֶּדֶד וְשִׁנָּס מִתְנִיָּה בְּתוֹהוּ וּבְסֻעָרָה

He arranged⁸⁸¹ upon the waters
The pillars of the world⁸⁸²
And girded her⁸⁸³ loins
With void⁸⁸⁴ and storm⁸⁸⁵

If we regard the sacrificial cult as a communication device that facilitates communion between God and His flock, and if we accept the premise that the piyyutic narrative stands in place of the sacrifice and affects the same efficacious purposes, then this becomes a paramount gauge.⁸⁸⁶ In these two piyyutim the paytan becomes one with his audience as they discuss God on the horizontal axis, amongst themselves, as equals. But in **אתה כוונת** God is spoken of in the second person. The direction of communication, indeed its very nature is altered. You created. You decided. You assigned:

גִּדְרָתָּ רְקִיעַ וְכִמְסַת חֲצֵי מַיִם וּמַפִּירוֹתָם עֲבִים יַחְשׁוּרוּ

You have trammed the firmament⁸⁸⁷
And therein concealed⁸⁸⁸ half the waters⁸⁸⁹
And from their crop⁸⁹⁰
Clouds becloud

⁸⁸¹ The root **ברר** signifies a choosing. מוסד ביאליק. ירושלים: פּוֹיטִי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי p. 129, footnote 13 maintains that the root **ברר** in this case refers to a strengthening. In the Hebrew Bible the root is more often construed in the sense of choosing, selecting the best object from among a variety of others. See: Ezek. 20:38; Eccles. 9:1; 1 Chron. 16:41. I chose to translate the word **בירר** as “arranged” which implies a choosing of form and function, and complies with the Biblical meaning more closely.

⁸⁸² Psalm 49:2. In Chagigah Tractate 12, Folio B, the Midrash on Prov. 8:31, the world is described as resting upon pillars that are anchored in the waters of the sea.

⁸⁸³ The earth.

⁸⁸⁴ After Gen. 1:1.

⁸⁸⁵ In a Braita for Chagigah tractate 12:1 the earth is described as being girded by a green belt of tempestuous chaos which emanates physical and spiritual darkness. It is a strengthening device for the world, according to the Sages.

⁸⁸⁶ Balberg, *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 22-23.

⁸⁸⁷ Gen. 1:7.

⁸⁸⁸ The Paytan uses the verb **כנס** which pertains to hiding, secreting, sequestering, and concealing something, after Deut. 32:34.

⁸⁸⁹ Gen. Rabba 4:4.

⁸⁹⁰ Braita Tractate Ta’anit, Folio 10:A; Psalm 104:13.

The communication axis is now vertical, as the paytan serves as the conduit of the congregation's collective yearnings. The paytan is also one with the congregation, but now he is their leader. He represents them to God, as he does not speak in one voice as the congregants. The creation narrative in all three Avodot sets the tone of communication and its directionality.

Within the creation narrative the paytan is consistent in drawing the images with a similar pen. For example, with regards to the creation of the first man and the first woman, the paytan in all three Avodot relies on the Genesis 2:16-25 in which the first man is made to slumber, as God causes the first woman to emerge from his rib, rather than on Genesis 1:27 in which God creates man and woman as one: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof."⁸⁹¹ Thus is **אספר גדולות** Yosse ben Yosse draws directly from the verse and writes:

דִּיבֵק לוֹ עוֹר מִיָּנּוּ וְלֹא זָרָה הִסִּיתָהּ זֹחֶל וְרִשֵׁת פְּרִסָּה לְעוֹפֵר.

He cleaved a help meet for him⁸⁹²
 She is drawn from him, she is not foreign
 A slithering reptile seduced her
 And she laid a snare at the feet of the innocent fawn.⁸⁹³

And in **אתה כוננת** he writes:

חִטִּיפַת שִׁנָּה עָלְיוֹ הַמַּתְקָת צָלַע אֲצֵלָת וּבָשָׂר כּוֹנֶנֶת.

A hasty sleep⁸⁹⁴
 You sweetened upon him
 And You cleaved⁸⁹⁵ his rib
 And from it You fashioned flesh.

⁸⁹¹ Gen. 2:21.

⁸⁹² Gen. 2:24.

⁸⁹³ The word **עופר**, meaning fawn, shares a root with **עפר**, meaning soil, in reference to the creation of Man from the soil of the earth. See: Gen. Rabbah 14:7.

⁸⁹⁴ Gen. 2:21.

⁸⁹⁵ The Paytan uses the root **אצל** which refers to a removal of something in order to imbue it with spiritual qualities and grant it to another, after Num. 11:17; Num. 11:25; Gen. 26:36.

And in a more “romantic” style in **אזכיר גבורות**:

הַרְדִּימוּ בְנוּעַם שִׁנָּה הָרִים מִנּוּ עֲצָם וְכוּנֵן עֲלֶמָה

He made him⁸⁹⁶ fall asleep⁸⁹⁷
 And while he reveled in his slumber
 He lifted a bone from his body⁸⁹⁸
 And fashioned a young maiden⁸⁹⁹

The consistence of sources creates a unified body of work and attests to the plausible attribution of the piyyutim to a single person, Yosse ben Yosse in this case. This consistency is evident in the piyyutic structure that leads from creation to the establishment of the priests as God’s emissaries before Him. In all the Avodot, as I had indicated, the structure of the narrative renders paramount the creation of the priestly caste by God, as a bulwark against chaos. It is their Avodah, their rituals at the temple, that preserve the munificent bounty of God’s creation in order. The ancestral Levites are the culmination of the creation narrative. Thus, in **אספר גדולות** the paytan ends the creation narrative at:

יּוֹפֵי מִטּוֹת עוֹז צָצוּ מִחֲלָצִיו בָּם לְמֶלֶךְ וּלְחוּזָה לְשֵׁרֵת וּלְכַהֵן.

The striking and mighty tribes⁹⁰⁰
 Emerged from his loins
 And from among them rose king⁹⁰¹ and prophet⁹⁰²
 And a servant to attend and to serve⁹⁰³.

⁸⁹⁶ A reference to Adam.

⁸⁹⁷ Gen. 2:21.

⁸⁹⁸ Gen. 2:21-22.

⁸⁹⁹ The root **עלמה** implies a mystery, after Lev. 4:13; Num. 5:13; Job 28:21; Eccles. 12:14. The word **עלמה** refers to youthfulness, and is translated as "young maiden," after Isa. 7:14; Gen. 24:23; Prov. 30:19. The Paytan insinuates something about the mystery and miraculous creation of Eve as a young woman wrought from Adam’s flesh.

⁹⁰⁰ A reference to the twelve tribes that hailed from Jacob.

⁹⁰¹ A reference to Moses, after Exod. 18:13.

⁹⁰² A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

⁹⁰³ A reference to Aaron, the Priest, after Exod. 38:21.

In **אתה כוננת** the narrative is less telegraphic and spans several stanzas (64-72) but it caps the creation story as a prelude to the truly consequential appointment of the Levites and Priests as God's servants upon His earth:

פְּרִי צְדִיק הַצְּמַחַת מְגֹזַע לִוִּי: עֲמָרָם וְנִינְיֹו כְּגִפְזֹן וְשָׂרִיגִיהּ.

The ornamental Diadem of priesthood⁹⁰⁴
 You endowed to the one who sanctifies⁹⁰⁵ You
 And he bequeathed it
 To his sons after him

In **אזכיר גבורות** the paytan asserts that the elevation of the priests is an eternal law before God.

לְמִלֵּא יָדָם יָמִים שְׁבַעַה. וַיְשִׁימָהּ לְחֹק לְדֹרוֹת עוֹלָם,

To fill their hands⁹⁰⁶
 For seven days.
 And he made it⁹⁰⁷ a Law
 For all generations eternally,

The Avodah narrative follows a similar structural aspect, as we move from the reportage style in **אספר גדולות** to the complexity and detail in **אזכיר גבורות**. It is a unifying element, if one accepts the descriptive taxonomy here. But there are differences between the Avodot that are merely structural. Indeed, the tone changes between the Avodot, but crucially the detail that Yosse ben Yosse adds or detracts is instructive. In **אתה כוננת** the paytan devotes enormous attention to the High Priest's vestments, and the ritual rationale that made them so efficacious in

⁹⁰⁴ Zech. 6:11; Lev. 8:9.

⁹⁰⁵ A reference to Aaron the High Priest, after Psalm 106:16.

⁹⁰⁶ Meaning: to be occupied, after Lev. 8:33.

⁹⁰⁷ A reference to the Avodah of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the exclusive priestly cultic duties in the Temple, as divinely mandated, after Lev. 8:34.

the Yom Kippur atonement ritual. Each element is imbued with spiritual importance, thus in Stanzas 106-107⁹⁰⁸ he writes:

הָלֵא בְּכֶתֶפָיו שְׁתֵּי אֲבְנֵי שֹׁהֶם וּבֵם שְׁמוֹת שְׁבָטִים כְּמִסְפַּר דְּגָלִים.

And on his epaulettes
Two onyx stones⁹⁰⁹
Upon which are names of the Tribes
In the number of their Standards.⁹¹⁰

הַגּוּיִים בְּשֵׁמוֹת חֲצוּיִים בְּאוֹתוֹת בְּפִתוּחַ שְׁמִיר נוֹצַר מִבְּרָאשִׁית

Their names are legible
Even as their letters are bisected⁹¹¹
Engraved with a diamond lathe⁹¹²
But fashioned at the moment of creation⁹¹³

The Avodah is consistently conceived as the mechanism through which creation is guaranteed salubrity and continued existence. The High Priest is God's chosen servant who is charged with the rituals that preserve creation. And the Avodah is the ultimate and singularly effective ritual that causes creation to prosper under God. The paytan repeats this theme in **אזכיר** **גבורות**, but devotes considerably fewer lines to the vestments. In **אספר גדולות** Yosse be Yosse skips to the Avodah without hovering over the matter of the vestments' role in the ritual. The High Priest removes his own apparel and wears the sacred vestments. C'est tout.

We must proceed with caution in drawing conclusions from the observed patterns of similarity and variability among and between the piyyutim. The Avodot are not dated, and we cannot therefore determine the order of their composition. Neither can we discern the audience

⁹⁰⁸ Appendix A, p. 576

⁹⁰⁹ Exod. 28:12.

⁹¹⁰ Exod. 28:9-10.

⁹¹¹ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Sottah 7:4

⁹¹² The Paytan uses the word **שמיר** which evokes the sin of Judea, after Jer. 17:1.

⁹¹³ Mishnah Avot 5:6

for which each Avodah was intended, we cannot establish the reasons behind the different iterations. What we can and must do, is describe the differences without commenting on the paytan's decision making process. I therefore, for the purposes of this study, regard the three Avodot as a single body of text, even as I note the different emphases and structures that characterize each piyyut.

The Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, dealing with Yom Kippur rituals at the temple in Jerusalem may be read as an ideological dialogue⁹¹⁴ with Yoma Tractate of the Mishnah, whereas each discourse represents a distinctive voice in the context of Jewish society in late antiquity.⁹¹⁵ Both texts were enacted within a specific social context and contributed to the dynamic ways in which that social context evolved. They are dialogical as groups of utterances that may have been crafted partly in response to one another, or at the very least in response to the ideologies and worldviews that animate the other group of utterances. Both texts contain evidence of underlying strategies of inclusion and exclusion that belie the political and religious framing of discourse and the interpretation thereof, whereas “discourses structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity.”⁹¹⁶ A comparison between Tractate Yoma and Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim, as a site of contestation of meaning, reveals something of the intricate nature of the multiple religious and ontological expressions of Judaism that coexisted in Palestine in late antiquity. “Though there is no specific available evidence, it is likely that there was diversity ... in the ways that different Judaeans (Israelites) in various locations throughout Syria Palaestina

⁹¹⁴ Mills, *Discourse*, 11 (citing Michel Pecheux).

⁹¹⁵ Mills, *Discourse*, 10 (citing Diane Macdonnell).

⁹¹⁶ Mills, *Discourse*, 13.

(sic) embraced Roman culture and mixed this embrace with adherence to traditional cultural and ritual practices.”⁹¹⁷

The variety and variability of Jewish groups within the complex environment of Palestine in late antiquity produced competing ideologies and reflected tensions within Jewish society.⁹¹⁸ Some Jews assimilated Greek cultural affectations and philosophies, others resisted accommodation.⁹¹⁹ There were non-Jewish groups as well, such as the Samaritans⁹²⁰ and the pagan Romans and Greeks, and the proto-Christian Jews; there were, according to Josephus, sects of Pharisees and Sadducees and Essenes,⁹²¹ rabbis, non-rabbis, and those who were semi-rabbinic to one degree or another; there was a reclusive group in Qumran, and in all probability other groups as well whose voice has not reached us because of the vicissitudes of time.⁹²² These multiple groups spoke a variety of languages, primarily Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew, but there were other dialects, tongues and idiosyncratic vernacular languages being spoken and heard. People lived in cities and towns and in rural communities, people farmed or laboured in small industries, some were learned, others not, some adopted Roman culture to various degrees,⁹²³ others remains true to their traditions, some rebelled against the foreign occupation, while others accepted it and adapted to its demands.⁹²⁴ Each group had its own ritual specialists who advised

⁹¹⁷ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 30.

⁹¹⁸ Mechoulam, “What is the Meaning of Jewish History? A Brief History of Jewish History-Writing Reveals an Abundance of Partial and Competing Narratives.”

⁹¹⁹ 1 Maccabees, 11.

⁹²⁰ Reinhard Plummer, “Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences,” in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 118-160.

⁹²¹ Josephus, *Antiquity of the Jews*, 13:171-173. Rabbinic literature refers to Pharisees and Sadducees. See: James VanderKam, “Judaism in the Land of Israel,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John Collins and Daniel Harlow, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 65.

⁹²² Josephus, *Antiquity of the Jews*, 13:171-173. Rabbinic literature refers to Pharisees and Sadducees. See: VanderKam, “Judaism in the Land of Israel,” 65.

⁹²³ Tessa Rajak, “The Synagogue Within the Greco-Roman City.” In *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 161-173.

⁹²⁴ VanderKam, “Judaism in the Land of Israel,” 67.

group members on the correct practice of ritual and who served as arbiters of tradition and memory.⁹²⁵

Rabbinic texts portray themselves as carriers of the proper meaning of older texts, thereby organizing knowledge and crafting harmony. The ideological convergence between different rabbinic texts provides the tools for interpreting new information and, in the process, reshapes social memory. Together, these processes create a textual whole that becomes paradigmatic for the group, serving as lenses through which to gaze upon and understand events over time.⁹²⁶ The community is organized along ideological lines, and comes to venerate specific figures (Moses, Abraham, David, Rabbi Akiva), specific events (the exodus, the temple, monarchy, messianic hope), and specific values (purity, learning, Torah observance, exclusivity of chosen-ness), under the leadership of the group – in this case the rabbis – that crafted the textual intellectual history with political and religious intent. Rabbinic literature became the ontologically constitutive and dominant discourse,⁹²⁷ whereas the Yosse ben Yosse liturgy and other non-rabbinic traditions as well, became marginalized, along with the worldview they encode.

The Mishnah recounts the *imagined* Avodah, painting a realistic picture, complete with speeches, and finger snapping, toe tapping scenes. It interjects animated rabbinic arguments over details of the past, lending the narrative an air of verisimilitude.⁹²⁸ The added “texture” seems to suggest that the events took place year after year precisely as described in the Mishnah. For

⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 271-272.

⁹²⁷ The Tosefta supplements the Mishnaic narrative, offering commentary, additional substance, packaged in a somewhat less controlled compendium than the Mishnah. The Talmud, drawing on additional traditions, develops Mishnaic narratives by adding haggadic materials and biblical expositions. See: H.L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to The Talmud And Midrash*, ed. and trans. Markus Bockmuehl, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 152, 157, 166.

⁹²⁸ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 58.

example, Mishnah Yoma 1:5 describes the High Priest who, following rabbinic instruction in the details of the Avodah, retires in tears even as the rabbis take leave of him in tears. The Mishnah does not explain the reason for this lachrymose goodbye. Tosefta Yoma therefore 1:7 asks, rhetorically, why the high Priest cried and why the rabbis did as well? It identifies a gap in the Mishnah text and aims to fill it with further creative elaboration and story-telling that imbues the new text with verisimilitude. It sounds as if it really happened thus. The Tosefta Yoma says: Why did he [the High Priest] retire in tears, because they [the rabbis] had to adjure him, and why did they have to adjure him because [of a past event that took place] of a Boethusite⁹²⁹ who erred in the offering of incense and did not heed rabbinic instruction, thereby nullifying the ritual and excoriating its redemptive function. Adding vignettes and case precedents, Tosefta accepts the Mishnah as true and continues the project of unpacking this truth to its smallest detail, once again reasserting rabbinic authority and the authenticity of their narrative. The Tosefta underscores the claims of the Mishnah by adding “colour” and texture to the narrative, and by not changing the essential nature of the Avodah.

The Paytan Yosse ben Yosse generally adopts the rabbinic account of the Avodah, but a judicious comparison of his works with rabbinic texts, reveals important differences that point to different traditions and political interests. Mirsky contends that Yosse ben Yosse wrote his piyyutim informed mostly by the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi) and on Tannaitic texts.⁹³⁰ For example, in **אתה כוננת** the paytan, in the 74th stanza, relates the sanctification procedure of the High Priest prior to the commencement of the Avodah. This is not unusual, whereas the

⁹²⁹ Boethus was one of the High Priests who was beloved by the people, but whose interpretation of Jewish tradition contradicted rabbinic views. He came to be regarded as the epitome of error by the rabbis. See: Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5:13.1.

⁹³⁰ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 90.

purifying rituals are narrated in all the Avodot. Here, however, the paytan appears to draw his information directly from the Palestinian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 1:1, by subjecting the High Priest to purification with the waters of the scorned woman⁹³¹ that were made ritually pure by the ashes of the red heifer. The blood, a “ritual detergent,”⁹³² is the agent of sanctification. In no other Avodah does the paytan refer to the purification and sanctification of the High Priest in terms of the power of blood to sanctify both the temple and the High Priest. The paytan thus equates the sanctity of the High Priest with the sanctity of the temple.

קִדְשׁוֹ וְחֻטְאוֹהוּ בְּמֵי נְדָה תְּמוּר חֲטוּי דָם וְשִׁמּוֹן הַמִּשְׁחָה.

They sanctify him and sanitize him⁹³³
 With the cleansing water⁹³⁴ of the heifer-ash⁹³⁵
 As a reward for⁹³⁶ the cleansing by blood
 And the anointing oil.

Yosse ben Yosse’s account, expressed in his multiple Avodot is, I maintain, representative of a parallel priestly history. His story differs significantly from the Mishnaic story. Yosse ben Yosse lived at least 100 years after the Mishnah was sealed, and at most 200 years thereafter, but neither system of texts offers a firsthand account of temple rituals.⁹³⁷ The differences between them, therefore, speak to the cultural diversity in Byzantine Palestine, to

⁹³¹ Num. 19:1-13; Num. 31:23.

⁹³² Lev. 16:16; Marc Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 79-80.

⁹³³ Lev. 8:30.

⁹³⁴ The water of sprinkling, after Num. 19:1-13; Num. 31:23.

⁹³⁵ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma, Folio 1, 1:1.

⁹³⁶ The reward of the High Priest is a measure-for-measure, equal to his service at the Temple during which he sanctified elements of the Temple with the blood as a “ritual detergent” [Brettler, *How to read the Jewish Bible*, 79-80, regarding the rituals of Lev. 16:16].

⁹³⁷ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 32. Mirsky states that Yosse ben Yosse based several of his rabbinic traditions on the Palestinian Talmud [Yerushalmi], and rarely referred to the Babylonian Talmud [Bavli]. For instance, when the High Priest confesses his offences upon the head of his bullock on Yom Kippur, the Paytan describes the “heavy hand” he places on the animal, meaning he did so with what we call a heavy heart, with thoughtful contemplation and seriousness. He drew this tradition from the PT [or a shared source] in Yerushalmi Hagigah, Ch. 2 Halakhah 2. Another example refers to the selection of the High Priest, which Yosse ben Yosse claims was done by casting lots among the worthy priestly candidates. This is a tradition found only in Tosefta Kippurim 1:6.

different religious-political agendas, and to authorial reliance on different earlier sources and their distinctive worldviews. “The surviving evidence (of Jewish texts from antiquity) exhibits a richness and diversity in Judaism... so great that some have resorted to the neologism “Judaisms” to express it.”⁹³⁸ The diversity, typical of Second Temple Jewish society, and of all Jewish environments thereafter, can be glimpsed through this comparison. Jews of all stripes and colours, maintained an attachment to the idea of the temple through the re-formulated Avodah narrative. They all thought it was a fundamental, foundational, and crucial pillar of the Jewish relationship with God, and they all sought ways to portray the performative aspects of the ritual because of its redemptive *raison d’être*.

There emerge, from the comparison of the two narratives, two opposing images of the High Priest. The Mishnah paints a picture of a heuristic High Priest, whose behavior must be carefully and constantly monitored by the wiser and more expert rabbis; Yosse ben Yosse’s High Priest conducts the ceremonies in a slow, deliberate, and informed manner, and thus his agency and thoughtfulness are never in doubt.

Scholars of Jewish writings⁹³⁹ have come to think of the Mishnah as a historically authentic voice, and often tend to regard *Piyyut* as an embellishment, a fanciful and creative divergence that bears little historical authenticity. As explained in Chapter 1, my claim in this dissertation is that norms of shared culture can and ought to be contested. National culture, and the discourses it embodies, is the result and product of a struggle between competing groups, one cannot claim that the power of one group privileges the content of its claims. One cannot claim

⁹³⁸ VanderKam, “Judaism in the Land of Israel,” 73.

⁹³⁹ See for instance, the discussion by: Stephen Reif, “From Manuscript Codex to Printed Volume: A Novel Liturgical Transition?” in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer*, ed. R. Langer and S. Fine, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

that because the Mishnaic discourse “won the day,” it more accurately reflects a true depiction of what actually took place on Yom Kippur in the temple, and that just because Yosse ben Yosse has lost the power struggle with the now dominant discourse, his version of events, which emphasizes priestly dominance rather than rabbinic dominance over the Avodah, is inherently wrong. I proposed, therefore, to study Tractate Yoma and Yosse ben Yosse as equally valid discourses that could be compared, contrasted, and analyzed in tandem. Critical discourse analysis that evaluates texts from an avowedly politically committed perspective⁹⁴⁰ may disclose important information regarding the interaction of a variety of Palestinian Judaic traditions in late antiquity.

Both Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbis responded to their own present realities, and their writings served socio-political and religious functions in their present. The rabbinic discourse on temple ritual was a vehicle for asserting rabbinic legitimacy and authority over post-destruction Jewish law and ritual practice, with emphasis on the prescriptive nature of rabbinic narratives; in Yosse ben Yosse’s narrative, the temple discourse takes on a reactionary zest, militating for a return to the old, biblically based model of religious leadership. The Mishnah asserted rabbinic leadership, and Yosse ben Yosse appears to have advocated a return to priestly leadership as the right legal and ritual experts.

There is scant historical evidence that the people in Roman Palestine knew of the clash of titans happening in their back yards. Priest and rabbis vied for leadership, both claiming an authentic understanding of the Torah, and asserting a continuous and unbroken line of authority extending well into the biblical past. Each side developed its own discourse on the nature of

⁹⁴⁰ Mills, *Discourse*, 24, 116-143 (citing Norman Fairclough).

things, on the way God's world works, and on the most accurate and dependable means of communication with the divine. Each discourse sought exclusivity, diminishing the stature of competing claimants and militating for the unbridled right to lead and educate the people. The competition lasted centuries, whereas historic events influenced the dialogue, making the success of one side mean the failure of the other, as there was no room for more than one authoritative voice. This competition determined which voices would remain audible, and which would be erased from the Jewish "airwaves," thereby shaping the agents of social transformation in Jewish society henceforth. In time, the rabbi's discourse won the day and the priestly discourse gradually sank, defeated. Echoes of the priestly narrative have reached us, if only faintly, preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the books of Josephus, and in some Piyyutic literature. Through his work, the paytan sought to transform the temple-centered worship that had hitherto dominated Judaic practice into the post-destruction variant of observance that emphasized prayer rather than sacrificial rites.⁹⁴¹

Findings

I conducted a systematic comparison of the 40 Mishnayot that speak of the Avodah in Tractate Yoma,⁹⁴² with the 3 confirmed Yosse ben-Yosse Avodah Piyyutim, and one piyyut ascribed to Yosse ben Yosse, whose provenance I doubt, as explained in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.⁹⁴³ The two narratives, I maintain, reflect the power relations that shaped the

⁹⁴¹ Mills, *Discourse*, 43-68 (citing Foucault).

⁹⁴² I compared every detail of Tractate Yoma 1-7 with the four Avodah works penned by Yosse ben Yosse. I did not investigate Yoma 8 because this is a strictly legalistic text which pertains not to the High Priest's rituals on Yom Kippur, but to the practice by lay people in observance of the Day of Atonement.

⁹⁴³ I considered the four Piyyutim as does Mirsky, meaning that I ignored my own reservations regarding the provenance of *קַרְבָּן* and treated it as if it were written by Yosse ben Yosse. I think comparing it along with the other confirmed Avodot of Yosse ben Yosse, further accentuates the oddity of *קַרְבָּן*. The four Avodot in question are: *אֶסְפֵּר גְּדוּלוֹת* [Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 203]; *אַתָּה כּוֹנֵן* [Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 178]; *אֶזְכִּיר גְּבוּרוֹת* [Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 127]. Only 15 liturgical poems (piyyutim) penned by Yosse ben Yosse have survived from antiquity. They represent the Paytan's preoccupation with the priestly caste, its cultic practices on Yom Kippur,

production and reception of these accounts. Both lay claim to the accuracy of their particular memory of the past, and imply eye-witness veracity, casting themselves as authentic and therefore authoritative.⁹⁴⁴ I studied Tractate Yoma and Yosse ben Yosse as equally valid discourses that could be compared, contrasted and analyzed. I present the dialogue in my dissertation, not by way of advocating for one worldview or another, but as an historian training my ear to hear the medley of whispers that have survived over the chasm of time and space, and that have reached us encased in a variety of literary forms.

The detailed comparison of every line in the Mishnah against its parallel in Yosse ben Yosse's liturgy⁹⁴⁵ revealed some interesting and illuminating differences – some of them quite subtle – that merit further investigation. Bearing in mind that texts have reached us after many centuries of scribal transmission, both rabbinic⁹⁴⁶ and non-rabbinic, one must treat them with some suspicion. Even as we recognize errors of transcription and the incomplete nature of manuscripts that attenuate our conclusions, we can point to trends, tendencies, and social

and with an eschatological future in which the priests would once again lead Israel. The fifth century CE Palestinian Paytan reflected in his writings the social and political concerns of his generation. Of the 15 known piyyutim 9 deal with the role of God in history, 9 lament the loss of the priesthood, 4 retell the details of the Avodah, 7 make a causal link between sin and the destruction, and 8 advocate repentance as a restorative mechanism (regarding the relationship of the people and God) to be mediated by the priestly caste. See: Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*.

⁹⁴⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 27.

⁹⁴⁵ The Yosse ben Yosse liturgy was saved from oblivion thanks to the inclusion of several Piyyutim in the Jewish prayer book, some Piyyutim were mentioned in the writings of R. Sa'adia Ga'on, and some were re-discovered thanks to the extraordinary good fortune of the discovery of the Cairo Genizah. Errors in transcription and transmission, have resulted in an array of fragmentary versions of the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, and it is possible that additional fragments still lurk unattributed to the Paytan in the archives of Genizah manuscripts yet un-catalogued. See: Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 7-11.

⁹⁴⁶ The Mishnah, Tosefta, and the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi) are especially prone to errors of transmission [Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 172-181]. There are no complete or uniform versions of these texts, because of scribal errors, neglect, the scarcity of original manuscripts, and because this is what happens to texts over millennia. They become adulterated, some of them are deliberately "harmonized" with later texts, and some even suffer the bruising effects of scribal flights of creativity. And as the Babylonian Talmud gained absolute pride of place on the Jewish learners' bookshelf, the Mishnah and its attendant texts, as well as the "incomplete" Palestinian Talmud, all became corrupted to one degree or another. As Eugene Ulrich explains: "For the most part... scribes assiduously recited or recopied... traditions as accurately as they could, but occasionally there were creative minds that sought to revise and expand the texts with insights addressing new situations and making the works meaningful to the current generation" [Eugene Ulrich, "The Jewish Scriptures: Texts, Versions, Canons," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John Collins and Daniel Harlow, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 99].

currents, and begin to reconstruct some of the diversity of Judaisms that thrived in late antiquity. I believe those are valid and important observations to make about a period of Jewish history we know so little about.⁹⁴⁷

The detailed comparison of Mishnah Yoma and the four Yosse ben Yosse piyyutim on the Avodah, allowed me to note the differences between the two narratives, and to shed light on commonalities and correlations between the two texts.⁹⁴⁸ The underlying similarity between the two text systems is important to note. Both Mishnah Yoma and Yosse ben Yosse's rendition of the Avodah appear to expand on Leviticus, adhere to the basic outline of the Avodah. In his treatment of Yoma 5:6, for example, Yosse ben Yosse mirrors the Mishnah almost exactly. A shared exegetical tradition runs through both narratives, and a shared memory of the temple rituals appears to be a common denominator, even as the poet at times diverges subtly from the rabbinic text. Yosse ben Yosse, aware of the Mishnah, drew upon it as well as on other sources and traditions. Most of the Avodah is an elaboration on the biblical account of the Yom Kippur sacrifices. The sages elaborated a detailed story that served to emphasize their own preeminent role in the temple. Mishnah Yoma 1:3 for example says:

The Elders of the Temple Court are the ones who instruct the High Priest and review with him the details of the Avodah.

The concern is that the High Priest may have forgotten the halakha, or that he did not even know it at all.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, the elders instruct the High Priest to stand at the Eastern Gate of the Temple courtyard, and they show him the animals he will sacrifice so he will better know the animals and the order of the Avodah.

⁹⁴⁷ The rabbinic texts remain an important source for the legal, social and intellectual history of Byzantine Palestinian Jewish life in Byzantine Palestine, a period we know so little about because of the paucity of historiographically sound (by today's standards) sources of information. See: Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," 104.

⁹⁴⁸ Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," 102.

Yosse ben Yosse recounts a similar elaboration of the story. He either read or heard a different source that corroborated the Mishnaic account, or he had access and was well versed in the Mishnaic story. His Avodah piyyutim are multiple accounts of the Avodah, each with a different accent, probably intended to dazzle audiences by innovating yearly on the same theme. But his story differs from the Mishnaic narrative, in telling ways. In **אזכיר גבורות**: the instructors are the **מחכימי פתי**⁹⁴⁹ the learned ones.⁹⁵⁰

מְחַכְּמֵי פִתֵּי יוֹעֲצֵמְתוֹ לּוֹ לְשִׁנְנוּ לְחִנּוּכוֹ בְּחֻקֵי עֲשׂוֹר.

Teachers⁹⁵¹ of the guileless⁹⁵²
Are partnered⁹⁵³ with him
To review with him and to teach him
In the Laws of the Tenth Day.⁹⁵⁴

Here, there is no mention of the rabbinic court [Sanhedrin] at all. Indeed, the animals to be sacrificed are brought to the High Priest by unnamed individuals, who compliment the High Priest and encourage him:⁹⁵⁵

מִה נָאָה עֲבוֹדָתְךָ יֵאֱמְרוּ, חֲזֹק וְאַמֵץ כִּי כָל אֱלֹהֵי פְעֻלָּה.

How substantial
Is your Avodah, they say,⁹⁵⁶
Be strong and brave
As all these are for your work to be done.

Yosse ben Yosse uses a very interesting word in **אזכיר גבורות**. The word **פתי** appears in the bible (as in Psalms 19:8) but is never used at all in the Mishnah. Interestingly, the word appears

⁹⁴⁹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 150, line 132.

⁹⁵⁰ Appendix A, p. 669

⁹⁵¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

⁹⁵² Psalm 19:8

⁹⁵³ The paytan uses the root **עמת** which refers to associates, co-workers, partners, or assistants.

⁹⁵⁴ An epithet for Yom Kippur.

⁹⁵⁵ Appendix A, p. 670

⁹⁵⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 18:1.

five times in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁹⁵⁷ In Fragment 8:I verse 7 of the 4Q-266 so called Damascus Document scroll, the text reads (original orthography): ומשוגע אל יבו וכול פתי ושוגה וכה עינים לבלתי ראות. Translated into English the sentence further clarifies the baggage that is loaded upon the shoulder of the word פתי. “And no stupid or deranged (person) should enter, and anyone feeble minded and insane, those with eye too weak to see.”⁹⁵⁸ In other words, employing the word פתי makes clear that the sage elders of the tribe, referred to as teachers of the guileless⁹⁵⁹ who could even teach a פתי, an unworthy, stupid, blind, and even insane person, instruct the High Priest on the Avodah’s procedures, lest he imperil creation itself. This is not intended to cast aspersions on the High Priest’s perspicacity, but to extol the qualifications of the teachers. The rest of the piyyut explains that the High Priest is chosen by God to serve, he is inherently worthy and meritorious, but the ritual requires a “refresher course” that the priestly elders of the tribe can provide.

Later on, in reference to the events described in Yomah 1:6, he again uses the word. This may hint at a tantalizing possibility of contact between Yosse ben Yosse and the Qumranic literature, a subject that merits further research. The attitude of the instructors in the first Piyyut is collegial, non-confrontational, even friendly. It assumes a certain social equality, rather than the Mishnaic tendency to portray the High Priest as a subject of the rabbis, as lesser in learning and therefore in stature. He is in Yosse ben Yosse a primus inter pares, not a student of a wiser group or a subjugated individual before their greater power.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁷ CD XIII, 6; CD XV, 15; 1QSa I, 19 I; 4Q177, 9,7 V; 4Q266 8:7 XVIII See: Martin G. Abegg, James E. Bowley, and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, Vol. 1, The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003).

⁹⁵⁸ Garcia-Martinez and Tigheelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, 592-593.

⁹⁵⁹ Psalm 19:8.

⁹⁶⁰ See the technical terms for leaders in the Qumran community, as derived from the Scrolls, in: L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam, *Encyclopaedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Vol. 1, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134-135.

In **אספר גדולות**: the High Priest studies the Avodah on his own. He needs no outside instruction at all.⁹⁶¹ Moreover, he confesses at the eve of the fast. In the second Piyyut the Paytan goes even further and removes all external instruction. Now the High Priest is sage enough, learned and able to review the Avodah without help. He is empowered and validated as the leader. In **אתה כוננת** : the High Priest receives instruction from **קציני מדימה**,⁹⁶² “Presiding⁹⁶³ men of knowledge,”⁹⁶⁴ who instruct are **כשבת אחים גם יחד**⁹⁶⁵ “like brethren who dwell together in unit.”⁹⁶⁶ In the Avodah that I believe is not an original Yosse ben Yosse piyyut but one written in his style, **אז בדעת חקר**: the elders instruct the High priest, they stay with him, and review and recite the details of **דיני עשור**, the laws of the Tenth Day.⁹⁶⁷ The legalistic aspect of the Yom Kippur instruction of the High Priest is absent in all the other Avodot by Yosse ben Yosse. The inclusion intimates a greater affinity with the legalism of rabbinic thought. Mirsky describes the **קציני מדימה** as “those who are great in wisdom,”⁹⁶⁸ given his rabbinic reading of the text, and assumes that the instructors are rabbinic, in line with the Mishnah narrative. The paytan calls the instructors “elders.” This may be read rabbinically as a reference to the Sanhedrin, or it may be read as a reference to a priestly group. The specific reading of the word **זקנים** is definitely

⁹⁶¹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 206, line 24.

⁹⁶² *Ibid.*, 188, line 77.

⁹⁶³ Mishnah Yoma 1:3 recounts that the men who instructed the High Priest were the elders of the Beit Din, or Sanhedrin. The Paytan does not insinuate any rabbinic presence into the Temple, or as part of the Yom Kippur Ritual. He maintains that priestly specialists oversaw the preparation of the High Priest. He uses the word **קצין**, which can be translated as “superintendents” or “overseers” who preside over a complex set of actions, at times military, but in this context, the Yom Kippur temple rites, after Prov. 25:15; Prov. 6:7.

⁹⁶⁴ Mishnah Yoma 1:3 appears to suggest that the High Priest was potentially unschooled in the order of the Avodah, and that he was taught by the rabbis. The Paytan inserts the word “wisdom” to suggest that the priests knew well the order of the Avodah and did not require non-priestly instruction. The Paytan uses the word **מדימה** which can be understood as a conspiracy by Modern Hebrew speakers, but in Biblical Hebrew suggests wisdom, after Prov. 1:4.

⁹⁶⁵ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 188, line 77, drawing from Psalm 133:1.

⁹⁶⁶ Psalm 133:1.

⁹⁶⁷ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 188, line 78.

⁹⁶⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 188.

influenced by the eyes of the beholder, by the hermeneutic lens one chooses to employ, depending on one's ideological position.

This apparent intentional use of non-Mishnaic words may point to one or two of the following possibilities: a literary choice, that aims to innovate and thus beautify the poetic piece; a preference for biblical words that pull the reader away from the Mishnah and toward a more “authentic” reading, from the biblical source that is the primary and most respected source by all; or an ideological affinity with the Zaddokite members of the Qumran community. Interestingly, in the Damascus Document,⁹⁶⁹ it is said: “The Priests and Levites and the sons of Zaddok who maintained the service of my temple etc.” (Ezekiel 44:15) ... The sons of Zaddok are the chosen of Israel, men of renown who stand to serve at the end of days.” In the Hebrew, the reference is clearer, as the priests are לעשות כפירוש התורה ... לקרואי השם. בחירי ישראל, קרואי השם. They are the right and true interpreters of the Torah. In 4Q266, Frg. 5 it is said: בני צדוק הכהנים הנה המה ... מדרש התורה It is the priests who are the last interpreters of the Torah, the only ones who are empowered to teach the Torah to the people entire, sans rabbinic input. In 4Q267 frag. 2 the community writes: God remembered the covenant with the forefathers and raised from Aaron men of knowledge. The segment explains that the priestly wise men are the “diggers of the well of Torah,” those who are able to draw from Torah the waters of wisdom and sagacity, which in turn allows them to instruct the people. Is Yosse ben Yosse in agreement with the Yaḥad's interpretive ideology?

Yosse ben Yosse was a trained scholar, who was certainly aware of the Talmud, especially the Palestinian Talmud.⁹⁷⁰ He did not distance himself entirely from rabbinic tradition,

⁹⁶⁹ CD-A, Col. IV.

⁹⁷⁰ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 28.

but incorporated the narrative, with additions, into his own. An excellent example regards Yoma 3:9-11, where the Avodah takes a more dramatic turn, following the Leviticus script:

The High Priest walks over to the eastern wing of the Courtyard, and positions himself north of the altar, opposite the gateway. He is flanked by his deputy on the right, and the head of his Clan⁹⁷¹ on his left. Two he-goats awaited the High Priest, and where they stood there was also a box containing two gold-coated boxwood lots, the gold covering of which was donated by [Yehoshua] Ben Gamla who is herein praised. People who contributed to the sumptuous vessels and décor of the temple are remembered as praiseworthy.⁹⁷² People who are remembered with scorn are those who refused to share their learning and ritual specialization.⁹⁷³

The Mishnah carefully inserts “real life” information about the appearance and provenance of the lots, continuing the effort toward literary verisimilitude intended to legitimate rabbinic authority. The Mishnah “positions” the High Priest spatially, at a specific point within the sacred space. Orienting people within the temple space makes the site meaningful and legitimates the social hierarchy constructed by the rabbis.⁹⁷⁴ The idealized constructed space of the temple in effect makes a claim on what contemporary social reality ought to be like. The rabbis assert their memory and telling of the sacred space as a contestation of power vis-à-vis other groups vying for authenticity and authority.⁹⁷⁵ Ritual action sanctifies the imagined space, and in turn draws the intellectual and religiously binding boundaries of the people. The interjection of an alternative rabbinic opinion lends the narrative an air of truth, the flavour of variability over time, and overall militates for rabbinic authority.

⁹⁷¹ The term “order” refers to the priestly *משמרות*, the administrative division of Temple priests. The priestly workforce was divided into 24 Families, each responsible for the Temple rituals for the duration of one week, during which they were entitled to the meat of offerings. Every order was divided into six family groups, or clans, each accorded service on a different weekday. The watch switched on the Sabbath, as the outgoing Order and incoming Order shared the day’s sacrifices. See: Jonathan Ben-Dov, “Mishmarot,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. by John Collins and Daniel Harlow, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 958-960.

⁹⁷² Ben Kattin, King Munbaz, Heleni the King’s mother, and Nikanor.

⁹⁷³ Beit Garmu, the bakers of sacrificial baked cakes; Beit Abtinias, the incense specialists who refused to share their secret know-how; Hugrass ben Levi who did not want to teach his musical compositions; Ben Kamtzar who was a scribe and calligrapher.

⁹⁷⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 74.

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

The Talmud⁹⁷⁶ finds no less than seven names for the eastern gate that divides the priestly Courtyard [wherein only the priests and Levites could assemble] from the women's Courtyard [wherein lay people could congregate]. The names are: Itton, Yessod [foundational], Tiḥon/Tavekh [central], Sur, Ḥarissit, Ḥadash [new], Elyon [upper]. Yosse ben Yosse selects three of these names, one for each of the first three piyyutim. In other words, he draws information from a rabbinic source, or from a common oral or other tradition,⁹⁷⁷ and as a literary craftsman, he embellishes his work with the various names, to create literary variety and impress his audience with his perspicacity and savvy.

Yosse ben Yosse accepts the rabbinic narrative and does not contest any of the details therein. He does not, however, concern himself with stories of men who were “remembered” as praiseworthy or as scornful, as does the Mishnah in Yomah 3:10-11. The Talmud and Mishnah further embellish the stories of the good, the bad and the ugly in Mishnah Tractate Shekalim 5:1, in Baraita Yomah 38:2, and retroject fantastic tales of miracle and wonder associated with each of the men and women here mentioned. The implication of course is that rabbinic memory is authentic, that rabbinic presence at the temple over many years was both central and ubiquitous, and that rabbinic conceptions of rituals are correct and binding.

I think therefore that we must regard the Paytan as part of the complex social fabric of Byzantine Palestine. He was learned and aware of rabbinic writing, but at the same time he was not afraid to contradict the rabbis and promulgate an alternative political-religious agenda of his own. Yosse ben Yosse generally accepts the Mishnah narrative of the ritual proceedings. He mirrors the Mishnah's account of the High Priest's movements in the temple space, and for the

⁹⁷⁶ Yerushalmi, Eruvin, Chapter 5 halakha 1.

⁹⁷⁷ Tropper, “The State of Mishnah studies,” 97.

most part echoes the choreographed ritual in all its aspects. Rabbinic texts predate Yosse ben Yosse by two centuries at the very least. It is therefore clear that the “inspirational thrust” moves from the rabbinic text to Yosse ben Yosse, and not vice versa. The thrust of this discussion is to highlight the differences between the two narratives and to draw some conclusions from these.

Differences and Similarities

I observed four major differences between the two texts. They deal with tone, language, literary tropes, and with the underlying political strategies that undergird each text. **First**, the tone of the Mishnah is casuistic, underscoring the rabbinic claim to authority and leadership over all aspects of traditional life. For example, the legalistic tone of Mishnah Yoma 7:5: “The High Priest served in eight vestments, and the ordinary priest in four. The ordinary priest wore a tunic, pants, hat, and belt. The High Priest added to these the breastplate, the efod [apron], robe, and tsits [forehead plate]. They were only allowed to question the urim vetumim [oracular device carried in the breastplate] while wearing these eight vestments. The urim vetumim was only questioned on behalf of the king, court, or someone the community requires [for leadership].”

This Mishnah stands in stark contrast with the liturgy of Yosse ben Yosse. He does not make any reference to the last Mishnah of this Mishnah, even as he refers to the previous mishnayot hitherto. Likewise, the paytan does not engage at all with Yoma 8:1-9 whereas this chapter deals entirely with instruction to lay Jews as to the correct conduct on Yom Kippur. The chapter makes no reference to the temple or to the priests, and concludes with a politically telling statement, that it is not the High Priest or the temple rites that purify Israel, but the prayer of individuals, wherever they may be, for the communication between God and His people is unmediated and direct: “R. Akiva says, Happy are you, Israel! Before whom are you purified, and who purifies you [of your transgressions]? Your Father Who is in heaven. For it is said,

‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean;’ and it is also said, ‘The ritual bath [lit. Hope] of Israel is the Lord;’ even as a ritual bath purifies the unclean, so does the Holy One, Blessed be He, purify Israel.”⁹⁷⁸

The paytan Yosse ben Yosse qua poet, does not seek to instruct on the minutia of law, but to animate an imagined past, and unify the congregation around the idea of its reconstruction. Both have a political aim in mind, but each narrative takes a different route. The Mishnah is a legalistic composition and as such it is most particular about the correct application of law and the correct performance of rituals. Claiming such stringency as does Yoma 8, for instance, helps assert rabbinic control and authority over all aspects of traditional life, extrapolating from temple specificity to all religious acts in general, of priests as well as of lay people.⁹⁷⁹ This text is especially detailed as it expands the biblical text to the smallest imagined detail, better to simulate the accuracy of the description, thereby confirming rabbinic memory as accurate and binding.

For example, in Yoma 2:4-6 describe the lots drawn by officiating priests vying for the honour of carrying out one of the sacred acts that constitute the Yom Kippur sacrificial order. The Mishnah adopts a legalistic and prescriptive tone, specifying the precise number of priests implicated in the sacrificial cult.

The third and fourth lots are drawn.

The third: for novice priests who have never had the honour of offering incense.

The fourth: for all priests, young and old, to determine who will bring the slaughtered animals’ limbs from half way up the altar ramp, all the way to the top where the pyre stands at the ready.

The daily offering is offered by 9-12 priests, “no less, no more,” depending on the calendar (weekdays, Sabbath, festivals).

⁹⁷⁸ Mishnah Yoma 8:9.

⁹⁷⁹ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 17.

An offering of a ram, and an offering of an ox, are both made by a varying number of priests.

The Talmud adds even more precise information, as well as anecdotal material. Both texts endeavour to make the rabbinic hold on the temple ritual seem complete and essential. Rabbinic memory is, it is claimed, authentic; rabbinic involvement in the actual ritual was essential. Indeed, without rabbinic oversight, the biblically mandated rituals cannot be accurately interpreted from word to deed. Without rabbinic control, the efficacy of the rituals would therefore be nullified and the relationship between God and His people would suffer irreparable injury. The rabbis thus underscore their claim to veracity, accuracy of both prescriptive behaviour and of their memory of the temple rites and assert ownership over all Jewish ritual life. It is as much an argument for rabbinic leadership, as it is a crafted memory of rite that no rabbi could have witnessed unless they were priests,⁹⁸⁰ and unless they had lived in the days when the temple still stood. The historical implausibility of these possibilities lends credence to the argument that crafted memories were, as Naftali Cohn demonstrates, a means to assert rabbinic political and religious leadership of the people. And once this is ascertained, the narrative militates against competing claims for authority at the present and henceforth as well.⁹⁸¹

Yosse ben Yosse is entirely silent about matters of law. None of his *Avodot* broach this subject. His is a poetic text, intended for a community. His artistry becomes apparent in response to *Yoma* 3:4, which describes the vestments of the High Priest in great detail. When Yosse ben Yosse evokes in word and metered rhyme, the visual splendour of the High Priest's attire worn in a temple long reduced to ashes, his text educates but also, through recitation of biblical

⁹⁸⁰ Lev. 16:17.

⁹⁵⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 26-28.

refrains, makes partners of the poet and his audience, as his intent is to recreate a specific moment in time (albeit with a wide diachronic horizon).⁹⁸² He is not a jurist, nor does he claim to be one; he is instead a poet whose task is to make vivid an important past no longer accessible to his community. He is not a jurist neither does he claim to be one; he is instead a poet whose task is to make vivid an important past no longer accessible to his community. The poetry was written in response to a distressing political reality in the post-destruction period, when sovereignty was denied the Jews, when their lives were regulated by foreign peoples and subject to oft repressive measures. The poet responded to popular anguish and offered a liturgical image of a reality that was once glorious and divinely regulated, and could, and would soon be re-established for the faithful.⁹⁸³ The liturgy expressed the longing plea for God's salvation, for the purging of evil, and for the restoration of Jerusalem, its temple, its people, and peace. The Yom Kippur ritual served as an important anchor, a rite that once ensured the welfare of the world entire and was performed at the very heart of the universe, in Jerusalem.

Reliving the redemptive ritual in word instead of deed, the congregation, led by the poet, could somehow recreate the mystery and have an active role in the deliverance of Israel. For such a ritual, therefore, the question of the precise number of priests and the issue of who holds which part of a slaughtered animal, are both overshadowed by the majesty of the Day of Awe that the Paytan seeks to evoke. In his treatment of the Yoma 2:3, for example, that deals with the order and number of lots drawn on Yom Kippur, Yosse ben Yosse is less legalistic than the Mishnah in his approach to the subject. Yoma 2:3 may be summarized as follows: The order of the second lot [of a total of four lots] is outlined in detail:

⁹⁸² Ibid., 62.

⁹⁸³ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*, 101-124.

1. the priest who will slaughter the daily offering;
2. the priest who will pitch the blood;
3. the priest who will cleanse the ashes of the inner altar;
4. the priest who will cleanse the candles of the Menorah;
5. the priest who will bring the sacrificed animals' limbs to the ramp of the altar;
6. the priest who will bring the forelegs;
7. the priest who will bring the fat tail of the animals, and the left hind leg;
8. the priest who will bring the breast fat and the neck, as well as the ribs, heart and lungs;
9. the priest who will bring the two flanks;
10. the priest who will bring the innards;
11. the priest who will bring the fine flour for the daily offering;
12. the priest who will bring the baked cakes; and
13. the priest who will bring the wine for the liquid offering.

The Mishnah is specific and detailed, imbuing its narrative with an air of legalistic precision. Yosse ben Yosse's Avodot, are each slightly different, but all are less detailed than the Mishnah.

In גבורות אזכיר: the second lot decides the apportioning of duties pertaining to:

1. the daily offering of the ram (sheep)
2. the cleansing of ashes from the inner altar
3. the cleansing of the candelabra.

In גדולות אספר: a lot is cast to determine:

1. who will cleanse the altar
2. who will set the organs of the sacrificed animal
3. who will prepare the incense.

In כוננת אתה: the first lot determined:

1. who will prepare the daily offering
2. who will cleanse the inner altar
3. who will cleanse and prepare the candelabra.

And the second lot determined which novice priests will prepare the incense. The "odd"

piyyut חקר בדעת אז: the lots determine:

1. who will cleanse the outer large altar
2. who will cleanse the inner altar

3. who will cleanse and prepare the candelabra
4. who will sacrifice (offer) the incense and thus win God's blessing.

The last comment is telling, because it assigns divine rewards for the act of offering incense. This type of “instant gratification” in terms of attaining Grace is absent from the other Avodot. Similar comments can be discerned in גבורות אזכיר, notably in stanzas that Mirsky contends may have been added later, and are therefore not originally written by Yosse ben Yosse.

Yosse ben Yosse does narrate the casting of lots, but in each telling, in each of the four piyyutim, he changes the order and substance of the duties to be apportioned to the various priests. He appears to be more “messy” in the allocation of duties to the priests. He sacrifices detail and accuracy for the sake of achieving literary flow in his poetry and subjugates the detail to the demands of poetic form. Yosse ben Yosse is not at all concerned with the literary trope or legal discourse, which typify rabbinic argumentative breaks in the narrative. All the Avodot sidestep the rabbinic vignettes, such as in the Mishnah narrative in Yoma 3:5 that reads: “The morning’s incense offering was made between the sprinkling of blood and the sacrifice of limbs. The afternoon’s incense offering was made between the sacrifice of limbs and the offering of liquid ablations. If the High Priest was old or weak or infirm or delicate, hot water is prepared for him to be mixed with the cold water (in the ritual bath) to temper the water.”

Yosse ben Yosse is silent here. None of his Avodah piyyutim refer to any of these details. He is not a jurist, he does not want to “lose his audience” to a deluge of numeric detail and pedantic time management, but to engage them and ignite their imagination to fill the gaps in the narrative. Yosse ben Yosse also aims to achieve verisimilitude in his narrative, and he does so with images of priestly garb, with changes in poetic cadence that denote the hurried air alleged to

have animated the proceedings, and with a literary recreation of the emotional tenor of the day. He brooks no alternative versions of the past. His past is idealized, synthesized, made to sound factual with sensory information. Like the rabbis he blurs the line between the actual events and the telling, but he is not in the business of militating for rabbinic authority. His concern is with the congregation who will “consume” the narrative, who will engage with it and make it his or her own, thus his other concern is to militate for priestly, not rabbinic, control of the action at the temple.

In reference to Yoma 3:6-7, which describe in detail the High Priest’s vestments, ablutions, and changes of clothes, Yosse ben Yosse appears at his poetic best. The Mishnah reads like a veritable report, as if the process was witnessed by the narrator:

The High Priest is led to the Parvah Chamber, which was on sacral grounds.
 A sheet of fine linen בויץ is drawn between himself and the people.
 He sanctifies his hands and feet. He then disrobes.
 R. Meir says: he first disrobed and then sanctified his hands and feet.
 He then immerses in the ritual bath, and dresses in his white linen clothes, and sanctifies his hands and his feet.⁹⁸⁴

Yosse ben Yosse is less concerned with the High Priest’s modesty, although he mentions it *en passant*,⁹⁸⁵ because the paytan has no didactic agenda to use the story as a vehicle for teaching modesty to the congregation at large. Yosse ben Yosse paints a more visual account of the procedures. Moreover, he consistently diverges from the rabbinic narrative on the subject of the fabric from which the High Priest’s vestments were made. Where the Mishnah reads: “A sheet of fine linen בויץ is drawn between himself and the people.” In אזכיר גבורות he writes: “A

⁹⁸⁴ The second part of Yoma 3:6-7 reads: In the morning he would wear Pelusian linen worth twelve maneh; at dusk, Indian linen worth eight hundred zuz, the words of Rabbi Meir. The Sages say: in the morning he would wear [garments] worth eighteen maneh and at dusk [garments] worth twelve maneh, altogether thirty maneh. These [costs] were [borne by] the community, and if he wanted to add [to them], he would add from his own [assets].

⁹⁸⁵ For instance, in אזכיר גבורות line 150, in Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 154.

sheet of שש is drawn between him and the people.” Again, chooses שש over בוץ. In אז בדעת חקר the sheet is just a sheet, and in אספר גדולות and אתה כוננת there is no sheet at all. These appear to be small details, but they intimate a significant difference. The two types of fabric are not identical, they are not interchangeable, as I explain below. The image drawn by the Mishnah is of a glittering, gold-clad High Priest who, despite his obvious wealth and status, remains under the guiding authority of the rabbinic sages. Yosse ben Yosse’s High Priest is clad in linen, in white clothes whose sanctity derives not from their economic value, but from the divine commandments that guided their preparation, as well as from the sacred ritual in which they are an essential element.

The Avodah soon takes a turn for the dramatic and the poet is eager for his audience to leave the small details of ablution and focus on the “real deal.” The rabbis are maintaining a casuistic and legalistic tone, discussing and debating the precise provenance and character of the priestly linen vestments, even their cost and value. But, as a poet, Yosse ben Yosse has a different agenda. He seems not to be concerned at all with the provenance of linen, with the price of the priestly vestments. Those are “accounting matters,” best left for historians and jurists. A poet notes the beauty of the vestments, not their price.

The second difference I note pertains to the language of authorship. Rabbinic literature speaks Hebrew, sprinkled with borrowed Greek and Aramaic words. The poet, on the other hand, is an advocate of unadulterated Hebrew. Interestingly, he uses words that do not appear in rabbinic texts and are rare even in the bible, perhaps as an artist seeking fancy words with which to impress his audience. I find interesting the Paytan’s lexical choice of words describing the linen fabric of the sheet that shielded the High Priest’s nakedness and thus enhanced his stature in the eyes of all beholders, at the temple itself and, in their imagination, the congregants hearing

the Avodah in liturgical form. Whereas the Mishnah uses the word **בויץ** to name the linen cloth in question, Yosse ben Yosse prefers (consistently in all his 15 piyyutim) the word **שש**. Both words can be translated as “fine linen.” Both words appear in the Hebrew Bible describing sumptuous fabrics and clothes.⁹⁸⁶

The question intrigued me. Hebrew was no longer the language of every day – it was a language reserved for religious purposes of prayer and study, and therefore the Piyyut poetry, which lionized Hebrew (as opposed to the lingua franca of the day, Aramaic, influenced by Hellenic linguistic imports), appears stilted to the modern-ear, but at the time it must have had some popular appeal, else it would not have been written or preserved.⁹⁸⁷ The form of Piyyut poetry is not an arbitrary affectation, but a reflection of a style that audiences favoured in the fifth century, and an emotionally charged form of liturgy.⁹⁸⁸ Why then did Yosse ben Yosse choose **שש** over the Mishnah and the Talmud’s **בויץ**? What difference did the words make to him and to his audience? Professor Lawrence Schiffman helped me resolve the problem when he pointed out the Greek etymology of **בויץ**, namely **Βύσσος** [Býssos]. Rabbinic literature freely weaves Hebrew, as well as foreign “invading” words and sentences in Aramaic and Greek words in its narrative.⁹⁸⁹ Could it be that Yosse ben Yosse argued for a return to national purity and was an advocate of Hebrew, at a time when the vast majority of Jews living in Byzantine Palestine spoke only Aramaic and were not conversant in Hebrew?⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁶ **בויץ**: In the Bible, it is mentioned four times. In the Mishnah it is mentioned four times, in the BT 20 times, in the PT five. **שש**: In the Bible it is mentioned six times, and as **שש בגדי שש** only once. It is not mentioned in the Mishnah as **שש בגדי שש** even once, nor in the BT, the PT of the Tosefta.

⁹⁸⁷ Yahalom, *Poetic Language in the Early Piyyut*, 32.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁸⁹ Strack Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 179.

⁹⁹⁰ Archaeological evidence points to the survival of Hebrew as a spoken language in the Southern Judaeen settlements, such as Sussya, where priestly communities preserved and old language and resisted its adulteration and dilution with foreign words. This may argue for a plausible assumption that Yosse ben Yosse lived in one such community and served as a Paytan for an audience that did understand Hebrew and valued its purity. See: Gutman, Yelvin, and Netzer, “Excavations in the Synagogue

One must remember that the Piyutic ecstatic emotional expression, as well as its cadence and vocabulary, were intended to astonish, to surprise, and to delight audiences. The language created by paytanim predates the codification and systemization of Hebrew grammar, as well as the rules of spelling and punctuation.⁹⁹¹ It also precedes the systemization of verb inflections and syntax, and is a significant bridge between the lively use of Hebrew in the everyday of antiquity, the remembered Scriptural Hebrew framed by daily use of Aramaic and Greek in fifth century Palestine, and the nascent written Hebrew of literary and cultural expressions. It is also possible, therefore, that the Paytan was not an advocate for a return to pure Hebrew, but a poet who was good at his craft, who chose “fun and interesting” words, better to delight his audience.

My research into the writings of Yosse ben Yosse has, however, uncovered a striking reliance on Qumranic language, terminology, lexicography and idiom, which may point to a unique discursive effort to position Yosse ben Yosse on the edge of rabbinic Judaism, given his expressed affinity (and, as I explain elsewhere, his priestly heredity and Zadokite roots) with the theology and ideology of the priestly Qumran group and its writings.⁹⁹² Some of the poet’s distinctive language is found in some Qumran scrolls, which may indicate a linguistic style prevalent at the time but lies unrecorded in rabbinic literature; or it may point to priestly ideology

at Horvat Sussya,” 123-128; Herr, ed., “The Roman-Byzantine Period – The Mishnah, the Talmud, and Byzantine rule 70-640 CE,” 80; Zertal, *Sisera’s Secret*; Levine, *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, 116-132; Yuval Baruch, “Horvat Sussya and Rujum el-Hamiri as a Case Study for the Development of the Village and the Rural Settlement in the Southern Hebron Hills from the Early Roman to Early Muslim Periods,” PhD diss. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009.

⁹⁹¹ Zulai, *The Land of Israel and Its Piyutim*, 35-44.

⁹⁹² Lev. 16:17; Furstenberg, *Purity and Community in Antiquity: Traditions of the Law from Second Temple Judaism to the Mishnah*, 12.

that animated the piyyutic endeavour, based on traditions that thrived in parallel with rabbinic ideology, before these were silenced and sidelined.⁹⁹³

In Yoma 3:8 the Mishnah says that the High Priest needs to confess and find atonement for his sins and those of his own household, before he can proceed, cleansed, to the next stage of the Avodah. To atone he must sacrifice a bullock, his own:⁹⁹⁴

The High Priest approaches his bullock. The animal stood between the Sanctuary and the altar, its head to the south but its face turned westward.

The High Priest stood on the east, his face turned westward, and there, he placed his hands on the bullock's head. The High Priest confesses for his iniquities, transgressions and then for his sins and those of his own household, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 *"For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD."*

They respond with: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."

The Mishnah is quite specific about the choreography, the "face" of the bullock, the directionality in space of all the actors in the ritual drama. Those are all imagined data, all details intended to lend credibility to rabbinic memory and militate for rabbinic authority. The Talmud⁹⁹⁵ adds even more detailed information, pertaining to the décor of the temple. It names the benevolent donors who contributed to the beautification of the temple, and it describes the golden handles and the sumptuous setting, relying on oral tradition or other sources. The Talmud thus confirms the continuous nature of rabbinic literature and further militates for rabbinic authority, as we have seen throughout the narrative. Citing Leviticus in his prayer, the High Priest confirms the link between the Mishnah and Leviticus. The Mishnah becomes an extension of scripture, part of it, continuous and harmonious with it; and the rabbis become direct and legitimate heirs to Moses and to the Word of God. This is in line with the statement in Tractate

⁹⁹³ Ibid., 56-65.

⁹⁹⁴ Lev. 16:3.

⁹⁹⁵ Yerushalmi, Chapter 3 Halakha 8.

Avot 1:1 that claims a rabbinic connection to the hoary past of Israel: “Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly.” The direct line of transmission from God through to Moses and to the Sanhedrin speaks to the legitimate claim for rabbinic authority and presents the Mishnah as continuous with the Pentateuch, with the entire Hebrew Bible itself.

There is a Baraita⁹⁹⁶ that suggests that the prayer spoken by the High Priest differed from the text that appears in this Yomah 3:8. The Mishnah here states that the High Priest confessed first of his iniquities (intentional offenses), then of his transgressions (offenses of a rebellious nature), and last of his sins (errors); the Baraita suggests that the order of these offenses was different: first the High Priest confessed for his sin, then the iniquities and last for his transgressions, moving from the “light” to the “heavy” offenses. The Baraita further rules that the halakha, the way things ought to be, is according to the sages of the Baraita, not according to the tradition of R. Meir as it appears in Yomah 3:8. Altering the order of recitations is not without consequence. The authority to determine the order of prayers was assumed as the authority to determine the essence of prayer. Rabbinic efforts to dislodge priests from their traditional preeminent position hinged upon this undertaking.⁹⁹⁷ By changing the text and the order of confessions, the rabbis manipulate the memory of the past and bend it to their needs, harmonizing the past with a later tradition. They thus cast themselves as central to the ritual, central to prayer in general, and central in the law-making endeavour that governs the traditional life. The order and composition of prayers were both the cause and effect of rabbinic ideology.⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁶ Yomah 36:B.

⁹⁹⁷ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 112.

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

In Yosse ben Yosse's narrative the choreography is basically the same as it is in the rabbinic narrative, although he is less concerned with the minutia of spatiality, with the direction of the High Priest's visage and with such imaginative elements of the drama. To him, the High Priest is glorious, he glows like a groom, like the sun, his office is the incarnate glory of God in action. The Paytan wishes to convey the sensory and emotive quality of the mystery, in order to make his audience feel the awesome drama, rather than understand it intellectually. Yosse ben Yosse does not dispute the rabbinic account, but he embellishes it poetically, as is his wont.

The order of offenses for which the High Priest confesses is different from the Mishnah Yomah 3:8, but in line with the Baraita order. Here Yosse ben Yosse seems to be aware of the halakhic dispute and he decides to toe the rabbinic line. The addition of the section on the priests and the people in attendance, who kneel and bow before God as His name is called out, appears in Mishnah Yomah 6:2, only after the third confession made by the High Priest. Yosse ben Yosse maintains throughout the position that this participation by the priests and the people in the Courtyard in effect took place even after the first (and second) confession. There may be a different tradition at play here, or a redactive error, or a silence that speaks to yet other possible reasons. I have not found a corresponding narrative in the Mishnah or in the Palestinian Talmud. This is problematic, in view of the great detail and importance of the rabbinic discourse on the Avodah, and I have yet to find a solution to this problem.

In Piyyut *בדעת אז חקר*, whose provenance I dispute, Yosse ben Yosse, responding to Yoma 3:8, employs the word *הוּן* reference to the High Priest's bullock.⁹⁹⁹ Later on, he calls the personal garb of the High Priest *בגדי הוּנו* whereas the Mishnah in Yoma 7:4 calls them simply

⁹⁹⁹ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 235, line 101.

בגדי עצמו. This is yet another example of a “curious” lexical variation from the other Avodot of Yosse ben Yosse. The word **הון** appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible, denoting the negative aspects of wealth and property. It never appears in the Mishnah and in other rabbinic texts it only appears in quotes from the bible.¹⁰⁰⁰ In the Qumran literature, however, this word appears no less than 110 times.¹⁰⁰¹ So why did the paytan choose this word, employing it in rather a positive tone? Why did he not simply say “his bullock,” or “his clothes” like the Mishnah says and like Yosse ben Yosse does in all his other Avodot? He could be choosing chose “fun and interesting” words to delight his audience; he too can be quoting scripture; he could be using a word off-spoken in his time and place; or, as I tend to think, he could be making a nuanced reference to Qumranic literature and to the ideology that animated it, namely the primacy of the priestly caste over rabbinic leadership. All these possibilities share a measure of plausibility, and so the matter points to interesting veins of riches yet to be investigated in the future. On the face of it, the piyyut in this instance seems to confirm my hypothesis that **אז בדעת הקר** is in imitation of Yosse ben Yosse’s pen, but not one of his piyyutim.

The third difference I noted concerns the literary tropes employed in the Mishnah and by Yosse ben Yosse. Literary tropes can be important vessels for substantive statements. In Yoma 1:7 for example, the Mishnah describes the High Priest who, in preparation for the day’s service must remain awake all night. Young priests snap their fingers, sing and talk to him, keeping him awake. In ben-Yosse’s rendition, in **אזכיר גבורות**, in addition to the gleeful sounds, the city’s din is allowed to enter the temple grounds through an open window:

¹⁰⁰⁰ Tosefta, BT, PT, Mekhilta, Genesis Rabba, Exodus Rabba, Leviticus Rabba, Numbers Rabba, Song of Solomon Rabba, Esther Rabba, and in Aggadic Midrashim.

¹⁰⁰¹ Abegg, Bowley and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, Vol. 1, The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*

נְטָה לְנוֹם שָׁנְתוּ יַפְרִירוּ בְּנוּעַם שִׁיר צָרָה בָּפָה וְלֹא בְכִינוֹר.

Should he doze off¹⁰⁰²
They¹⁰⁰³ interrupt sleep
By melodious singing and by snapping their fingers
Singing with their voice and not playing on violins.¹⁰⁰⁴

נוֹתְנִים שְׂאוֹן עִיר הוֹמְיָה לְהַשְׁבִּיעוּ נְרוֹדִים עֲדֵי נֶשֶׁף

They allow in the din¹⁰⁰⁵
Of the tumultuous city¹⁰⁰⁶
To give him his fill.
Of sleeplessness¹⁰⁰⁷ until the midnight hour¹⁰⁰⁸

The city's inhabitants take part in the effort to keep the High Priest awake the night before the solemn Day of Atonement, and profane Jerusalem enters the sacred space of the temple. Ben-Yosse is unique in that he “allows” the sound to travel into the temple, to mix in with the temple sounds, to be part of the service and the redemptive ritual. The service, says the paytan, is being performed for the people, and the people take part in it by extending their body's presence into the temple domain. This is entirely absent from the rabbinic story. No rabbinic

¹⁰⁰² Mishnah Yoma 1:7; Jer. 14:8.

¹⁰⁰³ The Mishnah (Yoma 1:7) asserts that priestly novices made sure that the High Priest remained awake all night. The Paytan is less specific.

¹⁰⁰⁴ The Mishnah (Yoma 1:7) only describes the snapping of fingers. The Paytan is more specific and adds the element of vocal singing, stipulating that no musical instruments were used. This detail is not mentioned in the Mishnah or the Talmuds.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Jer. 51:55.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Isa. 22:2 Note: In Mishnah Yoma the narrative presents an insular Temple, within whose confines the ceremonies and rituals are conducted by lofty men, independent of the people. The Paytan adds an interesting element in this stanza, entirely absent from the Mishnah narrative. Here the city sounds enter the Temple. The two way “traffic” suggests an organic connection between the Temple and the people, for whom the ceremonies and rituals are being performed.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Job 7:4.

¹⁰⁰⁸ The word נֶשֶׁף in Modern Hebrew is translated as “ball,” a “sumptuous party.” In Biblical Hebrew the word speaks of time, and means something like “the dead of night” and sometimes “twilight,” after Job 7:4; 1 Sam. 30:17; Isa. 5:11; Isa. 29:10; Jer. 13:16; 2 Kings 7:5; Prov. 7:9. In the DSS the word also has a connotation of time, specifically the darkest hour of the night, as in: 4Q184, Frg. 1:5; 4Q88 x,6; 4Q184, 1,5; 4Q162 II,2. Interestingly, the Qumran scrolls¹⁵⁹ also use this distinctive word, in the same manner and meaning as does Yosse ben Yosse. In 4Q88 X,6 the text reads: יַחַד יִהְיוּ נֹא כָּל כּוֹבְבֵי נֶשֶׁף referring to the doxological song of the midnight stars. In this reading therefore Yosse ben Yosse disagrees with the Mishnah regarding the time reference. The Mishnah claims that the High Priest was kept awake [with snapping fingers and the acolytes' voices] until the early dawn [when the Tamid sacrifice is to be offered] (Tractate Tamid 3:2) but Yosse ben Yosse says till midnight. The Qumranic word, coupled with a different understanding of the time bracket, is indicative of an alternate discourse. It is not the rabbinic discourse, it is something else. The same but quite different.

account allows the profane to enter the hallowed grounds that are imagined as being under the strict and exclusive purview of the rabbis, who share the sacral status by association. The body politic is not allowed to enter the temple. In rabbinic texts, temple noises reach *out* to the people and permeate the city, but the directionality is always one sided- *from* the temple outward, implying that the source of power is rabbinic and not popular. In another example, refers to Yoma 6:2, which states:

The High Priest approaches the he-goat that is to be cast off, places his hands on the he-goat and confesses. The High Priest confesses the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the people of Israel, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 "*For* on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD."

And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."

Once again Yosse ben Yosse seeks to engage his audience, make the temple ritual one in which they can partake. The paytan involves his audience directly, and announces, especially in **אזכיר גבורות** the very purpose of the Avodah, and of the liturgical poem itself. It was done, he tells the congregation, for us. We have been cleansed. We are the beneficiaries of the ritual. The High Priest prayed for us, performed the sacrifices and prayers for us, we, who live centuries after the temple was destroyed, can still enjoy the beneficent rewards of the priestly service, just by reciting its course. Yosse ben Yosse maintains throughout his oeuvre the position that this participation by the priests and the people in the Courtyard in effect took place even after the first (and second, see Yomah 4:2) confession. There may be a different tradition at play here, or a redactive error, or a silence that speaks to yet other possible reasons. I have not found a corresponding narrative in the Mishnah or in the Palestinian Talmud. This is problematic, in

view of the great detail and importance of the rabbinic discourse on the Avodah, and I have yet to find a solution to this problem.

The Mishnah is more didactic, more prescriptive in tenor, for it is concerned with law-making and with declaring how the synthetic past ought to have been like. The poet, on the other hand, is concerned with the here and now of his audience, and he wants them to be materially included in the Avodah, to feel cleansed and purified as a consequence. He wants his audience to feel a connection with the priestly service, a continuity with a glorious past during which the mediation of priests afforded the people a direct and efficacious relationship with God. In his narrative, the High Priest announces to the people- “You have been cleansed,” you have been forgiven by God for all your offenses. In this narrative, the priestly action is redemptive; in the Mishnah narrative the adherence to rabbinic edicts is redemptive. It is therefore not merely a question of choreography and style, but a political matter, a leadership matter, and a subtle challenge to rabbinic claims to prerogative, entitlement and exclusivity.

The fourth discernible difference between the two discourse systems pertains to the political infrastructure of the texts. In Yoma 6:3, the rabbis, who wanted to replace priestly leadership and supplant priestly centrality, argue that rabbinic supervision was essential for correct ritual action and directed by the rabbis. The Mishnah adds an air of verisimilitude by recounting a supposed error committed while rabbinic supervision was not enforced:

The High Priest hands over the he-goat that is to be cast off, to a person who used to walk to animal off to the desert.

The High Priests used to make a point of appointing a priest to the task. But R. Yosse says that once there was an Israelite who walked the he-goat to the desert.

The priests, far from being competitors, were imagined as tools in the hands of the rabbis. Here, the person who was appointed to deliver the he-goat to the desert is said to be not important enough to merit a technical title, he was just the guy who walked the goat to the desert. The Mishnah's story is that the High Priests wanted to have a designated priest, but when an Israelite once walked the animal to the desert things went just as smoothly, the ritual was just as efficacious, and nothing untoward really took place. In other words, the priests are dispensable. The ritual is legally sound and correct regardless of the clan association of the man pulling the rope of the condemned he-goat. This militates against priestly importance and for rabbinic importance, for after all, the important thing is to have the he-goat cast off in accordance with rabbinic edict, so the rabbis are central and essential, and not the politically presumptuous priestly caste.

Yosse ben Yosse challenges the rabbinic implications, in all the Avodot: In **אזכיר גבורות** the he-goat is handed over to a man who was appointed by the High Priest.¹⁰⁰⁹ In **אספר גדולות** a minor priest walks the he-goat to the desert cliff.¹⁰¹⁰ In **אתה כוננת** the High Priest deposits the he-goat into the hands of an **איש עיתי**. A designated person who will take the he-goat to the desert.¹⁰¹¹ And even in **אז בדעת חקר** the he-goat is handed over to a minor priest who is the **איש עיתי** appointed by the High Priest to take the doomed animal to its desert demise.¹⁰¹²

¹⁰⁰⁹ Stanza 200.

¹⁰¹⁰ Stanza 39.

¹⁰¹¹ Stanza 153, citing Lev. 16:21.

¹⁰¹² Stanza 127.

רְגִיל וְעִתִּי מִשְׁכוּ לְשִׁלְחוּ עָמוּס עֲוֹנוֹת עָם וּפִישְׁעֵיהֶם

An experienced appointed man¹⁰¹³
 Pulls it¹⁰¹⁴ to cast it¹⁰¹⁵
 Laden with the People's sins¹⁰¹⁶
 And their transgressions¹⁰¹⁷

In Yosse ben Yosse's narrative it is always a priestly agent, always a minor priest who is pre-appointed by the High Priest himself. Interestingly, the term **אִישׁ עִתִּי** is rare. It appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in Leviticus 16:21, it never appears in the Mishnah, never in Yerushalmi, never in Tosefta, and only once in the Bavli as a direct quote from Leviticus. It is also rare in the extant Qumranic literature, appearing once in 11QT col. xxvi. Yosse ben Yosse uses it twice in his work, but this is not, I think, a mere stylistic preference or affectation. By employing the rare term, the Paytan links his Piyyut to scripture, distancing it from the Mishnah, and asserting a more authentic understanding of historic events. He underscores priestly dominion over the Yom Kippur ritual, priestly centrality and importance, and entreat his audience to remember that the priestly connection to the ritual is based in Torah, not in fallible human claims to power.

In rabbinic narratives, the priests are often sidelined as obedient followers of rabbinic dictates. The High Priest is accorded no special place in the hierarchy of Jewish life. In Yoma 7:1 for instance, the Mishnah recounts the 8 prayers recited at the end of Yom Kippur in giving thanks to God for a series of important things. The High Priest is mentioned *seventh* in a list of eight, coming all but last in order of importance. There High Priest is cast merely as a

¹⁰¹³ Lev. 16:21; Mishnah Yoma 6:3; See: **אתה כוננת** stanza 153, footnote 435; see: **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 222.

¹⁰¹⁴ The he-goat intended to be cast off in the desert.

¹⁰¹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 6:3.

¹⁰¹⁶ See: **אתה כוננת** stanza 153; Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 66:B.

¹⁰¹⁷ The *yod*-rich orthography is noted.

mouthpiece for the soundtrack of Yom Kippur, while the Sanhedrin, the temple-based high rabbinic court, is cast as a body of sagacious men who understand fully the totality and intentionality of Torah. The rabbis, in their story, instructed the High Priest, telling him what, when and how to read and do, and the High priest in turn became a disembodied voice, a loudspeaker, a mechanism of communication that is directed by the rabbis.

Yosse ben Yosse's High Priest is a free agent. He knows the order of the Avodah, and he follows the script unaided. The Paytan does not accept the Mishnah narrative, does not include any mediators between the High Priest and the Torah, let alone between the High Priest and the people. He has an unambiguous and direct contact with the people, as their agent, their emissary before God. Here the High Priest wears his own clothes, a more ambiguous sartorial reference is made in the Mishnah, where the High Priest *can* choose to wear his own clothes if he decided not to wear the linen vestments for some reason. He stands before the congregation in the Women's Courtyard, alone and in direct contact with the people. He teaches them, he is not merely a mouthpiece for rabbinic sages. He is, in Yosse ben Yosse's narrative, empowered and independent, responsible for the people and to the people sans rabbinic mediation or instruction.

This is a literary rabbinic coup d'état that overthrows the biblically mandated priestly authority at the temple and priestly dominion over its rituals. In this narrative, the ritual was actually *governed* by the rabbis who are the facilitators, the *real* link between God and the people. The rabbis assert exclusive religious, social, legal and political leadership. They cast themselves as essential and central to the temple rituals and central to *all* practical and spiritual aspects of the traditional way of life. Rabbinic instruction, and *not* priestly ritual performance, is the guarantee of a successful continued relationship between God and Israel for all time.

The Paytan disagrees. He does not accept the Mishnaic assertion that priestly conduct was directed and supervised by the rabbis. In his narrative the High Priest is empowered and independent, responsible for the people and to the people *without* rabbinic instruction. The priests knew exactly what to do and did not need instruction. They were free agents who knew the order of the Avodah and followed the script unaided. Priests were self-directed and autonomous and brooked no interference by outsiders, including by the rabbis. The *priests* and not the rabbis are cast as vitally central to the temple ritual and to the welfare of the people.

To the Mishnah's matter of fact, didactic rendition of the final steps in the Yom Kippur drama in Yoma 7:4, Yosse ben Yosse adds the human touch, especially in the piyyutim **אתה כוננת** and **אספר גדולות**. The people, anxiously awaiting news of the success of the ritual they could not witness, become the subject of the poem. It is for them, for their sake, that the ritual was undertaken. The High Priest is the only one who saw it all unfold, the only one who was present in the Holy of Holies, the only one who really knows if "it worked" or not. He emerges to let the people, who had sent him as their emissary, that all is well and made right again. The Mishnah is less concerned with the public perception. What matters is the adherence to rabbinic instruction. The ritual was efficacious because the rabbis so decided, and the High Priest, while an important actor, was but an instrument of the rite. It is the Law that is central, not the performance itself, and once the High Priest has exited the stage, it's curtains for him, and the legal discourse can proceed. Not so for the Paytan. The homecoming is emotional, for the High Priest and for the people, it signals that the world is in order again. The audience, listening to the Piyyut, can make a sigh of relief, for the long telling is over, the Avodah in virtual space had worked, and they too can go home cleansed and edified. At the end of the first Piyyut the people are given a voice. It is a voice they claim, that is absent from the Mishnah. The people come to have agency as well,

with no apparent rabbinic guidance. They don't really need a rabbi to tell them they are blessed; the Psalmist already did.

Yosse ben Yosse adds an interesting element to the narrative responding to Yoma 7:4. In three of the four piyyutim,¹⁰¹⁸ he describes the High Priest disrobing of the linen vestments one last time and placing them for eternal safekeeping in the temple. The Mishnah does not speak of this, but the Yerushalmi does,¹⁰¹⁹ as does Mishnah Midot 1:4, speaking of the priestly vestments stored at the Phineas the Dresser's Chambers. Yosse ben Yosse is a learned scholar, as we have seen, and he takes great care to harmonize all the sources he is familiar with in order to animate to the extent possible all the actions of the High Priest, the focal point of his liturgy and the prime actor in the Yom Kippur drama. Describing the High Priest's blessing of the people, arms raised in the traditional form, underscores the importance of the High Priest to the people, to the closure of all Yom Kippur penitent rituals, to the final glorious step of the Avodah. It is an unmediated communication of blessings to the people, an interactive and direct statement of atonement and peace. No intervening claimants to authenticity or authority appear here. It is just the High Priest and the people, and all is now well in the world, sans rabbis.

I read the two narratives not only in order to recount and compare their plots, but to lay bare the ideological commitments of their authors, and to urge the reader to reconsider their perspective on piyyut as a historical record. The Avodah narratives, I maintain, disclose real-world concerns and socio-political contests between real people, as participants in volitional actors in the human condition. Note that for the purposes of this study, the authors of the

¹⁰¹⁸ אז בדעת חקר, אתה כוננת, אזכיר גבורות

¹⁰²⁹ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 24 Halakhah 1.

Mishnah are considered a singular, complex authorial construct, given Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi's editorial standardization of the Mishnaic texts.

Even if one reads Yosse ben Yosse's Avodot and the Mishnah Yoma narrative as plot *qua* plot, one cannot but notice that: the Avodah is narrated as a *type* of ritual, a systematic array of gestures purposely realized not as a specific point in time but timelessly enacted to restore balance and salubrity to the created universe; and the High Priest is considered an archetypal literary device, a *type* of agent, a *class* of character, a mere function of the story, who brooks little characterization aside from his title. His internal monologue and private thoughts are not disclosed. He is a participant, albeit important, but as such he is all but voiceless. He is necessary for the plot, he is the backdrop against which both authorial groups project their ideological concerns. The high Priest in both narratives is possessed of a single characteristic, his title and station, but he is not a full-fledged individual. His compound identity divulges motivations that are implicit in the texts but those discerned through a careful reading for hints cast as so many Hansel and Gretel's stones in and between the lines of the narratives. When we read the gaps, the silences, what is and what is not written explicitly, we may begin to glean the meaning behind the tales. The hermeneutic engine of this dissertation is that the two narratives are as they are because their authors wished to make a point about something important. Each version of the Avodah is a commentary about something- about the temple, about the priestly caste, about the place of the rabbis and their share, or lack thereof, in the Avodah, Time, its beginnings and foreseen end, and perhaps about Jewish society itself.

Yosse ben Yosse and the authors of the Mishnah both report actions, movements, gestures alleged to have taken place on Yom Kippur at the temple, letting the dialogue between literary characters indirectly the thoughts that animated those actions. Both conceptualize their

narrative as true, factual, historic, and accurate. The authors convey their authoritative stance as narrators of reality who do not misrepresent facts, while creating the world of the Avodah as they wish to impart it through story. The narrators are rhetorical interlopers between the text and its readers, and we must as scholars be aware of the authorial intervention in representing an unwitnessed set of events. The subtleties of the stories, the choice of words, the inclusion or exclusion of information, and the beginning and ending of the stories, all reveal the authors' positionality.

Our own ideological and cultural positionality are, per force, the lens through which we read the two narratives. Our secular, post-sacrifice doctrines attribute the authors and the priestly characters they describe a whiff of unevolved antiquity. Contemporary readers rely on millennia of Jewish theological and halachic fecundity to assume that prayer is much better, preferable to God, more civilized and ethically enlightened than sacrifice. We must therefore suspend our cultural and religious bias in this case, and retroject ourselves to a world in which people still valued the choreographed priestly gestures carefully carried out in the Avodah. They may not have in the fifth century been witness to the real Avodah, but their cultural norms still pined for, still made room for the sacrificial cult. I did not choose arbitrarily to read the narratives as ideologically inflected. The realization that there is more in the narratives than meets the eye came gradually, upon reading, translating, and countless re-readings of each body of work. My scholarly training made me do it, it made me read Yosse ben Yosse and Mishnah Yoma as narrative texts that were constructed and defined by people who had something meaningful to say about Jewish life.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Research comprises two levels of study. First, one has to report on the facts, explain the visible, untangle the complex, and expose the hidden, thereby illuminating issues. The second tie of study is to argue for a specific perspective and persuade the reader to read the texts with fresh eyes, to think differently about epistemic constructs, and to make connections between hitherto disparate aspects of the objects of study. This analytical pursuit must be buttressed with insights and proof, in order to set the stage for peer review and argument, which ultimately drive science forward. Writing a scholarly work involves an act of alchemy that fuses one's values, priorities, and aspirational goals, and through that attitudinal prism draw some conclusions about peoples and cultures of times long past. A scholar must determine what is worthy of study, the most efficacious methodology for exploring the subject, so as to bracket his or her conclusions by commonly agreed upon parameters. Participating in the scholarly dialogue with scholars of the past, present, and future, is a great honour and responsibility, as scholars, in this case of Jewish historians, seek to together deepen our understanding of Jewish life in late antiquity.

With this dissertation, I sought to lay another brick in the wall of the tower of knowledge. I began by reading Yosse ben Yosse's works, which so impressed me that I decided to learn more about him. The inaccessibility of the text required that I translate it, which was the only way, in truth, to truly understand what animated the piyyutic texts. Translation is an act of interpretation, subject to the values, priorities, and aspirational goals of the translator. The translation I present here, therefore, reflects my own attitudinal prism. Once I thought I understood the theme and content of the piyyutim, I developed working hypotheses, fundamental to the scholarly research endeavor. The methodological presupposition that undergirds my study is that piyyut can be read as a historiographic document that discloses socio-religious and

political data. Having a theory, an analytical tool with which to interrogate the “raw material” is a prerequisite choice to be made by any scholar. I chose as my methodology the tool of critical discourse theory, thinking that people in late antiquity were shaped by discourse even as some of them participated in and created the very discourse whose forces acted upon them. My understanding of the two narratives and the power relations they disclose is a “take,” it is not immutable even as it is buttressed by proof texts and evidence that emerge from the primary texts.

Data scientists need algorithms with which to cut through unstructured data, and pierce the ambient noise, so they can re-order the data and discern patterns therein. Of course, working with words as data rather than with numbers, one has to make allowances for the vagaries, the eccentricities, the proclivities of human beings, accepting that the “goodness of fit” test will not fit seamlessly and unshakably with one’s theoretical expectations. One must leave some “wiggle room” for the “messy” human interface with reality, for the unpredictable nature of human discursive products. History is shaped by interdependent, complex factors that simultaneously exert force on real human beings, not directly on the texts as independent entities. I therefore sought to synthesize several perspectives and widen my aperture. One cannot explain with a single or rigid disciplinary tool the multidimensionality of the human experience and the diversity of cultural artefacts and the social, religious, political phenomena of their environment.¹⁰²⁰ As a scholar I engaged with the cultural products of people who lived in late antiquity, but I un-limited my curiosity, and I drew from wells of different disciplines such as the fine arts and from legends. I tried to be inclusive yet focused on the characteristics of the literary

¹⁰²⁰ T.L. Friedman, *Thank You for Being Late*, (New York: Picador Press, 2016), 11-16.

data I found challenging. The sociological, political, and religious aspects of life could not remain exclusive of one another, so I wove them into an explanatory narrative presented here.

One transcendent aspect of this study is its response to the exclusion of women from both narratives. The only exception is Mishna Yoma 1:1. The one reference to women is to serve as a ‘spare’ for the priest, lest his purity be profaned by the accidental spilling of his seed. This is the *only* mention of a woman in the entire Mishnaic narrative – and it explicitly involves objectification of women in the service of the high priests’s ritual purity. Yosse ben Yosse alludes to the same objectification in his Avodot. My work here does not address the exclusion of women from the Avodah narratives, but it may in future lead to a study that examines the de-feminization of religious texts over time.

This study, like all studies, is inherently a work-in-progress endeavor. Scholars build and rebuild their rooms in the halls of science, forever revisiting the old with newly gleaned information. All one can do is connect the dots in a continuous collective effort to learn something about Jewish life in late antiquity. It is now and will probably continue to be impossible to develop a fully rounded picture of the tensions and power relations that animated the priestly-rabbinic discourse. As scholars we strive to assemble frameworks that illuminate and explain the dynamic exchanges and the thoughts that animated them in late antique Palestine. “...I am continually amazed that often, when you go back and re-report a story or a period of history, you discover things you never saw the first time.”¹⁰²¹ So, what have I learned?

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE was a “game changer,” a paradigm shift in Jewish life. The world had changed and was dramatically reshaped, exerting forces on many

¹⁰²¹ Ibid., 16.

realities at once.¹⁰²² This watershed event ignited a fight-or-flight moment for Jewish leadership, Jewish institutions, Jewish society, and Jewish observances and religious practice. The challenge to regulate Jewish life was one of governance, but it was primarily an ontological one. Jewish identity was under assault. The multi-faceted challenge was met with innovation and adaptability writ into Jewish life henceforth. Apparatuses of making knowledge, of expanding halachic law, and of the application of knowledge, were put in place over time.¹⁰²³ The instability wrought by the destruction of the temple reverberated through millennia of cycles of experimentation, learning, success, and failure. “Jewish communities ... centers that existed in (what is today’s) Israel, Iraq, and Egypt varied from one another with regard to the dominant cultures, religions, and languages that surrounded them and experienced different circumstances, both positive and negative, that had major impacts on their daily lives.”¹⁰²⁴

Instability gave rise to a new kind of stability, a dynamic, inherently unstable stability, an adaptable continuity that assured the survival, indeed thriving efflorescence of Jewish life and thought, indeed of the full spectrum of Jewish civilization itself. The unstable stability also gave rise to a disunity in unity. “Jewish unity ... is an oxymoron. On most issues, and especially those bearing on survival and continuity, Jews remain fiercely divided.”¹⁰²⁵ The double helix of Jewish paradigmatic stability/instability, unity/disunity elemental building-blocks, were the secret to the grand post-destruction revolution/re-invention of Jewish life. The dialectic forces of stasis and

¹⁰²² Levine, “Introduction: Movements, Institutions and Organizations: Mobilizing for Religious Change,” 15.

¹⁰²³ E.P. Sanders, “Common Judaism and the Synagogue in the First Century,” in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*. New York: Routledge, 1997), 1-17.

¹⁰²⁴ Reif, “From Manuscript Codex to Printed Volume: A Novel Liturgical Transition,” 95.

¹⁰²⁵ Levine, “Introduction: Movements, Institutions and Organizations: Mobilizing for Religious Change,” 17. Describing Jewish unity thus applies, in my understanding, to every period of history, not only to contemporary reality.

transformation continue to be held in tension even in the twenty-first century.¹⁰²⁶ It is therefore important that we study the formative age of this act of alchemy.

Temple ritual discourses rely on second and third hand sources that were modified over centuries through a process that sought to fit the past to distinct worldviews that promoted particular agents of power in Jewish society. Both Yosse ben Yosse and the rabbis agreed that Jewish liturgy ought to be centered around the idea of acknowledging God as sovereign,¹⁰²⁷ and both addressed God as the King, who has dominion and power over creation.¹⁰²⁸ Only echoes of non-rabbinic narratives have reached us, indeed there is no account that has reached us of the temple rituals that we can categorically define as a precise depiction of reality. The Avodah thus became a site of a contestation of meaning and power. The Mishnah asserted rabbinic leadership, and Yosse ben Yosse advocated a return to priestly leadership. The Mishnah argued for rabbinic authority over all Jewish law-making and all aspects of traditional life, citing an unbroken chain of authority, beginning with Moses and culminating in the rabbis themselves. Yosse ben Yosse thought the chain of transmission of authority began with Moses, but ran from him *only* to the priestly caste, which has had in the past, and must forever have, exclusive dominion over and Jewish ritual life and law. Each “side” needed to demonstrate their legitimacy, creating narratives about themselves, their authority, and God, using language and ritual activities that would underscore their claims. Two such narratives were compared here and forged into a dialectical dialogue regarding identity and leadership aspirations. Patterns of power relations and

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰²⁷ Reuven Kimelman, “Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy,” in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer*, ed. R. Langer and S. Fine, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 25.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid., 35.

programmatic differences emerged from this comparison, attesting to the evolutionary process of Jewish leadership roles after the destruction of the Second Temple.

The 15 piyyutim attributed by Mirsky to Yosse ben Yosse have been fully translated and annotated in Appendix A and are presented in this dissertation. Analysis of the Avodah piyyutim has revealed valuable historical information, thereby responding to the fundamental methodological presupposition of this study in the affirmative. Analysts posited that piyyut, as a literary entity, contains historic information that can disclose social, political, and religious currents that characterized the period in which the piyyut was written. Scholars detected hints ensconced in linguistic and lexical choices made by the paytan, attesting to his socio-political position that undergirds the piyyutim. We have demonstrated the validity of regarding piyyut as a historiographic source of information.

Having compared and contrasted the Mishnaic Tractate Yoma to the four piyyutim of Yosse ben Yosse that deal with the Avodah, in furtherance of answering the Disparity Hypothesis, we have emerged with a better understanding of the dynamics of discursive contests among Jewish groups in late antiquity. The hypothesis posited that a systematic comparison of coterminous narratives can identify similarities and differences that attest to the authors' political agenda that animated the texts. In our case, the piyyutim attributed to Yosse ben Yosse were systematically compared to the rabbinic Mishnah Yoma. The study identified echoes of social and political discourse between the rabbinic class and the priestly caste. It revealed hidden references to the religious and political rivalry between the rising rabbinic class and the traditionalist priestly caste, whereas both vied for authoritative control of Jewish practice after the destruction of the Second Temple. I have shown the rabbinic proclivity to re-imagine a collective past wherein they were central and essential to religious life, and I have glimpsed the

rabbinic propensity for crafting narratives that lay claim to exclusive rabbinic leadership and authority. The Mishnah discourse on the Avodah in effect supports rabbinic claims to authority over the people of Israel, by affirming the rabbis' version of the Avodah rituals as authentic and true depictions of the past, and by asserting rabbinic control over the *telling* of how the rituals were performed in the temple. I have also given voice to a paytan whose alternate *weltanschauung* has thus far been little understood or heard. Plausibly for Cohen, Yosse ben Yosse remains an advocate for a return to the old tradition of priestly dominion over Jewish religious life: "*For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*"¹⁰²⁹ As Michael Swartz phrases it: "... as far as their communities are concerned, both sage and poet are in the business of cosmically efficacious speech. If study...replace(d) sacrifice for the rabbis, the poet acted on the basis of an even more ancient premises: that the offering made by the lips had cultic consequences."¹⁰³⁰ The long historical process of investing the sanctity of the temple in the synagogue *qua* synagogue, and the parallel gradual codification of prayer texts, resulted in a new common Judaism that retained local differentiation but retained the ontological and theological underpinnings of the rabbinic revolutionary act of re-invention. Where scholars such as Stefan Reif describe early piyyut as "simple, asserting things such as: "The origins of (piyyutic) liturgical poetry may be traced to the second half of the Talmudic period, its characteristics at that time were simplicity and clarity. Only later did it adopt rhyme, allusive epithets, and a more formal and complex structure."¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²⁹ Mal. 2:7.

¹⁰³⁰ Swartz, "Sage, Priest, and Poet: Typologies of Religious Leadership in the Ancient Synagogue," 111.

¹⁰³¹ Reif. "From Manuscript Codex to Printed Volume: A Novel Liturgical Transition," 97. Discussing the scholarship of such specialists as Ezra Fleischer and Yosef Yahalom, in L.J. Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History*, (London: Littman Press, 1998).

I have been able to demonstrate that, drawing on the Mishnah and the Yerushalmi, as well as on other oral and written texts, Yosse ben Yosse was able to “re-re-imagine” the Avodah, and in doing so he sought to subtly but decisively undermine the rabbinic discourse. Indeed, I have learned that his literary style, form, and thematic characteristics were far from “simple.” Furthermore, Reif’s assertion that “liturgical composition stood in stark contrast to parallel types of rabbinic literature”¹⁰³² reflects the current understanding of piyyut as an embellishment, particularly the early “simple” piyyutim. I have been able to argue here that the fundamental nature of piyyut shares a hermeneutic thrust with rabbinic literature, and to show that our paytan was therefore able to engage in discourse with rabbinic works on the basis of this equality. Piyyut, I have discovered, is not parallel to or strands in contrast with rabbinic literature; it is a “dialect” of the same exegetical language.

One piyyut: **אז בדעת הקר** has been shown to be quite unlike the rest of Yosse ben Yosse’s oeuvre. Studying this piyyut in terms of its form and contents has shown that it is plausible to dispute its attribution to this paytan. The hypothesis posited that this piyyut was in all likelihood, not written by Yosse ben Yosse, but constitutes a later composition written in the style of Yosse ben Yosse. Oddities of literary form, linguistic choices, and a greater affinity to rabbinic literature, all support the assumption that **אז בדעת הקר** is not and cannot be attributable to Yosse ben Yosse.

The claim that Yosse ben Yosse might have lived and worked in a priestly settlement such as Sussy, remains unprovable. The fragmentary nature of rare documentary evidence from the fifth century corresponds to our understanding that oral transmission was the

¹⁰³² Reif, “From Manuscript Codex to Printed Volume: A Novel Liturgical Transition,” 98.

predominant form of preserving and sharing literary works in late antiquity.¹⁰³³ We cannot therefore state with absolute confidence that the fragments that did survive the millennial voyage attest fully to a comprehensive construct of Jewish society at the time. The study however, supports an assumption that Yosse ben Yosse might well have resided in a priestly community, a wealthy community that could support him, and whose members were fully aware of rabbinic literature but chose to emphasize traditional patterns of religious and social authority that was vested in the priestly caste. We know that: “(associations) come into being as people identify and seek solutions to their common interests or problems... (they) provide the framework for regular, sustained contact among people... as vehicles that can provide structure, regularity, stability, security, continuity, and shape to social life...people generally gravitate toward others who are like-minded, who share similar values, attitudes, and lifestyles.”¹⁰³⁴

It is therefore eminently plausible that Yosse ben Yosse, whose priestly concerns informed and animated his literary oeuvre, will have lived in a priestly community of like-minded Jews concerned with self-preservation of their caste and status, during the Byzantine era in Palestine. An organic community whose members valorized traditions of their forefathers, comprised members who felt bound by tradition and a sense of kinship, to stand together apart from, and at times against the rest of the world.¹⁰³⁵ Such a community could have been located in the Galilee, but the rabbinic preponderance in that region will have made it more challenging for a community to be led and governed by a reactionary priestly group. I therefore speculate that this community will have probably flourished in the southern regions of Judea, still maintaining

¹⁰³³ Ibid., 101.

¹⁰³⁴ Levine, “Introduction: Movements, Institutions and Organizations: Mobilizing for Religious Change,” 3.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid., 12.

contact with the rabbinic communities up north, but asserting a distinct life style that was governed by traditional priestly practices. I think but cannot prove beyond a standard of historical and socio-religious plausibility, that Yosse ben Yosse would have felt at home in such a community. In the absence of direct archaeological proof, we cannot with any measure of confidence connect Yosse ben Yosse to Sussya, but we can assume that the *type* of community that resided in Sussya, also characterized the *type* of community that was home to Yosse ben Yosse.

An Agenda for Study of External Influences on the Piyyutim

If, and when, we think we know something about the time and place in which Yosse ben Yosse lived, can we know anything useful about the influences that affected his style and the content of his piyyutim? There are four possible avenues that need to be explored in this connection. First, and foremost, is the question of the influence of Rabbinic Judaism on Yosse ben Yosse. There are four potential rabbinic literary sources that may have affected Yosse ben Yosse: The Babylonian Talmud, the Palestinian Talmud, the Mishnah, Toseftas, Mechilta, and Midrash as a hermeneutical system and as a body of knowledge. We have demonstrated that there are significant differences between the Mishnaic narrative of the Avodah and Yosse ben Yosse's narrative. This is the fulcrum of this dissertation. But the question remains: where did Yosse ben Yosse get his information from? Was it from the Tractate Yoma or from other sources? Is Mirsky correct in assuming, that Yosse ben Yosse was a creature of Jewish Rabbinic culture? Is there reason to believe he was an "odd duck" who did not fit into the Rabbinic world view?

The second source of potential influence is the ambient environment in Byzantine Palestine. There were pagans and Christians who lived cheek to jowl with the Jewish inhabitants

of the land.¹⁰³⁶ Even though Reuven Kimelman claims that "... arguments that attempt to find liturgical data for Jewish and Christian influence by the Roman imperial cult are weak,"¹⁰³⁷ I suspect that this evidence has not been fully mined. Jewish liturgy, far from being the product of exclusively internal theological developments, was a cultural product created by groups and individuals whose *sitz im leben* situationality per force availed them of opportune, synergistic cross fertilization. There was inevitable "seepage" between religious communities that, in the interest of preserving ontological and religious forms, compelled Jewish authorities to either contest or legitimate new cultural artifacts that arose in their cultural milieu.¹⁰³⁸ What aesthetics did they subscribe to?¹⁰³⁹ Is material culture indicative of ideological culture? Can we conclude from historical artifacts such as mosaic floors, synagogue architecture, and other remains that apparent mimetic tendencies in material culture point to mimesis in theological and religious terms as well? Are there liturgical writings of non-Jewish poets who were Yosse ben Yosse's contemporaries that might disclose a certain fashion of the time? As Steven Fine clearly asserts: "The scant evidence for the late second and early third centuries suggests a degree of respectful and fruitful interaction by Jews and non-Jews within the synagogue context, even as Jews were highly suspicious of the religious motives of non-Jews... Jewish sources reflect a Jewish community that lived under Christian colonial rule and reflected upon its situation through liturgical texts ... the 'hidden transcript of (the) community.'"¹⁰⁴⁰ Were there common stylistic

¹⁰³⁶ Steven Fine, "Non-Jews in the Synagogue of Late Antique Palestine: Rabbinic and Archeological Evidence," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 224-242.

¹⁰³⁷ Kimelman, "Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy," 33.

¹⁰³⁸ Fishbane, "No "Right" of Passage? The Rabbinic Dispute Regarding the Propriety of *Bat Mitzvah* Celebrations," 76.

¹⁰³⁹ Robin Jensen, "The Dura Europos Synagogue, Early Christian Art, and Religious Life in Dura Europos," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 174-189.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Fine, "Non-Jews in the Synagogue of Late Antique Palestine: Rabbinic and Archeological Evidence," 242.

and thematic elements that can be identified and point to a larger contextual arena? The cadence and rhythm of the stanzas, the responsive iterations of biblical verses, and stylistic ornamentations may hold clues; cross referencing information from other traditions, such as Christian and Roman liturgical customs, may help evaluate the possibility of musical accompaniment, of singing, as part of the fashion of the day and with possible relevance to the piyyutim in question. In this dissertation, I focus on a narrow question and cannot address all the possible questions that can arise from studying Yosse ben Yosse as a historical voice.

A future study of Byzantine Christian liturgy from the era under study, and of the remaining pagan artefacts of the time, may intimate something relevant and important about the cultural environment in which the piyyutim were written. Filling the historical gap, even with plausible speculation, may further our understanding not only of Yosse ben Yosse, but of the period of the fifth century in general, regarding which Jewish history is largely silent.¹⁰⁴¹ Authors such as Lee Levine, Daniel Schwartz, Daniel Boyarin, Zeev Weiss, Hayim Lapin, and Adiel Schremer have studied the oft transgressed borderlines between Jewish and Christian communities in late antiquity, it is obvious that communities that lived in cheek-to-jowl proximity, influence one another and were liberally influenced themselves by the “other” in their midst. As Tessa Rajak explains: “Judaism could be incorporated into the civic context through the inclusion of a synagogal community into the workings of the polis. So, the character of that

¹⁰⁴¹ Christian influences: Zeev Weiss, “Between Rome and Byzantium: Pagan Motifs in Synagogue Art and Their Place in the Judeo-Christian Controversy” In *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levin and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 367-390; Adiel Schremer, “The Christianization of the Roman Empire and Rabbinic Literature,” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. by Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009),349-366; McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, 443; Juliette Day, *The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem: Fourth and Fifth Century Evidence from Palestine and Egypt*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 11-32; Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, 37-73, 151-201; Robert Brody, *The Ge'onim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 283-297; Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE- 640 CE*, 179-202; Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100-400 CE*, 151-168; Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire: 312-1453*, 21-54; Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, 7-46.

community would inevitably be dictated by the Greco-Roman polis norms... the Greek political system permanently shaped the evolution of Diaspora Judaism.”¹⁰⁴² The variety and variability of each religious group contributed to the fecund interactions between the groups. This charged interface has yet to be studied in relation to comparative liturgical poetry. This study has demonstrated that valuable historic evidence lies ensconced in such literary works. It is therefore time now to study the literary environment that gave rise to distinctive poetic and religious expressions in late antiquity.

Third, is a possible contiguity with Karaite ideas.¹⁰⁴³ Some authors have suggested that Yosse ben Yosse read the Torah and interpreted it in a Karaite manner. Even though Karaism becomes a defined and separate tradition in and around the ninth century, and even if we accept the assertion that Yosse ben Yosse lived in the fifth century, were the core ideas of the Karaite tradition in circulation already in Yosse ben Yosse’s fecund and unsettled time? Can we connect a Karaite-type reading of the Torah with Yosse ben Yosse’s reading and understanding of the Torah? What would such a connection teach us about both Yosse ben Yosse and about the tradition of Karaism itself? What indeed would this disclose about Rabbinic Judaism and its struggle for supremacy?¹⁰⁴⁴ Laurence Schiffman, Lee Lervine, Daniel Schwartz, David Biale, and Eric Myers have all studied Jewish identities in late antiquity. There remains, however, a

¹⁰⁴² Rajak, “The Synagogue Within the Greco-Roman City,” 165.

¹⁰⁴³ Karaite influences: Zvi Ankori, *Karaites In Byzantium: The Formative Years, 970-1100*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1959), 3-25; Daniel Frank, “Karaite Ritual,” in *Judaism in Practice: From the Middle Ages Through the Early Modern Period*, ed. L. Lawrence Fine, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 248-264; Myers, “Jewish Culture in Greco-Roman Palestine,” 135-179; Leon Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 42-68; Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple Rabbinic Judaism*, 98-119; Hillel Newman, “The Normativity of Rabbinic Judaism: Obstacles on the Path to a New Consensus,” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 165-171.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine: 100-400 CE*, 64-97; David Levine, “Between Leadership and Marginality: Models for Evaluating the Role of the Rabbis in the Early Centuries CE,” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine and Daniel Schwartz, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 195-201.

lacuna in our understanding of the interactive exchanges between such distinctive identity-based communities, as evidenced by the literary works produced at the time. I think much can be gleaned from secular and religious literature alike, whereas we have found that every composition contains relevant information about the ambient conversations that animated the era.

Fourth, it is possible that Yosse ben Yosse had some contact with sectarian literature produced by the Qumran community. The Damascus Document, for instance, survived well into the ninth century, as we know from the Cairo Genizah and other sources. Could Yosse ben Yosse have had access to that we now call the Dead Sea Scrolls? If so, can we determine which scrolls, or what type of scrolls, he found most suitable to his world view? Were there other sources of sectarian writings produced by Sadducee and Essene communities that Yosse ben Yosse could access? Is there evidence of non-Rabbinic, Qumran-type information in the piyyutim? What would this teach us about the fluidity of religious ideas at the time? What can we learn about the interaction of competing world views, and by inference, about the rabbinic effort at standardization of Jewish thought?¹⁰⁴⁵ Rachel Elijor, Vered Noam, Paul Mandel, and Alex Jassen have each written extensively about the Dead Sea Scrolls. This study has contributed to this conversation a suggestion that the Dead Sea community might well have influenced other communities elsewhere. It is important to tease out possible strands of evidence that have been woven into the fabric of our understanding but remain there as silent witnesses to external influences on the narrative of communities outside the Dead Sea region.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Vered Noam, *From Qumran to the Rabbinic Revolution: Conceptions of Impurity* [Hebrew], (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010), 353-360; Paul Mandel, "Midrashic Exegesis and Its Precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8, no. 2 (2001): 149-168; Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 201-231; Jassen, "Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 3, 8-10, 12; Joseph Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4.XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266-27)*.

Another topic that has been left out of this dissertation in the interest of clarity is the matter of the communicability of the piyyutim and the performance thereof. Mirsky hints at the regional variability of musical tastes and habits,¹⁰⁴⁶ Ratzaby too speculates on the performative elements in prayer and liturgy in antiquity,¹⁰⁴⁷ but today there is no way of knowing with certainty whether or not the piyyutim were accompanied by musical instruments, there is no way of knowing how the piyyutim were performed, if they were part of regular services, if they took the place of homiletic addresses to the congregation, but certain assumptions can be made on the basis of the textual evidence nonetheless. There is reason to presume that ritual practices of a variety of religious groups in Byzantine Palestine did find echo in some Jewish communities' practices. I have already alluded to the possibility that sacred re-enactment of foundational rites by Christian communities, may have reverberated amongst some Jewish practitioners in the form of recitations and re-recitations aimed to re-enact in word, if not in deed as in the Christian case, the sacred rites.

The interface between artistic conventions in late antiquity and piyyutic literature needs to be further studied. I have alluded here to the artistic tradition of mosaic as a model for verbal artistry and word virtuosity. It is worth exploring contemporaries of Yosse ben Yosse, Jewish, Christian, and others, and to investigate the aesthetic mores of the time on their poetic works. There also remains a pressing need to study the results of millennia-worth of reproduction, copying, and transmission of these piyyutim. Yosse ben Yosse's works travelled with Jewish communities into the four corners of the earth. Did they shed some of their baggage *en route*?

¹⁰⁴⁶ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 89.

¹⁰⁴⁷ יהודה רצהבי, מגנזי שירת הקדם-פיוט וחקר פיוט, ירושלים: משגב, 1991.

Did they pick up new baggage along the way? To the extent afforded by the Genizah, versions of the piyyutim need to be studied in depth.

Mirsky began the enterprise of describing the literary corpus of Yosse ben Yosse,¹⁰⁴⁸ but a more coherent list must be made as a contribution to the theoretical essay we are yet to develop. Ezra Fleischer's study of piyyutic form¹⁰⁴⁹ treats the anonymous period, of which Yosse ben Yosse's work is considered a prime example, in terms of literary and stylistic form and, unlike other scholars, examines Yosse ben Yosse in detail. Yosef Yahalom's studies pertain more to later paytanim but his work too is relevant here,¹⁰⁵⁰ especially with regards to the grammar and philology. This dissertation constitutes an effort to consider liturgy as a valid historical source that discloses power relations between actors via an exhaustive comparison of Yosse ben Yosse's Avodah narrative with its Mishnaic counterpart. It remains a decidedly important task to conduct a full linguistic study, but it goes beyond the immediate concerns of this dissertation. Future research will entail a rigorous system of identifying the stylistic signature of Yosse ben Yosse, based on thematic textual analysis as well as on quantitative analysis. Such a study may yield a theoretical essay with which future findings may be assessed as having been written (or not) by Yosse ben Yosse. It is also important to compile a list of the pseudonyms and appellations, sobriquets, and epithets, that Yosse ben Yosse employed in his poetry.

I began studying Yosse ben Yosse by happenstance. I had never heard of him before I was given Mirsky's book for a translation project. I spent several years reading, translating, re-

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 67-71.

¹⁰⁴⁹ עזרא פליישר, *שירת הקודש העברית בימי הביניים*, ירושלים: מאגנס, 2007.

¹⁰⁵⁰ יוסף יהלום, *שפת השיר של הפיוט הארץ ישראלי הקדום*, ירושלים: מאגנס, 1985.

translating, and studying Yosse ben Yosse's poetry, ever discovering new depths in this remarkable body of work. The study unfolded organically, whereas each new revelation led me on to new avenues of exploration. As this dissertation demonstrates, I discovered in Yosse ben Yosse an exceptional artistry, an enviable facility with the written word, and an astounding familiarity with the Hebrew Bible and with rabbinic literature. His verses gradually began to divulge a worldview that has lain veiled beneath common assumptions of uniformity and conformity with rabbinic narratives. The written words, the silent spaces between the words, and the tenor of the oeuvre entire revealed a priestly affiliation that has hitherto gone unrecognized. Yosse ben Yosse emerges from this study a learned man, familiar with rabbinic texts of his era, who nevertheless was a partisan of priestly claims to authority in the fifth century. He lived in a community that sought his unique outlook, a community that needed ever new compositions of the Avodah because this ritual was the axis around which communal life revolved. It was important to his community that Yosse ben Yosse give voice to their aspirations and mores. And he did.

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Appendix A: The Piyutim Attributed to Yosse Ben Yosse, Translated and Annotated

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אור עולם – Eternal Light

TITLE: Eternal Light.....אור עולם

SUBJECT SUMMARY: The single stanza displays a deft acrostic system, whereas each line in the stanza begins with the letter א. This suggests a more complete Piyyut, now lost. The stanza fits the pattern of other Piyyutim. The stanza begins the narrative with the story of Creation.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 1
- **Acrostic system:** Begins with א
- **Complete/Incomplete:** The most incomplete known fragment of any of the Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim.
- **Other:** Not applicable

NOTES: The fragment is attributed to Yosse ben Yosse by Aaron Mirsky. The style and subject matter conform with Yosse ben Yosse's oeuvre.

עולם אור – Eternal Light

1. Eternal Light¹⁰⁵¹
 Fountain of Life¹⁰⁵²
 Effluence drawn from tenebrosity¹⁰⁵³
 He spoke,¹⁰⁵⁴ and it came to be.

אור עולם

אָמַר וַיְהִי.

אורות מֵאֵפֶל

אוֹצַר חַיִּים

אור עולם

¹⁰⁵¹ An epithet for God, after Isa. 60:19.

¹⁰⁵² An epithet for God, after Psalm 35:10.

¹⁰⁵³ God created light out of darkness, after Gen. 1:3.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Creation was effected by the Word of God: Gen. 1:3 [light from darkness], Gen. 1:6 [separating the firmament from the waters], Gen. 1:9 [dividing land from sea], Gen. 1:11 [plants], Gen. 1:14 [the sun, moon, and stars], Gen. 1:20 [birds and fish], Gen. 1:24 [beasts and crawling things]. Gen. 1:26 [Man and Woman], Gen. 1:29 [the Law]. Creation brings the world into being, but also affords the world with divine order and purpose.

אור עולם
ETERNAL LIGHT

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Genesis | 1 |
| Exodus | |
| Leviticus | |
| Numbers | |
| Deuteronomy | |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | |
| II kings | |
| I Samuel | |
| II Samuel | |
| Isaiah | 1 |
| Jeremiah | |
| Ezekiel | |
| Hosea | |
| Joel | |
| Amos | |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | |
| Malachi | |
| Psalms | 1 |
| Proverbs | |
| Job | |
| Song of Songs | |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | |
| Daniel | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | |
| II Chronicles | |
| Genesis Rabba | |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| | |

אפתה שפתי – I Open My Lips

TITLE: I Open My Lipsאפתה שפתי

SUBJECT SUMMARY: An elegy to God's greatness and His inclination to forgive His creatures' sins.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 4
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 1)
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Incomplete.
- **Other:** --

NOTES: Fragment of an introduction to a larger piyyut. The fragment suggests an embodied approach to the act of singing God's praises, and possibly to the conceptualization of sin. The eight couplets focus on the mouth, the throat, and the tongue as loci of vocality.

שפתי אפתי – I Open My Lips

- 1 I open my lips¹⁰⁵⁵
To Him, who created utterance
I glorify Him in joyous song¹⁰⁵⁶
With praises unending.
- 2 My mouth¹⁰⁵⁷ also praises
Him, who hath fashioned the mouth¹⁰⁵⁸
Words of great joy¹⁰⁵⁹
For Him, who is worthy of so much acclaim.¹⁰⁶⁰
- 3 Even my tongue proclaims¹⁰⁶¹
Him, who hath formed the tongue's retort¹⁰⁶²
And He who hath counselled Man, giving [him] strength,¹⁰⁶³
By teaching him His laws.
- 4 We sing hymns (composed)
For the King¹⁰⁶⁴, in¹⁰⁶⁵ my throat,
He is Gracious and Compassionate¹⁰⁶⁶
And He pardons¹⁰⁶⁷ [...]

¹⁰⁵⁵ Job 32:20; Psalm 51:16-17.

¹⁰⁵⁶ 2 Chron. 20-22; Psalm 106:47.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Psalm 19:14.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Exod. 4:11.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Psalm 63:6.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Psalm 147:1; Psalm 145:21.

¹⁰⁶¹ Psalm 106:2.

¹⁰⁶² Prov. 16:1.

¹⁰⁶³ Psalm 16:7.

¹⁰⁶⁴ An epithet for God.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Can also be translated as "through."

¹⁰⁶⁶ Neh. 9:17.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Psalm 65:4.

אפתח שפתי

אפתח שפתי לבורא ניב שפתים

ברנן אהללנו ברוב תושבחות.

גם בפני גרומם למי שם פה

דברי רננות לנאה בתהלות.

הלא לשוני ימלל לנותן מענה לשון

ומי יעצו כח ללמד לו תורות.

זמירות נשורר למלך בגרונני,

חגון סולח ומכפר — — —

אפתח שפתי
I OPEN MY LIPS

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Genesis | |
| Exodus | 1 |
| Leviticus | |
| Numbers | |
| Deuteronomy | |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | |
| II kings | |
| I Samuel | |
| II Samuel | |
| Isaiah | |
| Jeremiah | |
| Ezekiel | |
| Hosea | |
| Joel | |
| Amos | |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | |
| Malachi | |
| Psalms | 9 |
| Proverbs | 1 |
| Job | 1 |
| Song of Songs | |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | |
| Daniel | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | 1 |
| I Chronicles | |
| II Chronicles | 1 |
| Genesis Rabba | |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| | |

אפתח פה ברנן – I Open My Mouth in Prayerful Song

TITLE: I Open My Mouth in Prayerful Song.....אפתח פה ברנן

SUBJECT SUMMARY: An elegy to God's greatness.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 11
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 1)
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Complete.
- **Other:** Every strophe ends with the word מלך

NOTES:

1. First person meditation on the glory and centrality of God. Speaks of the poet's skill as a gift from God. The adoration of the Kind is achieved through the human body. Appears to be didactic, as part of the Rosh Hashanah order of prayers [מלכויות, זכרונות ושופרות].
2. One of the three Piyyutim whose provenance remains unclear. Attributed to Yosse ben Yosse by Aaron Mirsky.

אפתח פה ברנן – I Open My Mouth in Prayerful Song

- 1 I open my mouth¹⁰⁶⁸ in prayerful song,
I extol Him, who gave us a mouth,¹⁰⁶⁹
My lips are abundant with praise¹⁰⁷⁰
As I glorify the King.¹⁰⁷¹
- 2 I recite¹⁰⁷² His grandeur¹⁰⁷³
Among congregations and multitudes,¹⁰⁷⁴
His everlasting truth,¹⁰⁷⁵
And His everlasting reign as King.¹⁰⁷⁶
- 3 For it is He who gives
The tongue's retort,¹⁰⁷⁷
And for whomever He desires
He will turn that man's heart,¹⁰⁷⁸ for He is King.
- 4 He shall be remembered for all generations,¹⁰⁷⁹
His years endure for all time,¹⁰⁸⁰
He is, and shall live forever,¹⁰⁸¹
And none but Him is King.¹⁰⁸²

¹⁰⁶⁸ Dan. 10:16.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Exod. 4:11.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Psalm 63:6.

¹⁰⁷¹ Deut. 32:3.

¹⁰⁷² Deut. 6:7.

¹⁰⁷³ Psalm 145 :6.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Psalm 35:18.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Psalm 106:12; Psalm 119:76-79.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Psalm 10:16.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Prov. 16:1.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Prov. 21:1.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Psalm 135:13.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Psalm 102:25; Psalm 93:5; Psalm 61:6.

¹⁰⁸¹ Jer. 10:10; Deut. 32:40.

¹⁰⁸² 2 Sam. 7:22.

אפתח פה ברנן

אֶהְלֵל לְשֵׁם פֶּה
גֹדֵל אֶתֶן לְמֶלֶךְ.

אֶפְתַּח פֶּה בְּרִנָּן
בְּשִׁפְתַי רִנָּנוֹת

בְּקִהֵל וְעִידָה
וְהוּא לְעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ.

גֹּדְלוֹ אֲשַׁנֵּן
דְּבָרָיו אֲמוֹנָה

מַעֲנֵה לְשׁוֹן
יִטֶּה לֵב, מֶלֶךְ.

הֵלֵא הוּא נוֹתֵן
וְלִכְלֹ אֲשֶׁר יַחְפוֹץ

שְׁנוֹתָיו לְאוֹרֵךְ יָמִים
וְאִין כְּנַגְדּוֹ מֶלֶךְ.

זִיכְרוֹ לְדוֹר דוֹר
חַי הוּא לְעוֹלָם

- 5 I recount His Word¹⁰⁸³, with sweetness
 Upon my palate¹⁰⁸⁴ and in my throat,
 My tongue speaks of His justice,¹⁰⁸⁵
 In praises of the King.
- 6 All my limbs,¹⁰⁸⁶
 All the chambers of my bowels,¹⁰⁸⁷
 I do consecrate to praises of the Holy Name¹⁰⁸⁸
 For He is the eternal King.
- 7 I seek only His retort,
 Not from any other god,
 He shall revive my soul, guiding¹⁰⁸⁹
 As He leads me to glorify the King.¹⁰⁹⁰
- 8 My lips express¹⁰⁹¹
 Grace and supplication,¹⁰⁹²
 My mouth utters prayer
 To the mystery kindness of the King.
- 9 I recount His great deeds
 With my mouth and tongue,¹⁰⁹³
 I proclaim His righteousness,¹⁰⁹⁴
 For He alone is King.¹⁰⁹⁵

¹⁰⁸³ Ezra 7:13 imbues the Word with a legal overtone, which is translated as “Decree” in the context of Ezra. In the Piyyut, I chose to translate the word טעם as “Word,” because of the contextual reference to sweetness on the Paytan’s palate.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Song of Sol. 2:3.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Psalm 35:28.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Psalm 35:10.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Prov. 20:27.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Psalm 103:1.

¹⁰⁸⁹ The Paytan works with the Psalm verse to turn the original יחני into the word **בנות**, which has a joyful overtone and connotation. Psalm 23:3.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Psalm 34:4.

¹⁰⁹¹ Psalm 119:171.

¹⁰⁹² Zech. 12:10; Psalm 45:3.

¹⁰⁹³ Psalm 66:17; Psalm 126:2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Isa. 57:12.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Deut. 4:35; Isa. 37:20.

בְּחֵיף וּגְרוֹן
תְּהִילוֹת מֶלֶךְ.

טַעַם אֲמַתִּיק לּוֹ
יִהְיֶה לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָק

וְחֲדָרֵי קֶרְבֵּי
כִּי הוּא לְעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ.

כָּל עֲצָמוֹתַי
לְשֵׁם קְדוֹשׁ אֱהַלֵּל

וְלֹא מֵאֵל אֲחֵר
בְּנַחַת לְגִדְלֵי מֶלֶךְ.

מֵעַנָּה אֲשַׁאלָה מְנוּ
נַפְשֵׁי יִשׁוּבֵב

חַן וְתַחֲנוּנִים
בְּסוֹד נֹעַם מֶלֶךְ.

שְׁפַתַּי תִּבְעֶנָּה
עֲנוֹת סִיחַ בְּפִי

בְּפֶה וּבִלְשׁוֹן
כִּי הוּא לְבָדוֹ מֶלֶךְ.

פּוֹעֵלוֹ אֲשַׁנֵּן
צִדְקוֹ אֲגִיד

10 My innards and my limbs
Resonate with song,
They intone with music,
That none but Him is King.¹⁰⁹⁶

11 I sing a new song¹⁰⁹⁷
Unto the Creator of the Beginning,
I make sweet my adoration of His glory
For the riposte of the tongue is from Him.¹⁰⁹⁸

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures: *“The preparations of the heart are man's, but the answer of the tongue is from God”*¹⁰⁹⁹

זָמַר יִבְיָעוּ
כִּי אֵין זוּלָתוֹ מֶלֶךְ.

קִרְבֵּי וְכִלְיוֹתַי
רָנָן יִתְנֹוּ

לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית
כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ מַעֲנָה לְשׁוֹן.

שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ אֲשִׁיר
תְּהִלָּה אֲמַתִּיק לוֹ

כֹּכַב בְּקִלְבֵּי לְאָדָם מֵעֵרְכֵי לֵב.

¹⁰⁹⁶ 2 Sam. 7:22.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Psalm 144:9.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Prov. 16:1.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Prov. 16:1.

אפתח פה ברין
I OPEN MY MOUTH IN PRAYER

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Genesis | |
| Exodus | 1 |
| Leviticus | |
| Numbers | |
| Deuteronomy | 4 |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | |
| II kings | |
| I Samuel | |
| II Samuel | 2 |
| Isaiah | 2 |
| Jeremiah | 1 |
| Ezekiel | |
| Hosea | |
| Joel | |
| Amos | |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | 1 |
| Malachi | |
| Psalms | 20 |
| Proverbs | 4 |
| Job | |
| Song of Songs | 1 |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | |
| Daniel | 1 |
| Ezra | 1 |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | |
| II Chronicles | |
| Genesis Rabba | |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| | |

אז לראש תתנו – In the Early Days You Had Made Us the Head

TITLE: In the Early Days You Had Made Us the Head אז לראש תתנו

SUBJECT SUMMARY: A confession of sins, based on a measure-for-measure idea of reward and punishment. Sinfulness pervades Israel, as sin is linked to the human body as parable for the dynamic, after Lamentations Rabba 1:57 where the human body serves as reference for sin, punishment and ultimate redemption (they sinned in the head and were punished in the head, but will be redeemed by the head, etc.). Yosse ben Yosse follows the same order of the body parts as in Lamentations Rabba: head, ear, eye, nose. The Piyyut is incomplete so it is likely that the other organs mentioned in Lamentations Rabba were mentioned in the missing stanzas.

History and Historiography in which God is materially involved in human history. Relating the destruction to the People's sinful ungratefulness.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 16
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 1)
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Incomplete.
- **Other:** Each line “works” through the inflection of a single root as its focus.

NOTES: Fragment of an introduction to a larger piyyut. Each strophe ends with a congregational confession taken from the prayer book of Yom Kippur “We have sinned”.

התנו לראש אז – In the Early Days You Had Made Us the Head

1 In the early days¹¹⁰⁰ You had made us the head¹¹⁰¹
 And we said, somnambulant: Let us return¹¹⁰²
 Until the Temple was rent from the mountaintop¹¹⁰³
 And we were punished with poisonous waters¹¹⁰⁴

2 You bestowed us with ears¹¹⁰⁵
 But we had not listened¹¹⁰⁶
 Until the calamity was heard
 And our ears rang.¹¹⁰⁷

We have sinned

3 We also raised our eye in rebellion
 Before Him, who hath fashioned the eye¹¹⁰⁸
 Until we were left blindly groping the wall¹¹⁰⁹
 With no eyes to see

4 We presumed to be haughty, raising our noses¹¹¹⁰,
 At Him, who is so Patient¹¹¹¹
 Until He became wrathful
 And was infuriated with us.

We have sinned

¹¹⁰⁰ The word **אז** appears as the opening for many biblical songs, such as Song of Sol. 1:6; Psalm 126:2; 1 Kings 8:12.

¹¹⁰¹ Deut. 28:13.

¹¹⁰² To Egypt, referring to defiant behaviour, which denies the Ten Commandments. Num. 14:4.

¹¹⁰³ Micah 4:1; Isa. 2:2.

¹¹⁰⁴ Jer. 8:14.

¹¹⁰⁵ Psalm 94:9.

¹¹⁰⁶ Prov. 5:13.

¹¹⁰⁷ 1 Sam. 3:11.

¹¹⁰⁸ Psalm 94:9.

¹¹⁰⁹ Isa. 59:10.

¹¹¹⁰ Psalm 10:4.

¹¹¹¹ Patience and anger share a root in biblical Hebrew **אפ** whereas **חרון אף** indicates divine anger, as in Jer. 25:37; but **ארך אפיים** indicates God's forbearance, as in Psalm 86:15.

אז לראש תתנו

אז לראש תתנו וּנְמַנּוּ: נְתַנָּה רֹאשׁ עד [לא] נכון בראש רוינו מי ראש

בנו טעתה און וּבַל אֶזְן הַטִּינּוּ עד לא שמועה תְּצַלִּינָה אֶזְנֵינוּ.

חטאנו

גם עין הרמנו מוֹל יוֹצֵר עֵינָן עוד| לא נגשש בְּקִיר בְּאֵין עֵינַיִם

דמנו [בגבה] אפים לְאָרֶץ אֲפִים עד לא אנף וְעָלָה כְּנוֹ אִף.

חטאנו

- 5 We were stiff necked¹¹¹² and rebellious
 At Him, who decapitated our enemies¹¹¹³
 Until He no longer showed us¹¹¹⁴
 Neither the back of his neck nor His countenance¹¹¹⁵
- 6 And we turned our shoulder away¹¹¹⁶
 From Him, who hovers protectively over our shoulders¹¹¹⁷
 Until our shoulder
 Fell off from its blade.¹¹¹⁸

We have sinned

- 7 A raised arm¹¹¹⁹
 We had chosen for us,
 Until our forearm¹¹²⁰
 Was rent from its mooring
- 8 Our mouths imputed¹¹²¹
 Things that were not so
 Until we could only be considered
 As a mute, who openeth not his mouth.¹¹²²
- We have sinned***
- 9 We composed mendacities¹¹²³
 And we drew our tongues in falsehood like a bow¹¹²⁴
 Until we were struck
 By violence, and scourged by the lashings of tongues¹¹²⁵

¹¹¹² 2 Kings 17:14; Neh. 9:29.

¹¹¹³ Deut. 28:7.

¹¹¹⁴ Jer.18:17.

¹¹¹⁵ Exod. 33:20.

¹¹¹⁶ Neh. 9:29.

¹¹¹⁷ Deut. 33:12.

¹¹¹⁸ Job 31:22.

¹¹¹⁹ Job 38:15.

¹¹²⁰ Job 31:22.

¹¹²¹ 2 Kings 17:9.

¹¹²² Psalm 38:14.

¹¹²³ Psalm, 119:69.

¹¹²⁴ Jer. 9:2.

¹¹²⁵ Job 5:21.

הַקְּשִׁינוּ עוֹרֶף לְעוֹרֶף קְמִינוּ עַד לֹא הִרְאֵנוּ עוֹרֶף וְלֹא פָּנִים

וְסִרְרָנוּ כְּתֵף לְחִפֵּף כְּתֵף [עַד לֹא] כְּתִיפְנוּ מִשְׁכָּמָה תְּפוּל.

חטאנו

זָרוּעַ וְרָמָה] בְּחִרְנוּ לָנוּ עַד לֹא [אֶזְרְעֵנוּ] מִקְּנָה תִּשָּׁבֵר

חִיפֵינוּ בְּפֵה דְּבָרִים לֹא כֵן עַד לֹא נִחְשַׁב כְּאֵלִים וְאִין פֶּה.

חטאנו

טְפִלָּנוּ שָׁקַר וְדָרְכֵנוּ לְשׁוֹן עַד לֹא הוֹכִינוּ בְּשׁוֹד וְשׁוֹט לְשׁוֹן

10 We added untruth¹¹²⁶
 With lips of deceit
 Until we were felled and were humbled
 By the lips of our foes.

We have sinned

11 We made heavy our hearts¹¹²⁷
 Before Him, who examines all hearts¹¹²⁸
 Until we could only be considered
 A silly dove without discernment¹¹²⁹

12 We did not bend our will¹¹³⁰
 To Him, who hath created all
 Until we howled in agony
 For our enemies distressed us so gravely.¹¹³¹

We have sinned

13 In the bitterness of our remorse¹¹³²
 We had not [...]
 Until our reins
 Were pierced with His arrows¹¹³³

14 Our innards were filled
 With stolen booty
 Until we cried out
 Oh, my innards, I shudder.¹¹³⁴

We have sinned

¹¹²⁶ Psalm 17:1.

¹¹²⁷ 1 Sam. 6:6.

¹¹²⁸ 1 Chron. 29:17.

¹¹²⁹ Hosea 7:11.

¹¹³⁰ Jer. 10:16.

¹¹³¹ Psalm 129:1.

¹¹³² Job 16:13.

¹¹³³ Lam. 3:13.

¹¹³⁴ Jer. 4:19.

בְּשִׁפְתַי מְרָמָה עַד לֹא נִפְלְנִי בְּשִׁפְתַי קָמִינוּ.

חטאנו

כִּיבַדְנוּ לֵבָב לְבוֹחֵן לְכַבּוֹת עַד לֹא נַחֲשָׁבְנוּ כְּפוֹתָה וְאֵין לֵב

לֹא כִפַּפְנוּ יֶצֶר לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל עַד לֹא צָרַחְנוּ רַבַּת צָרְרוֹנוּ.

חטאנו

מֵר לְכִלְיֹת בּו לֹא... עַד לֹא בְּכִלְיֹתֵינוּ בְּנֵי אֲשָׁפָה בָּאוּ

נִמְלָאוּ מִיַּעֲיָנוּ חָמָס וְגִזּוּל עַד לֹא אֶעְקְנוּ מֵעֵי אוֹחִילָה.

חטאנו

15 We stubbornly stiffened our knee¹¹³⁵

And failed to kneel,

Until, from fasting,¹¹³⁶

Our knees did buckle

16 We dulled our eye

By defiling our loins,

Until those who emerged from Jacob's loin¹¹³⁷

Were exiled to the ends of the earth [...]¹¹³⁸

We have sinned

כְּשִׁלּוֹ בְרַכְיֵנוּ

עַד לֹא מִצּוֹם

מִכְרוּעַ בְּרַכְיֵנוּ

סָרְרָנוּ בְּרִוְךְ

נָדוּ לִירְכַתֵי אֶרֶץ –

עַד לֹא יוֹצְאֵי יְרֵךְ

בְּטַמְאֵינוּ יְרֵךְ

עֵין הַכְּבֹדָנוּ

חטאנו

¹¹³⁵ Isa. 45:23.

¹¹³⁶ Psalm 109:24.

¹¹³⁷ Exod. 1:5.

¹¹³⁸ Lev. 18:25.

אז לראש תתנו

IN THE BEGINNING YOU HAD MADE US THE HEAD

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Genesis | |
| Exodus | 2 |
| Leviticus | 1 |
| Numbers | 1 |
| Deuteronomy | 3 |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | |
| II kings | 2 |
| I Samuel | 2 |
| II Samuel | |
| Isaiah | 2 |
| Jeremiah | 5 |
| Ezekiel | |
| Hosea | 1 |
| Joel | |
| Amos | |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | 1 |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | |
| Malachi | |
| Psalms | 9 |
| Proverbs | 1 |
| Job | 4 |
| Song of Songs | |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | 1 |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | |
| Daniel | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | 1 |
| I Chronicles | 1 |
| II Chronicles | |
| Genesis Rabba | |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| | |

אכרעה ואברכה – I Bow and Kneel

TITLE: I Bow and Kneel.....אכרעה ואברכה

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Lament for loss of the Priesthood. Review of High Priest's Yom Kippur service. The destruction of the Temple is divine retribution for the iniquity of the People. Each element of the High Priest's service is correlated with a particular aspect of loss, which is a consequence of sin. An appeal to the people to repent of sin, in order to restore a proper connection with God through the mediation of the Priests.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 23
- **Acrostic system:** (1 x ב"א) x1 +(2 x) ת as cap + additional line with the word יהוה in prominence.
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete. Some missing phrases [manuscript characteristic].
- **Other:** Play on root words in each line. Some rhyming.

NOTES:

1. First person lament for loss of Temple and direct “conversation” with God. One responsive prayer at the end ties the lament to each person in the congregation.
2. One of the three Piyyutim whose provenance remains unclear. Attributed to Yosse ben Yosse by Aaron Mirsky.
3. The titles of four Piyyutim are inserted into the poetic verses, suggesting self-reference [if indeed the Piyyut was penned by Yosse ben Yosse], or a reference to his other works by another anonymous Paytan. The Piyyutim are: **אתה כוננת, אזכיר גבורות, אספר גדולות, (אז) בדעת חקר**.

אכרעה ואברכה – I Bow and Kneel

- 1 I bow¹¹³⁹ and kneel¹¹⁴⁰
 I retort¹¹⁴¹ with a soft tongue¹¹⁴²
 I rise¹¹⁴³ to [...]
 I stand before three humble and contrite.¹¹⁴⁴

- 2 My parted lips speak forthright
 In [...]
 The right things on my lips¹¹⁴⁵
 The loveliness of the Ten Orders.¹¹⁴⁶

- 3 I hope [...]
 Speaking not with conceit
 My throat will stridently praise
 The [...] of harm.

- 4 Knowing precious things
 About the greatness of the Dear One
 The veil¹¹⁴⁷ [...]
 Who sagaciously investigated the Beginnings.¹¹⁴⁸

- 5 He hath placed the firmament¹¹⁴⁹
 And curved it and placed it above
 He created light and broke the abyss to bring forth water¹¹⁵⁰
 He founded¹¹⁵¹ and submerged¹¹⁵²

¹¹³⁹ Psalm 95:6.

¹¹⁴⁰ Isa. 45:23.

¹¹⁴¹ Prov. 16:1.

¹¹⁴² Prov. 25:15; Prov. 25:1.

¹¹⁴³ Isa. 54:17.

¹¹⁴⁴ Isa. 57:15.

¹¹⁴⁵ Prov. 8:6.

¹¹⁴⁶ A reference to the ten orders of the Avodah on Yom Kippur, performed by the High Priest at the Temple.

¹¹⁴⁷ An epithet for the sky, or the heavens, after Isa. 40:22.

¹¹⁴⁸ Job 28:27.

¹¹⁴⁹ Gen. 1:6.

¹¹⁵⁰ Prov. 3:20.

¹¹⁵¹ A reference to the land, to Earth, after Prov, 3:19.

¹¹⁵² A reference to the pillars of the earth submerged in the waters, to bear the weight of creation, after PT Tractate Chagigah, Folio 12, page 2, which cites Amos 4:13 and Psalm 136:6.

אכרעה ואברכה

אָכְרַעָה וְאַבְרַכָּה אָעוּ לְשׁוֹן רַכָּה
אָקוּמָה ל... אִיתִי צַב כְּשִׁפְל וְדַכָּה.

בְּפִיפִיּוֹת מִיִּשְׂרָאִים ב.....
בְּשִׁפְתוֹת מִיִּשְׂרָאִים בְּחַן עֲשָׂרָה הַסְּדָרִים.

ג... אֶפְלֵל גִּיאוֹת לֹא אֶמְלִיל
גְרוֹנֵי קוֹל יְהוָה לֵל ג... וְעוֹלֵל.

דַּעַת יָקָר דְּבַר גְּדוֹלוֹת יָקָר
דוֹק.... [אָז?] בְּדַעַת חָקָר.

הִיצִיב רָקִיעַ הַכְּפִיף וְהִרְקִיעַ
הִיבְהִיק וְהִבְקִיעַ הוּא יָסַד וְהִשְׁקִיעַ

- 6 And so I shall bless in a chorus¹¹⁵³
 And express praises
 And of Him who tallies men's deeds¹¹⁵⁴
 I shall speak of His great works.¹¹⁵⁵
- 7 In remembrance of His wonders¹¹⁵⁶
 His gift¹¹⁵⁷ [given] in order to adorn¹¹⁵⁸
 By hastening¹¹⁵⁹ the end of wonders¹¹⁶⁰
 Oh Living God¹¹⁶¹, remember¹¹⁶² to work a sign for good¹¹⁶³ in my behalf.
- 8 The goodness¹¹⁶⁴ of the hinds¹¹⁶⁵
 Make my steps sure and steady¹¹⁶⁶ as the does'¹¹⁶⁷
 Speak¹¹⁶⁸ to me wisely sevenfold
 Thou, the Valiant Creator of great things.
- 9 I howl to the Dear One
 To revive my soul Selah¹¹⁶⁹
 My heart rejoices in the discipline¹¹⁷⁰
 May my musings be sweet unto Him.¹¹⁷¹

¹¹⁵³ Alternatively translated "in the gatherings of the congregation," after Psalm 26:12.

¹¹⁵⁴ 1 Sam. 2:3.

¹¹⁵⁵ Psalm 145:6; **אספר גדולות** is the title of Yosse ben Yosse's eponymous Piyyut that described the Avodah in great detail.

¹¹⁵⁶ Psalm 105:5; Psalm 77:12.

¹¹⁵⁷ Gen. 30:20.

¹¹⁵⁸ The people of Israel.

¹¹⁵⁹ Isa. 60:22.

¹¹⁶⁰ A reference to the end of time, after Dan. 12:6.

¹¹⁶¹ An epithet for God, 'ח, after Isa. 49:18.

¹¹⁶² Neh. 5:19.

¹¹⁶³ Psalm 86:17.

¹¹⁶⁴ I read the word **טוב** as TUV rather than TOV, because it fits the meaning of the couplet more neatly. Mirsky does not dwell on the word. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי, (1991). אהרון מירסקי. p. 243, no. 8.

¹¹⁶⁵ A reference to the emissaries of God to His people, after the Midrash to Psalm 29:9 [HIND: the female of the red deer, from Merriam-Webster.com, "Hind," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hind>], after the Song of Sol. 2:9 allegory that equates God with a fawn.

¹¹⁶⁶ Eccles. 12:11.

¹¹⁶⁷ Psalm 18:34.

¹¹⁶⁸ 1 Sam. 21:14.

¹¹⁶⁹ Hab. 3:9.

¹¹⁷⁰ Job 36:10 [God's castigation and reproof are welcomed].

¹¹⁷¹ Psalm 104:34.

וְאָבְרָךְ בְּמִקְהִילוֹת וְאֵבִיעָה תְּהִילוֹת

וְלִתְּוֹכֵן עַל־יְלִילוֹת אֲסַפֵּר גְּדוּלוֹת.

זָכַר נִפְלְאוֹת זָכַר לְהִנְאוֹת

חֲשׂוֹת קִץ הַפְּלְאוֹת חֵי זְכָרָה לִי לְטוֹבָה אוֹת.

טוֹב אֵילוֹת טַע פְּעָמֵי כְּאֵילוֹח

טַעֲמֵינִי בְּשִׁבְעָה אוֹמֵץ גְּדוּלוֹת.
קוֹלוֹת

יָקָר בְּצָרְחִי יְחֵי סָלָה רוּחִי

יָגַל בְּמוֹסֵר רוּחִי יַעֲרַב עָלָיו שִׁיחִי.

- 10 As God regards me
 In my confessions, God will be attentive to me
 I humbly acclaim¹¹⁷² God
 I extol God.
- 11 I purge my heart
 And He will turn toward me in mercy
 I set forth my prayers¹¹⁷³ with a prepared heart¹¹⁷⁴
 And He will answer me before I utter a word¹¹⁷⁵
- 12 My words, gravid, spill forth
 From my mouth, in the pit¹¹⁷⁶
 Good tidings will comfort me¹¹⁷⁷ in my suffering¹¹⁷⁸
 As I recount His great deeds.¹¹⁷⁹
- 13 I offer pleasantness
 May He find sweetness in my musical cantillation,
 And of the awesome grandeur of the Great King¹¹⁸⁰
 I shall speak in great gatherings.
- 14 I trill my song
 With joy and delight
 The mysteries of the Mighty Creator¹¹⁸¹
 I remember, Selah.
- 15 My heart will flourish in speaking evermore
 Setting prayer in both mouth and [heart]
 [...] He who bestowed a heart upon us¹¹⁸²
 Man hath the preparations of his heart.¹¹⁸³

¹¹⁷² Gen. 30:13.

¹¹⁷³ Psalm 5:4.

¹¹⁷⁴ Prov. 16:1.

¹¹⁷⁵ Isa. 65:24.

¹¹⁷⁶ Psalm 140:11.

¹¹⁷⁷ Psalm 40:10.

¹¹⁷⁸ Could also be read as "amidst congregations."

¹¹⁷⁹ The line evokes the Piyut **אזכיר גבורות אלוה** which narrates the Avodah.

¹¹⁸⁰ Psalm 48:3.

¹¹⁸¹ Jer. 32:19.

¹¹⁸² An epithet for God, after Jer. 24:7; Ezek. 11:19.

¹¹⁸³ Prov. 16:1.

כְּהֵבִיט אֵל כְּהִיתוּדוֹתַי יִשַׁע אֵל

כְּשָׁפֵל אֲאִשֶׁר לְאֵל אַרְוִמִם לְאֵל.

לִיבִי אֶפְנֶה לְרַחֲמַנִי יִפְנֶה

לְעֶרְךָ שׁוֹעַ בְּמַעֲנֶה טָרִם אֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲנֶה

מִיְלֻלֵי הוֹרוֹת מִפִּי בְמַהֲמוֹרוֹת

מִבֶּשֶׁר טוֹב בְּתוֹךְ אֲזַכִּיר גְּבוּרוֹת.
חֲבוּרוֹת

נוֹעַם אֶקְרֵב נְגִינּוֹתַי יַעֲרֵב

נוֹרָאוֹת מֶלֶךְ רַב אֲבִשֶׁר בְּקֶהֱל רַב.

שִׁיר אֶסְלְסְלֶה שְׂמֵחָה וְגִילָה

סוֹד רַב עֲלִילָה אֲזַכֵּר סְלָה.

עוֹד אֶלְבֵּלֵב עֶרְוֶךָ בְּפֶה וּבִלְב

עו... נוֹתֵן לֵב לְאָדָם מִעֲרֹכֵי לֵב.

- 16 I opened my heart, and You have understood,¹¹⁸⁴
 The pearls¹¹⁸⁵ hidden in the shell of the body, You hath arranged,
 [...] You have examined my innards
 Which You hath arrayed.¹¹⁸⁶
- 17 You have purified¹¹⁸⁷ my heart,
 The Rock of our existence, You have examined my heart,
 And You have hidden inside me, since my youth,
 The spirit of God that speaks within me.¹¹⁸⁸
- 18 He bestowed us with voices¹¹⁸⁹
 He who strives for Him will be strengthened by God
 The nearness to God is enfolded within us¹¹⁹⁰
 Our Lord is mighty.¹¹⁹¹
- 19 Hearken my voice
 As I pray to see You¹¹⁹²
 The High and Lofty One who is my strength¹¹⁹³
 I speak, that I may find relief.¹¹⁹⁴
- 20 Accept my words as I pray forthrightly
 Consider my sacrifice of the lips as of bullocks¹¹⁹⁵
 They pour the hearts anew every day¹¹⁹⁶
 To the Mightiest of all.

¹¹⁸⁴ The sentence could also be read, in agreement with the rest of the stanza, as: "You have constructed the openings of my body." See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי. p. 244, 16

¹¹⁸⁵ Could also be understood as פנימיים in reference to the innards of the body. Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁶ The verse אתה כוננת is the title for the eponymous Piyyut which recounts the Avodah.

¹¹⁸⁷ The root צרפ can also be understood as "to examine," after Psalm 17:3.

¹¹⁸⁸ 2 Sam. 32:2.

¹¹⁸⁹ The sentence can also be read as: He will respond with mercy to our supplicating voices," after Deut. 2:23.

¹¹⁹⁰ Psalm 73:28.

¹¹⁹¹ Psalm 8:2.

¹¹⁹² 1 Kings 8:28.

¹¹⁹³ Psalm 138:6; Hab. 3:19.

¹¹⁹⁴ Job 32:20.

¹¹⁹⁵ Hosea 14:3.

¹¹⁹⁶ Lam. 3:23.

פְּתַחְתִּי בִּינִיתָהּ פְּנִינֹת גּוֹף הִכְנַלְתָּהּ

פ... | קָרְבִי בְּחַנְתָּהּ אֶתָּה כּוֹנְנָתָהּ.

צַרְפָּתָה לְבִי צוּר בְּחַנְתָּהּ קָרְבִי

צַפְנָתָה לָךְ אָבִי רוּחַ יְיָ דְבַר בִּי.

קוֹלוֹת יְחוּנִינֹו קִנְיָה אֵל יְכוֹנְנֹו

קִירְבַת אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹכֵינוּ אֲדִיר אֲדוּנֵינוּ.

רְצָה קוֹלִי רְאוּתְךָ פִּילוּלִי

רַם יְיָ חִילִי אֲדַבְּרָה וַיְרוּחַ לִי.

שַׁעַה בְּדַבְּרֵי מִישָׁרִים שִׁלּוּם שְׁפָתַי פְּרִים

שׁוֹפְכִים חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים אֲדִיר בְּאֲדִירִים.

- 21 You have fashioned everything
 You sustain and support everyone
 Your intention is to be merciful unto all
 For You invested everything with essence.¹¹⁹⁷
- 22 You create and are omnipotent
 You have set everything up with good measure¹¹⁹⁸
 You will redeem the world in Your wisdom
 As You did then, when all was nonexistence.
- 23 I speak praises in togetherness¹¹⁹⁹
 Setting [...]
 I shall not silence my voice¹²⁰⁰
 As I stand [...].

As it is written:

*“My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; and let all flesh bless His holy name
 for ever and ever.”¹²⁰¹*

“Let Thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we have waited for Thee”¹²⁰²

“Hear, O LORD, and be gracious unto me; LORD, be Thou my helper”¹²⁰³

O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.¹²⁰⁴

¹¹⁹⁷ Prov. 16:2; Prov. 21:2.

¹¹⁹⁸ Job 28:25.

¹¹⁹⁹ Psalm 74:6; The word **תְּדַבֵּר** is loaded with Zaddokite meaning. Further research into the **תְּדַבֵּר** the community described in the Qumran scrolls, is required.

¹²⁰⁰ Job 41:4; Isa. 62:1.

¹²⁰¹ Psalm 145:21.

¹²⁰² Psalm 33:22.

¹²⁰³ Psalm 30:11.

¹²⁰⁴ Psalm 51:17.

תִּיכַנְתָּה כֹּל תוֹמֵךְ וּמוֹשֵׁל בְּכֹל

תְּחַבּוּלוֹתֶיךָ לְרַחֵם כֹּל תוֹכֵן כֹּל.

תוֹכֵן וְגַם יָכוֹל תִּיכַנְתָּה בְּמִידָה כֹּל

תוֹשִׁיעַ עוֹלָמִים לְשָׂכֵל אֲזַ בְּאִיִן כֹּל.

יְחַד תְּהִילוֹת אֲדַבֵּר עָרוֹף ... בֵּר

[קוֹל לֹא אֲרַחֵשׁ מִלְדַּבֵּר בְּעוֹמְדֵי ... בֵּר

כֹּכ תְהִילַת יי יִדְבַר פִּי וְגו'.

וְנֹא יְהִי חֶסֶדְךָ יי וְגו'... יי קוֹלִי וְגו'.

וְנֹא שָׁמַע יי וְחֲנִינִי וְגו'.

וְנֹא יי שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתַּח וְגו'.

אכרעה ואברכה
I BOW AND KNEEL

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

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אין לנו כהן גדול – We Have No High Priest

TITLE: We Have No High Priestאין לנו כהן גדול

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Lament for loss of Priesthood. Review of High Priest's Yom Kippur service. Relating the destruction of the Temple to the iniquity of the People. Each element of the High Priest's service is correlated with a particular aspect of loss which is a consequence of sin. An appeal to repent of sin in order to restore a proper connection with God through the mediation of the Priests.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 44
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 2) x1
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete
- **Other:** Play on root words in each line

NOTES:

1. Responsive reading is repetitive and prayerful, involving the congregation in the reading and recitation of the piyyut, and in the didactic principle of reading into history a proof of God's involvement, and of the People's responsibility [through sin] for negative events in history.
2. This Piyyut features prominently among the Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim for its wortspielerei, and for the Paytan's deft the play on words.

גדול כהן לנו אין – We Have No High Priest

- 1 We have no High Priest
To atone for us
And how shall we find atonement, to
Expiate our errors
- 2 We have no Urim and Thumim¹²⁰⁵
To inquire for judgment
And how shall we find a light¹²⁰⁶
While the object of our desire is in darkness.
[We have sinned]
- 3 The Avodah has ceased
From the House of Avodah
And how shall we worship the Pure One¹²⁰⁷
While a foreigner enslaves us
- 4 There ceased from His abode
All fire and guilt offerings
And how shall we offer fire offerings
While the fire has been extinguished on the altar.
[We have sinned...]
- 5 The joy of casting lots¹²⁰⁸
Has faded from it
And how shall we make a jubilant pilgrimage
While we are in exile
- 6 The repairers of the breach¹²⁰⁹
Have been scattered¹²¹⁰ for our faults
And how shall we repair the breach¹²¹¹
While there is none who can withstand the assault.
[We have sinned...]

¹²⁰⁵ Num. 27:21.

¹²⁰⁶ PT, Yoma 7:3 explains the origin of the term Urim and Thumim, based on the root **אור**. They lit the way for Israel. The Piyyut contradicts Mishnah Sotah 9:12 which states that since the passing of the First Prophets the Urim and Thumim were no longer needed or in use. Yosse ben Yosse harks back to early times, seeking to re-enact the First Temple sacral judgment, in opposition to the rabbis who seek to enact a new form of Judaic legislative system.

¹²⁰⁷ The Pure One: an epithet for God.

¹²⁰⁸ Lev. 16:8 .

¹²⁰⁹ Isa. 58:12.

¹²¹⁰ Exod. 19:22.

¹²¹¹ Ezek. 22:30.

אֵין לָנוּ כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל

אֵין לָנוּ כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל לְכַפֵּר בְּעַדְנוּ וְאִיךָ יִתְכַפֵּר לָנוּ עַל שְׁגָגוֹתֵינוּ

אֵין לָנוּ אוֹרִים וְתוֹמִים לְשֹׂאֵל בְּהֵם וְאִיךָ יֵאָר לָנוּ וְאוֹוֵיֵינוּ מֵאוֹפֵל.

חטא'

בְּטָלָה עֲבוֹדָה מִבֵּית עֲבוֹדָה וְאִיךָ נַעֲבֹד לְךָ וְזָר מַעֲבִיד בָּנוּ

בְּטָלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ אֲשִׁים וְאֲשָׁם וְאִיךָ נַעַשׂ אֲשִׁים וְאִשׁ מִזְבַּח כָּבֵה.

חטא'

גֵּיל גּוֹרְלוֹת חֲדַל מִמֶּנּוּ וְאִיךָ נַעַל בְּגִילָה וְאָנוּ בַּגּוֹלָה

גּוֹדְרֵי פְרָצוֹת נִפְרָצוּ בְּאֲשָׁמֵינוּ וְאִיךָ נִגְדּוֹר פְּרִץ וְאִין עוֹמֵד בְּפִרְץ.

חטא'

- 7 Offerings of tear¹²¹² and fullness¹²¹³
 Have become scarce in it
 And how shall we make our first offerings
 While our eyes are tearful¹²¹⁴
- 8 The blood that is to be dashed upon the altar¹²¹⁵
 Is no longer¹²¹⁶ in the House of Sacrifice¹²¹⁷
 And how shall we fling blood
 While our own blood spills.
[We have sinned...]
- 9 The offering of sweet spices incense¹²¹⁸
 Has been removed from it
 And how shall we offer the fragrance
 While our own odour has soured
- 10 The arrangement of oil lamps
 Has dimmed, along with our yearning,
 And how shall we prepare oil lamps
 While our own flame has expired.¹²¹⁹
[We have sinned...]
- 11 And the fragrance¹²²⁰ has ceased
 From the Place of our Respite¹²²¹
 And how shall we bring offerings of tribute
 While our House of Respite¹²²² is no more
- 12 And first-fruits for offerings¹²²³
 Have stopped ripening in season
 And how shall we make a pilgrimage on the Holiday of First Fruits¹²²⁴
 While there are no ripe fruit.¹²²⁵
[We have sinned...]

¹²¹² An epithet for wine, after Exod. 22:28.

¹²¹³ An epithet for fruit of the offerings of first fruits, **ביכורים**

¹²¹⁴ Here the reference is to human tears.

¹²¹⁵ Lev. 1:5.

¹²¹⁶ Reference to 1 Chron. 11:13 **פס דמים** where the Philistines gathered for battle. The root **פס** makes reference to something that has ceased and no longer flows. The blood offerings no longer flow in the Temple. The insinuation is that foreign powers have caused the cessation of ritual practices.

¹²¹⁷ 2 Chron. 7:12.

¹²¹⁸ Exod. 40:27.

¹²¹⁹ BT, Pssachim Folio 2, Gmara 1.

¹²²⁰ Lev. 6:8 in reference to the Minchah meal-offerings.

¹²²¹ An epithet for the Temple, after Psalm 95:11.

¹²²² 1 Chron. 28:2.

¹²²³ The meal-offering and the offering of first fruits are mentioned together in Lev. 23:17-18, and in Num. 28:26.

¹²²⁴ Shavuot is called **חג הביכורים**, the Holiday of the First Fruits, after Exod. 23:19.

¹²²⁵ Micah 7:1.

דְּמָעָה וּמְלֶאָה דָּלְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְאִיךְ נִתְרוֹם דָּמָע וְדָמָעָה בְּעֵינֵינוּ

דָּם זְרִיקַת זָבַח פֶּסַע מִבֵּית זָבַח וְאִיךְ נִזְרוֹק דָּם וְנִשְׁפָּךְ דָּמֵינוּ.

חטא'

הִקְטַרְתָּ רֵיחַ סַמִּים הוֹסֵר מִמֶּנּוּ וְאִיךְ נִקְטִיר רֵיחַ וְהוֹבֵאֵשׁ רֵיחֵינוּ

הִטְבַּת גְּרוֹת הוֹדַעְכוּ מֵאוֹיְבֵינוּ וְאִיךְ נִטִּיב גְּרוֹת וְכָבֵה נִירֵינוּ.

חטא'

וְנִיחַח חֶדְלִי מִמְּנוּחַתֵּינוּ וְאִיךְ נָבִיא מְנוּחָה וְאִין בֵּית מְנוּחָה

וּבִיכּוּרִים חֶדְלוּ לְבַכֵּר וְאִיךְ נַעַל בְּבִיכּוּר וְאִין בִּיכּוּרָה.

חטא'

- 13 The whole offerings¹²²⁶
 Have disappeared from the Perfection of Beauty¹²²⁷
 And how shall we offer a sacrifice
 While the House of Sacrifices¹²²⁸ has been destroyed
- 14 Our congregation has been given to gluttony¹²²⁹
 And strangers have risen up against it¹²³⁰
 And how shall we come to the City of our Inheritance¹²³¹
 While our estate is in the hands of others.
[We have sinned...]
- 15 Offerings of fat
 No longer give their fragrant scent
 And how shall we make fat offerings
 While our harvest has thinned¹²³²
- 16 There are no longer in it
 Goat offerings of atonement for sin
 And how shall we make a sin offering
 While our share of sin is overwhelming.
[We have sinned...]
- 17 Ablutions of purification
 Are no more in the Parvah Chamber¹²³³
 And how shall we¹²³⁴ bathe in purity
 While there are no more such ablutions
- 18 Rows of precious stones¹²³⁵
 No longer fill the settings of stones
 And how shall we remove the stony heart¹²³⁶
 While stones are cast upon us.¹²³⁷
[We have sinned...]

¹²²⁶ Psalm 51:21.

¹²²⁷ An epithet for Jerusalem, after Psalm 50:2.

¹²²⁸ 2 Chron. 7:12.

¹²²⁹ An epithet for the Congregation of Israel, after Lam. 1:11. The root *לרע* can be in reference to gluttony, but also to a cheapening, a state of being in abject misery and worthlessness.

¹²³⁰ Psalm 54:5.

¹²³¹ An epithet for Jerusalem, after Deut. 12:9.

¹²³² Psalm 81:17.

¹²³³ In accordance and agreement with Yoma 3:3.

¹²³⁴ Actually, a reference to the High Priest who must, on Yom Kippur, immerse himself five times and sanctify his hands and his feet ten times.

¹²³⁵ On the Breastplate of Judgment, see Exod. 28:17-20.

¹²³⁶ Ezek. 11:19.

¹²³⁷ Lam. 3:53.

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| זבחי קליל | פסו ממכלל יופי | ואיך נעש זבח | וחרב בית זבח |
| זוללה | זלזלה זרים | ואיך נבוא לנחלה | ונחלתינו לזרים. |

חטא'

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| חלבים | פסו מהקטירם | ואיך נקטיר חלב | ואין חלב חטה |
| חדלו ממנו | שעירי חטאת | ואיך נעש חטאת | וגברו חטאינו. |

חטא'

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| טבילת טהרה | אין בפרוה | ואיך נטבול בטוהר | ופסקו טבילות |
| טורי אבן | פסו ממלואת אבן | ואיך נסיר לב אבן | וידו בנו אבן. |

חטא'

- 19 The Forest of Lebanon¹²³⁸
 Has been trampled¹²³⁹
 And how shall the Groom's¹²⁴⁰ heart be ravished
 By the Bride of Lebanon¹²⁴¹
- 20 Our splendour¹²⁴² has withered¹²⁴³
 And our radiance¹²⁴⁴ has dimmed¹²⁴⁵
 And how shall the Pre-eminent One¹²⁴⁶ be extolled
 By the City of Beautiful Eyes¹²⁴⁷
[We have sinned...]
- 21 The atonement of bullocks
 Has passed from the Palanquin¹²⁴⁸
 And how shall we sacrifice a bull
 While there is no one¹²⁴⁹ to make the atonement possible
- 22 Our sacrifices of atonement
 Have gone from the place where our God has desired to dwell¹²⁵⁰
 And how shall we offer gifts¹²⁵¹
 While our corpses consume away.¹²⁵²
[We have sinned...]
- 23 We have not prepared frankincense¹²⁵³
 In the Hill of Lebanon¹²⁵⁴
 And how shall sin be whitewashed¹²⁵⁵
 For she who is fair as the moon¹²⁵⁶

¹²³⁸ An epithet for the Temple, after 1 Kings 7:2.

¹²³⁹ Isa. 5:5.

¹²⁴⁰ Song of Sol. 1:16.

¹²⁴¹ An epithet for the Congregation of Israel, after Song of Sol. 4:8.

¹²⁴² An epithet for Jerusalem, after Lam. 2:15.

¹²⁴³ The roots שָׁמָה refers to desertification and abandonment.

¹²⁴⁴ A possible epithet for God, after Psalm 27:1.

¹²⁴⁵ If the epithet refers to God, then this verb refers to a clouding over, a barrier that hinders communication between Israel and God.

¹²⁴⁶ An epithet for God, after Song of Sol 5:10.

¹²⁴⁷ An epithet for Jerusalem, after 1 Sam. 16:12, where reference is made to the beauty of King David. The beauty of the city reflects on the People; now that the city has been ravaged, her beauty has been devastated and hence the ability of the People to glorify God.

¹²⁴⁸ An epithet for the Temple, after Song of Sol. 3:9.

¹²⁴⁹ Priests.

¹²⁵⁰ Psalm 132:14.

¹²⁵¹ Psalm 76:12.

¹²⁵² Psalm 39:12. In another version of the Piyyut, the last line reads: "ואין שורש ישי" translated as "And there is no scion of Yishai," a King of the House of David, after Isa. 11:10. The reference is to the abolition of both the Kingdom of Israel and the destruction of the Temple, and hence to the cessation of sacrifices. See (1991) פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי, אהרון מירסקי, p. 213

¹²⁵³ Offered with the Meal-Offering, after Lev. 2:1.

¹²⁵⁴ An epithet for the Temple, after Song of Sol. 4:6.

¹²⁵⁵ Isa. 1:18.

¹²⁵⁶ An epithet for the Congregation of Israel, after Song of Sol. 6:10.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| יַעַר הַלְּבָנוֹן | הוֹשֵׁת לְמַרְמָס | וְאֵיךְ תִּלְבַּב לְדוֹד | כִּלְת הַלְּבָנוֹן |
| יִפְיִינוּ הוֹשֵׁם | וְאוֹרֵינוּ אֹפֶל | וְאֵיךְ תִּיַּפֶּה לְרַגּוּל | יִפֹּת עֵינָיִים. |

חטא'

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| כּוֹפֵר פֶּר | פֶּס מֵאֶפְרַיִן | אֵיךְ נִקְרִיב פֶּר | וְאִין מִי יִכְפֹּר |
| כְּפָרוֹתֵינוּ | פֶּסוּ מֵאוֹוֵיֵינוּ | וְאֵיךְ נִגִּישׁ שִׁי | וְתָמַס פְּגָרֵינוּ |

חטא'

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| לְבוֹנָה לֹא עֲשָׂנוּ | בְּגִבְעַת הַלְּבָנוֹן | וְאֵיךְ יִלְוֶינָה חֲטָא | יִפֶּה כִּלְבָנָה |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|

- 24 Loggs¹²⁵⁷ of oil have dried
 From the Fruitful Hill¹²⁵⁸
 And how shall we pour oil
 Upon the meal and oil offering.¹²⁵⁹
[We have sinned...]
- 25 Flowing myrrh¹²⁶⁰ has evaporated
 From the One who is Perfumed by Myrrh¹²⁶¹
 And how, on Mount Moriah¹²⁶²
 Shall the Bag of Myrrh¹²⁶³ rest
- 26 The brazier¹²⁶⁴ has shattered
 And can no longer collect the glowing embers
 And how shall we offer sweet spices
 While we have been ruined.
[We have sinned...]
- 27 Spikenard and saffron¹²⁶⁵
 Their perfume now dissipated
 And how shall we respond: My Spikenard
 Has sent forth its fragrance¹²⁶⁶
- 28 The drink offerings¹²⁶⁷
 Have ceased to be poured
 And how shall we pour forth
 As our Princeliness¹²⁶⁸ was intended.
[We have sinned...]

¹²⁵⁷ Logg is a measure for liquids, in reference to the measure of oil offered in the Meal Offering. See Mishnah Menachot 9:3; Lev. 2:1.

¹²⁵⁸ Literally "Horn of oil," like a cornucopia. An epithet for the Land of Israel, after Isa. 5:1.

¹²⁵⁹ Lev. 5:6.

¹²⁶⁰ Exod. 30:23.

¹²⁶¹ An epithet for the Congregation of Israel, after Song of Sol. 3:6.

¹²⁶² Gen. Rabah 55:7 links the מור in Moriah to myrrh.

¹²⁶³ An epithet for God, after Song of Sol. 1:13.

¹²⁶⁴ Coal pan with which the High Priest removes the glowing embers from the inner pyre. Lev. 16:12; Yo.ma 4:3

¹²⁶⁵ Song of Sol. 4:14.

¹²⁶⁶ Song of Sol. 1:12.

¹²⁶⁷ Num. 28:7.

¹²⁶⁸ Prov. 8:23.

לֹג שֶׁמֶן פֶּס מִקְרָן בֶּן שָׁמֶן וְאִיךָ נִצּוֹק שֶׁמֶן עַל בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן.

חטא'

מֶר דְּרוֹר אָפֶס מִמְקוֹטֶרֶת מוֹר וְאִיךָ בָּהָר הַמּוֹר יְלִין צְרוֹר הַמּוֹר

מַחְתָּה הוֹחְתָּה מִלְחָתוֹת גְּחָלִים וְאִיךָ נֶעַשׂ מַחְתָּה וְאֵנוּ בְּמַחֲיָתָה.

חטא'

נֶרֶד וְכַרְכּוֹם נֶרֶד רִיחוֹ וְאִיךָ נֶעַן: נֶרֶדִי נָתַן רִיחוֹ

נִסְכֵי שֶׁכֶר פֶּסוּ מֵהֶסֶד וְאִיךָ נִנְסֶד כְּנִי־סִכְתּוֹ מֵרֹאשׁ.

חטא'

- 29 The fine flour has been removed¹²⁶⁹
 From the preparation of breads¹²⁷⁰
 And how shall we prepare fine flour
 While we are ensnared behind ramparts¹²⁷¹
- 30 The sweet spices¹²⁷² have been removed
 From handfuls
 And how shall we mix spices
 While we are wilting under heavy taxes.
[We have sinned...]
- 31 The burnt offerings have departed
 From the Forest of Burnt Offerings¹²⁷³
 And how shall we make burnt offerings
 While the yoke is so heavy upon our shoulders
- 32 The wood on the pyre
 Is no longer set upon the altar of wood¹²⁷⁴
 And how shall we purify ourselves through the burning wood
 While we have stumbled because of that piece of wood¹²⁷⁵
[We have sinned...]
- 33 Bullocks and goats¹²⁷⁶
 No longer burn
 An how shall we burn a bull
 While our Temple has burned
- 34 The ornamental veil¹²⁷⁷ had been rent
 And the covering of the ark¹²⁷⁸ has been slashed
 And how shall we open our mouths in prayer
 While we toil in hardship.
[We have sinned...]

¹²⁶⁹ The root **פלו** insinuates a perversion of the way things ought to be; after Prov. 19:3.

¹²⁷⁰ Lev. 24:5-6.

¹²⁷¹ Both “ramparts” and “fine flour” share a eponymous root **ללו**.

¹²⁷² Lev. 16:12.

¹²⁷³ An epithet for the Temple, after Isa. 22:8.

¹²⁷⁴ Ezek. 41:22.

¹²⁷⁵ Lam. 5:13. The phrase “that piece of wood” may allude to the wood of the Cross.

¹²⁷⁶ Reference to the Yom Kippur offerings made by the High Priest, after Lev. 16:27.

¹²⁷⁷ That shields the ark from view. Exod, 26:20, 26:31, 30:6, 35:12, 36:34, 38:27, 39:34; Lev. 4:6. 16:1, 21:22, 24:2; Num. 4:5, 18:7; 1 Chron. 3:14.

¹²⁷⁸ Exod. 25:17; Exod. 37:6.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| וּנְלַכְדְּנוּ מִסּוּלְלוֹת | וְאִיךְ נִיּיֶפֶה סוּלַת | מִסְדֵּר חֵלוֹת | סוּלַת סוּלְפָה |
| וְהוּמְסָנוּ בְּמַסִּים. | וְאִיךְ נַעַשׂ סַמִּים | מִמְלוֹא חֶפְנִים | סַמִּים הוֹסֵר |

חטא'

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| וְהוֹכְבֵּר עוֹלֵינוּ | וְאִיךְ נַעַשׂ עוֹלוֹת | מִיַּעַר עוֹלוֹת | עוֹלָה עֲתָקָה |
| וְכָשְׁלָנוּ בְּעֵץ. | וְאִיךְ נִטְהַר בְּעֵץ | חֲדָלוּ מִמִּזְבַּח עֵץ | עֲצֵי עֵרֶף |

חטא'

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| וּמִקֹּדֶשׁ נִשְׂרַף | וְאִיךְ נִשְׂרוֹף פָּר | פֶּסוּ מְלֵהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל | פָּר וְשָׁעִיר |
| וְאָנוּ גַם בְּפָרָה. | וְאִיךְ נִפְצִיחַ פֶּלֶל | וְכַפּוֹרֶת כּוֹרֶתָהּ | פְּרוּכַת פּוֹרְכָהּ |

חטא'

- 35 Zion has become a desert
 Jerusalem is in ruins
 And how shall we mark for ourselves¹²⁷⁹
 The road to return
- 36 The plate of the holy crown¹²⁸⁰ has been removed
 From the forehead of the Appeaser¹²⁸¹
 And how shall we appease through offerings
 While our grace before God has wilted like grass.¹²⁸²
[We have sinned...]
- 37 The Voice has ceased to speak¹²⁸³
 In the Tent¹²⁸⁴
 And how shall we pitch our tent¹²⁸⁵
 While our Tent has been devastated
- 38 Sacrifice has ceased
 From the sacrificial lambs
 And how shall we make sacrifices
 While Shalem¹²⁸⁶ is in ruins.
[We have sinned...]
- 39 The Multitude¹²⁸⁷ has been removed¹²⁸⁸
 The boiled meal-offering¹²⁸⁹ has grown cold
 And how shall we mix the boiled meal offering
 While we are tormented with boiling liquids
- 40 The Wide Square¹²⁹⁰ has been narrowed
 And the celebrations therein have been padlocked
 And how shall we open our mouths over our enemies¹²⁹¹
 While our enemies judge¹²⁹² us.
[We have sinned...]

¹²⁷⁹ Jer. 31:20.

¹²⁸⁰ Exod. 39:29. The word זָרָח alludes to the staff of Aaron which had issued buds of flowers in miraculous evidence of Aaron's special chosen status as Appeaser of God, who appeases God's wrath for the sins of Israel through the sacrificial rituals of Yom Kippur at the Temple. Num. 17:23.

¹²⁸¹ An epithet for the High Priest.

¹²⁸² Isa. 40:7.

¹²⁸³ Num. 7:89.

¹²⁸⁴ An epithet for the Temple, in reference to the desert Tent of Meeting.

¹²⁸⁵ Jer. 10:20.

¹²⁸⁶ An epithet for Jerusalem, after Jer. 22:11 where the prophet makes reference to Shalem Son of Josiah King of Judea.

¹²⁸⁷ Literally "ten thousand," which is in reference to the Congregation of Israel, after Ezek. 16:7.

¹²⁸⁸ From Zion.

¹²⁸⁹ Lev. 6:14; see also Mishnah Menachot 7:1.

¹²⁹⁰ An epithet for the Temple, after Ezek. 41:4.

¹²⁹¹ 1 Sam. 2:1.

¹²⁹² Deut. 32:31.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| נְצִיב צִיּוֹנִים | וְאִיךְ נְצִיב לָנוּ | יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְעַיִים | צִיּוֹן צִיָּה |
| וְחִסְדֵּנוּ כְּצִיץ. | וְאִיךְ נִרְצָה כְּצִיץ | מִמִּצַּח מִרְצָה | צִיץ נֶזֶר נּוֹצֵל |

חטא'

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| וְשׁוֹדֵד אֹהֲלֵינוּ | וְאִיךְ נִנְטָה אֹהֶל | חֲדַל מֵאֹהֶל | קוֹל מְדַבֵּר |
| וְשָׁלֵם בְּחֶרֶבּוֹ. | וְאִיךְ נִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּנוּ | מִטְּלָה קֶרְבָּנוּ | קֶרְבָּנוּ חֲדַל |

חטא'

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| וְאָנוּ מְרוֹבְכִים | וְאִיךְ נַעַשׂ מְרַבֶּכֶת | רְבוּכָה הוֹקֶרֶה | רְבֵבָה הוֹרְחָקָה |
| וְאוֹיְבֵנוּ פְּלִילִים. | וְאִיךְ נִרְחִיב פֶּה | וְנִסְבָּה הוֹסְגָרָה | רְחֵבָה הוֹצָרָה |

חטא'

- 41 The People who have lacked for nothing have been made to sigh
 The sacrifice offerings have stopped
 And how shall we pay homage¹²⁹³
 While we are far off from peace¹²⁹⁴
- 42 The unblemished seven lambs¹²⁹⁵
 Have disappeared from our land
 And how shall we praise sevenfold¹²⁹⁶
 While we are sevenfold tormented.¹²⁹⁷
[We have sinned...]
- 43 Prayer has ceased
 From the House of Prayer¹²⁹⁸
 And how shall we respond in prayer
 While God has blocked the firmament¹²⁹⁹ to prayer.
- 44 The daily sacrifices ended
 From the Forest of Offerings
 And how shall we offer our daily devotions
 While the Temple has been abandoned.
[We have sinned...]

¹²⁹³ See line 22 above.

¹²⁹⁴ Lam. 3:17.

¹²⁹⁵ Of the Month Offering, Num. 28:11.

¹²⁹⁶ Psalm 119:164.

¹²⁹⁷ Lev. 26:28.

¹²⁹⁸ An epithet for the Temple, after Isa. 56:7.

¹²⁹⁹ Lam. 3:44.

שְׁלָמִים הָאֲנָחוּ שְׁלָמִים שָׁבְתוּ וְאִיךְ נְשָׁלֵם שִׁי וּמִשְׁלוֹם זָנְחָנוּ

שְׁבָעָה תְּמִימִים תָּמוּ מֵאֲרִצָּנוּ וְאִיךְ נְהַלֵּל שְׁבַע וַיִּסְרְנוּ בְּשָׁבַע.

חטא'

תְּפִלָּה פְּסָקָה מִבֵּית תְּפִלָּה וְאִיךְ נַעַן תְּפִלָּה וְסָף בְּעַד תְּפִלָּה.

תְּמִידִים כְּלוּ מִיַּעַר תְּמִידִים וְאִיךְ נַעַשׂ תְּמִידִים וּכְטַל הַתְּמִיד.

חטא'

אין לנו כהן גדול
WE HAVE NO HIGH PRIEST

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | |
| Exodus | 9 |
| Leviticus | 13 |
| Numbers | 5 |
| Deuteronomy | 2 |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | 1 |
| II kings | |
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| Hosea | |
| Joel | |
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| Obadiah | |
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| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |

| | |
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| Zephaniah | |
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| Zechariah | |
| Malachi | |
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| Job | |
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| Daniel | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | 2 |
| II Chronicles | 2 |
| Genesis Rabba | 1 |
| Mishnah | 2 |
| PT | 1 |
| BT | 1 |
| | |

אתן תהילה – I Give Praise

TITLE: I Give Praise.....אתן תהילה

SUBJECT SUMMARY: An elegy to God's greatness and His inclination to forgive His creatures' sins.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 44
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 2)
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete
- **Other:** --

NOTES: Ends with a single scriptural quote, which speaks of the ineffable nature of God's glory.

תהילה אתן – I Give Praise

- 1 I give praise¹³⁰⁰
To the Praiseworthy God,
I recount with reverence
A few of His deeds:
- 2 Everlasting God¹³⁰¹
For all eternity
Neither before nor after Him¹³⁰²
Shall any other god exist.
- 3 He is singular¹³⁰³
And none be with Him,¹³⁰⁴
He speaks and thus creates,
And nothing tarries before His word¹³⁰⁵
- 4 The sole judge,¹³⁰⁶
His justice unblemished,¹³⁰⁷
His word is Truth,¹³⁰⁸
And grace is an ornament upon His lips.¹³⁰⁹
- 5 He is mighty in strength,¹³¹⁰
He pardons iniquity,¹³¹¹
His is great in counsel¹³¹²,
And He overlooks transgression¹³¹³

¹³⁰⁰ Psalm 69:31.

¹³⁰¹ Psalm 93:2.

¹³⁰² Isa. 43:10.

¹³⁰³ Isa. 37:2.

¹³⁰⁴ Deut. 32:12.

¹³⁰⁵ Isa. 40:26.

¹³⁰⁶ Job 23:13.

¹³⁰⁷ Psalm 92:16.

¹³⁰⁸ Psalm 119:160.

¹³⁰⁹ Prov. 31:26.

¹³¹⁰ Psalm 103:20.

¹³¹¹ Micah 7:18.

¹³¹² Jer. 32:19.

¹³¹³ Micah 7:18.

אתן תהלה

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| אתן תהלה | לאל המהולל | אספרה ביראה | מעט ממעשיו: |
| אלוה מעולם | ועד לא עולם | לפניו ואחריו | לא נוצר אל. |
| בלבדו הוא | ואין אתו זר | אומר ועושה | ואיש לא נעדר |
| באחד ישפוט | ואין בו עולה, | אמת אמרתו | ועל שפתיו חסד. |
| גבור בכח | נושא עון | גדול העצה | ועובר על פשע |

- 6 He reveals deep mysteries,¹³¹⁴
 And extracts them from darkness,
 He dwells in concealment,¹³¹⁵
 And yet He sees all that we hide.¹³¹⁶
- 7 Knowledge and wisdom
 Come forth from His mouth,¹³¹⁷
 And His eyes rove,¹³¹⁸
 Yet no eye can behold Him¹³¹⁹
- 8 His word creates
 And His reign is eternal,
 The world entire is filled with His glory,¹³²⁰
 And He cannot be contained by the vastness of the heavens.¹³²¹
- 9 He dons glory,¹³²²
 Adorned by His Majesty,¹³²³
 His might is magnificent,
 And His Name is as great as His might
- 10 God is perfect in His ways¹³²⁴
 Everlasting and eternal,
 All shall pass,
 But He alone will forever endure.¹³²⁵
- 11 Even before He formed¹³²⁶
 The world upon the void,
 The roar of waters¹³²⁷
 Testify to His greatness¹³²⁸

¹³¹⁴ Job 12:22.

¹³¹⁵ Psalm 91:1.

¹³¹⁶ Jer. 23:24.

¹³¹⁷ Prov. 2:6.

¹³¹⁸ 2 Chron. 16:9.

¹³¹⁹ Job 34:29.

¹³²⁰ Isa. 6:3.

¹³²¹ 2 Chron. 2:5.

¹³²² Psalm 104:1.

¹³²³ Psalm 96:6.

¹³²⁴ Psalm 18:31.

¹³²⁵ Psalm 102:27-28.

¹³²⁶ Isa. 44:5.

¹³²⁷ Psalm 93:4.

¹³²⁸ The word אָדָר is drawn from the word אָדִיר and from the verb לְהַאדִיר, to glorify, to testify to God's greatness.

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| גולה עמוקות | מני חשה, | יושב בסתר | ורואה כל סתר. |
| דעת ותבונה | יוצאות מפיו | ועיניו משוטטות | ועין לא תשורנו |
| דברו המשל | וממשלתו סלה, | מלא כל־הארץ כבודו | ורום לא יכילנו. |
| הדור בלבשו | הוד תפארתו | הדר עוזו | כשמו גבורתו |
| האל תמים | צור עולמים, | הכל יעבורו | והוא לבד יעמוד. |
| ועד לא רקע | תבל על תהו | ומקולות מים | אדר ישמיעו |

- 12 He resides in the heavens above¹³²⁹
 He is a matchless sovereign of all
 Yet He gazes upon the most humble,
 And upon the meek.¹³³⁰
- 13 The smallest of His fingers hath
 Fashioned the firmament with perspicacity,¹³³¹
 The sun, the moon, and the stars,
 Are but the creatures of His fingers¹³³²
- 14 With forethought and wisdom
 Creation became, and was completed,¹³³³
 As He purposed in His heart,¹³³⁴
 So does it stand.
- 15 Benevolent in all His deeds,¹³³⁵
 And merciful to all who flee toward Him¹³³⁶
 Righteous in all His ways
 And close to His seekers¹³³⁷
- 16 He desires to find innocent
 All the creatures He has created,
 He is always striving
 For the welfare of His chosen ones.¹³³⁸
- 17 Clear and pure of eyes,¹³³⁹
 He yearns for repentance,
 Fond of acquittal,
 He is quick to withdraw His anger¹³⁴⁰

¹³²⁹ Isa. 57:15.

¹³³⁰ Isa. 66:1-2.

¹³³¹ Isa. 40:12.

¹³³² Psalm 8:4.

¹³³³ Psalm 33:11.

¹³³⁴ Isa. 14:24.

¹³³⁵ Psalm 145:17.

¹³³⁶ The verse is evocative of the Piyut **לעזרה אנוסה**; it can also be translated as: "Those who are tested by Him," after Deut. 8:2.

¹³³⁷ Psalm 26:6.

¹³³⁸ Psalm 105:6.

¹³³⁹ Hab. 1:13.

¹³⁴⁰ Psalm 78:38.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| וּמְרוֹם שְׁבַתוֹ | וְהוּא רָם עַל כָּל | וּמִבֵּית אֶל עָנִי | וְנִכְחַ רֹחַ. |
| זֶרְתּוֹ תִּכְנֶה | שָׁמַיִם בְּתִבּוּנָה | מְאֹרוֹת וְכוֹכָבִים | מַעֲשֵׂה אֲצַבְעוֹתָיו |
| זָמַם בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ | וְתִקַּם וְתַעַשׂ | יֹעֵץ בְּלִבּוֹ | וְתַעֲמֹד עֲצָתוֹ. |
| חָסִיד בְּמַעֲשָׂיו | וְרַחוּם לְמִנּוּסָיו | צַדִּיק בְּדַרְכָּיו | וְקָרוֹב לְקוֹרְאָיו |
| חֶפֶץ לְהַצְדִּיק | יְצוּרֵי כִפְיוֹ, | תְּמִיד יִשְׁקֹד | בְּטוֹבַת בְּחִירָיו. |
| טְהוֹר עֵינָיִם | רוֹצֵה בְּתִשׁוּבָה, | מְרַבֵּה לְזָכוֹת | לְהָשִׁיב אָפוֹ |

- 18 Compassionate to each succeeding generation
 He speaks justice,¹³⁴¹
 The crown on His head¹³⁴²
 Is the diadem of salvation.¹³⁴³
- 19 His right hand is always open
 To those who repent of iniquity,¹³⁴⁴
 Always saying:
 Return unto Me, and I will return unto you¹³⁴⁵
- 20 Out of clay He had fashioned¹³⁴⁶
 A person in His image,¹³⁴⁷
 His tender mercies are over all His works¹³⁴⁸
 And He knows and understands our nature.¹³⁴⁹
- 21 He is the epitome of Glory¹³⁵⁰
 Yet He watches over the meek
 He listens to our every murmur¹³⁵¹
 And to our every joyous song¹³⁵²
- 22 The legions of the heavens¹³⁵³
 All bow before Him,
 The sun and the moon,
 Kneel before Him.

¹³⁴¹ Isa. 63:1.

¹³⁴² Ezek. 24:23.

¹³⁴³ Isa. 59:17.

¹³⁴⁴ Isai. 59:20.

¹³⁴⁵ Mal. 3:7.

¹³⁴⁶ Gen. 2:7.

¹³⁴⁷ Gen. 1:27.

¹³⁴⁸ Psalm 145:9.

¹³⁴⁹ Psalm 103:14.

¹³⁵⁰ Psalm 29:9.

¹³⁵¹ 1 Kings 8:28.

¹³⁵² Psalm 51:16.

¹³⁵³ Neh. 9:6.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| טובו בְּכָל־דּוֹר | מְדַבֵּר בְּצַדִּיקָה | פֶּאֶר רֵאשׁוּ | כּוֹבֵעַ יְשׁוּעָה. |
| יְמִינוֹ פְּתוּחָה | לְכָל שָׁבִי פֶשַׁע, | אוֹמֵר בְּכָל־עֵת: | שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאֲשׁוּבָה |
| יֵצֵר מִחוּמָּר | צֶלֶם דָּמוֹתוֹ | רַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו | יֹדֵעַ יֵצְרָנוּ. |
| כֹּלֹ כְבוֹד | מִשְׁגִּיחַ בְּדָכָא | מֵאֲזִין כָּל־לַחֵשׁ | רַנַּת לְשׁוֹן |
| כָּל־צָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם | מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לוֹ | שֶׁמֶשׁ וַיָּרַח | יִכְרְעוּ לְפָנָיו. |

- 23 Never will He stretch a line of chaos¹³⁵⁴
 Against His creations
 When He sits in judgment¹³⁵⁵
 He does not dwell on petulance¹³⁵⁶
- 24 He hath created, for His pleasure,¹³⁵⁷
 The world in all its complexity,
 And proclaimed the generations for all time,¹³⁵⁸
 Who can be compared to Him.¹³⁵⁹
- 25 In the depths of one's heart,
 And through the secrets of one's conscience,
 He understands the thoughts¹³⁶⁰
 Of all human beings
- 26 From Iniquity and perverseness¹³⁶¹
 He hides his countenance
 For He does not look upon wickedness¹³⁶²
 As He averts His eyes there from.¹³⁶³
- 27 He is encircled by glowing radiance¹³⁶⁴
 And He is concealed in darkness¹³⁶⁵
 For none can gaze upon Him
 And live¹³⁶⁶

¹³⁵⁴ Isa. 34:11.

¹³⁵⁵ Psalm 122:5.

¹³⁵⁶ Exod. 17:7.

¹³⁵⁷ Prov. 16:4.

¹³⁵⁸ Isa. 41:4.

¹³⁵⁹ Psalm 89:7.

¹³⁶⁰ I Chron. 28:9.

¹³⁶¹ Num. 23:21.

¹³⁶² Hab. 1:13.

¹³⁶³ Isa. 33:15

¹³⁶⁴ Ezek. 1:4.

¹³⁶⁵ Psalm 18:12.

¹³⁶⁶ Exod. 33:20.

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|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| לא ינטה קו | כנגד יצוריו | בשבתו למשפט | ברייב לא יעמיק |
| למענו פעל | מפעלות עולם | קורא דורות | מי יערוך אליו. |
| ממעמקי לב | וסתרי כליות | מבין מחשבות | כל־בני אדם |
| מאון ומעמל | יסתיר פניו | מראות ברע | יעלים עיניו. |
| נוגה סביביו | ושת סתרו חשך | כי לא יראהו | האדם וחי |

- 28 Awesome in His deeds!¹³⁶⁷
 He demands a human's contrition¹³⁶⁸
 Until he repents
 So that long may he live.¹³⁶⁹
- 29 His strength is exalted¹³⁷⁰
 And He dons Righteousness,¹³⁷¹
 Who is a god like Him,¹³⁷²
 So patient and forgiving¹³⁷³
- 30 He despises and abhors
 Robbery with iniquity¹³⁷⁴
 But He adores and loves the pure of heart¹³⁷⁵
 For to obey is better than sacrifice.¹³⁷⁶
- 31 He arrests (the world) with His rebuke
 And dries up the oceans¹³⁷⁷
 He bounds in his garment
 All the waters of Creation¹³⁷⁸
- 32 He answers, with His grace,¹³⁷⁹
 The call of rams' horns¹³⁸⁰
 And wipes clean all iniquities
 As the wind blows clean the mists and the clouds.¹³⁸¹

¹³⁶⁷ Psalm 66:5.

¹³⁶⁸ Psalm 90:3.

¹³⁶⁹ Ezek. 18:32.

¹³⁷⁰ Job 37:23.

¹³⁷¹ Isa. 59:17.

¹³⁷² Micah 7:18.

¹³⁷³ Num. 14:18; Joel 2:13.

¹³⁷⁴ Isa. 61:8.

¹³⁷⁵ Prov. 22:11.

¹³⁷⁶ I Sam. 15:22.

¹³⁷⁷ Job 12:15.

¹³⁷⁸ Prov. 30:4.

¹³⁷⁹ Psalm 22:22.

¹³⁸⁰ An allusion to the Shofar, and thereby to Rosh Hashanah.

¹³⁸¹ Isa. 44:22.

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| נֹרָא עֲלִיָּלָה! | הִשָּׁב אָנוּשׁ עַד דְּכָא | עַד כִּי יָשׁוּב | וַיֵּאָרִיךְ יָמַיִם. |
| שְׂגִיָּא כַּח | לוֹבֵשׁ צְדָקָה | מִי אֵל כְּמָהוּ | אָרַךְ אַפָּיִם |
| שׁוֹנָא וּמְתָעַב | גָּזַל בְּעוֹלָה | אוֹהֵב טְהוֹר לֵב | שְׁמוּעַ מְזֻבַּח טוֹב. |
| עוֹצֵר בְּגַעְרָתוֹ | וּמַחְרִיב יָמַיִם | צוֹרֵר כְּשִׁמְלָה | כָּל־מִי בְּרֵאשִׁית |
| עוֹנָה בַּחֲסָדוֹ | מְקַרְנֵי רְאֵמַיִם | מוֹחָה עוֹנוֹת | כְּעֵב וְכַעְנָן. |

- 33 He had wrought and done everything¹³⁸²
 With the word of His mouth¹³⁸³
 In all His ways
 He seeks justice and judgment¹³⁸⁴
- 34 His mouth says:
 Do this and live¹³⁸⁵
 For I do not desire
 The death of the iniquitous.¹³⁸⁶
- 35 He gazes into the future
 He soars in His awesomeness¹³⁸⁷
 His throne is elevated¹³⁸⁸
 Yet He sees every humble creature,¹³⁸⁹
- 36 Girded with abundant power¹³⁹⁰
 He rides astride the wind,¹³⁹¹
 He examines hearts¹³⁹²
 And forgets naught.
- 37 He stridently calls out:
 I am God, El-Shadai,¹³⁹³
 Return unto Me
 And I will return unto you¹³⁹⁴

¹³⁸² Isa. 41:4.

¹³⁸³ Psalm 33:6.

¹³⁸⁴ Deut. 32:4.

¹³⁸⁵ Gen. 42:18.

¹³⁸⁶ Ezek. 18:32.

¹³⁸⁷ Isa. 87:15; Psalm 47:3.

¹³⁸⁸ Isa. 6:1.

¹³⁸⁹ Psalm 138:6.

¹³⁹⁰ Isa. 63:1.

¹³⁹¹ Psalm 18:11.

¹³⁹² Psalm 7:10.

¹³⁹³ Gen. 17:1.

¹³⁹⁴ Joel 2:12; Mal. 3:7.

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|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| פֶּעַל וְעָשָׂה הַכֹּל | בְּדַבַּר פִּי | כִּי כָל־דַּרְכָּיו | צָדֵק וּמִשְׁפָּט |
| פִּי יֹאמֶר: | זֹאת עָשׂוּ וַחֲיוּ | כִּי לֹא אֶחְפוֹץ | בְּמוֹת הַרְשָׁע. |
| צוּפָה רְחוּקוֹת | נִשְׂא וְנוֹרָא | מְרוֹמִם כְּסָאוֹ | וְשָׁפַל יִרְאֶה, |
| צוּעָה בְּרוֹב כַּחוֹ | וְדוֹאָה בְּכַנְפֵי רוּחַ, | בוֹחֵן לְבוֹת | וַאִיִּן לְפָנָיו שְׂכָחָה. |
| קוֹרָא בְּקוֹל רָם: | אֲנִי אֵל שַׁדַּי, | שׁוֹבוּ עָדַי | וְאֲשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם |

- 38 Come closer to Him,¹³⁹⁵
 With the force of repentance,
 For His ears are keen¹³⁹⁶
 To hear the cries of the lowly.¹³⁹⁷
- 39 Merciful and compassionate,¹³⁹⁸
 Please judge us with kindness,
 Acquit us in judgment
 For we are but dust and ashes¹³⁹⁹
- 40 Revered in the heavens,¹⁴⁰⁰
 The King of the firmament,¹⁴⁰¹
 He hears from up above
 The cries of the destitute.¹⁴⁰²
- 41 The sky is His throne
 And the earth but a foot rest¹⁴⁰³
 His armour is Justice¹⁴⁰⁴
 And His garment is radiance¹⁴⁰⁵
- 42 His Name is most awesome
 He is merciful and compassionate¹⁴⁰⁶
 To each and every generation¹⁴⁰⁷
 This is His righteousness.

¹³⁹⁵ Joel 2:12.

¹³⁹⁶ Psalm 130:2.

¹³⁹⁷ Prov. 21:13.

¹³⁹⁸ Exod. 34:6.

¹³⁹⁹ Gen. 18:27.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Psalm 91:9.

¹⁴⁰¹ Psalm 68:35.

¹⁴⁰² Psalm 69:34.

¹⁴⁰³ Isa. 66:1.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Isa. 59:17.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Psalm 104:2.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Psalm 111:4.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Isa. 51:8.

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|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| קָרְבוֹ עֲדִיו | בְּכַח הַתְּשׁוּבָה, | וְאֲזַנְיוֹ קְשׁוּבוֹת | לְקוֹל זַעֲקַת דָּל. |
| רְחוּם וְחַנוּן, | שֶׁפְּטִינוּ בְּרַחֲמִים | צְדָקְנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט | כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ עֶפֶר וְאֶפֶר |
| רַם בְּעַלְיוֹנִים | מֶלֶךְ בְּשַׁחֲקִים | שׁוֹמֵעַ מִמְרוֹמִים | זַעֲקַת אֲבִיוֹנִים. |
| שָׁמַיִם כֶּסֶאֹ | וְהָאָרֶץ הָדוּם | צְדָקָה שְׂרִיוֹנוֹ | וּמְאוּרַ שְׁמֵלְתוֹ |
| שְׁמוֹ נוֹרָא מְאֹד | חַנוּן וְרַחוּם | בְּכֹל דוֹר וְדוֹר | הִיא צְדָקְתוֹ. |

- 43 His is perfect is all His ways¹⁴⁰⁸
 And brooks no evil¹⁴⁰⁹
 Every morning¹⁴¹⁰ He dispenses
 His justice for all to see
- 44 He weighs hearts¹⁴¹¹
 He is mighty in His every deed¹⁴¹²
 Who can express
 The mighty acts of God.¹⁴¹³

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“Who can express the mighty acts of God, who can make all of His praise heard.”¹⁴¹⁴

תָּמִים דְּרָכָו וְאֵין לְפָנָיו עֹל בְּכָל־בִּקְר יִתֵּן לְאֹר מְשַׁפֵּטוּ

תּוֹכֵן לְבוֹת רַב הָעֲלִילָהָ מִי יִמְלֵל גְּבוּרוֹת יְיָ.

ככתוב בדברי קדשך: מי ימלל גבורות יי שמיע כל־תהלתו.

¹⁴⁰⁸ 2 Sam. 22:31.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Deut. 32:4.

¹⁴¹⁰ Zeph. 3:5.

¹⁴¹¹ Prov. 21:2.

¹⁴¹² Jer. 32:19.

¹⁴¹³ Psalm 106:2.

¹⁴¹⁴ Psalm 106:2.

אתן תהילה
I GIVE PRAISE

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | 5 |
| Exodus | 3 |
| Leviticus | |
| Numbers | 2 |
| Deuteronomy | 4 |
| Joshua | |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | 1 |
| II kings | |
| I Samuel | 1 |
| II Samuel | 1 |
| Isaiah | 26 |
| Jeremiah | 4 |
| Ezekiel | 4 |
| Hosea | |
| Joel | 2 |
| Amos | |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | 3 |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | 2 |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Zephaniah | 1 |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | |
| Malachi | 2 |
| Psalms | 42 |
| Proverbs | 7 |
| Job | 5 |
| Song of Songs | |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | |
| Daniel | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | 1 |
| I Chronicles | 1 |
| II Chronicles | 2 |
| Genesis Rabba | |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| | |

אהללה אלוהי – I Praise My God

TITLE: I Praise My God.....אהללה אלוהי

SUBJECT SUMMARY: An elegy to God's greatness with an emphasis on miraculous wonders. Review of ten miraculous victories of Israel over their foes, through the direct intercession of God. Speaks of God's Majesty and His direct involvement in human history. The sovereignization of God.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 46
- **Acrostic system:** (2 x א"ב) + (4 x repetition of the letter ת as a cap).
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Complete.
- **Other:** Every strophe ends with the word מלוכה

NOTES: Scriptural proof texts are interspersed in the Piyyut. May be intended for responsive reading by the congregation. Appears to be didactic, as part of the Rosh Hashanah order of prayers [מלכויות, זכרונות ושופרות]. In this Piyyut the Paytan relies extensively on "external" sources and on non-canonical texts.

אלוהי אהללה – I Praise My God

- 1 I praise my God¹⁴¹⁵
I sing of His glory¹⁴¹⁶
I speak of His grace¹⁴¹⁷
I robe¹⁴¹⁸ Him with Majesty
- 2 I extol¹⁴¹⁹ the Creator¹⁴²⁰
Whose Word became deed¹⁴²¹
I shall glorify Him¹⁴²² for He
Is most worthy¹⁴²³ of Majesty.
- 3 I forever lionize¹⁴²⁴ His might
For I am His legion¹⁴²⁵
And He merits tale
Of His grand Majesty

¹⁴¹⁵ Psalm 69:31.

¹⁴¹⁶ Psalm 59:17.

¹⁴¹⁷ Psalm 96"3.

¹⁴¹⁸ Exod. 29:5 speaks of the High Priest's vestments. The **אפוד** is a unique item of clothing reserved only for the High Priest. Here the Paytan turns the object into a future-tense verb **אאפודהו**. The implication is that God is robed with an **אפוד**, with the High Priest's vestments; or, alternatively, that the Priestly vestments are worthy of God, thus imbuing the High Priest with a measure of God's glory.

¹⁴¹⁹ Psalm 91:14.

¹⁴²⁰ Literally: The One who Acts, an epithet for God the Creator, after Prov. 16:4.

¹⁴²¹ Psalm 33:9.

¹⁴²² Exod. 15:2.

¹⁴²³ Jer. 10:7.

¹⁴²⁴ The Paytan uses the verb **שננ** which can be translated in several ways, as follows: (1) **שינן**: sharpened, after Psalm 64:4 and 48:6 which speak of sharpened arrows. Similarly, in Deut. 6:7 the verse speaks of sharpening the mind as one sharpens a sword. (2) **שינן**: reiterated, as is commonly used in Modern Hebrew. (3) **שינן**: glorify, praise. Mirsky proposes that **אשנן** hails from Syriac whereas in Syriac **שענן** means to glorify [ירושלים: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). p. 93, footnote 3. (4) **אשנן**: a reference to the Heavenly Choir of angels, after Psalm 68:18 "אֲדַבֵּר בְּכֹדֶשׁ; רַבְתִּים אֱלֹהִים, רַבְתִּים אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמַיִם;" which imbues the act of singing with a heavenly overtone, and the community singers with an angelic closeness to God. In my reading of the Piyyut it is probably safe to say that all four meanings can be folded into the word as one. I chose the English word "Lionize" to capture the cultural fear, awe, and reverence before the King of Beasts as an allegory of God's might.

¹⁴²⁵ Exod. 7:4.

אהללה אלהי

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| אֶהְלֵלָה אֱלֹהֵי | אֲשִׁירָה עֲוֹז | אֶסְפְּרָה כְבוֹדוֹ | אֶאֱפָדְנֹו מְלוֹכָה |
| אֲשַׁגֵּב לְפוֹעַל | אֲשֶׁר שָׁח וּפָעַל | אֶאֱנִיְהוּ כִּי לוֹ | יֵאֲתָה מְלוֹכָה. |
| בְּעֹזוֹ נִצַּח אֲשַׁנֵּן | כִּי צָבָאוֹ אֲנִי | וְלוֹ נִאָּה שִׁיחַ | גִּדְלֵ הַמְלוֹכָה |

- 4 I proclaim in assembly¹⁴²⁶
 And exalt among the multitudes¹⁴²⁷
 Him, who has the excellence of dignity and the supremacy of power¹⁴²⁸
 And He, who is our Majesty.
- 5 Come hither, oh Nations
 Come forth, all you Kingdoms
 See how magnificent He is
 In His girded belt¹⁴²⁹ of Majesty
- 6 Declare His greatness with me
 And let us exalt His name together¹⁴³⁰
 And do not adorn yourselves
 With a crown of Majesty.
- 7 The paths found while
 Traversing the depths of the sea¹⁴³¹
 All of you¹⁴³² - look and consider
 Him who is foremost in Majesty
- 8 He hath trampled¹⁴³³ their horses in the deep¹⁴³⁴
 All six hundred chariots¹⁴³⁵
 What use a man's effort¹⁴³⁶
 Given the might of Majesty.

¹⁴²⁶ Psalm 40:10.

¹⁴²⁷ Prov. 14:28.

¹⁴²⁸ Gen. 49:3. In Gen. Rabba 99:6, the Sages speak of the three crowns that were to garland Judah: the Priesthood, the Monarchy (after 1 Sam. 2:10), and the right of the First Born. I did not alter the English translation here to reflect the added layer of meaning, but one has to read the Piyyut with the additional information in mind.

¹⁴²⁹ Psalm 109:19 The word **נרמ** in Modern Hebrew refers to a pier at a harbour. In Biblical Hebrew, the word carries a connotation of a tough and resolute girding of oneself before battle, after Job 12:22 The following verses speak of the ten heroic victories of the Israelites over the Nations, whereas God fought for and with the Israelites to victory.

¹⁴³⁰ Psalm 34:4.

¹⁴³¹ A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea.

¹⁴³² A reference to the Nations.

¹⁴³³ Psalm 91:13.

¹⁴³⁴ Hab. 3:15.

¹⁴³⁵ Exod. 14:7.

¹⁴³⁶ A reference to the humanity of the Pharaoh, after Prov. 24:5.

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| בְּקָהֶל אַבְשָׁר | בְּרֹב עַם אֶהְיֶה | לְמִי שָׂאת וַיִּתֶּר עָז | וּלְמִי הִמְלוֹכָה. |
| גָּשׁוּ גוֹיִם | וּבֹאוּ מִמְּלָכוֹת | רְאוּ מָה נִהְדָּר | בְּמִזַּח הִמְלוֹכָה |
| גִּדְלוּהוּ אֶתִי | וּנְרוּמְמָנְהוּ יַחַד | וְאֵל תִּתְגָּאוּ | בְּנִזֵּר הִמְלוֹכָה. |
| דְּרָכִים בְּעַת | נַעֲשֶׂתָה מְצוּלָה | הַתְּבוֹנְנוּ יַחַד | לְמִי נִזְרְקָה מְלוֹכָה |
| דֶּרֶךְ סוּס בָּיִם | כַּנְגֵּד שֵׁשׁ מְאוֹת רֶכֶב | וּמֵה־יּוֹעִיל גִּבֹּר | עוֹז בְּמְלוֹכָה. |

- 9 The noblemen listened
 And then were agitated¹⁴³⁷
 They watched the destruction¹⁴³⁸
 And forsook all Majesty
- 10 They spoke of His strength¹⁴³⁹
 All the Nations declared
 This is the God, who shall be rightfully writ
 In the name of Majesty.
- 11 He hath battled the foremost¹⁴⁴⁰
 Of the Nations, and they perished,¹⁴⁴¹
 For The Living One¹⁴⁴² swore¹⁴⁴³
 By the throne of Majesty
- 12 And the enemy¹⁴⁴⁴ will be derided in every generation
 For he had not realized
 Who had done battle at the Sea
 And donned Majesty¹⁴⁴⁵.
- 13 He had sinned wilfully against his Master
 That slave who dwells in the south¹⁴⁴⁶
 Because of that, the earth trembles¹⁴⁴⁷
 Because of a slave, who provocatively seeks Majesty

¹⁴³⁷ Exod. 15:14.

¹⁴³⁸ Job 6:21.

¹⁴³⁹ Exod. 18:11.

¹⁴⁴⁰ A reference to Amalek, after Num. 24:20.

¹⁴⁴¹ Exod. 17:8, 13.

¹⁴⁴² An epithet for Moses, after the verse in Exod. 1:16 in which the Pharaonic decree sentences to death every Hebrew male newborn. Moses remained alive despite the edict, hence his sobriquet The Living One.

¹⁴⁴³ Num. 24:20.

¹⁴⁴⁴ A reference to Amalek.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Isa. 61:10.

¹⁴⁴⁶ A reference to Canaan, after Gen. 9:25.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Prov. 30:21-22.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| הַאֲזִינוּ רוֹזְנִים | אֲזוּ וַיִּרְגְּזוּ | הַבֵּיטוּ חַתָּת | וּמֵאֲסוּ מְלוֹכָה |
| הַגִּידוּ כֹחַו | לְאֻמִּים וְדַבְּרוּ | לְזֶה יִכְתֹּב | שֵׁם הַמְּלוֹכָה. |
| וְנִלְחַם רֵאשִׁית | גוֹיִם וְאָכַר | כִּי נִשְׁבַּע חַי | בְּכֶסֶף מְלוֹכָה |
| וַיִּוֹלַעַג בְּכַל־דֹּר | כִּי לֹא לָמַד | מִי נִלְחַם בַּיָּם | וְעָטָה מְלוֹכָה. |
| זָד עַל אֲדוֹנָיו | עֶבֶד יֹשֵׁב נֶגֶב | בְּזֹאת תִּרְגְּזוּ אֶרֶץ | בְּשֵׂאת עֶבֶד מְלוֹכָה |

- 14 The blessed seed¹⁴⁴⁸
 Have vanquished the cursed¹⁴⁴⁹
 Because they¹⁴⁵⁰ raised their voices
 To the Mighty in Majesty¹⁴⁵¹.
- 15 Heshbon¹⁴⁵² and Bashan¹⁴⁵³
 Instigated a war
 Blocking the path
 Of the legions¹⁴⁵⁴ of Majesty
- 16 Their armies were destroyed¹⁴⁵⁵
 And their land was partitioned¹⁴⁵⁶
 And despite their strength
 Thus fell their Majesty.
- 17 The Canaanites were obtuse
 For they are strangers¹⁴⁵⁷
 In the land of Shem
 The seed of Majesty¹⁴⁵⁸
- 18 Bin Nun did slay them
 Until he cleared the Land
 For the Ark of the Covenant
 Of the Lord¹⁴⁵⁹ of Majesty.

¹⁴⁴⁸ A reference to Israel, after Isa. 61:9.

¹⁴⁴⁹ A reference to the Canaanites, after Num. 21:3.

¹⁴⁵⁰ A reference to the Israelites who raised their voices to God in prayer, after Num. 21:3.

¹⁴⁵¹ Isa. 33:21.

¹⁴⁵² Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, after Num. 21:26.

¹⁴⁵³ Og was the king of Bashan, after Num. 21:33.

¹⁴⁵⁴ A reference to Israel who are God's army, after Exod. 7:4.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Amos 2:9.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Num. 21:24-25.

¹⁴⁵⁷ A reference to the forefather of the Canaanites, Noah's son Ham, after Gen. 10:6.

¹⁴⁵⁸ A reference to Israel, with a Priestly overtone, for Israel serves God, after Exod. 19:6.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Joshua 3:11.

זָרַע בְּרוּכִים הֶחֱרִימוּ אַרְוֵרִים כִּי נָתַנוּ קוֹל לְאֲדִיר בְּמְלוּכָה.

חֶשְׁבוֹן וּבִשּׁוֹן עוֹרְרוּ מְלַחֶמֶת בְּלִי לְתֵת דָּרֶךְ לְצַבָּאוֹת מְלוּכָה

חֵילָם נִשְׁמַר וְאֶרְצָם חוֹלְקָה וּמַעַל זְרוּעָם נִפְלָה מְלוּכָה.

טָפְשׁוּ בְנֵי כְנַעַן כִּי נוֹכְרִים הֵם בְּאֲדַמַּת בְּנֵי שָׁם זָרַע הַמְּלוּכָה

טְבַחָם בְּזַנּוֹן עַד יִפְנֶה אֶרֶץ לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית אֲרוֹן הַמְּלוּכָה.

- 19 The denizens of Harosheth¹⁴⁶⁰
 Did tyrannize and oppress¹⁴⁶¹
 And they¹⁴⁶² aided him without seeking reward¹⁴⁶³
 Thus to naught came their Majesty
- 20 The war was fought through God's intercession¹⁴⁶⁴
 With His own armies¹⁴⁶⁵, who seek no reward
 So may His enemies all be smashed¹⁴⁶⁶
 And to God His Majesty.
- 21 Like a cedar in Lebanon¹⁴⁶⁷
 Assyria had grown
 And hurled abuse¹⁴⁶⁸: I shall remove¹⁴⁶⁹
 This giant Majesty
- 22 A fiery angel stunned¹⁴⁷⁰ them¹⁴⁷¹
 In a sleepless night¹⁴⁷²
 And then all and sundry did know
 That only to God¹⁴⁷³ is this Majesty.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Jabin king of Canaan reigned in Hazor. His captain was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-Goim, after Judges 4:2.

¹⁴⁶¹ Judges 4:3.

¹⁴⁶² Other kings came to the aid of Sisera, after Judges 5:19.

¹⁴⁶³ Tosefta Sotah 3:14.

¹⁴⁶⁴ The verb **הלחם** refers to God who caused the enemies of Israel to wage war upon Israel. It is in **בניין הפעיל**, a causative verb form.

¹⁴⁶⁵ A reference to the stars in the firmament who fought Sisera, meaning that Nature itself fought on behalf of Israel, after Judges 5:20.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Judges 5:31.

¹⁴⁶⁷ A reference to Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, after Ezek. 31:3.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Isa. 37:24.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Isa. 10:13.

¹⁴⁷⁰ 2 Kings 19:35.

¹⁴⁷¹ A reference to Sennacherib's armies.

¹⁴⁷² The Paytan uses the phrase **ליל שימורים** in reference to the Eve of Passover, after Exod. Rabba 18:5.

¹⁴⁷³ Isa. 45:14.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| אֶפְסֵי מְלוּכָה | עֲזֹרוּהוּ בְּלִי בְּצַע | אֲזֵה קֶשֶׁה לְחַץ | יֹשְׁבֵי חֲרוֹשֶׁת |
| וְלֹאֵל הַמְּלוּכָה. | כִּן יֵאבְדוּ שְׂאָר | צָבָא בְּלִי בְּצַע | יְהִי הַלְּחִים בָּם |
| כְּבִיר מְלוּכָה | וְחִירָף: אֹרִיד | אֲשׁוּר גְּדָל | כְּאָרֶז בְּלִבְנוֹן |
| כִּי לֹאֵל הַמְּלוּכָה. | וְאֲזֵי יִדְעוּ הַכֹּל | בְּלִיל שְׁמוּרִים | כְּלִיל אֵשׁ הַמָּמָם |

- 23 He¹⁴⁷⁴ kneeled before Bel¹⁴⁷⁵ in vain
 Thinking he would ascend to the heavens¹⁴⁷⁶
 But his heart was changed from that of a man¹⁴⁷⁷
 And he lost his Majesty
- 24 And he was returned to his senses¹⁴⁷⁸ and kingdom
 And then he acknowledged the might of God
 He who elevates, and who humbles,¹⁴⁷⁹
 And he confirmed His¹⁴⁸⁰ of Majesty.
- 25 Toppled¹⁴⁸¹ like lambs¹⁴⁸² to the slaughter¹⁴⁸³
 But through stratagems and plots¹⁴⁸⁴
 The youthful one¹⁴⁸⁵, adorned with vestments,¹⁴⁸⁶
 Defeated¹⁴⁸⁷ them with God's Majesty

¹⁴⁷⁴ A reference to Nebuchadnezzar, who worshipped the god Bel.

¹⁴⁷⁵ The god Bel is mentioned in: Isa. 46:1 and in Jer. 50:2 in reference to the Babylonian god the Baal. A tantalizing possible source may be the narrative of **Bel and the Dragon**, which is incorporated as chapter 14 (14:1–22) of the extended Book of Daniel. The text exists only in Greek (while the oldest copies of the Book of Daniel are entirely in Hebrew and Aramaic). The original Septuagint text survives in a single manuscript, Codex Chisianus (also *Chigianus*; also known as "MS 88"; formerly Chigi Library R. VIII. 45, since 1922 part of the Vatican Library) is a 9th-century biblical manuscript, first edited in 1772. It contains what was only surviving version of the original Septuagint text of the Book of Daniel until the 1931 discovery of Papyrus 967 (Chester Beatty X, 3rd-century). The manuscript purports to be directly derived from the recension of the Septuagint made by Origen, ca. AD 240), The Septuagint text of the Book of Daniel had disappeared almost entirely from Greek tradition at the end of the 4th century, being superseded by the revised text of Theodotion in the 2nd-century CE. See: "Bel and the Dragon," Wikipedia, last modified December 6, 2018, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bel_and_the_Dragon. See also: "Codex Chisianus 45," Wikipedia, last modified October 15, 2017, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Chisianus_88; "Daniel," BibleAudio.com, <http://www.bibleaudio.com/daniel.htm>.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Isa. 46:1; Isa. 14:13-15.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Daniel 4:13; Daniel 4:28.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Daniel 4:33.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Daniel 4:31-22.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Isa. 44:26 The root **שָׁלַח** here is understood as 'coming to terms' with the Majesty of God, a realization of the undeniable truth, after Daniel 4:34. Mirsky understands the verb as a reference to Jerusalem, also called **שָׁלַח**, after Ezra 7:19 See: [כתר]. **פְּיוּטֵי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם: כְּתָר**. (1991). [אהרון מירסקי]. pp. 96-97, footnote 24.

¹⁴⁸¹ Psalm 89:45.

¹⁴⁸² An epithet for Israel, after Ezek. 34:31.

¹⁴⁸³ Psalm 44:23.

¹⁴⁸⁴ A reference to the stratagems of Hamman, after Esther 3:6 which were foiled by God through Mordechai.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Mordechai hailed from the tribe of Benjamin (Esther 2:5), and Benjamin was called the "youngest ruling them," (Psalm 68:28), hence the reference to youthfulness as the vehicle or instrument of salvation.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Esther 8:15.

¹⁴⁸⁷ The Paytan employs the root **רָדָה** which makes reference to defeating an oppressor, to overturning tyranny, after Isa. 14:6 and Lam. 1:13, and continuing the theme of Psalm 68:28 above.

לְשַׁחַת כָּרַע בַּל כְּחֶשְׁבוֹ עֲלוֹת לְשַׁחַק וְסָר מִנּוֹ לִבּוֹ אָנוּשׁ וְרָד מִמְּלוּכָה
 לְכַנּוֹ הוֹשֵׁב וְכַח אֵל הַכִּיר לְמַרְיִם וּמִשְׁפִּיל הַשָּׁלִים מְלוּכָה.
 מוֹגֵדָה צֵאן לְטַבַּח וְנִתְּכָנוּ עֲלֵילוֹת בְּלִבּוֹשׁ צָעִיר רוֹדֵם מִמְּלוּכָה

- 26 Those who were sold for no treasure
 And those redeemed with no funds¹⁴⁸⁸
 Glorify¹⁴⁸⁹ Him, who directs the flow of water¹⁴⁹⁰
 And turns the very heart¹⁴⁹¹ of Majesty.
- 27 The doves¹⁴⁹² were sold
 To the sons of Greece¹⁴⁹³
 And they removed them¹⁴⁹⁴
 From the boundaries of the Land¹⁴⁹⁵ of Majesty
- 28 They bedevilled¹⁴⁹⁶ the Covenant and the Laws¹⁴⁹⁷
 And caused the People to barter their God,
 And they vanquished the ones who were without force¹⁴⁹⁸,
 These Priests¹⁴⁹⁹ that serve in Majesty.
- 29 The hirsute one¹⁵⁰⁰ flattered
 His father¹⁵⁰¹ by hunting
 And crying out¹⁵⁰², he inherited
 A sword and Majesty

¹⁴⁸⁸ An epithet for the people of Israel, after Isa. 52:3.

¹⁴⁸⁹ The Paytan uses the word סולו from the root סלה which makes reference to glorifying something beyond the worth of fine gold, after Lam. 4:2.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Prov. 21:1.

¹⁴⁹¹ A reference to King Ahasuerus, who had a change of heart concerning the fate of the Jews.

¹⁴⁹² An epithet for the people of Israel, after Song of Sol. 2:14.

¹⁴⁹³ A reference to the Maccabean rebellion. .

¹⁴⁹⁴ Joel 4:6.

¹⁴⁹⁵ A reference to the Land of Israel.

¹⁴⁹⁶ The Paytan uses a verb that has overtones of a curse, מארה, after Psalm 89:40.

¹⁴⁹⁷ The First Book of Maccabees 1:45-49 1 Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew and survives in a Greek translation. It relates the history of the Maccabees from 175 BCE until 134 BCE. See: "The Deuterocanon: The First Book of Maccabees," St-Takla.org, https://st-takla.org/pub_Deuterocanon/Deuterocanon-Apocrypha_El-Asfar_El-Kanoneya_El-Tanya__8-First-of-Maccabees.html. See also: Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 12, 5:4 (composed by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in the thirteenth year of the reign of Roman emperor Flavius Domitian which was around AD 93 or 94).

¹⁴⁹⁸ A reference to the war of the few and meek (Israel) against the many and mighty (Greece).

¹⁴⁹⁹ The Hasmonean Dynasty was a Priestly dynasty that ruled Judea semi-autonomously under the Seleucids, during classical antiquity, between c. 140 BCE and c. 116 BCE.

¹⁵⁰⁰ An epithet for Esau, after Gen. 27:11.

¹⁵⁰¹ A reference to Isaac.

¹⁵⁰² Gen. 27:38-40.

מְכַוְּרֵי בְּלֹא הוֹן פְּדוּיֵי בְּלֹא כֶסֶף סוּלוֹ לְמִטְוֶה כַּמִּים לֵב הַמְּלוּכָה.

נִמְכְּרוּ יוֹנִים לְבָנֵי יוֹנִים וְרִיחֵקוֹם מֵעַל גְּבוּל מְלוּכָה

נִיָּאוּ בְּרִית חַיִּית וְהִמְרוּ עִם גְּבֹל וּמִיָּאוּם בְּלֹא כַח מְכַהְנֵי מְלוּכָה.

שָׁעִיר הַחֲנִיף לְהוֹרִיחוֹ בְּצִירוֹ וַיִּירֶשׁ בְּקוֹל בְּכִי חָרַב וּמְלוּכָה

30 The smooth-skinned one¹⁵⁰³ was exalted¹⁵⁰⁴
 To lord over his kin¹⁵⁰⁵
 And thus will return
 To Jeshurun¹⁵⁰⁶ their Majesty.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“He became King over Jeshurun when the numbers of the nations gathered- the tribes of Israel in unity.”¹⁵⁰⁷

31 In Zion You shall proclaim
 Your name in awesome wonders¹⁵⁰⁸
 And as You succeeded in the past so shall You again
 Return Israel’s reign of Majesty

32 Arouse and awaken,¹⁵⁰⁹
 You, Joy of all the earth,¹⁵¹⁰
 And establish Your throne
 In the City of Majesty¹⁵¹¹.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“Fairest of sites, joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, by the northern side of the great king’s city.”¹⁵¹²

33 The visage of the radiant moon
 And the sun, You shall humble¹⁵¹³,
 And their worshippers will be shamed
 As You elevate Your reign in Majesty¹⁵¹⁴

¹⁵⁰³ A reference to Jacob, after Gen. 27:11.

¹⁵⁰⁴ The Paytan writes **שׁוּגַב** which may be a spelling variation of **שׁוּגַב** [with the letter SIN rather than SHIN], which can be translated as “was exalted” in the passive form, after Psalm 148:13.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Gen. 27:29.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Jeshurun is one of the epithets for the people of Israel, after Deut. 32:15 and Deut. 33:26.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Deut. 23:5 This verse marks the turning point in the Piyyut, whereas the prior verses speak of past instances of God’s miraculous intercession on behalf of the people of Israel, and the verses henceforth speak of hopes for future salvific miracles.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Isa. 64:1-2.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Psalm 35:23 The verbs are to be read imperative, appealing to God to awaken Israel from its slumber after the Destruction. See: [אהרון מירסקי. (1991). *פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי*. ירושלים: כתר.] p. 98, footnote 33.

¹⁵¹⁰ Psalm 48:3.

¹⁵¹¹ A reference to Jerusalem, after Psalm 48:3.

¹⁵¹² Psalms 48:3.

¹⁵¹³ Isa. 24:23; Psalm 71:24.

¹⁵¹⁴ Isa. 24:23.

סוּגַב הַלֵּק הָיִיתָ גְבִיר לְאֶחָיִם וְעוֹדֵי תֵיטֹב לְיִשְׁרוּן מְלוּכָה.

ככת' בתו' ויהי בישורון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם יחוד שבטי ישראל.

עָשָׂה לָךְ בְּצִיּוֹן שֵׁם נִרְאֹת כָּאִזְ תִּצְלַחְנָה בְּכֶסֶף מְלוּכָה

עוֹרֵר וְהַקִּץ מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וְכוֹנֵן כֶּסֶף בְּקִרְיַת מְלוּכָה.

כפת' בוד' קד' יפה נוף משוש כל הארץ הר ציון ירכתי צפון קרית מלך רב.

פָּנֵי מְאוֹר לְכָנָה וְהִמָּה תִנְחַפִּיר וַיְבוֹשׁוּ עוֹבְדֵי־מֹו בְּשִׂאֵי־תֶךְ מְלוּכָה

- 34 Adorn the City of Perfect Beauty¹⁵¹⁵
 For the sake of the Clear as the Sun¹⁵¹⁶
 And reveal to our leaders¹⁵¹⁷
 The glory of The Majesty¹⁵¹⁸.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“The moon will be humiliated and the sun will be shamed, for God, Master of Legions, will have reigned in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and there will be honour or His elders.”¹⁵¹⁹

- 35 The legions of those who were redeemed from Zoan¹⁵²⁰
 Sang on the eve of the festival¹⁵²¹
 That night of sleepless remembrance¹⁵²²
 Of the eroded¹⁵²³ Majesty
- 36 Those who marched in the path¹⁵²⁴ in shallow measured waters¹⁵²⁵
 Witnessed with a wise manner¹⁵²⁶
 Where will they be settled¹⁵²⁷
 To accept His Majesty¹⁵²⁸.

¹⁵¹⁵ An epithet for Jerusalem, after Lam. 2:15.

¹⁵¹⁶ A sobriquet for the people of Israel, after Song of Sol. 6:10.

¹⁵¹⁷ The word **לנגדינו** may be read as “before us,” but I translate it as “to our leaders,” from the word **נגיד** meaning “community elder,” after Jer. 20:1; 2 Sam. 6:21 and 7:8; I Kings 1:35; Daniel 9:25-26; 1 Chron. 9:11 and 9:20; and I Chron. 31:12-13 In my reading of the Piyyut this translation captures the didactic message enveloped in the Piyyut, whereas the Priestly elders guide the Congregation toward God, and therefore hasten salvation. The translation also follows the Isa. verse 24:23 which is the scaffold of this stanza.

¹⁵¹⁸ Isa. 24:23.

¹⁵¹⁹ Isa. 24:23.

¹⁵²⁰ An epithet for Egypt, after Num. 13:22; Isa. 19:11 and 19:13; Psalm 78:12 and 78:43.

¹⁵²¹ Isa. 30:29.

¹⁵²² A reference to the first night of Passover, after Exod. 12:42.

¹⁵²³ The root **סחפ** refers to objects that are washed by torrents of rain or water, thus a reference to the drowned Egyptian chariots that were in pursuit of the Israelites and drowned miraculously in the Red Sea, thus in effect miraculously vanquishing the Egyptian Pharaoh’s stratagem against the Israelites, eroding his power over the People.

¹⁵²⁴ The word **שעל** shares a common connotation as **משעול**, which may be translated as a foot-path, after Isa. 40:12.

¹⁵²⁵ The Israelites who crossed the Red Sea, after Exod. m14:29 and 15:19.

¹⁵²⁶ The compound word **רוח שכל** has to be translated contextually, for the expression does not appear as such in the sources. The word **שכל** refers to learning, after Psalm 42:1 and 32:8 for example, among many instances in the Hebrew Bible. The word **רוח** can be translated as “spirit” in order conform to the rest of the stanza, which speaks of prophetic wisdom **[רוח הקודש]** that the People had, sagaciously and portentously envisioning their establishment as a nation in the Land of Israel.

¹⁵²⁷ Exod. 15:17.

¹⁵²⁸ Exod. 15:18.

פָּאָר עִיר יוֹפִי לְבָרָה בְּחֶמֶה וְגִלָּה לְנַגְדֵינוּ כְּבוֹד הַמְּלוּכָה.

ככת' עי"נ' וחפרה הלכנה ובושה החמה כי מלך יי צבאות בהר ציון ובירושל' ונגד זקיניו כבוד.

צְבָאוֹת גְּאוּלֵי צֶעַן שׁוֹרְרוּ בְּלֵיל חָג וְהוּא לַיְלָה נִשְׁמַר לְסַחֵף מְלוּכָה

צָעְרוּ בְּמֵי שַׁעַל צָפוּ בְרוּחַ שָׁכַל אָנָּה יוֹנְטְעוּ וַיִּקְבְּלוּ מְלוּכָה.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“You will bring them and implant them on the mount of Your heritage, the foundation of Your dwelling place, that You, God, have made- the Sanctuary, my Lord, that Your hands established. God will reign for all eternity.”¹⁵²⁹

37 The gates of the Abode¹⁵³⁰ have been rent¹⁵³¹
The Eternal Dwelling¹⁵³² place,
Because from the midst of its walls
There ceased all Majesty

38 The Holy One will return
To those walls for all time
And then they shall raise their heads up
As You renew Your Majesty.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“Raise up your heads, Oh gates, and be uplifted, you everlasting entrances, so that the King of Glory may enter. Who is this King of Glory? God, the mighty and strong, God the strong in battle. Raise up your heads, Oh gates, so that the King of Glory may enter. Who is this King of Glory? God, master of Legions, He is the King of Glory, Selah.”¹⁵³³

39 The pampered one¹⁵³⁴ lay down,
Confident that she will not be widowed¹⁵³⁵
That her days have been extended
And long was her Majesty¹⁵³⁶

40 Fight for her, the redeemers,¹⁵³⁷
Remove the mantle of kingship¹⁵³⁸ from Edom,
And place the greatcoat on the Lord,¹⁵³⁹
The splendour of Majesty.

¹⁵²⁹ Exod. 15:17-18.

¹⁵³⁰ A reference to the Temple in Jerusalem.

¹⁵³¹ Job 16:8.

¹⁵³² An epithet for the Temple in Jerusalem, after I Kings 8:13.

¹⁵³³ Psalms 24:7-10.

¹⁵³⁴ A reference to the indulgence in material delights, in reference to Babylon, after Isa. 47:8.

¹⁵³⁵ Isa. 47:8.

¹⁵³⁶ Despite Babylon's confidence in its enduring and lasting reign, its kingdom eventually met its demise.

¹⁵³⁷ Obad. 1:21.

¹⁵³⁸ Jonah 3:6.

¹⁵³⁹ Exod. 23:17.

קוֹמְטוּ שְׁעָרֵי זְבוּל בַּיִת עוֹלָמִים כִּי מִבִּינֵינוּ שְׁבִתָּהּ מְלוּכָה

כַּכְתּוּב 'בְּתוֹ' תְּבִיאֵמוּ וְתִטְעֵמוּ בְּהַר נַחֲלַתְךָ מִכּוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פִּעֲלַת יְיָ מִקֹּדֶשׁ יְיָ כּוֹנְנֵנוּ יְדִידְךָ.
יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

קֹדֶשׁ יָבוֹא רַם לְעוֹלָמִים וְאַזְּ שְׂאוֹ רֹאשׁ בְּחֻדְשֵׁךָ מְלוּכָה.

כַּכְתּוּב 'בְּד' ק' שְׂאוֹ שְׁעָרִים רֹאשֵׁיכֶם וְהִנְשֵׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֵא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד. מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ
הַכְּבוֹד יְיָ עֲזֹנוּ וְגִבּוֹר יְיָ גִבּוֹר מִלַּחְמָה. וְנָ' שְׂאוֹ שְׁעָרִים רֹאשֵׁיכֶם וְשֵׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֵא
מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד. מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְיָ צְבָאוֹת הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד טְלֵה.

רַבְצָה עֲוִינָה שְׁקֵטָה מֵאֲלֵמוֹן כִּי אֶרְךָ לָהּ קָץ וּמְלוּכָה

רִיבֵנוּ מוֹשִׁיעִים שְׂאוֹ אֶרֶץ מְאֹדוֹם וְשִׁיתֵנוּ עַל אֲוִיּוֹן הוֹדֵי הַמְּלוּכָה.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“And saviours will ascend Mount Zion to judge the Mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be God’s.”¹⁵⁴⁰

- 41 God despises falsehood¹⁵⁴¹
 Yet deceit is on our tongues¹⁵⁴²
 He sought the truth, but none was found¹⁵⁴³
 And thus He distanced His Majesty¹⁵⁴⁴
- 42 Almighty God¹⁵⁴⁵ remove
 All iniquity from Your legions¹⁵⁴⁶
 And they will call out and proclaim You¹⁵⁴⁷
 With the acclaim of Majesty.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“He perceived no iniquity in Jacob, and saw no perversity in Israel. God his God is with him and the acclaim of the King is in him.”¹⁵⁴⁸

- 43 Don Your grandeur¹⁵⁴⁹
 Gird¹⁵⁵⁰ Yourself with might,
 Lest a stranger¹⁵⁵¹
 Take the reins of Majesty
- 44 The universe will be sustained
 When evil will be shirked¹⁵⁵²
 And righteousness will attend His footsteps¹⁵⁵³
 And He will be crowned¹⁵⁵⁴ with Majesty.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Obad. 1:21.

¹⁵⁴¹ Prov. 6:16-17.

¹⁵⁴² Isa. 59:3.

¹⁵⁴³ Isa. 59:4.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Isa. 59:9.

¹⁵⁴⁵ One of the Names of God, which describes God’s omnipotence, after Gen. 17:1; Job 27:10.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Israel is the Legion of God, after Exod. 12:41.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Num. 23:21.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Num. 23:21.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Psalm 93:1.

¹⁵⁵⁰ The root **אָזַר** refers to a girding of oneself (usually God) with a ‘belt’ [Ezek. 23:15; 2 Kings 1:1; Isa. 11:5; Job 12:11] of strength and might, after Jer. 1:17; Psalm 65:7.

¹⁵⁵¹ Invader.

¹⁵⁵² Job 35:13.

¹⁵⁵³ Isa. 41:2.

¹⁵⁵⁴ The verb **יִצְנַף** is in a passive form, hailing from the **מִצְנֻפֶת**, the High Priest’s miter. The Paytan alludes to the Priestly vestments, and implies that the High Priest acts as a diadem of glory to God, after Exod. 28:4.

ככת' ע'ינ' ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון לשפוט את הר עשו והיתה ליי המלוכה.

שוא שגא אל והוא על לשונינו בקש אמת ואין וריחקה מלוקה

שדי וטר און מצבאיה וריעו לה תרועת מלוקה.

ככת' בתו' לא הביט און ביעקב ולא ראה עמל ב'שר' יי אלהיו שמו ותרועת מלך בו.

תחגור גאות תתאזר עוז לבל ישתרר זר במלוקה

תיכון תבל פי יונער רשע ושם צדק לרגליו ויוצנף מלוקה.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“God has reigned, He has donned grandeur, God has donned strength and girded Himself, even the world of men is firm, it shall not falter.”¹⁵⁵⁵

45 Execute vengeance upon the Nations,
 Rebuke the Peoples,¹⁵⁵⁶
 Break the staff of the wicked,¹⁵⁵⁷
 You, who rule with Majesty

46 Cast out the false gods,¹⁵⁵⁸
 You alone shall be glorified,¹⁵⁵⁹
 You will forever be called
 The Singular Majesty.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“God will be the King over all the land, on that day God will be One and His Name will be One.”¹⁵⁶⁰

As it is written in Your Torah:

“Hear Oh Israel, God is our God, God is the One and Only.”¹⁵⁶¹

¹⁵⁵⁵ Psalm 93:1.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Psalm 149:7.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Isa. 14:5.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Isa. 2:18.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Isa. 2:17.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Zech. 14:9.

¹⁵⁶¹ Deut. 6:4.

ככת' בדב'ק' יי מלך גאות לבש לבש יי עוז התאזר אף תכון תבל בל תמוט.

תיקום גוים תוכיח לאומים תשבור מטה רשע מושל במלוכה

תחליף אלילים תושגב לבדו תקרא נצח יחיד במלוכה.

אהללה אלוהי
I PRAISE MY GOD

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | 8 |
| Exodus | 20 |
| Leviticus | |
| Numbers | 9 |
| Deuteronomy | 4 |
| Joshua | 1 |
| Judges | 5 |
| I Kings | 1 |
| II kings | 2 |
| I Samuel | |
| II Samuel | |
| Isaiah | 30 |
| Jeremiah | 4 |
| Ezekiel | 3 |
| Hosea | |
| Joel | 1 |
| Amos | 1 |
| Obadiah | 2 |
| Jonah | 1 |
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| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | 1 |
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | 1 |
| Malachi | |

| | |
|--|----|
| Psalms | 30 |
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| Job | 5 |
| Song of Songs | 2 |
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| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | 3 |
| Daniel | 5 |
| Ezra | 1 |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | |
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| Genesis Rabba | 1 |
| Exodus Rabba | 1 |
| Mishnah | |
| PT | |
| BT | |
| Tosefta Sotah | 1 |
| Codex Chisianus, Extended Daniel | 1 |
| Book of Maccabees | 1 |
| Antiquities of the Jews, Flavius Josephus | 1 |

אנוסה לעזרה – I Flee for Help

TITLE: I Flee for Help.....אנוסה לעזרה

SUBJECT SUMMARY: A messianic account of history with some apocalyptic elements. Redemption is associated with שופרות as part of the Yom Kippur service, but also as an auditory artistic element with meditative qualities.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- Stanzas: 46
- Acrostic system: (2 x א"ב) + (4 x repetition of the letter ת as a cap).
- Complete/Incomplete: Complete.
- Other: Every strophe ends with the word קול

NOTES: Proof texts enhance the didactic tenor of the piyyut, which is rich in allusions, images, metaphors, and artistic elements. A solid example of Peshet exegesis, in which contemporary events are read into scripture, and in which scripture points prophetically into present and future times. Appears to be didactic, as part of the Rosh Hashanah order of prayers [מלכויות, זכרונות וישופרות].

לעזרה אנוסה – I Flee for Help

- 1 I flee for help¹⁵⁶²
And, there, next to me, I find
God, who stands by me¹⁵⁶³
When I call out with my Voice
- 2 He who, in Divine Assembly¹⁵⁶⁴
Resides within me,
And here, in this Temple Minor,¹⁵⁶⁵
I chant¹⁵⁶⁶ to Him with my Voice.
- 3 Seek me out, gather me unto You,¹⁵⁶⁷
For I am like a lamb astray,¹⁵⁶⁸
I have been shorn and silenced,¹⁵⁶⁹
Without protest in my Voice
- 4 As my shearers said:
Oh, she¹⁵⁷⁰ is banished,¹⁵⁷¹
Her Protector and Companion¹⁵⁷²
Will not roar with His Voice.¹⁵⁷³
- 5 I exult in His Laws,¹⁵⁷⁴
So pleasing to my palate are they,¹⁵⁷⁵
He lends His ear to me and whispers:
Let Me hear your Voice.

¹⁵⁶² Isa. 10:3.

¹⁵⁶³ Deut. 4:7.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Psalm 82:1.

¹⁵⁶⁵ An epithet for the Synagogue, after Mishnah Berachot 6:1 in reference to the Quorum of prayer at the synagogue.

Also in Ezek. 11:16.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Isa. 10:14.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Ezek. 34:11.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Jer. 50:17.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Isa. 53:7.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Meaning Israel.

¹⁵⁷¹ Jer. 30:17; Ezek. 34:4.

¹⁵⁷² Psalm 121:5.

¹⁵⁷³ Jer. 25:30.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Psalm 119:48.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Song of Sol. 2:14.

אנוסה לעזרה

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| אָנוּסָה לְעִזְרָה | אִמְצָא נִגְדִי | אֵל קְרוֹב לִי | בַּעַת קוֹרְאֵי בְּקוֹל |
| אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲדַת אֵל | בְּקִרְבִי נֹצֵב | וּפֹה בַּמִּקְדָּשׁ מֵעַט | אֲצַפְצֶף לוֹ בְּקוֹל. |
| בְּקִרְבִי דוֹרְשֵׁנִי | שָׁה פְּזוּרָה אָנִי | נִגְזַזְתִּי וְנִאֲלַמְתִּי | בְּלִי לְהַרִים קוֹל |
| בְּאִמּוֹר גּוֹזְזִי: | נִדְוָה הִיא | שׁוֹמְרָה וְצִיָּלָה | לֹא יִשְׁאַג קוֹל. |
| גַּלְתִּי שִׁיחַ בְּחֻקָּיו | וְחִיִּפִי עָרֵב | הָטָה אוֹזְן וְשָׁח: | הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי קוֹל. |

- 6 But He has vanished and forsaken me,
Like a fawn on distant mountains,¹⁵⁷⁶
For He hath sought a signal and a sign
In my dwellings, but He heard no Voice.
- 7 He, who rushed from one cut up offering to the next,¹⁵⁷⁷
Please return him to me
Perhaps he will appease You,
For once he heeded Your Voice.¹⁵⁷⁸
- 8 Bring goodness unto him,¹⁵⁷⁹
And gaze upon the lamb-offering bound at Moriah,¹⁵⁸⁰
He, whose silent complicity at the altar will advocate
For those who did not heed Your Voice.
- 9 Remove from the smooth-skinned one¹⁵⁸¹
Those menacing hirsute hands,¹⁵⁸²
For his supplication still echoes,¹⁵⁸³
And unto You he turns his Voice
- 10 Deliver us, for
The Testimony¹⁵⁸⁴ shall not be forgotten
From his offspring,
Who will not cease to sound their Voice.¹⁵⁸⁵
- 11 And my seers and prophets
Are the sons of my mother,¹⁵⁸⁶
And in yesteryears they were incensed and chastised me¹⁵⁸⁷
To heed Your Voice

¹⁵⁷⁶ Song of Sol. 2:17.

¹⁵⁷⁷ An epithet for Abraham, after Gen. 15:10.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Gen. 26:5.

¹⁵⁷⁹ A reference to Israel, after Zeph. 3:1.

¹⁵⁸⁰ An epithet for Isaac, after Gen. 22:8.

¹⁵⁸¹ An epithet for Jacob, after Gen. 27:11.

¹⁵⁸² An epithet for Esau, after Gen. 27:11.

¹⁵⁸³ A reference to Gen. Rabba 65:20: As long as the sound of Jacob rings within synagogues, the hands of Esau do not harm Israel.

¹⁵⁸⁴ An epithet for the Torah, after Psalm 19:8, as well as after Deut. 31:21.

¹⁵⁸⁵ Esther 9:28.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Song of Sol. Rabba 1:6.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Song of Sol. 1:6.

גָּזוּ וּבְרָחוּ מִנִּי כְּעוֹפֵר עַל הָרִי בְּתַר נִבְקָשׁוּ דָת וְאוֹת בְּמִשְׁכָּנוֹתַי וְאִין קוֹל.

דְּלִג מִבְּתַר לְבְּתַר הִשִּׁיבֵהוּ אֵלַי אוֹלֵי יִשָּׂא פָנָיָה עֲקֵב שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹל

דְּרוֹשׁ טוֹבָה לָמוּ וְרָאָה שָׁה מוֹרְיָה אֵלֶם פִּיהוּ יְהִי צָרֵק לְלֹא שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹל.

הִסֵּר מִחֶלֶק יָדַיִם שְׁעִירוֹת הוֹגָה בְּתַחֲנוּגִים כִּי לָהּ הַקּוֹל

הוֹשַׁע כִּי לֹא תִשְׁכַּח עֲדוֹת מִפִּי זָרְעוּ לֹא יִסּוּף קוֹל.

וְחֹזֵי וּמְלִיצֵי הֵם בְּנֵי אֲמִי וְאִז נִיחָרוּ בִּי לְמַעַן אֲשַׁמַּע קוֹל

- 12 As they stood upon their watch¹⁵⁸⁸
 And called out,
 So the mystery be revealed to them,
 And He rejoined them with His Voice.
- 13 He¹⁵⁸⁹ has eluded me¹⁵⁹⁰
 And I roamed¹⁵⁹¹ and did seek Him,
 For He is omnipresent,
 Hither and yon I still cry with my Voice
- 14 The memory of my Beloved is exulted below¹⁵⁹²,
 And His grandeur in the heavens,¹⁵⁹³
 The whole world is filled with His awesome glory,¹⁵⁹⁴
 And the legions of heaven raise up their Voice.
- 15 Colossal waves are His armies¹⁵⁹⁵
 Wherein His paths stretch forth,
 And they have spoken: We did not perceive a likeness,¹⁵⁹⁶
 Nothing but a Voice¹⁵⁹⁷
- 16 I searched in the wilderness
 Is it there, and He said: It is not here,
 Before He bestowed upon us His might,¹⁵⁹⁸
 He terrified me with His Voice.¹⁵⁹⁹
- 17 The Pure One¹⁶⁰⁰ has bounded
 Over mountains and went onward,¹⁶⁰¹
 And from His abode on the Mountain of Myrrh¹⁶⁰²
 He gave sound to His Voice¹⁶⁰³

¹⁵⁸⁸ Hab. 2:1.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Literally "That One," a reference to God, after Exod. 15:2.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Song of Sol. 5:6.

¹⁵⁹¹ Literally "circumambulated," after Song of Sol. 3:2.

¹⁵⁹² A reference to the Earth, stated in opposition to the heavenly choirs that also extoll God's grandeur. The dynamic is reversed: The earthly choir speaks of God's heavenly glory, while the heavenly choir sings of Gods grandeur upon the earth.

¹⁵⁹³ Psalm 93:4.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Isa. 6:3.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Psalm 77:20.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Deut. 4:12.

¹⁵⁹⁷ A reference to God's voice, after Psalm 29:3.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Psalm 29:11.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Psalm 29:8.

¹⁶⁰⁰ An epithet for God, after Hab. 1:13.

¹⁶⁰¹ Song of Sol. 2:8.

¹⁶⁰² An epithet for Moriah, God's abode, after 1 Sam. 2:29 and Song of Sol. 4:6.

¹⁶⁰³ Jer. 25:30.

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| וְעַל מְשֻׁמְרֵתָם | יַעֲמְדוּ וַיִּזְעַקוּ | וְגַל לָהֶם סוּר | וְהוּא יַעֲנֵם בְּקוֹל. |
| זֶה חֶמֶק מִנִּי | אֲטוֹבב וְאֲבִקֶשְׁנֶנּוּ | בְּכָל־מָקוֹם הוּא | אָנָּה אֲשָׂא קוֹל |
| זָכַר דּוֹדֵי לְמַטָּה | אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם | מָלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ | לְמַעַלָּה קוֹרְאִים קוֹל. |
| חַיִּילֵי מַיִם | אֲשֶׁר בָּם שָׁבִילוֹ | דְּבַר־וּ: תִּמְוִנָּה לֹא רָאִינוּ | זוֹלָתִי קוֹל |
| חִפְּשֵׁתִי יִשְׁימוֹן | הַיֵּשׁ, וְאָמַר: אֵיזוֹ, | קָדַם תָּתוּ עוֹז | בִּיעֲתַתְּנִי בְּקוֹל. |
| טְהוֹר דִּלְג | הָרִים וְעָבַר | וּמִמְעוֹן הַר מוֹר | אֲז גַּתָּן קוֹל |

- 18 I have sullied the Loveliness,¹⁶⁰⁴
 And He removed His Presence from me,
 But on the Appointed Day¹⁶⁰⁵
 My ears will ring with His Voice.
- 19 I am dear to Him,¹⁶⁰⁶
 And He has come with me into captivity,¹⁶⁰⁷
 I am wholeheartedly with Him,
 He has given me assurance with His Voice
- 20 He went [with me]¹⁶⁰⁸ down to Shin'ar,
 And settled [with me] in Eilam,¹⁶⁰⁹
 Then He gathered us with His leonine Roar¹⁶¹⁰
 With His colubrine hissing Voice.¹⁶¹¹
- 21 He destroyed the bear¹⁶¹² that had set upon me,
 When the Holy Rites were disabled¹⁶¹³
 And caused it to be decreed in an epistle¹⁶¹⁴
 And averted disaster with His Voice
- 22 He has helped me vanquish
 The four headed beast,¹⁶¹⁵
 And I, with everlasting¹⁶¹⁶ gratitude,¹⁶¹⁷
 Do thank Him with my Voice.

¹⁶⁰⁴ An epithet for the Temple, wherein God resides, after Psalm 84:2

¹⁶⁰⁵ Prov. 7:20.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Isa. 43:4.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Psalm 91:15; Isa. 43:14; See also Mechilta Bo, Tractate Passcha, Ch. 14.

¹⁶⁰⁸ 1 Sam. 2:27.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Jer. 49:38.

¹⁶¹⁰ Hosea 11:10. The lion is a sobriquet for Babylon, after Jer. 4:7, and Daniel 7:4.

¹⁶¹¹ Jer. 46:22. The snake is also an allusion to Babylon, after Deut. 8:15.

¹⁶¹² A reference to the Persian empire, after Daniel 7:5.

¹⁶¹³ The Holy Rites are a reference to the Avodah at the Temple.

¹⁶¹⁴ A reference to the Persian King Darius, after Ezra 6:1-15.

¹⁶¹⁵ A reference to Greece, after Daniel 7:6, alluding to the Hasmonean rebellion.

¹⁶¹⁶ Psalm 68:33.

¹⁶¹⁷ Mishanah, Tractate Shabbat 21:2.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| בְּאֲזַנַי קוֹל. | לְיוֹם כָּסָא יָבוֹא | שִׁכְנוּ וְעָלָה | טִמְאַתִּי יְדִידוֹת |
| אֲז הִבֵּטִיחֲנִי בְּקוֹל | עֲמוּ אֲנֹכִי | וְנִלְוָה לִי בְּשֹׁבִי | יְקִרְתִּי בְּעֵינָיו |
| וּכְנַחֵשׁ קוֹל. | וְהִשְׁמִיעַ כְּאֲרִי | וְשָׁם פִּט בְּעֵילָם | יָרַד בְּשִׁנְעָר |
| וַיַּעֲבֵר קוֹל | חֶק בְּמִכְתָּב | כְּהִתְרַפָּא מִמְּלֹאכֶת | כֶּלָּה מִנִּי דוֹב |
| אֲשָׁמִיעַ לוֹ בְּקוֹל. | וְגַם אֲנִי בְּהוֹדִיֹת סָלָה | אַרְבַּעָה רְאִשֵׁי נֹמֵר | כִּבֵּשׁ לִי |

- 23 Then to the beast of the reeds¹⁶¹⁸
 Did He trade¹⁶¹⁹ the Land,
 The doubter of heaven,¹⁶²⁰
 Whose impudence rang out in one Voice¹⁶²¹
- 24 To God, who is my saviour,
 From within the iron teeth¹⁶²² I implored,
 As my legs sank in thick mire,¹⁶²³
 I shouted with my Voice.
- 25 The eschaton
 He did not reveal to me,¹⁶²⁴
 When, in my Land,
 Will the saviour, like a dove¹⁶²⁵, sound his Voice
- 26 Even from prophets¹⁶²⁶ and seers¹⁶²⁷
 He hid the mystery of the End of Days¹⁶²⁸,
 Even my watchmen¹⁶²⁹ know not
 When redemption will ring out in His Voice.¹⁶³⁰
- 27 I entreat You to gaze upon me and see¹⁶³¹
 My destitution and my hardship,¹⁶³²
 I have no one,
 And to whom shall I appeal with my Voice
- 28 I shall forever hope
 That all prophesies will come true to a word,
 For those who heard¹⁶³³
 In the silence and stillness- Your Voice.

¹⁶¹⁸ Psalm 65:31. A reference to Rome, after Daniel 7:7 and Lev. Rabba.

¹⁶¹⁹ Ezek. 30:12.

¹⁶²⁰ A reference to Eddom [Rome], who not only denies God but profanes His Name, after Daniel 7:8.

¹⁶²¹ Psalm 73:25.

¹⁶²² A reference to Rome, after Daniel 7:7.

¹⁶²³ Hab. 2:6.

¹⁶²⁴ Psalm 39:5.

¹⁶²⁵ Song of Sol. 2:12.

¹⁶²⁶ Daniel 1:17.

¹⁶²⁷ Prophets, after Isa. 29:12.

¹⁶²⁸ Daniel 12:9.

¹⁶²⁹ Prophets, after Ezek. 3:17.

¹⁶³⁰ Isa. 52:8.

¹⁶³¹ Psalm 142:5.

¹⁶³² Lam. 3:19.

¹⁶³³ Prophets, after Job 4:16.

לְחֵית קָנָה אֶז מְכַר אֶרֶץ וּמִי לִי בַשָּׁמַיִם אֶז הֲרִימָה קוֹל

לְאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשִּׁינַי בְּרוֹזַל שִׁוְעֵתִי וּמִרְגֵּל עֵב טִיט הִצְרַחְתִּי קוֹל.

מִדַּת קִיֵּצִי לֹא הוֹדִיעַנִי מָתִי בְּאֶרֶצִי תוֹר יִשְׁמִיעַ קוֹל

מִיּוֹדְעֵי סֶפֶר סֶתֶם קִיֵּצִי לְבַל דַּעַת צוֹפִי עַת יִשְׁאוּ קוֹל.

נָא הִבֵּט וּרְאֵה עוֹנֵי וּמְרוֹדֵי אִיז לִי מְכִיר לְמִי אֶשָּׂא קוֹל

נֶצַח אֶקוּהָ כִּי לֹא יִפּוֹל דְּבַר מִמֶּקְשִׁיבֵי דְּמָמָה וְקוֹל.

29 My heart will gladden¹⁶³⁴
 And rejoice within me,¹⁶³⁵
 When I shall hear my Beloved knocking¹⁶³⁶
 On my door with His Voice

30 He will for all eternity
 Be etched upon my heart,¹⁶³⁷
 Like you did the, under the apple tree¹⁶³⁸
 You had aroused me with Your Voice.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“On the third day when it was morning, there was thunder and lightning and a heavy cloud on the mountain, and the sound of the Shofar was very powerful, and the entire people that was in the camp shuddered.”¹⁶³⁹

31 You have elevated me, God,
 Above all the daughters,¹⁶⁴⁰
 For it was for me
 That at Sinai You sounded Your Voice

32 You are supreme above all others,
 Exceedingly exalted,¹⁶⁴¹
 And for all time You will be preeminent,
 Like the trumpeting sound of Your Voice.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“God has ascended midst acclamation, God with the blasts of the Shofar.”¹⁶⁴²

¹⁶³⁴ Isa. 61:10.

¹⁶³⁵ Jer. 23:9.

¹⁶³⁶ Song of Sol. 5:2.

¹⁶³⁷ Song of Sol. 8:6.

¹⁶³⁸ A reference to Mount Sinai, after Song of Sol. 8:6.

¹⁶³⁹ Exod. 19:16.

¹⁶⁴⁰ A reference to the Nations, after Prov. 31:29.

¹⁶⁴¹ Psalm 97:9.

¹⁶⁴² Psalm 47:6.

שׁוֹשׁ יְשִׁישׁ לְבִי בְקִרְבִּי בְּשׁוֹמְעֵי דוֹרֵי דוֹפֵק עַל פְּתָחַי קוֹל

סֵלָה יְשִׁימְנִי כַּחוֹתֶם עַל לֵב כְּאִז תַּחַת הַתְּפוּחַ עוֹרְרֵנִי בְּקוֹל.

ככת' בת' ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר ויהי קולות וברקים וענן כבד על ההר, וקול שופר חזק מאד ויחרד כל העם אשר במחנה.

עִלִּיתָנִי אֵל עַל כָּל־בְּנוֹת כִּי בַעֲבוּרֵי בְּחֹרֵב תִּתֶּה קוֹל

עַל כָּל־אֱלֹהִים מְאֹד נַעֲלִיתָהּ נִצַּח תִּתְּעֶלֶה בַּתְּרוּעַת קוֹל.

ככת' בד' ק' עלה אלהים בתרועה יי בקול שופר.

33 He¹⁶⁴³ bleated and cried¹⁶⁴⁴ in the wilderness
 When, like a bird¹⁶⁴⁵, he took wing and flight from Egypt,
 Like a cooing dove¹⁶⁴⁶
 From the Assyrian cage he gave Voice

34 Remember the bird¹⁶⁴⁷ of Your Land,
 Protect Your silent dove¹⁶⁴⁸,
 Sound out Your Shofar,¹⁶⁴⁹
 And hiss¹⁶⁵⁰ to it with Your Voice.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“It shall be on that day that a great Shofar will be blown, and those who are lost in the land of Assyria and those cast away in the land of Egypt will come together, and they will prostrate themselves to God on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”¹⁶⁵¹

35 Bind¹⁶⁵² Your Laws unto me,
 Lest they fly away like an eagle,¹⁶⁵³
 Lest they hide,¹⁶⁵⁴
 Those who give Voice¹⁶⁵⁵

36 I study Your perfection¹⁶⁵⁶,
 And look up to my teachers,
 As when in Sinai our envoy¹⁶⁵⁷ did speak¹⁶⁵⁸
 And God did respond to him with His Voice.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“The sound of the Shofar grew continuously much stronger, Moses would speak and God would respond to him with a voice.”¹⁶⁵⁹

¹⁶⁴³ A reference to Israel.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Isa. 42:14.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Psalm 102:8.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Hosea 11:11.

¹⁶⁴⁷ A reference to Israel, after Psalm 84:4.

¹⁶⁴⁸ A reference for the Congregation of Israel, after Psalm 56:1.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Isa. 27:13.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Call unto them to gather them, after Zech. 10:8.

¹⁶⁵¹ Isa. 27:13.

¹⁶⁵² Isa. 8:16.

¹⁶⁵³ Prov. 23:5.

¹⁶⁵⁴ The root פננ can refer to birds' wings, but in context, the reference here is to a verse in Isaiah which uses the root in reference to concealment, see Isa. 30:20.

¹⁶⁵⁵ A reference to the people of Israel who disregard the words of the prophets.

¹⁶⁵⁶ An epithet for the Torah, after 2 Sam. 22:31.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Moses is called the Envoy, after Prov. 25:13.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Exod. 19:19.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Exod. 19:19.

פָּעָה מִמִּדְבָּר צָפוֹר מִמְצָרִים וַיֹּנֶה הַשְּׁמִיעָה מֵאֲשׁוֹר קוֹל

פְּקוֹד צָפוֹר בַּיִת דְּרוֹשׁ יוֹנָת אֱלֹם תִּקַּע לָמוֹ בְּשׁוֹפָר וַיִּשְׂרוֹק לָמוֹ בְּקוֹל.

ככת' ע'י'נ' והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול ובאו האוכדים בארץ אשור והנרחים בארץ מצרים, והשתחוו ליי בהר הקודש ובירושלם.

צוֹר חֻקִּים, מָנִי לְבַל יְעוּפוּ כְנָשָׁר, וּבַל יִכְנָפוּ מִשְׁמִיעֵי קוֹל

צְרוּפָה אֱלֶמֶד וְעֵינַי לְמוֹרֵי כָּאֲז צִיר מִדְּבַר וְאֵל מְשִׁיבוֹ בְּקוֹל.

ככת' בתו' ויהי קול השופר הולך וחזק מאד, משה ידבר והאלהים יעננו בקול.

37 The year ebbs,¹⁶⁶⁰
 And the time of Judgment¹⁶⁶¹ is upon us,
 Now an advocate¹⁶⁶² shall rise to speak of our merit
 And to implore with his Voice

38 As the month¹⁶⁶³ is consecrated,
 And the Holy Day is appointed,
 I shall sound out the Shofar¹⁶⁶⁴
 And He will answer me with His Voice.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

*“Blow the Shofar at the moon’s renewal, and the time appointed for our festive day. Because it is a decree for Israel, a judgment day for the God of Jacob.”*¹⁶⁶⁵

39 Passions will spring from the tombs,¹⁶⁶⁶
 The rocks will set forth with a howling,¹⁶⁶⁷
 As the dry bones will rise
 From the dust and give Voice

40 The mountains will be crowned with Your banners,
 And the Shofar will ring out in the Land,
 To sing Your praises
 With those who had hitherto had no Voice.¹⁶⁶⁸

As it is written by Your Prophets:

*“All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth- you will see when the banner is hoisted up upon the mountains, and when the Shofar sounds you will hear.”*¹⁶⁶⁹

41 Doubt shall be cleaved from the heart,
 Lest it divert us,
 Lest our ears be blocked
 To the sound of Your Voice

¹⁶⁶⁰ This phrase could be understood as the end of the calendar year at Rosh Hashanah, or an eschatological reference to the End of Days.

¹⁶⁶¹ A reference to Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment.

¹⁶⁶² Mirsky understands the advocate to be the Paytan himself, or the cantor who implores God on behalf of the congregation. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי (1991). אהרון מירסקי, p. 116, 43.

¹⁶⁶³ A reference to the month of Tishre, wherein the holiday of Rosh Hashanah is observed. Ibid. p. 116, 44.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Psalm 81:4-5.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Psalm 81:4-5.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Isa. 42:11.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Psalm 104:23.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Job 4:16.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Isa. 18:3.

קָרַב קִי בָּא עַת מִשְׁפָּט קָם מִלִּיץ יוֹשֵׁר לְהִתְחַנֵּן קוֹל

קוֹדֵשׁ חוֹדֵשׁ וְהוֹכֵן מוֹעֵד אֶתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר וַיִּצְנֶה לִי בְּקוֹל.

ככת' בר' ק' תקעו בחודש שופר בכסא ליום חגיגו. כי חוק לישר' הוא ומשפט לאלהי יעקב.

רָגַשׁ מִקָּבֶר צִוְּחָה מִסֶּלַע בָּתַת יְבִישֵׁי עֲצָם מִעֲפָר קוֹל

רָאוּ נֶס בְּהָרִים וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר בְּאֶרֶץ לְהִשְׁמִיעַ רֶנֶן מִדְּמוּמֵי קוֹל.

ככת' ע'י'נ' כל יושבי תבל ושוכני ארץ כנשוא נס הרים תראו וכתקוע שופר תשמעו.

שָׁגַג לֵב הוֹתֵל עוֹד בֶּל יִטְנוּ בְּלִי לְהִכְבִּיד אֶזְזוּ מִשְׁמוֹעַ בְּקוֹל

- 42 Answer me,¹⁶⁷⁰ as You did in the past,
The Law You bequeathed us
Which made me shudder,¹⁶⁷¹
Before the flames and Your Voice.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“The entire people saw the thunder and the flames, the sound of the Shofar and the smoking mountain; the people saw and trembled and stood from afar.”¹⁶⁷²

- 43 He, who derives perspicacity,¹⁶⁷³
Is a wise and praiseworthy man,
He, who composed songs of splendoured praise,¹⁶⁷⁴
And sings them with his mellifluous Voice

- 44 All will give adoration,
And let everyone hear,
While, unto God the Almighty,
They sweeten their Voice.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“Halleluiah. Praise God in His Sanctuary, praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts, praise Him as befits His abundant greatness. Praise Him with the blast of the Shofar, praise Him with lyre and harp. Praise Him with drum and dance, praise Him with organ and flute. Praise Him with clanging cymbals, praise Him with resonant trumpets. Let all souls praise God, Halleluiah.”¹⁶⁷⁵

- 45 The Children of Zion prevailed,
To whom did the people of Greece succumb,¹⁶⁷⁶
As You flashed Your bolts of lightning,¹⁶⁷⁷
And You stunned them¹⁶⁷⁸ with Your Voice
- 46 Do please daze my oppressors,
And sound once again Your Shofar,¹⁶⁷⁹
To sweep, like a thundering storm, the southern nations all,¹⁶⁸⁰
With naught but Your Voice.

¹⁶⁷⁰ An alternative translation here could be: Return to me. See: Deut. 33:4.

¹⁶⁷¹ At Mount Sinai, after Exod. 19:16.

¹⁶⁷² Exod. 20:15.

¹⁶⁷³ Prov. 3:13.

¹⁶⁷⁴ A reference to King David's Psalms, after 2 Sam. 23:1.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Psalm 150:1-6.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Zech. 9:13.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Zech. 9:14.

¹⁶⁷⁸ 2 Sam. 22:15.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Zech. 9:14.

¹⁶⁸⁰ An alternative translation here could be: Like a thundering storm from the south/ Then will come forth Your Voice.

שׁוֹבֵב לִי כְקָרָם דַּת מוֹרְשָׁה אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ עֲלֵפוֹנִי בְּלִפְיָדַיִם וְקוֹל.

ככת' בתו' וכל העם רואים את הקולות ואת הלפידים ואת קול השופר ואת ההר עשן.
וירא כל העם וינזעו ויעמדו מרחוק.

תְּבוּנָה הַפִּיק אִישׁ נְבוֹן דָּבַר וְחַק נֹעַם זְמִירוֹת בְּנַעֲיַמַת קוֹל

תְּהִלָּה יִתְנוּ אֲזַל לְכָל הַשָּׁמַיִם לְאֵל מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל יִמְתִּיקוּ בְּקוֹל.

ככת' בד' ק' הללו יה הללו אל בקדשו הללוהו ברקיע עוזו הללוהו בגבורותיו הללוהו
כרוב גודלו הללוהו בתקע שופר הללוהו בנבל וכנור הללוהו בתוף ומחול הללוהו
במינים ועוגב הללוהו בצלצלי שמע הללוהו בצלצלי תרועה כל הנשמה תהלל יה' הללו
יה'.

תַּחַת בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן בְּנֵי יוֹן שָׁחוּ הַבְּרִקָּתָה חִיצִים וַתְּהוּמִם בְּקוֹל

תִּרְעַם לְבוֹזוֹי תִּתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפֵר בְּסַעֲרוֹת תִּימָן אֲזַל יִלְךְ קוֹל.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“God will appear to them and His arrow will go forth like the lightning, and God the Lord will blow with a Shofar and go forth in southern tempests. God, Lord of Legions, will protect them.”¹⁶⁸¹

ככת' ע'י'נ' ויי עליהם יראה ויצא כברק חיצו ויי אלהים בשופר יתקע והלך בסערות
תימן. יי צבאות יגן עליהם. כן תגן על עמך ישראל בשלומך.

¹⁶⁸¹ Zeph. 10:14-15.

אנוסה לעזרה
I FLEE FOR HELP

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אפחד במעשי אפחד – I am in Dread Because of My Deeds

TITLE: I Am in Dread Because of My Deeds.....אפחד במעשי

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Part of the Yom Kippur prayer section of זכרונות. The enormity of sin as an explication of the catastrophic disaster which has befallen the people of Israel with the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile. A prayer for the restoration of Israel's past good fortune. If the People will again remember God, God will remember with favour His People.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- Stanzas: 46
- Acrostic system: (2 x א"ב) + (4 x repetition of the letter ת as a cap).
- Complete/Incomplete: Complete.
- Other: Every strophe ends with the word זכרון .

NOTES: An emphasis on congregational responsive readings. The prayerful tone of supplication is most evident in this piyyut, whereas it is often more obscured in the other piyyutim. Appears to be didactic, as part of the Rosh Hashanah order of prayers [מלכויות, זכרונות ושופרות].

בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי אִפְחָד – I am in Dread Because of My Deeds

- 1 I am in dread because of my deeds,
I am troubled all the time,
I tremble in fear of the Day of Judgment
When I come forth for Remembrance.
- 2 I supplicate before the Compassionate One,¹⁶⁸²
I pray to the Merciful One,¹⁶⁸³
I implore the One, who hath mandated for me
A Day of Remembrance.
- 3 When I stand to be judged
Whom shall I lean on?
And who shall seek for me
Justice on the Day of Remembrance?
- 4 I have trust in our Forefathers,
And I have benefited from their good deeds,
They have stood by me and protected me,
In the past of Remembrance.
- 5 I became strong
As if to say: Expunge me,¹⁶⁸⁴
Lest there be erased from my heart¹⁶⁸⁵
Thy name and Your Remembrance
- 6 A mere man, should he stand
Before Him, will he be effectual,
When I am asked if I have any
Merit for Remembrance.

¹⁶⁸² Isa. 55:6.

¹⁶⁸³ The Compassionate, The Merciful: Both are epithets for God, after Exod. 34:6.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Exod. 32:32.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Exod. 32:10.

אֶפְחָד בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי

אֶפְחָד בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי אֲדָאג בְּכָל־עֵת אִירָא בַּיּוֹם דִּין בְּבוֹאֵי לְזִכְרוֹן.

אֲדַרּוֹשׁ לְחַנּוּן אֲחַלֶּה לְרַחֵם אֲחַנּוּן לְחַק לִי יוֹם לְזִכְרוֹן.

בְּבוֹאֵי לַמַּשְׁפֵּט בְּמִי אֲשַׁעֵן? וּמִי יַחֲפֹשׂ־לִי צַדִּיק לְזִכְרוֹן?

בְּאֲבוֹת בְּטַחַתִּי וּפְעַלְטִים אֲכַלֶּנִּי, הֵם הָיוּ לִי קָרַם לְזִכְרוֹן.

גְּבֵרָה זְרוּעֵי פֶּשַׁח: מַחֲיֵבֵי נָא, לְכָל יְמֵה מְנִי שֵׁם וְזִכְרוֹן

גְּבֵר אִם יַעֲמוּד לְפָנָיו הָיוּעִיל בְּעֵת יְבוֹקֵשׁ מְנִי זְכוֹת לְזִכְרוֹן.

- 7 I rejoiced in he who dons the Ephod¹⁶⁸⁶
 And the Breastplate of Judgment,¹⁶⁸⁷
 Upon which there was etched
 My¹⁶⁸⁸ name for all Remembrance
- 8 He who had hurried to take the brazier¹⁶⁸⁹
 Until the contagion was arrested,
 When the un-consecrated man¹⁶⁹⁰ approached Him
 And was set ablaze for all Remembrance.
- 9 Gaze upon me, God,
 As I stand before Thee,
 There is no man in my midst¹⁶⁹¹
 Whose mark¹⁶⁹² deserves Remembrance
- 10 Will a person rise and pray¹⁶⁹³ on my behalf
 To avert the wrath,¹⁶⁹⁴
 After the covenant given for all generations
 That his name has merit¹⁶⁹⁵ for Remembrance.¹⁶⁹⁶
- 11 And who disdains all lucre,¹⁶⁹⁷
 And who can say: I stand as a witness,
 And could even add: My witness
 Is the Lord, in His Remembrance

¹⁶⁸⁶ An epithet for the High Priest. The Ephod is one of the High Priest vestments. It is understood to have been an apron-like vestment made of gold, turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool. See: Exod. 28:6.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Exod. 28:15.

¹⁶⁸⁸ The Breastplate of Judgment was engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. Here the Paytan refers to the Congregation of Israel in the first person, as if he speaks for them. See: Exod. 28:21.

¹⁶⁸⁹ An epithet for Aaron, after Num. 17:11-13.

¹⁶⁹⁰ An epithet for Korach, after Num. 17:5.

¹⁶⁹¹ Isa. 13:7.

¹⁶⁹² A reference to one's deeds that leave a mark, good or bad, that is engraved upon their countenance, after Ezek. 9:4.

¹⁶⁹³ A reference to Phineas son of Elazar son of Aaron the Kohen, after Psalm 106:30.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Num. 25:11.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Before God, on behalf of the People.

¹⁶⁹⁶ The stanza makes reference to the exclusive soteriological role of the Priestly caste, after the verses: *"And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: ♦ 'Phinehas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, in that he was very jealous for My sake among them, so that I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy. ♦ Wherefore say: Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace; ♦ and it shall be unto him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel."* Num. 25:10-13.

¹⁶⁹⁷ A reference to Samuel, after 1 Sam. 12:3.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| דַּצְתִּי בְּלוּבֵשׁ אֶפֹד | וְהוֹשֵׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט | אֲשֶׁר בֵּת הַחֹק | שְׁמִי לְזִכְרוֹן |
| דִּלְג בַּמַּחֲתָה | עַד יוֹעֵצַר נְגִיף | בְּגִשְׁתׁוֹ זֶר מְכֵהוּ | יְקוּד לְזִכְרוֹן. |
| הַבִּיטָה אֵל | בְּעוֹמְדֵי לְפָנֶיהָ | אִין בְּקִרְבֵי אָנוּשׁ | תְּנוֹי לְזִכְרוֹן |
| הִישׁ מִי יִפְלֵל | וַיֵּשִׁיב חֵימָה | וַיַּחֵק לְדוֹרוֹת | שְׁמוֹ לְזִכְרוֹן. |
| וְמִי שׁוֹנֵא בָצַע | יְדַבֵּר: עֲנוּ בִי, | וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר: עַד | אֲדוֹן לְזִכְרוֹן |

- 12 Who could, with a suckling lamb,
Atone for us,¹⁶⁹⁸
And who, for the merit of the Two Fawns¹⁶⁹⁹
Could advocate for us favourably in Remembrance.
- 13 A man who can witness His fury and say:
Punish me in their stead,¹⁷⁰⁰
A man who is favoured by God¹⁷⁰¹
And can be effective at the time of Remembrance
- 14 He who called out to God¹⁷⁰², and returned
The sword¹⁷⁰³ into its sheath,¹⁷⁰⁴
And was placed on a sun-like
Throne¹⁷⁰⁵ for Remembrance.
- 15 I waited during the draught
For him, who can open the clouds and bring rain,¹⁷⁰⁶
For him who resuscitated the child,¹⁷⁰⁷
Who had been all but lost from Remembrance
- 16 He lives forever to see the Covenant fulfilled,
As he said: I have acted in great zeal,
But the people have forsaken
The Covenant of Remembrance.¹⁷⁰⁸

¹⁶⁹⁸ A reference to Samuel, 1 Sam. 7:9.

¹⁶⁹⁹ An epithet for Moses and Aaron, after Song of Sol. Rabba 4:5, and Psalm 99:6 [referring to Moses and Aaron as God's Priests, and to Samuel as one who could invoke God's name; they called upon God and He answered them. Their intercession was efficacious].

¹⁷⁰⁰ A reference to David, after 1 Chron. 21:17.

¹⁷⁰¹ 1 Sam. 13:14.

¹⁷⁰² A reference to David, after 1 Chron. 21:26.

¹⁷⁰³ Of the destroying angel. Ibid.

¹⁷⁰⁴ 1 Chron. 21:27.

¹⁷⁰⁵ A reference to the eternal House of David, after Psalm 89:37.

¹⁷⁰⁶ A reference to Elijah, after I Kings 17:1 Interestingly, the rabbis, in Sanhedrin 113, Folio A, say that the "key" to rain making has not been given to any human emissary. Yosse ben Yosse appears to dispute this by placing the "key" in Elijah's hand. Mirsky points out the discrepancy but leaves it unresolved. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991) אהרון מירסקי. p. 103, footnote 15.

¹⁷⁰⁷ A reference to Elijah, after I Kings 17:23.

¹⁷⁰⁸ A reference to Elijah, after I Kings 19:10.

וּבִטְלָה חֶלֶב יִכַּפֵּר בְּצַדִּיקוֹ וּבִכְנָד שְׁנֵי עֲפָרִים יַעַל לְזִכְרוֹן.

זַעַף וַיִּירָא, וַיֹּאמֶר: תְּהִי יְדֵה בִּי, אֲשֶׁר כָּלֵב אֱלֹהִיו חָשׁוּב לְזִכְרוֹן

זַעַק וַיִּהְיֶיב חָרַב אֶל נְדָנָה וְהוֹשַׁת לוֹ כְּשִׁמְשׁ כֶּסֶם לְזִכְרוֹן.

חִפְיִי בָּעַת עֲצָר לְפֹתַח וּמִמַּטִּיר כְּמֹשִׁיב רוּחַ לַיָּלֵד אָבוֹד מִזְכְּרוֹן

חַי לְרֵאוֹת בְּרִית בְּדַבְּרוֹ: קִנְאַתִּי, כִּי עֲזָבוּ עָם בְּרִית לְזִכְרוֹן.

- 17 I used to have
 An atoner of sins,¹⁷⁰⁹
 With a burned offering, used
 To mitigate the wrath of Remembrance
- 18 With a mixture of herbs and aromatics
 For Him, who dwells in His Abode,
 Blood and fat for the fragrance,
 And bread for Remembrance.
- 19 I now represent myself
 My embers empty,¹⁷¹⁰
 Because Israel is not widowed from its God
 And I am committed to Remembrance¹⁷¹¹
- 20 God¹⁷¹², I trust in You¹⁷¹³
 And not in nobles,¹⁷¹⁴
 For they lie in their graves,¹⁷¹⁵
 Whereas Your Name lives for all eternity in Remembrance.¹⁷¹⁶
- 21 All these men have supported me,¹⁷¹⁷
 As I have begged for Your mercy,
 Without them I would have perished¹⁷¹⁸
 And would not be part of Remembrance
- 22 For they did not come demandingly
 Unto You,
 But rather they came with praises for You in their mouths¹⁷¹⁹
 Which they cherish in Remembrance.

¹⁷⁰⁹ An epithet for a Priest, after Gen. 32:21.

¹⁷¹⁰ Ezek. 24:11.

¹⁷¹¹ Jer. 51:5.

¹⁷¹² The name of God spelled with a Yod and a Hey is, in the original, actually written by the scribe as a Kof and a Hey, lest the Name be profaned. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי. p. 104, footnote 20.

¹⁷¹³ Psalm 55:24.

¹⁷¹⁴ Psalm 146:3.

¹⁷¹⁵ Meaning that they are mortal.

¹⁷¹⁶ Psalm 135:13.

¹⁷¹⁷ A reference to the righteous leaders of Israel, mentioned in the above stanzas, who had interceded with God on behalf of the People.

¹⁷¹⁸ Num. 17:28.

¹⁷¹⁹ Psalm 149:6.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| טָרַם הָיָה לִי | מִכַּפֵּר פָּנִים | מִנְחָה הוֹלֶכֶת | בְּשׂוֹחַד לְזִכְרוֹן |
| טָרַף גֵּרָד וְסָמִים | לְמִיֶּסֶב חֲדָרָיו | דָּם וְחֵלֶב לְגִיחַח | וְלֶחֶם לְזִכְרוֹן. |
| יֹצְגֹתִי עַל | גְּחֹלֵי רִיקָה | כִּי לֹא אֶלְמָן | שָׁתִי לְזִכְרוֹן |
| יֵה אֲבֹטַח בָּךְ | וְלֹא בְנֵדִיבִים | כִּי הֵם בְּקֶבֶר | וְלִנְצַח שְׁמֶךָ לְזִכְרוֹן. |
| כָּל אֱלֹהֵי סִמְכוֹנִי | וְרַחֲמֶיךָ בְּקִשְׁתִּי | לֹלֵי הֵם תִּמְתִּי | וְאִינִי לְזִכְרוֹן |
| כִּי הֵם בְּזֹרוּעַ | עֲדִיךָ לֹא בָאוּ | רוֹמְמוֹתֶיךָ בְּפִיָּהֶם | שָׁמוּ לְזִכְרוֹן. |

- 23 It is for this day there was ensconced
 The sum of all deeds
 For the Beginning of all Days,¹⁷²⁰
 And the header of Remembrance
- 24 Upon it to be read,
 That which was written in pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond¹⁷²¹
 To be revealed and explicated
 And made known for Remembrance.
- 25 Death and life,
 Peace and war,
 Famine¹⁷²² and satiation,
 Come before You in Remembrance.
- 26 The deeds of a man,
 And the measure of his steps,
 Are forgotten by humans,
 But are God's Remembrance.
- 27 My path had deviated,¹⁷²³
 Who could recount,
 It is for naught that my deeds were recorded,
 My sins writ for Remembrance
- 28 A man will be faced
 With his deeds as proof,
 And much as he try to deny,¹⁷²⁴
 His deeds testify in Remembrance.
- 29 Declare the cogitations of God,
 All humanity as one,¹⁷²⁵
 All who pass under His Staff,¹⁷²⁶
 As sheep before the shepherd for Remembrance

¹⁷²⁰ A reference to Rosh Hashanah, after PT Rosh Hashanah, Ch. 1, Halacha 3 [53, A].

¹⁷²¹ A reference to the sins of the People, after Jer. 17:1.

¹⁷²² Isa. 58:11.

¹⁷²³ Isa. 40:27.

¹⁷²⁴ Job 16:8.

¹⁷²⁵ Psalm 49:3.

¹⁷²⁶ Lev. 27:32.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| לְיוֹט זֶה נִכְמַט | סִכְכֶם חֲשׁוֹנוֹת | תַּחֲלֶה לְיָמִים | וּרְאֵשׁ לְזַכָּרוֹן |
| לְהִיקְרָא בּוֹ | כָּתַב עֵיט וְשָׁמִיר | גְּלוֹי וּבְאֵר | וַיְדוּעַ לְזַכָּרוֹן. |
| מֹות וְחַיִּים | שְׁלוֹם וּמְלַחֲמַת | צַחֲצָחוֹת וְשׁוֹבֵעַ | כָּאוּ לְזַכָּרוֹן |
| מֵעַלְלֵי גֵבֶר | וּמִסְפָּר צְעָדָיו | נִשְׁכָּחוּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ | וּלְאֵל לְזַכָּרוֹן. |
| נִסְתָּרָה דְרָכָי, | מִי יוֹכַל שִׁית, | לְשׂוֹא גִכְתַּב לִי | חֲטָא לְזַכָּרוֹן |
| נִגְדַּד פְּנֵי גֵבֶר | מֵעֲשָׂיו יוֹכִיחוּ | וַיַּעֲנֶה כְחָשׁוּ | עַד לְזַכָּרוֹן. |
| שִׁיחוּ מְזִימוֹת אֵל | יַחַד כָּל בְּנֵי אִישׁ | עוֹבְרֵי תַחַת שֶׁבֶט | כְּצֹאן לְזַכָּרוֹן |

30 He, who shut the door¹⁷²⁷
 For the innocent during times of affliction and fury,
 Until the wrath ebbs
 And they can emerge back in Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the animals that were with him in the Ark, and God caused a spirit to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.”¹⁷²⁸

31 Work Your miracle for the living,¹⁷²⁹
 Lest we be like the dead,
 For will Your truth be told
 In tombs, will there be Remembrance

32 You once arose to redeem us with Your might
 Please redeem us again, even though we are not worthy,
 For the sake of Your wonders,
 Act for all Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“He made a memorial for His wonders, Gracious and Compassionate is God.”¹⁷³⁰

33 Train Your eyes¹⁷³¹, God,
 Upon those who dwell in your Gardens,¹⁷³²
 Harken those who speak
 Of your Law in rapt Remembrance

34 Their deeds are before You,
 And their reward is from You,¹⁷³³
 Those who eat the bread of toil,¹⁷³⁴
 And who are written before you in Remembrance.

¹⁷²⁷ A reference to Noah, after Gen. 7:16, who shut the door of the ark and emerged therefrom after the flood; and a reference to the people of Israel, after Isa. 26:20.

¹⁷²⁸ Gen. 8:1.

¹⁷²⁹ Psalm 88:11-12.

¹⁷³⁰ Psalm 111:4.

¹⁷³¹ Eccles. 2:11.

¹⁷³² A reference to those who study the Torah.

¹⁷³³ Isa. 40:10.

¹⁷³⁴ Psalm 127:2.

סוּגַר דָּלַת בְּעַד תְּמִימִים בְּזַעַם עַד בּוֹא קִיּוֹץ צֵאת לְזִכְרוֹן.

ככת' בתו' ויזכור אלהים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתבה ויעבר
אלהים רוח על הארץ וישבו המים.

עֲשֵׂה פְּלֵא לַחַיִּים לְבַל יְהוּ כַּמֵּתִים הִישׁ אֲמַתִּיהָ בְּקִבְר לְזִכְרוֹן

עוֹרְרָתָהּ אֹז בְּפוֹעֵל עוֹרְרָנוּ בְּלֹא פוֹעֵל הֲלֹא לְנַפְלְאוֹתֶיהָ תַעֲשׂ לְזִכְרוֹן.

ככת' בד' ק' זכר עשה לנפלאותיו חנון ורחום יי.

פָּנָה אֱלֹהִים בְּיוֹשְׁבֵי גַנִּים מְקַשֵּׁיב לְגַדְבְּרֵי בְּדַת לְזִכְרוֹן

פְּעֻלָּם לְפָנֶיהָ וּשְׁכָרָם אֲתָךְ אֲכָלִי לֶחֶם הַעֲצָבִים בְּסִפּוֹר זִכְרוֹן.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“Then those who fear God spoke to one another, and God listened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear God and those who give thought to His Name.”¹⁷³⁵

- 35 There appeared foxes,
 Who spoiled the vineyards,¹⁷³⁶
 Who sought to cut off from the vine,¹⁷³⁷
 Both roots and all Remembrance¹⁷³⁸
- 36 They oppressed the people with hard labour,¹⁷³⁹
 And the people cried out and were saved,¹⁷⁴⁰
 For the sake of the Ancient Mountains,¹⁷⁴¹
 Whose deeds were etched into Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.”¹⁷⁴²

- 37 Before¹⁷⁴³ You looked well into future generations
 And You found them wanting,¹⁷⁴⁴
 So You replaced them and effaced them
 From Remembrance
- 38 You chose the thousandth generation
 And You bequeathed¹⁷⁴⁵ them Your word,
 For their sake and for the sake in every generation,
 Your Law is inscribed for Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

“He remembered His covenant forever- the Word He commanded for a thousand generations.”¹⁷⁴⁶

¹⁷³⁵ Mal. 3:16.

¹⁷³⁶ Song of Sol. 2:15.

¹⁷³⁷ A reference to Israel, after Isa. 5:7.

¹⁷³⁸ A reference to the Egyptians who sought to injure Israel, after Song of Sol. Rabba, A.

¹⁷³⁹ Exod. 1:13.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Exod. 2:24.

¹⁷⁴¹ An epithet for the Forefathers, after Deut. 33:15.

¹⁷⁴² Exod. 2:24.

¹⁷⁴³ The word refers to the time before creation, after Psalm 119:152.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Eccles. 12:1.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Job 20:29.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Psalm 105:8.

ככת' ע"נ' או נדברו יראי יי איש אל רעהו ויקשב יי וישמע ויכתב בספר זכרון ליראי
יי ולהושבי שמו.

צצו שועלים מחבלים כרמים להכרית מגפן שורש וזכרון

צרום בפרך נאקו ונושעו בכושר הררי קדם הוחק לזכרון.

ככת' בתו' וישמע אלהים את נאקתם ויזכר אלהים את בריתו את אמרהם את יצחק
ואת יעקב.

קדם בנתה לדורות ואין בהם חפץ חילפתם ואיבדתם מהיות לזכרון

קחתה דור מאלף אמריה הנחלתם למענם בכל דור קחתה לזכרון.

ככת' בר' קד' זכר לעולם בריתו דבר צוה לאלף דור.

39 The Lofty One¹⁷⁴⁷ desired¹⁷⁴⁸
 The bride of his youth,¹⁷⁴⁹
 Her dead and her poor
 Come forth in Remembrance

40 She hastened to followed You¹⁷⁵⁰
 In the valley of wilderness and in the shadow of death,
 The love of her betrothal
 Is a monument to Remembrance.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

“Go and call out in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: Thus said God: I recall you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me into the Wilderness, into an unsown land.”¹⁷⁵¹

41 The people have dealt corruptly¹⁷⁵²
 And they bear their disgrace before their foes,
 For they invoked the name of a statue,¹⁷⁵³
 And did not bear God’s Name in Remembrance¹⁷⁵⁴

42 In an instant they were all but lost,¹⁷⁵⁵
 But for the one who stood in the breach before Him,¹⁷⁵⁶
 And reminded Him of His
 Covenant of Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“Remember for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself and You told them, ‘I shall increase your offspring like the stars of heaven, and this entire land of which I spoke, I shall give to your offspring and it shall be their heritage forever.’”¹⁷⁵⁷

¹⁷⁴⁷ An epithet for God, after Isa. 57:15.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Deut. 10:15.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Jer. 2:2.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Song of Sol. 1:4.

¹⁷⁵¹ Jer. 2:2.

¹⁷⁵² Exod. 32:7.

¹⁷⁵³ A reference to the Golden Calf.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Joshua 23:7.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Exod. 33:5.

¹⁷⁵⁶ A reference to Moses, after Psalm 106:23.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Exod. 32:13.

רַחֵם חֶשֶׁק מְאֹד בְּכֵלֶת נְעוּרִים הַרוּגִיה וְעַגְיִיה בָּאוּ לְזַכְרוֹן

רָצָה אַחֲרֶיךָ בְּגִיא צִיָּה וְצַלְמוֹת אֶהְבֵּת כְּלוּלוֹתֶיךָ תַעֲשֵׂה לְזַכְרוֹן.

ככת' ע'י'נ' הלוך וקראת באוני ירושלם לאמר כה אמר יי וזכרתי לך חסד נעוריך אהבת כלולותיך לכתך אחרי במדבר בארץ לא זרועה.

שִׁיחֲתוּ עִם אֵל שְׂאֵת שְׂמֵצָה בְקַמִּיהֶם שֵׁם פֶּסֶל וְלֹא אֵל שָׁתוּ לְזַכְרוֹן

שׁוֹפְלוּ כַמַּעַט רָגַע לִוְלִי קִם בַּפֶּרֶץ מְעוֹרֵר שְׁבוּעוֹת בְּרִית זְכָרוֹן.

ככת' בתו' זכור לאברהם ליצחק ולישר' עבדיך אשר גשבעת להם כך ותדבר אליהם ארבה את זרעכם ככוכבי השמים וכל הארץ הזאת אשר אמרתי אתן לזרעכם ונחלו לעולם.

43 You despised from the Beginning,
The multitude of the nations,
You chose and desired us above them,
As a testament to Remembrance¹⁷⁵⁸

44 Those called Refuse Silver¹⁷⁵⁹
You took a forgotten generation,
Procure¹⁷⁶⁰ us once more
Before we were cast off from all Remembrance.

As it is written in Your Holy Scriptures:

*“Remember Your congregation, which You acquired long ago, You redeemed the Tribe of Your heritage; the Mountain of Zion, the one where You rested Your Presence.”*¹⁷⁶¹

45 The Wholesome one¹⁷⁶² saw
After whose name shall his progeny be called,¹⁷⁶³
And so he crossed his hands
As a sign of Remembrance

46 Remember with fondness the people who, like Ephraim,
Are Your delightful child,¹⁷⁶⁴
For he is my firstborn,
As You have mandated for all Remembrance.

As it is written by Your Prophets:

*“Is Ephraim My favourite son or a delightful child, that whenever I speak of him I remember him more and more? Therefore My inner self yearns for him, I will surely take pity on him- the Word of God.”*¹⁷⁶⁵

¹⁷⁵⁸ Psalm 19:8.

¹⁷⁵⁹ A reference to Israel during the First Temple, after Jer. 6:30.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Isa. 11:11.

¹⁷⁶¹ Psalm 74:2.

¹⁷⁶² An epithet for Jacob, after Gen. 25:27.

¹⁷⁶³ A reference to Ephraim, after Jer. 31:8.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Jer. 31:19.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Jer. 31:19.

תִּיעַבְתָּהּ מֵאֵז עֲדַת כָּל־אֻמִּים חֲשַׁקְתָּנוּ מֵהֵם עֲדַת לְזַכְרוֹן

תִּמְוֹר פְּטָרִי נִמְאָס יוֹרֵי נִשְׁכּוֹת קַחְתָּהּ קִנִּינוּ שְׁנִית כִּי שׁוֹכְחָנוּ מִזְכְּרוֹן.

כַּכֵּת בְּר' ק' זְכוּר עֲדִיתְךָ קִנִּית קֶדֶם גְּאֵלֶת שֶׁבֶט נִחַלְתִּיךָ הִרְ צִיּוֹן זֶה שְׁכַנַּת בּוֹ.

תָּוִר אִישׁ וְהָם בְּמִי זָרְעוּ יְכוּנָה שָׁפַל יָדָיו לְאוֹת לְזַכְרוֹן

תִּרְפֵּק מְשׁוּל אֶפְרַיִם בְּשַׁעֲשׁוּעַ יְלָד הֲלֵא בְּכוֹרֵי הוּא חֲקָתָהּ לְזַכְרוֹן.

כַּכֵּת ע"ב' הֵבֵן יְקִיד לִי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יֶלֶד שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים כִּי מִדֵּי דִבְרֵי בּוֹ זְכוּר אֲזַכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד,
עַל כֵּן הִמּוֹ מֵעַי לּוֹ רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נֵאֵם יי.

אפחד במעשי

I AM IN DREAD BECAUSE OF MY DEEDS

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
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אמנם אשמינו – Despite Our Transgressions

TITLE: Despite Our Transgressions.....אמנם אשמינו

SUBJECT SUMMARY: A congregational prayer for forgiveness. God is manifest in history and events are related to the People's conduct.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 46
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 4)
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete.
- **Other:** Two phrases per line [unlike most piyyutim where there are 4 phrases per line].

NOTES: Introduced by two verses which become alternating responsive phrases for the congregation to recite after the paytan's stanzas. The piyyut is written in the first person plural, as a congregational piyyut. An appeal to God for pardon. Relate present misfortune to God's retribution for the People's sins in straying from God's instructions.

אֲשַׁמֵּנוּ אֱמוּנָה – Despite Our Transgressions

- 1 It is Your manner, our God
To suspend Your anger¹⁷⁶⁶
Against the iniquitous and the just
And that is Your renown.¹⁷⁶⁷
- 2 For Your sake, our God,
Act, not for our sake,¹⁷⁶⁸
Look upon us standing before you,
Inadequate and empty-handed.
- 3 Indeed, our transgressions
Are too grave to be recounted
The sorrows of our generation
Are more numerous than can be spoken of,¹⁷⁶⁹
- 4 For we have not hearkened
Your rebuke,¹⁷⁷⁰ as we ought to have understood
Even as we are enveloped by tortures
Like a rebellious man¹⁷⁷¹, we have deliberately done evil.

*It is Your manner, our God
To suspend Your anger
Against the iniquitous and the just
And that is Your renown.*

- 5 Even as You spoke to us: Return-¹⁷⁷²
We have hidden our faces.
We pretended to seek You
But we did not return unto You.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Exod. 34:6.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Isa. 48:9.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Psalm 115:1.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Psalm 40:6.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Prov. 17:10.

¹⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷² 2 Kings 17:13-14.

אִמְנֵם אֲשֵׁמִינּוּ

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אִפְּךָ
 לְרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תְהַלְתִּיהָ.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
 רְאֵה עֲמִידָתֵנוּ דְּלִים וְרִקִּים.

אִמְנֵם אֲשֵׁמִינּוּ עֲצָמוּ מִסֵּפֶר
 אֲנַחֲוֹת דּוֹרֵינוּ רַבּוּ מִלְדַּבֵּר,

אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִקְשַׁבְנוּ גְּעָרָה כְּמִבִּין
 אֲפַפּוֹנוּ מִכּוֹת כְּכֶסֶל הַזֹּרְנוּ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אִפְּךָ
 לְרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תְהַלְתִּיהָ.

בְּדַבְרְךָ לָנוּ: שׁוּבוּ – פְּנִינוּ הַסְתַּרְנוּ.

בְּמַרְמָה בְּקִשְׁנוֹךְ וְאֵלֶיךָ לֹא שָׁבְנוּ.

- 6 In good times¹⁷⁷³ we did not yearn for You
 And in the midst of plenty we disregarded You-
 And now in the time of our need
 How will You be found?¹⁷⁷⁴

*For Your sake, our God,
 Act, not for our sake,
 Look upon us standing before you,
 Inadequate and empty-handed.*

- 7 We have no great deeds¹⁷⁷⁵
 With which to appear before You,
 Amputees¹⁷⁷⁶ in our action
 We are shamed, now that we must pay for our deeds.

- 8 We have exhausted and consumed¹⁷⁷⁷
 The merit of our forefathers,
 The capital and its fruit both¹⁷⁷⁸
 Cannot fully suffice.¹⁷⁷⁹

It is your manner ...

- 9 Our beloved treasures¹⁷⁸⁰
 Have been humiliatingly taken from us¹⁷⁸¹
 Those who beat at Your gates
 With the force of good deeds and their heroism.

- 10 We have become haughty of speech¹⁷⁸²
 But please deliver us in Your mercy,
 Suspend Your verdict
 Of the revolving flaming sword.¹⁷⁸³

For your sake ...

¹⁷⁷³ Deut. 28:47.

¹⁷⁷⁴ 1 Chron. 28:9.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Psalm 71:16.

¹⁷⁷⁶ 1 Sam. 2:31.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Job 13:28.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Job 20:22.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Isa. 2:16.

¹⁷⁸¹ Jer. 44:10.

¹⁷⁸² Psalm 17:10.

¹⁷⁸³ Gen. 3:24.

בְּטוֹב לֹא דִרְשָׁנוּךְ בְּרוֹב כֹּל שְׁכַחְנוּךְ –

בְּעֵת הַיֵּצֵר לָנוּ אֵיךְ תִּמְצָא?

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְּלִים וְרָקִים.

גְּבוּרוֹת אֵין בָּנוּ אֲשֶׁר בָּם נִבּוֹא,

גְּדוּעֵי זְרוּעַ בְּפוּעַל בְּתַת שְׁכָר בִּשְׁנוּ.

גְּמָרְנוּ וְאָכַלְנוּ צְדָקַת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,

גַּם קָרוֹן גַּם פָּרִי לֹא מְלֹאוּ סִפְקוֹ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַאֲרִיךְ אִפְךָ
לְרַעִים וְלִטּוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

דּוֹכָאוּ מָנוּ שְׁכִיּוֹת הַחֲמֻדָּה

דְּפָקִי דְלֶתִיךָ בְּכַח וּבְגִבוּרָה.

דְּכָרִי בְּגֵאוּהוּ נַעֲשִׂינוּ עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ,

דְּחַה מְשַׁפֵּט בַּחֲרֵב הַמֵּתֵהֶפְכֶת.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְּלִים וְרָקִים.

11 We have been made bare, presented like an empty vessel¹⁷⁸⁴
 Like husks of grain
 We have become but chaff¹⁷⁸⁵
 Which no one wishes to gather.

12 Indeed, when
 Grain is gathered in its season¹⁷⁸⁶
 Fire now laps having been lit
 In the dry straw.¹⁷⁸⁷

It is your manner ...

13 So what can we say
 And how can we justify ourselves,¹⁷⁸⁸
 And what shall we utter
 So our words will be awash with some boon?¹⁷⁸⁹

14 And who amongst us who can speak¹⁷⁹⁰
 Would speak plainly for us¹⁷⁹¹
 And will not be ashamed
 As he opens his mouth?

For your sake ...

15 This is our foolish manner¹⁷⁹²
 We have come into folly,
 Iniquitous sinners
 Gluttonous and inebriates.¹⁷⁹³

¹⁷⁸⁴ Jer. 51:34.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Psalm 1:4.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Hosea 2:11.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Isa. 5:24.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Gen. 44:16.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Psalm 45:3.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Exod. 24:14.

¹⁷⁹¹ Isa. 32:4.

¹⁷⁹² Psalm 49:14.

¹⁷⁹³ Deut. 32:15.

הוֹרֵקֵנוּ וְהוֹצֵגֵנוּ בְּקֶשׁ מִדָּגָן

הֵיִינוּ כְּמוֹץ וְאִין דּוֹרֵשׁ לְאֹסֶפּוֹ.

הֲלֹא בְּהִלָּקַח דָּגָן בְּעֵתוֹ

הוֹצֵאת לְשׁוֹן אֵשׁ בְּקֶשׁ הַיֵּבֶשׁ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אֶפְךָ
לְרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

וּמֵה־נִּדְבֵר וּמֵה־נִּצְטַדֵּק,

וּמֵה־נֶאֱמַר וַיּוֹצֵק חֵן בְּשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ?

וּמִי בְּעַל דְּבָרִים יְדַבֵּר צְחוֹת

וּבִפְתָחוֹן פִּי לֹא יִכְלֵם?

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לְנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְּלִים וְרָקִים.

זֶה דְרַכֵּינוּ כֶּסֶל נַחֲלָנוּ אֲוֹלֶת,

זֵידִים חוֹטְאִים זוֹלָלִים וְסוֹבְאִים.

16 Who amongst us can say-
 I have cleansed my heart?¹⁷⁹⁴
 We are but seed implanted in wombs
 To be born and to die in vanity.¹⁷⁹⁵

It is your manner...

17 Having seen wonders
 We have put our mark on the land¹⁷⁹⁶
 Marked by the sign of the covenant
 And by the righteous laws.¹⁷⁹⁷

18 We were considered the Holy seed¹⁷⁹⁸
 Children of the Living God-¹⁷⁹⁹
 Yet we have become defiled¹⁸⁰⁰- and have been called:
 The nation that has sullied the Name of God.¹⁸⁰¹

For your sake...

19 Your eyes are too pure
 To behold evil,¹⁸⁰²
 In times of yore You did not see
 Iniquity in Jacob.¹⁸⁰³

20 We yearn for
 Food¹⁸⁰⁴ that is not ours-
 And thus we have been slain, the old and the young,
 Consumed, as if by fishes.¹⁸⁰⁵

It is your manner ...

¹⁷⁹⁴ Prov. 20:9.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Eccles. 6:4.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Ezek. 9:4.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Deut. 28:10.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Isa. 6:13.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Hosea 2:1.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Ezek. 22:5.

¹⁸⁰¹ Isa. 6:5.

¹⁸⁰² Hab. 1:13.

¹⁸⁰³ Num. 23:21.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Psalm 111:5 and Mal. 3:10. The root טרף has a connotation of devouring food, after Gen. 37:33.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Jonah 2:1-11. The Paytan is evoking Jonah's experience and his prayer of repentance.

זכיתי לבי – מי יוכל שיח?

זרע קבורת רחם בא והולך בהכל.

דרכך אלהינו
לרעים ולטובים
להאריך אפך
והיא תהלתיה.

חזות מופת התוינו בארץ

חתומי באות ברית וחקים ישרים.

חשבנו זרע קדש בנים לאל חי, –

חללנו – ונקרינו: אום טמאת השם.

למענה, אלהינו,
ראה צמידתנו
עשה ולא לנו,
דלים ורקים.

טהור עינים מראות ברע,

טרם לא ראה עמל ביעקב.

טרף לא־לנו נכספה נפשינו –

טבחנו רב וצעיר כבליעת דגים.

דרכך אלהינו
לרעים ולטובים
להאריך אפך
והיא תהלתיה.

- 21 God, when we were impoverished
 You have delivered us with mercy,
 You held us in Your hand¹⁸⁰⁶
 When we were weakened.
- 22 You enlightened us:
 Do this and you shall live-¹⁸⁰⁷
 No hands fell upon us¹⁸⁰⁸
 Like the city¹⁸⁰⁹ that was overthrown in a moment.¹⁸¹⁰
For your sake...
- 23 Like a seal upon a heart¹⁸¹¹
 You have set us, our King,
 Like a soul, bound¹⁸¹²
 With love's twines.¹⁸¹³
- 24 As we become evil doers
 Having aligned ourselves with idols-¹⁸¹⁴
 Now that our heart has separated¹⁸¹⁵ from You,
 We are guilty.
It is your manner ...
- 25 You spoke to us, to better us,¹⁸¹⁶
 Not a Word has failed to come to pass,¹⁸¹⁷
 The words of your faithfulness
 Have not been false unto us.-¹⁸¹⁸

¹⁸⁰⁶ Lev. 25:35.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Gen. 42:18; Deut. 11:13; Jer. 17:24.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Lam. 4:6.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Sodom.

¹⁸¹⁰ Gen. 19:25.

¹⁸¹¹ Song of Sol. 8:6.

¹⁸¹² Hosea 11:4.

¹⁸¹³ Gen. 44:30.

¹⁸¹⁴ Hosea 4:17.

¹⁸¹⁵ Hosea 10:2.

¹⁸¹⁶ Jer. 32:40.

¹⁸¹⁷ Joshua 21:43.

¹⁸¹⁸ Psalm 89:34.

יְהִי בְּדִלּוֹתֵינוּ צְדָקָה חֲנֻנֹתֵנוּ,

יֵד בְּנוֹ הַחֲזוּקָה בַּעַת מָטָה יְדֵינוּ.

יִדְעָתֵנוּ: זֹאת עָשׂוֹ וְחַיּוֹ –

יָדִים לֹא חָלוּ בְנוֹ כַּהֲפֹכֶת רָגַע.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידָתֵנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

כַּחֲתָם עַל לֵב שְׁמָתָה מִלְּבִינוּ

כַּנֶּפֶשׁ קְשׁוּרָה בַּעֲבֹת אֶהְבָּה.

כִּי נִתְרוּעַע חֲבוּרֵי עֲצָבִים –

כַּעַת חָלַק לְבִינוּ, אֲשַׁמְנוּ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אֶפְדָּ
לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

לְהִיטִיב דְּבַרְתָּ אֹמֵר לֹא הִפְלָתָה,

לֹא שֶׁקֶר בְּנוֹ דְּבַר אֱמוּנָתִיךָ. –

26 Our heart and our mouth have not been equal
 Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross¹⁸¹⁹
 With a mocking flattering lip
 We have spoken with a double heart.¹⁸²⁰

For your sake ...

27 You smote the belly-crawling creature¹⁸²¹
 Before debating its guilt¹⁸²²
 You castigated
 Those who have a forked tongue.-¹⁸²³

28 From a scorner's chastisement¹⁸²⁴
 A fool cannot learn¹⁸²⁵
 He that smites his fellow in secret¹⁸²⁶
 With coals of broom-wood.¹⁸²⁷

It is your manner ...

29 You have put dread
 In the hearts of men¹⁸²⁸
 Teaching them the laws of a vow, and of bearing false witness,¹⁸²⁹
 When making an oath between two men,¹⁸³⁰

¹⁸¹⁹ Prov. 21:23.

¹⁸²⁰ Psalm 12:3.

¹⁸²¹ Gen. 3:14.

¹⁸²² Gen. Rabba 20:2.

¹⁸²³ Eccles. 10:11.

¹⁸²⁴ Prov. 22:10.

¹⁸²⁵ Prov. 21:11.

¹⁸²⁶ Deut. 27:24.

¹⁸²⁷ Psalm 120:4.

¹⁸²⁸ Deut. 6:13.

¹⁸²⁹ Deut. 23:22-24; Num. 30:2-17.

¹⁸³⁰ Exod. 22:10.

לֵב וּפֶה לֹא הִשְׁוִינוּ כַּכֶּסֶף עַל חָרֶשׁ

לְעַג שִׁפְתַּי חֲלָקוֹת בְּלֵב וּלֵב דִּבְרָנוּ.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לְנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידָתְנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

מִכַּת הוֹלֵךְ עַל גַּחֲזוֹן הַקְּדָמָתָה

מוֹסֵר לְמִדָּת לְבַעֲלֵי הַלְשׁוֹן. –

מְעוֹנֵשׁ לֵץ לֹא יַחֲכֵם פִּתֵי

מִכָּה רִיעַ בַּסֵּתֶר בְּגַחֲלֵי רִתְמִים.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַאֲרִיךְ אֶפֶק
לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִּהְלֶתֶיךָ.

נִתְּתָה מוֹרָא עַל לֵב אַנְשִׁים

גִּדְרִי, שְׁבוּעַת שְׂוֹא, בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם, חֲקָתָה.

- 30 You said: “I cause it to go forth”¹⁸³¹
 Concerning those who swear falsely by Your Name-
 We have become riddled with oaths¹⁸³²
 So much so, that the land is in mourning.¹⁸³³

For your sake ...

- 31 You have shouldered¹⁸³⁴ the weight of the world
 You have been feet to the lame,¹⁸³⁵
 You buttress the world with Truth¹⁸³⁶
 And with peace and with justice.¹⁸³⁷

- 32 We have distorted judgments¹⁸³⁸
 And truth has failed as well-¹⁸³⁹
 We have turned and returned seeking
 Peace, and found none.¹⁸⁴⁰

It is your manner ...

- 33 You are most high¹⁸⁴¹
 Upon Your lofty elevated throne,¹⁸⁴²
 Your eyes behold
 The lowly and the meek.¹⁸⁴³

¹⁸³¹ Zech. 5:4.

¹⁸³² The Paytan uses the root פָּרַץ, implying a wide distribution of sin, after Gen. 28:14.

¹⁸³³ Jer. 23:10.

¹⁸³⁴ The Paytan uses the root סָבַל implying that God has borne the weight of the world with sorrow. The root carries both connotations, of bearing weight, and of suffering.

¹⁸³⁵ Job 29:15.

¹⁸³⁶ Mishnah Avot 1:18.

¹⁸³⁷ Zech. 8:16.

¹⁸³⁸ Hab. 1:4.

¹⁸³⁹ Isa. 59:14.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Ezek. 7:25.

¹⁸⁴¹ Psalm 97:9.

¹⁸⁴² Isa. 6:1.

¹⁸⁴³ Isa. 6:2; Isa. 57:15.

נִמְתָּה 'וְהוֹצֵאת' – עַל נִשְׁבָּעִים לְשֹׁקֵר –

נִפְרָצְנוּ בְּאֵלֶה נִפְרָצְנוּ בְּאֵלֶה עַד אֲבֵלֶה הָאָרֶץ.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לְנוּ, רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

סִבְלַתָּה עוֹלָם כְּרִגְלִים לִפְסָח,

סִמְכַתוּ בְּאֵמֶת וְשָׁלוֹם וּמִשְׁפָּט.

סִלְפָּנוּ מִשְׁפָּט – וְגַם כִּשְׁלֵה אֵמֶת –

סִבְבָּנוּ לְבִקֵּשׁ שָׁלוֹם וְאִינוּ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אִפְךָ לְרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

עֲלִיוֹן אַתָּה בְּכֶסֶף רֶם וְנִשְׂאָ,

עֵינֶיךָ מִבֵּיטִים שָׁפֵל וְדָכָא.

- 34 You said¹⁸⁴⁴ unto us- seek humility-¹⁸⁴⁵
 And you will be shielded from anger,
 But we were brazen with a proud heart¹⁸⁴⁶
 And our eyes were haughty.¹⁸⁴⁷

For your sake...

- 35 Your countenance is always¹⁸⁴⁸
 Gazing upon the Beloved Land of all lands,¹⁸⁴⁹
 You call on her in her seasons and You water her¹⁸⁵⁰
 And You make grow and thrive her bountiful crops.

- 36 Lest man rob
 God¹⁸⁵¹
 Of the fruit You have given to be tithed
 Lest the land's bounties wither.¹⁸⁵²

It is your manner ...

- 37 You have fashioned the wilderness¹⁸⁵³
 Your labour is measured in years,
 There is a time of service to man upon the earth¹⁸⁵⁴
 His toil measured in days.

¹⁸⁴⁴ The Paytan uses the root פצה which evokes a bird chirping, a song, after Isa. 10:14.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Zeph. 2:3.

¹⁸⁴⁶ Prov. 16:5.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Prov. 21:4.

¹⁸⁴⁸ Deut. 11:12.

¹⁸⁴⁹ Jer. 3:19.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Psalm 65:10-11.

¹⁸⁵¹ Mal. 3:8.

¹⁸⁵² Hosea 9:2.

¹⁸⁵³ Isa. 41:18.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Job 7:1.

עֲנֶנּוּ בְקִשׁוֹ – פְּצֵתָהּ – וְתִסְתְּרוּ מֵאֵף,

עֲזֹנוּ בְּגִבְהוֹת לֵב וְרָמוּ עֵינֵינוּ.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

פְּנִיךָ תָּמִיד בְּחִמּוֹת אֲרָצוֹת,

פְּקֹדֶה וּמְשׁוֹקֵקָה וּמְצַמֵּיחַ מְגִדֶּיָּה.

פֹּז יִקְבַע אָדָם אֱלֹהִים

פְּרִי תִתֶּה לְמַעֲשֶׂר וּכְחֹשׁוֹ מְגִדֶּיָּה.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אֶפְדֵּךְ
לְרָעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תְהַלְתֶּיָּה.

צִיָּה יִצְרֶת לְמִלְאֲכַת שָׁנִים,

צָבָא לְאַנוּשׁ עָלֵי אֲרֶץ לְמִלְאֲכַת יָמִים.

- 38 You have commanded a rest on the seventh day¹⁸⁵⁵
 But they did not take respite.
 You have commanded the Land of the Deer¹⁸⁵⁶ to lay fallow on the seventh year-¹⁸⁵⁷
 And the Land did not rest.¹⁸⁵⁸

For your sake ...

- 39 We approached Your countenance¹⁸⁵⁹
 With a fool's offering in hand¹⁸⁶⁰
 Trying t buy Your leniency
 With empty flattery that is not heartfelt.
- 40 Please accept, as if it is the fragrance of sacrifice
 The little righteousness we have done,¹⁸⁶¹
 Please take our words
 As if they were a handful of flour, like the offerings of the poor.¹⁸⁶²

It is your manner ...

- 41 We roamed at large and have not come unto You¹⁸⁶³
 In our obstinacy we did say,
 Oh Elevated One,¹⁸⁶⁴ you have bent-over for our sake
 Like a supple green cypress.¹⁸⁶⁵
- 42 Even as You have thrust us with Your left hand,
 Please do draw us near with Your right.
 Gaze upon the leaven in our hearts
 The heart's imagination that is evil from our youth.¹⁸⁶⁶

For your sake ...

¹⁸⁵⁵ Exod. 20:10.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Dan. 11:16.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Lev. 25:2.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Lev. 26:35.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Psalm 95:2.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Prov. 17:16.

¹⁸⁶¹ Prov. 16:8.

¹⁸⁶² Lev. 2:2.

¹⁸⁶³ Jer. 2:31.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Isa. 57:15.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Hosea 14:9.

¹⁸⁶⁶ PT Sota Folio 47-A.

צוֹיֵת לְמַרְגּוּעַ שְׁבִיעִי וְלֹא נָחוּ.

צָבִי לְשִׁמְטַת שְׁבִיעִית – וְהִיא לֹא שָׁבְתָה.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עָשָׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

קִדְמָנוּ פָּנֶיךָ כַּמְחִיר בְּיַד כָּסִיל

קִנּוֹת צְדָקָתֶיךָ בַּתּוֹדָה בְּלֹא לֵב.

קָבַל כְּנִיחוֹחַ מְעַט בְּצַדְקָה,

קַח נָא אֲמַרֵינוּ כְּקוֹמֵץ מִנַּחַת דָּל.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַאֲרִיךְ אֶפְסָה
לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

רְדָנוּ וְלֹא נָבֵא בְמַרְיָנוּ אֲמַרְנוּ,

רֵם, לָנוּ נִכְפַּפְתָּ כְּבָרוּשׁ רַעְזָנוּ.

רוּחֲקָנוּ בְשִׁמְאֵל קָרַב בְּיָמֶינוּ.

רְאֵה שְׂאוֹר לְכַבֵּינוּ יֵצֵר הַנְּעוּרִים.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עָשָׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְלִים וְרָקִים.

43 We have repented with a heart full of pride
 Bringing You gifts of the injudicious
 We have been whipped by disgrace¹⁸⁶⁷
 That is our lot

44 Please regard my pronouncements
 And may our desire be fulfilled
 Even as we sink into oblivion¹⁸⁶⁸
 Your mercy will greet us.¹⁸⁶⁹

*It is Your manner, our God
 To suspend Your anger
 Against the iniquitous and the just
 And that is Your renown.*

45 Please heal¹⁸⁷⁰
 A wind-blown leaf¹⁸⁷¹
 Please find forgiveness
 For dust and ashes¹⁸⁷²

46 Please cast our sins¹⁸⁷³
 And pardon Your creatures¹⁸⁷⁴
 Look at us, bereft of intercessors¹⁸⁷⁵
 And treat us with kindness.

*For Your sake, our God,
 Act, not for our sake,
 Look upon us standing before you,
 Inadequate and empty-handed.*

¹⁸⁶⁷ Isa. 10:26.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Psalm 30:10.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Psalm 79:8.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Jer. 30:17.

¹⁸⁷¹ Job 13:25.

¹⁸⁷² Job 42:6.

¹⁸⁷³ Micah 7:19.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Job 14:15.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Isa. 59:16.

שִׁבְנוּ בְּגוֹדֵל לֵב בְּמַתַּנֵּת אוֹיֵל

שׁוֹט כְּלִימָה עָלָה לְחַלְקֵינוּ

שׁוֹר נָא אֲמַרִי יִמְלֵא חֶפְצֵינוּ

שַׁחַת אִם גֵּרַד יִקְדְּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ.

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אִפְךָ
לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים וְהִיא תִהְלֶתִיךָ.

תַּעֲלֶה אַרוּכָה לְעָלָה נִדְּף

תִּנְחַם עַל עֶפֶר וְאֶפֶר

תִּשְׁלִיךְ חֲטָאֵינוּ וְתַחֲוֹן בְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ

תֵּרָא כִּי אִין אִישׁ עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה.

לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,
רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְּלִים וְרַקִּים.

אמנם אשמינו
DESPITE OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | 8 |
| Exodus | 4 |
| Leviticus | 4 |
| Numbers | 2 |
| Deuteronomy | 8 |
| Joshua | 1 |
| Judges | |
| I Kings | |
| II kings | 1 |
| I Samuel | 1 |
| II Samuel | |
| Isaiah | 15 |
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| Amos | |
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| | |
|---------------|----|
| Zephaniah | 1 |
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| Malachi | 2 |
| Psalms | 15 |
| Proverbs | 10 |
| Job | 7 |
| Song of Songs | 1 |
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| Daniel | 1 |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | 1 |
| II Chronicles | |
| Genesis Rabba | 1 |
| Mishnah | 2 |
| PT | 1 |
| BT | |
| | |

גדולות אספר – I Speak of Great Works

TITLE: I Speak of Great Works.....אספר גדולות.

SUBJECT SUMMARY: A brief description of the High Priest service [Avodah] on Yom Kippur. Interspersed with verses from scripture and quotes from Mishnah Yoma. Begins with Creation, leads to Cain and Abel, the Three Fathers, and then to the birth of Levi as the most important constitutive element- the Priestly service as mediator for the People with God.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 46
- **Acrostic system:** (2 x ב"א) x1 + (2 x 2) ת as cap . Ends with the word יהוה in prominence.
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete
- **Other:** Some rhyming.

NOTES: Brief review of scripture. Focus on Avodah. Brief and not detailed. Focus on responsive reading of scripture and Mishnah.

גדולות אספר – I Speak of Great Works

- 1 I speak of the greatness¹⁸⁷⁶
Of Him who has worked tremendous feats¹⁸⁷⁷
He spoke and thus created
And His works are eternal¹⁸⁷⁸
- 2 He has strengthened the thin veil of firmament¹⁸⁷⁹, turning it into His throne¹⁸⁸⁰
And He has fashioned the world as his foot-rest
He uncovered the light for use during the day
And he has secreted the darkness as eventide for the festive ball.¹⁸⁸¹
- 3 He arranged the firmament¹⁸⁸²
To bear brooks of water¹⁸⁸³
And the remaining water He chased into the nether regions
So that they would push forth the grasses and bushes and wild plants¹⁸⁸⁴
- 4 He made the world glow
With the light of the rulers of the day and the night¹⁸⁸⁵
To preside over the reckoning of days¹⁸⁸⁶
And the occasions of festivals.
- 5 The mighty that are locked in the abyss¹⁸⁸⁷
And the scaly fish
The crawling creatures and the spawn of fire
He let propagate in the shallows of the water He left in His wake¹⁸⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷⁶ Psalm 145:6; stanzas 1-2 refer to the First day of creation, we call Sunday.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Job 5:9.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Psalm 145:6; Eccles. 3:14.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Isa. 40:22.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Isa. 66:1.

¹⁸⁸¹ The word נִשְׁפָּר depicting the evening, with an insinuation that evening is a social gathering time of the day, appears in several stances in the bible, as follows: Jer. 13:16; Job 7:4; Job 24:15 In other biblical sources, the root נִשְׁפָּר usually pertains to issuing a puff of wind in anger. My understanding is that the chosen root here implies a divinely mandated darkness, often initiated in anger, as light is reserved for the worthy.

¹⁸⁸² Gen. Rabbah 4:2; stanza 3 refers to the Second day of creation, we call Monday.

¹⁸⁸³ Gen. Rabbah 4:4.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Psalm 65:10; Job 35:16; These phrases refer to the Third day of creation, we call Tuesday.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Gen. 1:17-18; The stanza refers to the Fourth day of creation, we call Wednesday.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Gen. 1:14.

¹⁸⁸⁷ The stanza refers to the Fifth day of creation, we call Thursday.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Isa. 40:12.

אספר גדולות

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| מַעֲשֵׂיוֹ לְעוֹלָם | שָׁח וַיַּפְעֵל | עוֹשֵׂה גְדוּלוֹת | אֲסַפֵּר גְדוּלוֹת |
| וְאוֹפֵל הַחֲבִיא לְנֶשֶׁף. | אוֹר גִּילָה לְיוֹם | וְתַבַּל לְהֵרוֹם | אֵימָץ דּוֹק לְכֶסֶם |
| וּלְהַדְשִׂיא שִׁיחַ וְעֶשֶׂב | וַיִּתְרַם הַנִּיֵּס לְנֶבֶךְ | לְעֲמוֹס פִּלְגֵי מַיִם | בִּירַר רְקִיעַ |
| וּלְרַגְעֵי עֵתִים. | הָיֹוֹת לְפָקֹד יָמִים | בְּמוֹשְׁלֵי יוֹם וְלַיְלָה | בִּיהַק עוֹלָם |
| הַשְּׂרִיץ בְּמֵי שׁוּעַל | רָמַשׁ וּבְנֵי רֶשֶׁף | וּדְגַת קִשְׁקֶשֶׁת | גְּאוֹן בְּרִיחֵי תְהוֹם |

- 6 And even in the soil of the earth¹⁸⁸⁹
 He fashioned a multitude of creatures
 And He decided to fashion
 Man to rule all of Creation.¹⁸⁹⁰
- 7 He made man in His image¹⁸⁹¹
 And donned him with privilege¹⁸⁹²
 And placed him under the glorious canopy¹⁸⁹³
 And instructed him and gave him decrees to test him
- 8 He cleaved a help meet for him¹⁸⁹⁴
 She is drawn from him, she is not foreign
 A slithering reptile seduced her
 And she laid a snare at the feet of the innocent fawn.¹⁸⁹⁵
- 9 The seducer's limbs were passed over¹⁸⁹⁶
 And his repast is mud
 Hers is a fate of sorrow, his is toil¹⁸⁹⁷
 And all of Creation is fated to rot¹⁸⁹⁸
- 10 Their tendency is toward the evil inclination¹⁸⁹⁹
 And desire is their wont
 And their offspring
 A field worker and a sheep herd.¹⁹⁰⁰

¹⁸⁸⁹ Gen. 1:24; The phrasing refers to the Sixth day of creation, we call Friday.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Gen. 1:26.

¹⁸⁹¹ Gen. 1:26.

¹⁸⁹² Psalm 8:6.

¹⁸⁹³ Ezek. 28:13.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Gen. 2:24.

¹⁸⁹⁵ The word **עופר**, meaning fawn, shares a root with **עפר**, meaning soil, in reference to the creation of Man from the soil of the earth. See: Gen. Rabbah 14:7.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Gen. 3:14.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Gen. 3:16.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹⁹ Gen. 3:16.

¹⁹⁰⁰ The "field worker" is an epithet for Cain, and the "sheep herd" an epithet for Abel, after Gen. 4:2.

גַּם בְּאֲדַמַּת חֶלֶד עַשׂ יִצְוֵרִים לְרוֹב וְהֵעֵלָה לְלֵב עֲשׂוֹת אָדָם לְרִדּוֹת בְּכָל.

דָּמָהּ בְּצֶלֶם הֵעֲטָהּ כְּבוֹד וְהִנִּיחוּ בְּחֹפֶת יָקָר וְהוֹרָהּ צִיּוֹ לְבוֹתָן.

דִּיבַק לּוֹ עֵזֶר מִיָּנּוּ וְלֹא זָרָה הִסִּיתָה זֹחֶל וְרִשֶׁת פְּרָסָה לְעוֹפֵר.

וְהוֹפְסָחוּ פְּעַמָּיו וְטִרְפוּ עֶפֶר הִיא לְעֶצֶב וְהוּא לְיִיגַע וְהִכַּל לְרִקֵּב.

וְהוֹרְגָלוּ לְיִצֵּר וְשָׁבוּ לְתִשׁוּקָהּ וְצִאֲצָאֵיהֶם עוֹבֵד וְרוּעָה.

- 11 And the two brought a gift offering¹⁹⁰¹
 To Him who examines men's hearts¹⁹⁰²
 And He accepted the young one's offering¹⁹⁰³, and rejected the older one's¹⁹⁰⁴
 And then a brother defiled himself with murder¹⁹⁰⁵
- 12 And the blood of the slain one called out to the Lord¹⁹⁰⁶
 And the killer was punished¹⁹⁰⁷
 Having confessed his sin
 And he was shielded with a mark.¹⁹⁰⁸
- 13 The sons of the third generation of man¹⁹⁰⁹
 And those fashioned in His image began to call on God
 Then He who meets vengeance upon His adversaries¹⁹¹⁰
 Instigated a call to the sea
- 14 Those who tell God to move aside have transgressed¹⁹¹¹
 So much so that they were obliterated in the flood waters¹⁹¹²
 And from the faithful who were ensconced
 All the families of mankind populated the earth.¹⁹¹³
- 15 The traitors conspired
 To ascend above the heights of the clouds¹⁹¹⁴ and they were scattered¹⁹¹⁵
 And the forefather who hailed from a city and was righteous¹⁹¹⁶
 Did not come into their council¹⁹¹⁷

¹⁹⁰¹ Gen. 4:3-4.

¹⁹⁰² 1 Chron. 29:17.

¹⁹⁰³ Gen. 4:4.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Gen. 4:5.

¹⁹⁰⁵ Gen. 4:8.

¹⁹⁰⁶ Gen. 4:10.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Gen. 4:11-12.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Gen. 4:15.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Gen. 4:26.

¹⁹¹⁰ Nahum 1:2.

¹⁹¹¹ Gen. 6:5.

¹⁹¹² Gen. 6:13.

¹⁹¹³ Gen. 9:19.

¹⁹¹⁴ Isa. 14:14 referring to Gen. 11:4.

¹⁹¹⁵ Gen. 11:8.

¹⁹¹⁶ A reference to Abraham, after Isa. 41:2.

¹⁹¹⁷ Gen. 49:6.

וְהוֹכִילוּ שִׁי לְבוֹחַן לְכַבוֹת וְשֹׁעַ בְּרַד וְקִז בְּרַב וְשִׁיחַת אַח בְּרִצַּח

וְזַעַק דָּמוֹ לְאֵל וְנִעַנֵּשׁ הוֹרֵג וְנִתְוֹדָה פֶּשַׁע וְנִתְמַגֵּן בְּאוֹת.

זֶרַע דוֹר שְׁלִישִׁי לְצֶלֶם הוֹחֵל קְרוֹא בְּשֵׁם וְנוֹקֵם לְצָרִיו הֵחֵל קְרוֹא לַיָּם

זָדוֹ אוֹמְרֵי לְאֵל סוֹר עַד נִמְחוּ בַּמַּיִם וּמִצְפוּנֵי בְּסֶדֶק קָמוּ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת חָלָד.

חֲשָׁבוּ בּוֹגְדִים עֲלוֹת לְעֵב וְנוֹפְצוֹ וְאָב מַעִיר בְּצַדִּיק בְּסוֹדֵם לֹא בָּא

- 16 He brought sinners near¹⁹¹⁸
 To Him who is eternal¹⁹¹⁹
 And He tried him ten fold¹⁹²⁰
 And he did not tarry even when He asked for his son as an offering.¹⁹²¹
- 17 A lamb was served up to the blade¹⁹²²
 And placed on a pyre for fire
 God, look upon his ashes¹⁹²³
 When You castigate us
- 18 Goodly are the tents¹⁹²⁴ of the pure one¹⁹²⁵
 And we gather in his tents¹⁹²⁶
 Seeking at all times
 His God who is his stanchion, to shelter us.¹⁹²⁷
- 19 His name¹⁹²⁸ was endeared to the heavens
 And an emissary angel was enfeebled before him
 And He shattered before him¹⁹²⁹
 The sword and the fiery shafts of the bow¹⁹³⁰
- 20 The striking and mighty tribes¹⁹³¹
 Emerged from his loins
 And from among them rose king¹⁹³² and prophet¹⁹³³
 And a servant to attend and to serve¹⁹³⁴.

¹⁹¹⁸ Gen. Rabbah 39:24.

¹⁹¹⁹ Exod. 15:2.

¹⁹²⁰ Avot 5:4.

¹⁹²¹ Gen. 22:8.

¹⁹²² A reference to the Binding of Isaac, after Gen. 22:8.

¹⁹²³ Tanchuma, Vayera 23.

¹⁹²⁴ Num. 24:5.

¹⁹²⁵ An epithet for Jacob, after Gen. 25:27.

¹⁹²⁶ Psalm 84:11.

¹⁹²⁷ Psalm 9:10.

¹⁹²⁸ A reference to Jacob, after Gen. 32:25.

¹⁹²⁹ Psalm 76:4.

¹⁹³⁰ Isa. 66:19.

¹⁹³¹ A reference to the twelve tribes that hailed from Jacob.

¹⁹³² A reference to Moses, after Exod. 18:13.

¹⁹³³ A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

¹⁹³⁴ A reference to Aaron, the Priest, after Exod. 38:21.

חִיבֵר פּוֹשְׁעִים לְחֵי עוֹלָמִים וְנִיֶּסְהוּ זֶה בְּעֶשֶׂר עֲשׂוֹת בֶּן שִׁי וְלֹא אָט.

טָלָה הוֹשֵׁלֵם לְחָרֵב וְלִיקוֹד אֵשׁ יְהִי יִרְאֵהוּ אַפֶּר עַת תִּצָּר לְנֹו

טוֹבוּ מִשְׁכָּנוֹת תָּם וּבָם נִסְתַּוֶּפֶף מִצּוֹא בְּכָל־עַת צוּרוֹ לְמִשְׁגָּב.

יָקָר שְׁמוֹ לְמַעֲלָה וְכִיחַשׁ לוֹ שֶׁר וְשִׁיבֵר לְפָנָיו חָרֵב וְרִשְׁפֵי קֶשֶׁת

יוֹפֵי מִטּוֹת עוֹז צָצוּ מִחֲלָצִיו בָּם לְמַלְךָ וּלְחוֹזָה לְשֶׁרֶת וּלְכַהֵן.

21 The greats from tribe of the chosen¹⁹³⁵
 Will rejoice when the lot is cast¹⁹³⁶
 For the commanding man of their household
 To serve Him in turns¹⁹³⁷, in accordance with His Commandment

22 He will be instructed in the art of being a High Priest
 By the elders of the tribe¹⁹³⁸
 To prepare the daily orders
 And keep the appropriate times for each of the works.

As it is written in the Torah:

*“As hath been done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make atonement for you.”*¹⁹³⁹

23 Responsible for blood sprinkling¹⁹⁴⁰, mixing incense¹⁹⁴¹ and arranging the oil lamps¹⁹⁴²
 For sacrificing the head and the limbs
 To teach the edicts of sacrifices¹⁹⁴³
 And to confess on the eve of the Fast

24 Come the evening he will not eat his fill¹⁹⁴⁴
 Lest he fall asleep and be defiled with nightly emission
 And he was sworn by the leaders of his tribe
 Lest he make light of his duty.

25 They¹⁹⁴⁵ snap their finger¹⁹⁴⁶
 And sing to keep him awake
 Until half night¹⁹⁴⁷
 And the chosen mighty men of valour¹⁹⁴⁸ gather

¹⁹³⁵ A reference to the Priests, after Lev. 21:10; See also DSS 11QT LVII 8.

¹⁹³⁶ Prov. 16:33.

¹⁹³⁷ Lev. 8:34; See also 1 Chron. 26:13.

¹⁹³⁸ In Tractate Yoma 1:3 the Mishnah claims that the rabbinic sages instructed the High Priest; here the Paytan claims that the elders of the tribe, from which the High Priest hails, instructed him.

¹⁹³⁹ Lev. 8:34.

¹⁹⁴⁰ Lev. 16:15.

¹⁹⁴¹ Lev. 16:12.

¹⁹⁴² Yoma 1:2.

¹⁹⁴³ Joshua 1:8.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Yoma 1:4.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Junior priests, after Yoma 1:7.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Yoma 1:7.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Gen. 14:15.

¹⁹⁴⁸ A reference to the priests, after 1 Chron. 7:40.

כְּבִירֵי שֶׁבֶט יַעֲלֶסוּ כְּגֹרֶל אִישׁ כּוֹחַ לְבַיִת אָב סָגַן כְּחוֹק מִלּוּאִים

כִּיהוֹן יִלְמְדוּהוּ תַּחֲכַמוּנֵי שַׁבָּת לְהַכִּין בְּיוֹם זֶה עֲתִים לְכָל־פּוֹעֵל.

כֹּכ' בתורתך כאשר עשה ביום הזה צוה יי' לעשות לכפר עליכם.

לְדָם לְרִקַּח לְנִרוֹת לְהַגִּישׁ בְּרֹאשׁ וְרִגְלָיִם הָג סֵדֶר זְבָחִים וּמִתּוֹדָה בְּעָרֵב צוֹם

לְעֵת עָרֵב יוֹרֵעַ פֶּן יִישַׁן וַיִּיקַר וּנְשַׁבַּע לְשָׂרֵי מִטָּהוּ פֶּן יִהְיֶה לְ.

מִכֵּים בְּאֶצְבַּע מְשׁוֹרְרִים לְעוֹרָרוּ עַד נִחַלֵּק לִילָהּ וְאוֹסְפוּ בְּרוּרִים

- 26 They cast ballots¹⁹⁴⁹ to choose
 Who will raise the ashes¹⁹⁵⁰
 And the second one who will set up the sacrifice¹⁹⁵¹
 And the third for the incense.¹⁹⁵²
- 27 The emissaries told¹⁹⁵³ him: the dawn has lit up¹⁹⁵⁴
 And he undressed and made an ablution¹⁹⁵⁵
 And wore his eight garments¹⁹⁵⁶
 And he sanctified the daily lamb¹⁹⁵⁷
- 28 He then took the blood and sprinkled it
 And he lit incense and arranged the oil lamps
 And sacrificed the head and the flesh
 The meal offering, and the libation to be poured on the altar.¹⁹⁵⁸
- 29 He went to the middle of the Parvah Chamber
 And became sanctified through ablutions
 And he donned white linen
 And was further sanctified¹⁹⁵⁹

¹⁹⁴⁹ Yoma 2:2.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Yoma 2:3.

¹⁹⁵¹ Yoma 2:3.

¹⁹⁵² Yoma 2:4.

¹⁹⁵³ The word **נמו** is drawn not from the root **נמ** which speaks of sleep, but from the root **נהמ** which describes the roar of a lion, after Prov. 20:2.

¹⁹⁵⁴ In Yoma 3:1 the Mishnah employs the word **ברקאי** which is derived from the root **ברק** but has a foreign sound to it. The Paytan chooses the more Hebrew sounding expression **ברק נגה**. The expression **ברק נגה** does not appear in the bible. **ברק נגה** is a compound word. The first word **ברק** mirrors the Mishnaic terminology and also evokes a lightning-like first ray of sun; the Qumranic texts also use the word (4Q169, 3-4ii4; 4Q392, 1,9), for it is a common one in scripture (appearing 18 times in the Hebrew Bible) as well as in the quotidian speech. The word **נגה** however, which appears only 4 times in the bible (all describing the righteous individual, not the physiognomy of sunlight), and thrice in the Qumran scrolls (4Q468b1; 11Q22,1,2; 1QHa, xiv, 18) is an almost painterly lexical choice. It speaks of a glow, a brightness more diffuse than lightning-like ray of sun, it evokes a softer dawn and captures the chilly air of morning when the sky blushes with anticipation of the day.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Lev. 16:4; Yoma 3:4.

¹⁹⁵⁶ Exod. 28:4,36,42.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Yoma 3:4.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Yoma 3:4.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Yoma 3:6.

מְצַבִּיעִים פִּיִּס מִי יָרִים דָּשׁוֹן שְׁנֵי לְעָרוֹף שְׁלִישֵׁי לְקַטְרֶת.

נְמוֹ: בָּרַק נוֹגֵה, וּפֶשֶׁט וְטָבֵל וְעֵטָה שְׁמוֹנָה וְקִידָשׁ עֲשׂוֹת כְּבֶשׂ

נָטַל דָּם וְזָרַק וְהִקְטִיר וְהִיטִיב וְהֶעֱלָה רֹאשׁ וְנִתַּח מִנְחָה חֲבַתִּים וְנֶסֶף.

סָר לְבֵית פְּרוּהָ וְקִידָשׁ וְטָבֵל וְעֵטָה בְּדִים וְעוֹר גִּתְּקָדָשׁ

30 Redolent as a hero to all who happened upon him¹⁹⁶⁰
 As he approached his bullock¹⁹⁶¹
 And placed both his hands
 Upon him, confessing.¹⁹⁶²

And thus did he say: "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord*"¹⁹⁶³

And the Priests and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the High Priest in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever." And he too would intend to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed."¹⁹⁶⁴

31 He went up to the Yessod Gate¹⁹⁶⁵
 And there stood the People's he-goats
 And he cast lots upon them
 For God, and to his perdition¹⁹⁶⁶

32 He prepared¹⁹⁶⁷ them with crimson¹⁹⁶⁸
 This one for slaughter, and this one to be pushed hard¹⁹⁶⁹
 And for the second time he approached his bullock
 To confess his own sins and his tribe's.¹⁹⁷⁰

¹⁹⁶⁰ Psalm 19:6.

¹⁹⁶¹ Yoma 3:8.

¹⁹⁶² Lev. 16:6.

¹⁹⁶³ Lev. 16:30.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Yoma 3:8.

¹⁹⁶⁵ Yoma 3:9 refers to this place as eastern wing of the Courtyard. The Talmud (Yerushalmi, Eiruvin, Chapter 5 halakha 1) finds no less than seven names for the eastern gate which divides the priestly Courtyard [wherein only the priests and Levites could assemble] from the women's Courtyard [wherein lay people could congregate]. The names are: Itton, Yessod [foundational], Tihon/Tavekh [central], Sur, Harissit, Hādash [new], Elyon [upper].

¹⁹⁶⁶ Yoma 4:1 after Lev. 16:7-8.

¹⁹⁶⁷ The root ענד comes from Prov. 24:27 and refers to a preparation, a provision of necessary goods.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Yoma 4:2 The Mishnah uses the word זהרית whereas the Paytan uses the word שני which insinuates a connection to the threads embroidered in the fabrics of the Tent of Meeting and the Temple, after Exod. 25:4

¹⁹⁶⁹ Lev. 16:7-10 The Paytan employs the word דח which refers to shoving, to pushing away, after Psalm 118:13; and to rejection, after Prov. 14:32.

¹⁹⁷⁰ Lev. 16:11; Yoma 4:2.

שש כגבור לארח בגשתו אצל פרו וסמך שתי ידיו עליו ומתודה.

וכך היה אומר: אנא השם חטאתי עויתי פשעתי לפניך אני וביתי. אנא השם
 כפר נא סלח נא על החטאים על העונות על הפשעים שחטאתי שעויתי שפשעתי
 לפניך אני וביתי כפתו בתור' משה עבד' כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטה'
 אתכם מכל חטאת' לפני השם. והכה' והעם העומ' בעז' והמ' בהי' בזמן שהם שומעין
 את השם היוצא מפי כהן גדול בקרו' ובטהרה היו כורע' ומשתחוי' ואומר': ברוך
 שם כבו' מלכו' לעו' ועד. אף הוא מתכווין לגמור את השם כנגד המברכי' ואומ':
 תטהרו.

עד שער היסוד בא ושם שעירי עם והגריל עליהם לשם ולגזרה

עיתדם בשני זה לטבח וזה לדחי [ונגש ש]ניה אצל פרו להתודות בעד [עצמו] ומטהו.

And he came to his bullock a second time and put his two hands on it and made the confession. And thus did he say, "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house and the children of Aaron [the priests], your holy people. O Lord, forgive, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you, I, my house, and the children of Aaron, your holy people."¹⁹⁷¹

As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"¹⁹⁷²

33 He turned¹⁹⁷³ to it¹⁹⁷⁴ to slaughter¹⁹⁷⁵ it
And a blossom¹⁹⁷⁶ stirred the blood¹⁹⁷⁷
And he, with a red¹⁹⁷⁸ brazier
Gathered embers of fire

34 He walked over and scooped¹⁹⁷⁹
From a tureen,¹⁹⁸⁰ into a ladle
And kept¹⁹⁸¹ it in his left hand
And stood¹⁹⁸² between the curtains.

¹⁹⁷¹ Yoma 4:2.

¹⁹⁷² Lev. 16:30.

¹⁹⁷³ In the Mishnah the verb is "he came to" **בא לו אצל פרו** (Yoma 3:8), but the Paytan prefers the verb **פנה**

¹⁹⁷⁴ To his bullock.

¹⁹⁷⁵ In the Mishnah the verb is **שחט** (Yoma 4:3), but the Paytan prefers the verb **טבח**

¹⁹⁷⁶ An epithet for a novice priest. This is a common turn of phrase for novices in Hebrew.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Lest the blood congeal. See Yoma 4:3

¹⁹⁷⁸ The colour red is a sobriquet for gold. See Yoma 4:4.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Yoma 5:1.

¹⁹⁸⁰ The word **מגס** is rare. It refers to a deep bowl, like a deep soup bowl, a tureen. See: "Definition of mag," Hebrew Dictionary, http://milog.co.il/%D7%9E%D7%92%D7%A1/e_58495/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99 The Paytan adds a new Temple instrument here, which is not mentioned in the Mishnah (Yoma 5:1). The Mishnah does mention the tureen in Yoma 6:7.

¹⁹⁸¹ The Mishnah uses the verb **נטל** (Yoma 5:1), whereas the Paytan uses the verb **נטר**. This may be a transcription error, or an intentional deviation from the Mishnaic text.

¹⁹⁸² The Mishnah maintains that the High Priest reached **עד שמגיע** (Yoma 5:1) the space between the two curtains that separated the Hall and the Holy of Holies. The Mishnah proceeds to describe in great detail the route taken by the High Priest. The Paytan 'makes' the High Priest stand still between the two curtains, and does not make any reference to the route described in Yoma 5:1.

וְסוֹמֵךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְכָךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר וּג' וּבְנֵי אֶהְרֹן עִם קְדוֹשֵׁיהֶם וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם וּג'
 אֵף הוּא מִתְכַּוֵּן לַגַּמ...]

פְּנֵה לְטַבְחוֹ וְדָם יִמְרַס פְּרַח וְהוּא בְּמַחְתַּת אוֹדָם חַת גְּחָלֵי אֵשׁ

פְּלוֹסֶע וְחַפּוֹן מִמַּגַּס לְתוֹךְ כַּף וּנְטָרָה בְּשִׁמְאֵל וְקָם בֵּין בְּדָיִם.

35 He piled the incense¹⁹⁸³
 And the Abode filled with smoke¹⁹⁸⁴
 And he supplicated in the Hall¹⁹⁸⁵
 At the edge of the House of Habitation¹⁹⁸⁶

36 He traversed¹⁹⁸⁷ to take the blood
 And returned to his place
 And he whipped once upwards
 And seven¹⁹⁸⁸ downward, at the count.¹⁹⁸⁹

And so he would count: One, one plus one, one plus two, one plus three, one plus four, one plus five, one plus six,
 one plus seven.¹⁹⁹⁰

37 He drew¹⁹⁹¹ the he-goat and sacrificed the he-goat of the People
 And did unto it as he had unto the bullock's blood
 And thus he sprayed both their blood
 In the Hall upon the ark cover¹⁹⁹²

38 He approached the golden altar¹⁹⁹³
 And cleansed it with the mixture of blood
 Four times around the altar
 And seven times for its purification.¹⁹⁹⁴

And so he would count: One, one plus one, one plus two, one plus three, one plus four, one plus five, one plus six,
 one plus seven¹⁹⁹⁵.

¹⁹⁸³ The Mishnah in Yoma 5:1 gives more visual information, stating that the incense was piled upon the glowing coals in the brazier.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Yoma 5:1.

¹⁹⁸⁵ The Mishnah calls it **הבית החיצון** Yoma 5:1.

¹⁹⁸⁶ An epithet for the Temple, after I Kings 8:13.

¹⁹⁸⁷ 2 Sam. 19:18.

¹⁹⁸⁸ Seven times.

¹⁹⁸⁹ Yoma 5:3.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Yoma 5:1.

¹⁹⁹¹ The Mishnah in Yoma 5:4 says that the he-goat was brought [it is not indicated by whom] to the High-Priest. The Paytan gives more independent agency to the High Priest who drew the he-goat toward himself, on his own with no assistance.

¹⁹⁹² Exod. 25:17 The Mishnah says that the blood was sprayed on the curtain that shielded the Holy of Holies and the Ark therein from the Hall. Yoma 5:4.

¹⁹⁹³ Yoma 5:5.

¹⁹⁹⁴ Yoma 5:6.

¹⁹⁹⁵ Yoma 5:1.

צָבַר כְּלֵי קִטְרֶת וְנִתְעַשֵּׂן בַּיִת וְשִׁוּעַ בְּהִיכָל בְּקוֹצֵר בַּיִת זָבֹול

צָלַח קַחַת דָּם וְשָׁב לְמִקְמוֹ וְהִצְלִיף אַחַת לְמַעְלָה וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה בְּמִסְפָּר.

וְכַךְ הָיָה מוֹנֶה אַחַת אַחַת וְאַחַת אַחַת וְשִׁתִּים וּגְמָרִיה

קִידִם וְזָבַח שְׁעִיר עֵם וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּדָם פָּר וְכֵן מְשַׁנִּיהֵם יְזֶה בְּהִיכָל עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת

קָרַב לְמִזְבֵּחַ פֶּזַח וְחָטָא בְּדָם תַּעְרוּבֶת וְאַרְבַּע סָבִיב וְשָׁבַע עַל טוֹהָרוֹ.

וְכַךְ הָיָה מוֹנֶה

וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ בָּא לוֹ אֶצֶל שְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח וְסָמַךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וּמֵת' עוֹן עֲמֹה וְנִחַלְתָּהּ
 יַע' וּבְהִתְנוּדוֹתוֹ מִתְנוּדָה וְכַךְ הוּא אוֹמֵר: אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם חָטָאוֹ ג'.

And then he would come to the goat which is to be sent forth and lay his two hands on it and made the confession.

And thus did he say, "O Lord, your people, the house of Israel, has committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you. Forgive, O Lord, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which your people, the house of Israel, have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"¹⁹⁹⁶

39 A man who is accustomed¹⁹⁹⁷ cast it¹⁹⁹⁸ the rocky cliff

And came to sacrifice the animal's fat

Outside, his disciples burned

The skin and the flesh and the dung¹⁹⁹⁹

40 And he ran and recited, in the order²⁰⁰⁰

And became sanctified through ablutions²⁰⁰¹

And he donned the eight vestments

And was further sanctified

41 He sacrifices the offerings in thanksgiving²⁰⁰²

And he undressed and bathed

And he donned white linen

And was further sanctified²⁰⁰³

42 He returned the implements of the incense

And became sanctified through ablutions

And he donned the eight vestments

And was further sanctified²⁰⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹⁶ Lev. 16:30; Yoma 6:2.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Lev. 16:21 uses the phrase: **איש עתי**. I translate the Paytan's **רגיל** along the lines of the Rashbam's [רבי שמואל בן מאיר] exegesis on the Lev. phrase, given the Paytan's intentional choice of words. The Mishnah in Yoma 6:3 however, diminishes the importance of the appointed man and of his knowledge of the desert routes, saying **מסרו למי שהיה מוליכו... הכל כשרים** **להוליכו**, they handed the he-goat to whoever led it to the desert, anyone could do it.

¹⁹⁹⁸ The he-goat.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Lev. 16:27 and Yoma 6:7.

²⁰⁰⁰ Yoma 7:1.

²⁰⁰¹ Yoma 7:3.

²⁰⁰² Yoma 7:3.

²⁰⁰³ Yoma 7:4.

²⁰⁰⁴ Yoma 7:4.

| | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|
| חֲנִיכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּחוּץ עוֹר וּבָשָׂר וּפְרֶשׁ | וּבָא לְהַקְטִיר חֶלֶב | רְגִיל מִשְׁלַחוֹ לְצוּק |
| וְעוֹד נִתְקַדֵּשׁ. | וְעֵטָה שְׂמֹנֶה | רֵץ וְשִׁינֹן כַּסְדָּר |
| וְעוֹד נִתְקַדֵּשׁ | וְעֵטָה בָּדִים | שֵׁי יַעַשׂ עוֹלוֹת |
| וְעוֹד נִתְקַדֵּשׁ. | וְעֵטָה שְׂמוֹנֶה | שׁוֹבֵב כְּלֵי קְטוֹרֶת |

- 43 The daily sacrifice of dusk, for its fragrance²⁰⁰⁵
 He offered as evening had come
 And smoke rose from the mixture of incense
 Between the meat offerings and the libation.
- 44 Having completed all the works²⁰⁰⁶
 He cleaned the oil lamps and lit them²⁰⁰⁷
 And for the tenth time he was sanctified²⁰⁰⁸
 And donned his own²⁰⁰⁹ clothes.
- 45 The congregation exulted, singing²⁰¹⁰
 Greeting the faithful messenger²⁰¹¹
 Because their Creator's desire
 Was, in his hands, successfully executed

²⁰⁰⁵ The Paytan has the High Priest make the incense offering after he returned the implements. The Mishnah in Yoma 7:4 does not refer to the implements as having been returned yet, they are still in use as before.

²⁰⁰⁶ The word **תכלית** makes reference not only to the completion of the works, after the root **כלה**, but also to the very purpose, the end, the objective of the Avodah itself. It has a deeper connotation, whereas the Avodah has a spiritual aim, it is not only an order of actions. The Paytan invests the ritual with purpose, and imbues the High Priest with the spiritual responsibility.

²⁰⁰⁷ Yoma 7:4.

²⁰⁰⁸ Yoma 3:3.

²⁰⁰⁹ The Paytan uses the phrase **בגדי הון** following Prov. 6:31" ... all the substance of his house." The word **הון** appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible, denoting wealth and property. It never appears in the Mishnah and in other rabbinic texts it only appears in quotes from the Bible (Tosefta, BT, PT, Mekhilta, Gen. Rabba, Exod. Rabba, Lev. Rabba, Numbers Rabba, Song of Solomon Rabba, Esther Rabba, and in Aggadic Midrashim). In the Qumran literature this word appears no less than 110 times (Abegg, Bowley and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, Vol. 1, The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*). The Mishnah refers to the priestly every-day clothes as **עצמו בגדי** (Yoma 7:4).

²⁰¹⁰ The Mishnah does not "record" any singing at this reunion, Yoma 7:4.

²⁰¹¹ An epithet for the High Priest, after Prov. 25:13.

תְּמִיד לְנִיחֹחַ הַגִּישׁ לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְתִימַר מְרַקַחַת בֵּין נְתָחִים לְנֶסֶד

תְּכַלִּית כָּל־פּוֹעַל הַטֵּיב וְהַדְּלִיק נִירוֹת וְקִדְּשׁ עֲשִׁירִית וְעָטָה כְּלֵי הַזָּהָב.

תִּרְנֹז עָדָה לְקַרְאֵת צִיר אֲמַת כִּי חִפֵּץ יוֹצְרָם בְּיַד הַצְּלִיחַ

46 The pure righteous²⁰¹² multitudes
 Escorted him to his abode²⁰¹³
 The congregation²⁰¹⁴ celebrate in delightedly
 As he emerged²⁰¹⁵ unharmed.

תְּמִימִים יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנוֹהוּ יְלוֹוֵהוּ יַחַד יִשְׂמְחוּ בְּטוֹב בְּצֵאתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם בְּלֹא פְגַע.

²⁰¹² The Mishnah does not make reference to the new spiritually pure status of the Congregation.

²⁰¹³ In Exod. 15:13 the word **נוה** refers to the Abode of God, as do nine other biblical appearance of the word. The Paytan, in employing the sobriquet for a 'home', thus imbues the home of the High Priest with a measure of the Temple sacredness. The Mishnah merely calls it **ביתו**, his home (Yoma 7:4).

²⁰¹⁴ The stanza is divided in two, each portion restates the other, completing it, in a style which evokes biblical songs. The word **יחד** can be read as an adverb, in which case the line would read in English: **"Together, they celebrated delightedly."** But the word **יחד** can also be read as a distinctive noun, following Shemaryahu Talmon's study (Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Sectarian **יחד**," *Vetus Testamentum* 3, (1953, April): 133-140). Talmon compared the word **יחד** as it appears in the Hebrew Bible, and as it appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran. Whereas Schechter reads the word as an adverb, Talmon reads the word as a noun which is rendered in English by community, congregation, assembly, and covenant. The word, according to Talmon, carries a technical quality, referring to the governing body of the community, after 1 Chron. 12:18. The original meaning of the term **יחד** has, over time, become diluted to "friendly togetherness," but Talmon demonstrates amply that in the OT and in the DSS, until the beginning of the Christian era, **יחד** was read as a "covenantal community." In Yosse ben Yosse's Piyyut **אכרעה ואברכה**, he once again employs the word **יחד** in a covenantal sense. We know that the Qumran community described itself as **היחד, אנשי היחד, יחד אל** **אנשי היחד, סרך היחד, עצת היחד, יחד אל** and so forth. The noun may have been thus commonly used among priestly sages. This issue merits further investigation, but I have chosen to translate the term along Talmon's interpretation as it appears to capture the essence of the Piyyut better as a noun, rather than as an adverb.

²⁰¹⁵ From the Holy of Holies.

אספר גדולות
I SPEAK OF GREAT WORKS

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

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| Genesis | 30 |
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אז בדעת הקר – In the Beginning He Scrutinized

TITLE: In the Beginning He Scrutinized.....אז בדעת הקר

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Extensive review of Creation, the Three Fathers, Amram's three descendants, culminating in the Priestly caste as privileged. Lead to the High Priest service [Avodah] on Yom Kippur at the Temple. Detailed account.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 138
- **Acrostic system:** (2 x א"ב) + (Reverse 2 x א"ב) + (2 x א"ב) + 6 x repetition of letter ה as cap.
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete. Some missing phrases [manuscript characteristic] especially noticeable where reference is made to Aharon as a particularly important descendant of Amram.
- **Other:** Of all the Piyyutim, this one has the most unusual and most “unruly” or creative orthography.

NOTES:

1. Avodah account relies on scripture and on Mishnah Yoma. Recitation of the quotes may be by the congregation or by the Paytan/cantor, lending credibility to the detailed description of the Avodah, and connecting the congregants to the service. The Piyyut appears complete but may be truncated as it ends abruptly.
2. A complex Piyyut which is both like [in subject matter and emphases] and unlike [morphologically and stylistically] other Piyyutim in this compendium. More polished than most , deftly displaying greater tendencies toward rhyming and wortspielerei. Verses from other Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim are rephrased here, especially from **אזכיר גבורות** .
3. The orthography in this Piyyut is less polished and less careful than in other Piyyutim. The letter *Yod* is liberally “sprinkled,” the letter *Hey* is at times dropped [e.g. Stanza 103 "מיפו ומיפו"].
4. One of the three Piyyutim whose provenance remains unclear. Attributed to Yosse ben Yosse by Aaron Mirsky. The unique morphological characteristics make the provenance more difficult to ascertain. The attribution of the Piyyut to Yosse ben Yosse is further complicated by the unusual reference to rabbinic presence and supervision at the Temple, unlike all other Piyyutim which assert priestly autonomy and independence [e.g. stanzas 73, 77, and 84].

חֵקֵר בְּדַעַת אֵז – In the Beginning He Scrutinized

- 1 In the beginning He scrutinized
He counseled with wisdom
He devised and schemed
And examined sagaciously²⁰¹⁶
- 2 There is naught but Him²⁰¹⁷
With none but Him could we take counsel²⁰¹⁸
There is no other god by His side²⁰¹⁹
Who can fail His spoken word.²⁰²⁰
- 3 With His right hand
He cultivates²⁰²¹ His abode²⁰²²
And even if one thinks He is borne by the heavens
He is the bearer thereof²⁰²³
- 4 He is alone an unparalleled
Master of two multitudes²⁰²⁴
King of His Hosts²⁰²⁵
Master of His Dominion.²⁰²⁶
- 5 He laid the foundations of the world,²⁰²⁷ as His footrest²⁰²⁸
And set boundaries²⁰²⁹
And He fills the earth²⁰³⁰
And the earth is within Him²⁰³¹

²⁰¹⁶ Prov. 8:12; Prov. 3:19-20.

²⁰¹⁷ Isa. 45:6.

²⁰¹⁸ Isa. 40:14.

²⁰¹⁹ Deut. 32:12.

²⁰²⁰ Joshua 21:43.

²⁰²¹ Isa. 48:13.

²⁰²² Deut. 26:15.

²⁰²³ Isa. 44:24.

²⁰²⁴ The word **רִיבוֹתַיִם** denotes two measures of **רִיבּוֹא**, a word that denotes 10,000, or a multitude. In Ezra 2:64 the prophet counts the multitude of returnees from the Babylonian exile, and in Neh. 7:66 the prophet counts the multitude of priests who returned to Jerusalem, thus making two **רִיבּוֹא**, or in a creative and singular *wortspiele*: **רִיבוֹתַיִם** denoting two distinct multitudes who return from exile to rebuild the Temple.

²⁰²⁵ Isa. 47:4.

²⁰²⁶ Job 25:2.

²⁰²⁷ Isa. 48:13; Psalm 104:5; Prov. 3:19.

²⁰²⁸ Lam. 2:1; Isa. 66:1.

²⁰²⁹ Psalm 104:9.

²⁰³⁰ Jer. 23:24; Isa. 6:3.

²⁰³¹ Exod. 33:21.

אז בַּדַּעַת חָקֵר

אֲז בַּדַּעַת חָקֵר בְּבִינָה יַעֲזֵ בְּעֶרְמָה זָמַם בְּשִׁיכָל הִיתְבוּנָן

אָפֶס אֵין בִּלְתוֹ וְכִי בְּמִי נוֹעֵז וְאֵין עִימוֹ זָר לְהַפִּיל דְּבָרוֹ.

בְּאַחַת בְּיָמֵין טִיפַח מְעוֹנוֹ וּנְחָשָׁב כְּנִישָׂא אֵד הוּא נִשָּׂא

בְּלִבְדוֹ הוּא אֲדוֹן רַבּוֹתִים מֶלֶךְ עַל צְבָאוֹ וְעִמוֹ הַמֶּשֶׁל.

גַּם יָסַד אֶרֶץ הַדְּרוֹם וְהֶצִּיב גְּבוּלוֹת וְהוּא מְמַלֵּא אֶרֶץ וְאֵתוֹ מְקוֹם

- 6 The earth's resident denizens
Resemble but insects
The earth's powerful rulers and wealthy men
Are considered as naught.²⁰³²
- 7 He spoke, and He illuminated²⁰³³
And with a line He divided²⁰³⁴
Light for the toil of day
And darkness for rest²⁰³⁵
- 8 They²⁰³⁶ are fated to flee
One from the other
But though them He is blessed
Illuminator and bedimmer.²⁰³⁷
- 9 The Creator gazed
And there were cold waters²⁰³⁸
Concealing from view²⁰³⁹
The glory of His Creation
- 10 He set half the waters in the firmament²⁰⁴⁰
Where they are suspended upon His Word²⁰⁴¹
And from them He brings rain²⁰⁴²
Lest the brooks lie bereft.²⁰⁴³
- 11 In them²⁰⁴⁴ shall the wind
Storm, and do His bidding²⁰⁴⁵
From water He fashioned snow like wool
Like ashes and like snow flakes.²⁰⁴⁶

²⁰³² Isa. 40:22-23.

²⁰³³ Gen. 1:3.

²⁰³⁴ Isa. 34:17.

²⁰³⁵ Psalm 104:23.

²⁰³⁶ The light of the sun and the light of the moon which are mutually exclusive, after Gen. 1:16-18; Psalm 148:6; Josh. 10:12.

²⁰³⁷ Referring to God as creator of light and of darkness alike, after Psalm 18:29; 2 Sam. 22:2.

²⁰³⁸ Jer. 18:14.

²⁰³⁹ Gen. 1:9.

²⁰⁴⁰ Gen. 1:6.

²⁰⁴¹ Gen. Rabba 4:3.

²⁰⁴² Psalm 68:10; Ezek. 34:26; Jer. 5:24; Joel 1:23; Zech. 10:1.

²⁰⁴³ Psalm 65:10.

²⁰⁴⁴ Referring to the water of the seas.

²⁰⁴⁵ Psalm 148:8.

²⁰⁴⁶ Psalm 147:16-17.

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| גְּרִיהַ שׁוֹכְנִיהָ | הֵלֹא כַחֲגָבִים | רוֹזְנִיהָ נְדִיבִיהָ | יַחֲשֹׁבוּ כְאִיִּז. |
| דוֹבֵר וְהִיאִיר | וְחִילֵק בְּקוֹ | אוֹר לְעִבּוֹדָה | וְאוֹפֵל לְמְנוּחָה |
| דְּוֹבְרָם יְנוֹסוּ | זֶה מִפְּנֵי זֶה | וּבָם יִתְבָּרַךְ | מִגִּיהַ וּמִחֲשִׂידָה. |
| הַבֵּיט יוֹצֵר | וְהִנֵּה קָרִים | מִכֶּסֶם מִרְאוֹת | אֵת כְּבוֹד מַעֲשֵׂהוּ |
| הַחֲצִים בְּרִקִיעַ | וְהֵם תְּלוּיִים בְּאוֹמֵר | וּמֵהֶם יְגִשִּׁים | וּפְלֵג בְּלִי יַחֲסֵר. |
| וּבָם תַּעֲשֶׂה | רוּחַ סְעָרָה דְּבָרוֹ | בְּמַיִם תִּיכֹן כְּצֶמֶר | כְּאוֹפֵר וּכְפִיתִים. |

- 12 And the rest of the waters²⁰⁴⁷ He rebuked
 To the labyrinthine depths of the abyss²⁰⁴⁸
 He ordered them thus with the wind
 And they await there until He will summon them.²⁰⁴⁹
- 13 He endowed²⁰⁵⁰ the world with grasses
 And fruit bearing trees²⁰⁵¹
 He taught them to bring benefit
 [...] every creature²⁰⁵²
- 14 In them is enfolded the eternal²⁰⁵³ memorial
 Of His wondrous works²⁰⁵⁴
 Harvesting on the day of sowing seeds
 And reaping on the day of planting.
- 15 He contemplated safeguarding the Light²⁰⁵⁵
 So that it will rest solely with Him
 But how will, in palpable darkness,
 His creatures navigate through Creation?²⁰⁵⁶
- 16 He consigned the Torch²⁰⁵⁷ to the day
 And Candles²⁰⁵⁸ for the small of night²⁰⁵⁹
 They²⁰⁶⁰ know their course in the sky
 Lest they trespass.²⁰⁶¹

²⁰⁴⁷ Referring to the subterranean waters.

²⁰⁴⁸ Psalm 104:7.

²⁰⁴⁹ Amos 5:8.

²⁰⁵⁰ Gen. 30:20.

²⁰⁵¹ Gen. 1:11-12.

²⁰⁵² Isa. 48:17.

²⁰⁵³ In the eternal future, Nature will obey God and will allow men to harvest their crops on the same day they plant and seed them, after Sifre, Bechukotay 1:3.

²⁰⁵⁴ Psalm 111:34.

²⁰⁵⁵ There are two plausible interpretations of this stanza, affecting our understanding and translation of the Piyyut: (a) The Light refers to the Torah, after Prov. 6:23; or (b) the Light refers to the hidden light which God had ensconced and reserved for the righteous for the End of Time, after Gen. Rabba 3:6; Isa. 30:26. I chose the former, even as Mirsky opts for the latter, see: פייטוי יוסף בן יוסף. (1991) אהרון מירסקי ק. 224, footnotes 15-16..

²⁰⁵⁶ Psalm 91:6.

²⁰⁵⁷ An epithet for the sun, which intimates a connection with the covenant between the parts that God made with Abraham, in which He foretold the exile, the return, and the endurance and burgeoning of the people of Israel, after Gen. 15:1-15.

²⁰⁵⁸ Referring to the Stars, the lesser celestial bodies, after Gen. 37:9.

²⁰⁵⁹ Prov. 7:9.

²⁰⁶⁰ There are two plausible interpretations of this stanza, affecting our understanding and translation of the Piyyut: (a) The celestial bodies know well their preordained course as they journey across the sky, after Gen. 1:16; or (b) The sun and the stars help all creatures navigate the earth, and by inference, the Light of God [the Torah] illuminates the path of all His creations, after Psalm 119:34.

²⁰⁶¹ Lest the celestial bodies trespass on each other's domains, or, according to the second interpretation, lest the people sin and transgress.

וַיִּתְּרֵם הַיְנִיס לְנִבְכֵי מְצוּלָה דְּבָרוֹ בְּרוּחַ לְמוֹ עַד יִקְרָאִם.

זָבַד חֶלֶד בְּדָשָׂא וְעָשָׂב מְזִרְיַע זָרַע לִימָדָם לְהוֹעִיל... יַע כָּל פּוֹעֵל

זִיכָר עָשָׂה בָּם לְנַפְלְאוֹתָיו נֶצַח קָצִיר בְּיוֹם זָרַע וּבְקָצִיר בְּיוֹם נָטַע.

חִישָׁב לְהַעֲלִים אוֹר וְעָמוֹ יִשְׁכּוֹן וְאִיךָ יִמְשָׁשׁוּ בְּאוֹפֵל יְצוּרִים אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵר?

חֶק לְפִיד לְיוֹם וְנִירוֹת לְאִישׁוֹן נְתִיבָם יִכִּירוּ גְבוּל בַּל יִשְׁיגוּ.

- 17 Quick finned creatures²⁰⁶²
 Flying winged beings²⁰⁶³
 At His Word
 Became a multitude and spread out²⁰⁶⁴
- 18 The Good One²⁰⁶⁵ designated as food²⁰⁶⁶
 For the Nation of His choosing²⁰⁶⁷
 And all the Creatures and all the grasses²⁰⁶⁸
 For the nations He rejected.²⁰⁶⁹
- 19 He made abundant²⁰⁷⁰ in places of settlement²⁰⁷¹
 And even in the wilderness²⁰⁷²
 Swarms of insects²⁰⁷³
 And dust crawlers²⁰⁷⁴
- 20 He assigned from amongst them²⁰⁷⁵
 The horned animals with split hoofs²⁰⁷⁶
 For the King's repast²⁰⁷⁷
 And for the nourishment²⁰⁷⁸ of His Hosts.
- 21 When He completed²⁰⁷⁹
 Until there was nothing wanting
 And the fullness of His sufficiency was manifest²⁰⁸⁰
 And there was nothing missing²⁰⁸¹

²⁰⁶² Referring to fish, after Lev. 11:9.

²⁰⁶³ Referring to birds as well as to flying insects, after Gen. 7:14; Daniel 9:27; Deut. 4:17-18.

²⁰⁶⁴ Gen. 1:20-22.

²⁰⁶⁵ An epithet for God, after Jer. 33:11.

²⁰⁶⁶ The Laws of Kosher foods, as outlined in Lev. 11; Deut. 14:1-21.

²⁰⁶⁷ The Chosen People are Israel, after Psalm 135:4; Deut. 14:2.

²⁰⁶⁸ Gen. 9:3.

²⁰⁶⁹ The other nations, the un-elected, the un-chosen, after Isa. 41:9.

²⁰⁷⁰ Gen. 1:22; Gen. 1:28.

²⁰⁷¹ Psalm 107:4; Exod. 16:35.

²⁰⁷² Psalm 88:13.

²⁰⁷³ Literally: things that one steps on and quashes, after Gen. 1:24.

²⁰⁷⁴ A reference to snakes and serpents, after Gen. 3:1-4.

²⁰⁷⁵ The beasts and animals He created.

²⁰⁷⁶ Denoted which beasts are to be eaten and which are not, after Lev. 11:2; Deut. 14: 4-10; Psalm 68:32.

²⁰⁷⁷ For sacrifices to be offered to God, after Lev. 23:8.

²⁰⁷⁸ Daniel 1:3.

²⁰⁷⁹ Referring to Creation, after Gen. 2:2.

²⁰⁸⁰ Job 20:22.

²⁰⁸¹ Isa. 40:26.

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| טְסִי סִנְפִיר | וְדָאֵי כְנָף | בְּמֵאמֶר פִּי | פָּרְצוּ לְרוֹב |
| טוב הִיתְנוּהוּ אוֹכֵל | לְעַם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר | וְהִכַּל כִּיֶּרֶק עֲשֶׂב | לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִמָּאֵס. |
| יִיתֵר בְּיוֹשֵׁב | וְגַם בְּנִשְׂיָהּ | הַמּוֹן רוֹמְסֵי רֶגֶל | וְזוֹחֲלֵי עֶפֶר |
| יִידַע בָּם | מִקְרִיֹן וּמִפְרִיס | לְאַרוּחַת מְלֶךְ | וּפְתַבֵּג צְבָאיו. |
| כְּכֹלוֹתוֹ | עַד לֹאִין מַחְסוֹר | כְּמֵלֵאוֹ סִפְק | וְאִין מְאוּמָה נֶעְדָּר |

- 22 Then He saw
That the sacrificial animals had been prepared²⁰⁸²
And the table was set²⁰⁸³
But there was no one to enjoy it.²⁰⁸⁴
- 23 He taught us the ways of
Humility by consulting²⁰⁸⁵
The Spirit Creatures²⁰⁸⁶
Who dwelt in the hedges²⁰⁸⁷
- 24 To weave²⁰⁸⁸ a human form
In the image of His appearance²⁰⁸⁹
To make him²⁰⁹⁰ eminent²⁰⁹¹, and to diminish his stature²⁰⁹²
To be lesser than God.²⁰⁹³
- 25 He brings forth the dawn in the east and sets the sun in the west²⁰⁹⁴
He puts to sleep and reveilles²⁰⁹⁵
He feeds²⁰⁹⁶ and he starves²⁰⁹⁷
He lifts one up and He brings one low²⁰⁹⁸

²⁰⁸² Prov. 9:2.

²⁰⁸³ Psalm 23:5.

²⁰⁸⁴ Literally: "No one whose head could be anointed with oil," after Psalm 23:5; Psalm 104:15.

²⁰⁸⁵ Gen. Rabba 8:8.

²⁰⁸⁶ The souls of the righteous, after Gen. Rabba 8:7.

²⁰⁸⁷ 1 Chron. 4:23.

²⁰⁸⁸ The Paytan connects the Creation of Man with the High Priest's vestments, after Exod. 38:29; Psalm 139:15.

²⁰⁸⁹ Man is created in God's image, after Gen. 1:26; Man was created in the image of God and would have elicited the same fear as the fear from God (unless God made Man lesser, as in the next line), after Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin, Folio 56:B.

²⁰⁹⁰ A reference to Man, after Gen. 1:28.

²⁰⁹¹ To be the top of the food chain, to be above all other creatures.

²⁰⁹² Lest Man presume to have divine powers, and lest other creatures consider Man a god, see footnote 74 above.

²⁰⁹³ Psalm 8:6.

²⁰⁹⁴ Isa. 45:7.

²⁰⁹⁵ 1 Sam. 26:12.

²⁰⁹⁶ Psalm 136:25; Prov. 30:8.

²⁰⁹⁷ Deut. 8:3; Ezek. 36:29; 1 Sam. 2:5.

²⁰⁹⁸ 1 Sam. 2:7.

26 He looks to the past²⁰⁹⁹
 And He can see²¹⁰⁰ the future
 He understands²¹⁰¹ the mysteries of the sky
 And the wonders of the land²¹⁰² are His song.²¹⁰³

כְּרֵאוֹתוֹ כִּי טָבַח טְבוּחַ וְשׁוֹלְחָן עֲרוּךְ וְאִין מִי יְדוֹשָׁן.

לִימַד אֹרַח עֲנֻוּהַ וְנוֹעֵץ בְּנִשְׁמוֹת יְצוּרִים וַיּוֹשְׁבֵי נְטָעִים

לְרִקַּם גּוֹלָם בְּצֶלֶם מוֹרָאוֹ לְגִדְלוֹ, לְחֶסְרוֹ מִעֵט מַאֲלֵהִים.

מִזְרִיחַ מְעָרִיב מְרַדִּים וּמְקִיץ מְטָרִיף מְרַעִיב מְרוֹמִם וּמְשָׁפִיל

מִבֵּית לְאַחֹר וְצוּפָה לְפָנִים מִבֵּין מַה בְּשַׁחַק וְשָׂר חֲקָרֵי אֶרֶץ.

²⁰⁹⁹ Isa. 41:22-23.

²¹⁰⁰ The verb **צופה** can refer to God as the One who watches and sees, or to the prophets, called Watchmen, who are sent by God to tell of the future, after Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 33:2.

²¹⁰¹ Daniel 8:5.

²¹⁰² Psalm 104:32; Psalm 95:4.

²¹⁰³ The Psalms are an elegy to God, the Piyyut likewise speaks of God's wonders and is a song to God, of God, and offered to God, after Psalm 150; Psalm 104.

- 27 He poured liquids and solidified²¹⁰⁴
 And fashioned a mortal²¹⁰⁵
 And enveloped him²¹⁰⁶ with sinew and bone²¹⁰⁷
 Which He covered with skin²¹⁰⁸
- 28 And He blew His essence into the creature²¹⁰⁹
 And poured His spirit²¹¹⁰
 He lit the spirit²¹¹¹
 And illuminated a lamp.²¹¹²
- 29 He filled him with intelligence²¹¹³
 And blessed him with abundant²¹¹⁴ understanding
 And set six commandments²¹¹⁵
 Before him to follow
- 30 He said: Lest you die²¹¹⁶
 By lust for the Tree of Knowledge
 Which allows men to reject living for the moment
 And to desire life eternal.²¹¹⁷

²¹⁰⁴ Job 10:9-12.

²¹⁰⁵ The Paytan uses the word **שאר** which can be translated either as one's progeny, after Lev. 18:6, or as flesh, after Psalm 78:20. The over arching meaning is mortality, for humans are but flesh and therefore subject to death, and once dead, they live on only through their children. I therefore comingled the two possible meanings and enfolded them into the word "mortal."

²¹⁰⁶ Man.

²¹⁰⁷ Ezek. 37:6.

²¹⁰⁸ Ezek. 37:6; Gen. 3:21.

²¹⁰⁹ Gen. 2:7.

²¹¹⁰ God imbued Man with a soul, after Isa. 44:3.

²¹¹¹ Referring to Man's soul, after Prov. 20:27.

²¹¹² Referring to the Torah, after Prov. 6:23.

²¹¹³ The Paytan uses the word **סיכל** [pronounced as *sechel*], meaning "intelligence," after 1 Chron. 22:12; it has to be noted that the correct spelling of "intelligence" is **שכל** [pronounced as *sechel* as well], but the root the Paytan chose here **סכל** implies that Man looks upon the world and learns its mysteries, that is, Man's intelligence depends upon examination, after Mishnah Tractate Avot 4:26.

²¹¹⁴ The Paytan uses the word **איסמו** which is a verb derived from the noun **אום**, a granary, a storehouse, after Deut. 28:8.

²¹¹⁵ Gen. Rabba 16:6 lists the six commandments given by God to Adam and Eve, after Gen. 1-3.

²¹¹⁶ Gen. 2:17.

²¹¹⁷ The Paytan implies that knowledge of God's universe confers a measure of eternal life upon men, but I think the Paytan refers here to Lam. 3:40 wherein scripture calls men to repent and return unto God, introducing the Day of Atonement in small steps to the congregation.

נִסְדָּ וְהִיקָפָה וַיִּסְדֵּר שְׂאֵר סִיפֵהוּ בְּגִיד וְעֶצֶם וַיִּיקָרֵם עוֹר

נִפְחַ נְפֶשׁ וַיִּצוֹק רוּחַ הִיִּצִית נְשָׁמָה וַיִּבְעֵר נֵר.

סִיכָל מִלְּאוֹ דִּיעָה אִיסְמוֹ וְדַת שֵׁשׁ מִיִּצְוֹת לְפָנָיו עָרַף

שָׁח: אֵל תִּמְיָדָהוּ תִּאֲוֹת עֵץ דָּעַת מוֹאֵס בְּחַיֵּי עַת עַת חֲשׂוֹק בְּחַיֵּי עַד.

- 31 He²¹¹⁸ was attentive to his²¹¹⁹ needs
 Lest he be solitary²¹²⁰
 I will make him a helpmeet²¹²¹ and teach him
 The ways of a man with a woman²¹²²
- 32 He²¹²³ brought upon him²¹²⁴ a luxuriating²¹²⁵ sleep²¹²⁶
 And made him inebriated with slumber
 And from the rib of his side
 He prepared an opposite²¹²⁷ for him.
- 33 He laid a serpent trap²¹²⁸
 At the feet of the guileless woman²¹²⁹
 And she lured²¹³⁰ to thoughtless²¹³¹ error²¹³²
 Together they were burdened²¹³³
- 34 The decree²¹³⁴ of his God
 He²¹³⁵ did not want to obey
 And acted on desire and evil inclination
 Rather than on the wishes of the Creator.²¹³⁶

²¹¹⁸ God.

²¹¹⁹ Adam.

²¹²⁰ Gen. 2:18.

²¹²¹ Eve.

²¹²² Prov. 30:19.

²¹²³ God.

²¹²⁴ Adam.

²¹²⁵ Gen. 18:12; Neh. 9:25; Psalm 36:9.

²¹²⁶ Gen. 2:21-23.

²¹²⁷ Gen. 2:20; Job 18:12 intimates that the "fall of Adam" is due to the calamity brought on by Eve's insubordination.

²¹²⁸ Gen. 3:1.

²¹²⁹ Prov. 9:13.

²¹³⁰ Job 31:9; Job 31:26.

²¹³¹ Prov. 14:15.

²¹³² The Paytan "plays" with the sounds of words here: פתן [serpent], פוטה [guileless woman], פתי [thoughtless man].

²¹³³ Referring to the burden of God's rebuke and punishment of Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, after Psalm 140:12; Gen.

3:14-19.

²¹³⁴ Esther 1:20.

²¹³⁵ Man.

²¹³⁶ The Paytan "plays" with the root יצר first to denote the evil inclination of man יצר [yetzer], then to denote the Creator יוצר [yotzer].

עָלִיו שָׁקַד לְבַל יְהִי עֲרִירִי אַעֲשֵׂ עֵיזֹר אֶלְמַד דֶּרֶךְ גִּבֹר בְּעַלְמָה

עֵידָנוּ שָׁנָה שִׁיכְרוּ תְנוּמָה וּמַעֲצָם צִלְעוּ הֵיכִין לְאִידוֹ.

פַּח שָׁם פֶּתֹן לְרַגְלֵי פֹתָה וְהִיא מְשַׁכָּה לְפִתִּי יַחַד לְמַדְחֵיפּוֹת

פֶּתְגָם אֱלֹהֵיו לֹא אָבָה לְשִׁמּוֹר עָשָׂה רְצוֹן יִצְרָ וְלֹא רְצוֹן יוֹצֵר.

- 35 They stood like the inhabitants of Za'anān²¹³⁷
 Their shame²¹³⁸ exposed²¹³⁹
 And their dignity²¹⁴⁰ was replaced
 By a shroud of wilting leaves²¹⁴¹
- 36 The viper was made [...]
 For the one who smites with tongues²¹⁴²
 To be hit by the heel of man²¹⁴³
 And its fodder was perverted.²¹⁴⁴
- 37 His²¹⁴⁵ countenance darkened²¹⁴⁶ and he could not rest
 In the shelter of Eden²¹⁴⁷
 Because on the day of his betrothal to Eve²¹⁴⁸
 He made apparent his folly
- 38 His sustenance²¹⁴⁹ was to be eked with difficulty²¹⁵⁰
 And similar exertion was the verdict of birth²¹⁵¹
 Sorrow and death were made the lot of every creature²¹⁵²
 And the wilderness was made desolate²¹⁵³ and thorny.²¹⁵⁴

²¹³⁷ Za'anān is a city whose residents were iniquitous, after Micah 1:11.

²¹³⁸ Their genitals, after Hosea 2:12.

²¹³⁹ Referring to Adam and Eve, after Gen. 2:25.

²¹⁴⁰ The Glory of God in whose image Man and Woman were made, dimmed because of their sin, after Ezek. 1:28; Job 26:6.

²¹⁴¹ Referring to the fig leaves with which Adam and Eve covered their genitals after eating the forbidden fruit, Gen. 3:4.

²¹⁴² An epithet for Man, after Prov. 21:6.

²¹⁴³ Gen. 3:15.

²¹⁴⁴ Gen. 3:14.

²¹⁴⁵ Adam's countenance.

²¹⁴⁶ Became mournful, after Psalm 35:14; Job 30:28.

²¹⁴⁷ Adam and Eve were cast from Eden, after Gen. 3:23-24.

²¹⁴⁸ On the Sixth Day of Creation Adam and Eve became wed, upon their copulation, after Gen. 2:24.

²¹⁴⁹ The Paytan "plays" with the word שבר [*shever*], whereas it can refer to sustenance and food, after Gen. 42:1, but it can also mean "hurt" or "failure," after Jer. 8:11.

²¹⁵⁰ Gen. 3:19.

²¹⁵¹ Gen. 3:16.

²¹⁵² Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, after Gen. 3:19; Gen. 18:27; Jer. 31:39.

²¹⁵³ Zeph. 2:13.

²¹⁵⁴ Gen. 3:18; "thorny" after the nettles in Zeph. 2:9, and the thistles in Prov. 24:31.

צֶאֱנָן עָמְדוּ חֲשׂוּפֵי נִיבְלוֹת וְהוֹמַר כְּבוֹדָם לְמַעֲטָה נוֹבִילוֹת

צָפַע הוֹשֵׁת צַע... לְמַכָּה בְּלִשׁוֹן כְּמַכַּת פְּעָמָיו סוּלָף מֵאֲכָלוֹ.

קָדַר וְלֹא לָן בְּמִסּוּכַת עָדָן כִּי בְיוֹם חֲתוּנָה הוֹדִיעַ אֹלֶת

קוֹשֵׁי מִשְׁבֵּר הַחֹזֵק לְלִידָה עֲצָב וּמּוֹת לְכָל יְצוּר וְצִיָּה לְחֶרֶוֹל.

- 39 His lust welled up²¹⁵⁵ in him²¹⁵⁶
 To mate²¹⁵⁷ with the woman of his passion²¹⁵⁸
 And she gave birth to a first born who worked the field²¹⁵⁹
 And to his second a shepherd²¹⁶⁰
- 40 They each brought a gift offering
 To please their Creator
 The first born brought the overflowing bounty of the field²¹⁶¹
 And the young one brought the first-born lambs of his flock.²¹⁶²
- 41 The Almighty²¹⁶³ refused the senior's²¹⁶⁴
 And accepted the younger one's gift²¹⁶⁵
 And jealousy ravaged the cruel²¹⁶⁶ one's heart
 And he murdered²¹⁶⁷ his brother²¹⁶⁸
- 42 He²¹⁶⁹ who heard the crying sound of blood
 Punished him²¹⁷⁰ [...]
 And he²¹⁷¹ supplicated so He shielded him²¹⁷²
 [...]
- 43 And his²¹⁷³ lust welled again to mate²¹⁷⁴
 And He had brought him offspring²¹⁷⁵
 And established a lineage
 Of the descendants of the murdered one²¹⁷⁶

²¹⁵⁵ Psalm 45:2.

²¹⁵⁶ Adam.

²¹⁵⁷ The Paytan evokes Lev. 18:23 here, to speak of the baseness of unchecked sexual desire.

²¹⁵⁸ Eve.

²¹⁵⁹ Cain, after Gen. 4:2.

²¹⁶⁰ Abel, after Gen. 4:2.

²¹⁶¹ Cain brought the *leftover* vegetable bounty to offer God, after Gen. 4:3.

²¹⁶² Able chose the *best* of his flock for God, after Gen. 4:4.

²¹⁶³ Gen. 17:1.

²¹⁶⁴ Gen. 4:5.

²¹⁶⁵ Gen. 4:4.

²¹⁶⁶ Referring to Cain, after Gen. 4:5-6; Amos 1:11.

²¹⁶⁷ Gen. 4:8.

²¹⁶⁸ Abel.

²¹⁶⁹ God, after Gen. 4:10.

²¹⁷⁰ Cain, after Gen. 4:11-12.

²¹⁷¹ Cain, after Gen. 4:13.

²¹⁷² Gen. 4:15.

²¹⁷³ Adam.

²¹⁷⁴ Gen. 4:25.

²¹⁷⁵ Gen. 4:25.

²¹⁷⁶ Seth is in Abel's stead, after Gen. 4:25-26.

רַחֵשׁ יִצְרוּ לְרַבֵּעַ תְּשׁוּקַת אִשָּׁת וְהַבְּכִירָה מִשְׁדָּד וּמִשְׁנֵהוּ רוּעָה

רִיצוּי תְּשׁוּרָה לְיוֹצְרֵם הוֹכִילוּ בְּכוֹר מִמוֹתָר וְצִעִיר מִפְּטָר.

שְׂדֵי קִץ בָּרֵב וְנִרְצָה בְּצִעִיר וְקִנְיַת אֶכָּזֵר שִׁיחָתָה אַח בְּרִצָּח

שׁוֹמֵעַ קוֹל דָּם עָנְשׁוּ..... וְשׁוֹעַ וּמִגְנוּ

תָּאֵב עוֹד לְרַבֵּעַ וְהֶעֱמִיד לוֹ זֶרַע מִעֵמִיד יַחַס תּוֹלְדוֹת נִרְצָח

- 44 The first among transgressors
 Were the Sons of Seth²¹⁷⁷ who rose up
 And called in the Name of God²¹⁷⁸
 But being Godless they perished.²¹⁷⁹
- 45 They grew mighty in the world²¹⁸⁰
 They were rich with equanimity
 They said unto God: Depart from us²¹⁸¹
 What good are You to us
- 46 The mocked²¹⁸² and derided²¹⁸³
 The Torch²¹⁸⁴ who had cautioned them
 They [...] as eccentric
 And they acted unwisely.
- 47 he Judge²¹⁸⁵ let loose the knot
 Of the satchel of clouds²¹⁸⁶
 And He split open the waters of the abyss²¹⁸⁷
 Upon them all and they dispersed²¹⁸⁸
- 48 He made bountiful the land
 Through the Righteous one²¹⁸⁹ and his family²¹⁹⁰
 And the few²¹⁹¹
 Creatures that were ensconced in the Ark.²¹⁹²

²¹⁷⁷ Gen. 4:26.

²¹⁷⁸ The Paytan uses God's epithet **אלוה**, after Isa. 44:8.

²¹⁷⁹ Gen. 6:13; Gen. 7:23.

²¹⁸⁰ Gen. 6:4.

²¹⁸¹ Job 22:17.

²¹⁸² Gen. 27:12.

²¹⁸³ Prov. 13:13.

²¹⁸⁴ An epithet for Noah, after Gen. 6:9.

²¹⁸⁵ An epithet for God, after Psalm 7:12.

²¹⁸⁶ Job 26:8.

²¹⁸⁷ Gen. 7:10-11 mentions the waters of the abyss first and the rain second; the Paytan reverses the order here.

²¹⁸⁸ The verb **נפצו** can be read both as "they dispersed," after Gen. 9:19; Gen. 10:32; Isa. 33:3; Ezek. 34:6 – and as "they were crushed" after Gen. 6:21-23.

²¹⁸⁹ An epithet for Noah, after Gen. 6:9.

²¹⁹⁰ Gen. 9:18.

²¹⁹¹ Gen. 6:19-20.

²¹⁹² Gen. 8:1.

תְּחִילָה לְפוֹשְׁעִים הוֹקְמוּ בְּנֵי שֵׁת וְקִרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי לֹא אֱלֹהִים וְאֶבְרֹה.

תִּבַּל הָעֲצִימוֹ עֲשִׂירֵי שָׁלוֹה דְּבָרוֹ לְאֵל: סוֹר מֵה תִּטִּיב לָנוּ

תּוֹעֲתָעוּ בְּבוֹז כְּלַפִּיד מְזַהֵר ...טו כְּזָרִים וְלֹא כְּבַעְלֵי דָעַת.

שׁוֹפֵט הַתִּיר צָרוֹר עֲבֵי מַיִם וּבִיקַע מִי תְהוֹם עֲלֵיהֶם וְנוֹפְצוֹ

שֶׁפַע אֲדָמָה בְּצַדִּיק וְנֹוֹהוּ וּבְמַעַט מִסָּפֵר נְצוּרֵי תִיבָה.

- 49 He appeased God with fragrance²¹⁹³
 And He vowed never again to smite any of the living²¹⁹⁴
 And He set a rainbow in the cloud²¹⁹⁵
 And the waters of Noah will henceforth no longer inundate.²¹⁹⁶
- 50 They wanted to perch above²¹⁹⁷
 Those who dwell below
 And God who dwells above²¹⁹⁸
 Dispersed them below²¹⁹⁹
- 51 He drew near and had come²²⁰⁰
 A friend²²⁰¹ from afar
 And healed²²⁰² the lot
 Of all kinfolk of the land²²⁰³
- 52 He²²⁰⁴ was first to understand
 Who is the Master of the Earth²²⁰⁵
 And who rules the heavens²²⁰⁶
 And who commands the Hosts of Heaven.²²⁰⁷
- 53 The steps of the lame²²⁰⁸
 He set on an even place²²⁰⁹
 So they would not seek guidance from the dead²²¹⁰
 For the sake of the living

²¹⁹³ Referring to the sacrifice Noah offered God after the Flood's waters had abated, after Gen. 20-21.

²¹⁹⁴ Gen. 8:21; Gen. 9:11.

²¹⁹⁵ Gen. 9:13.

²¹⁹⁶ Isa. 54:9.

²¹⁹⁷ Referring to the Tower of Babel, after Gen. 11:4.

²¹⁹⁸ Referring to God, after Isa. 57:15; Isa. 33:5.

²¹⁹⁹ Gen. 11:7-9.

²²⁰⁰ Isa. 41:5.

²²⁰¹ Referring to Abraham, after Gen. 12:1; Psalm 139:2.

²²⁰² Abraham brought the salubrious words of God, after Prov. 16:24.

²²⁰³ Gen. 12:3; Gen. 28:14; Amos 3:2.

²²⁰⁴ Abraham.

²²⁰⁵ Referring to the omnipresent God, after Joshua 3:11; Psalm 114:7.

²²⁰⁶ I1 Chron. 20:6; I1 Chron. 29:12.

²²⁰⁷ Psalm 24:10.

²²⁰⁸ Referring to those who stray from God, after Judges 5:6.

²²⁰⁹ Referring to the right path, God's path, after Psalm 26:12; Psalm 143:10.

²²¹⁰ Referring to lifeless idols, after Isa. 8:19.

רִיצָה אֱלֹהֵיוּ בְּנִיחָח וְנִשְׁבַּע שְׁלֹא וְלִהְיוֹת וְקִשַׁת שֵׁם בְּעַב
 מַעְבֹּר מִי נוֹחַ
 כָּל חַי

רָצוּ לְקַנְנוּ בְּמַעֲלָה תוֹשְׁבֵי מִטָּה וְאֵל שׁוֹכֵן מַעֲלָה הִפְיָצוּ מִלְמָטָה.

קָרַב וַיֵּאָת רִיעַ מְרָחוֹק רָפָא אַרוּחַת מְשַׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה

קִידָם וְהִיבִין מִי אָדוֹן לְאָרֶץ וּמִי מוֹשֵׁל בְּשַׁחַק וּמְנַהִיג צְבָאָם.

צַעֲרֵי צוֹלִיעִים כּוֹנֵן בְּמִישׁוֹר לְבַל דְּרוֹשׁ לְמַתִּים בְּעַד הַחַיִּים

- 54 Forged in a trial of fire²²¹¹
 And persecuted in war²²¹²
 God told him: Go forth, for your sake,²²¹³
 And He forever exalted²²¹⁴ him.²²¹⁵
- 55 He gave him a fruit²²¹⁶
 From dried branches²²¹⁷
 He tested him²²¹⁸ and tested him²²¹⁹ by asking him for a gift²²²⁰
 And he did not tarry²²²¹
- 56 He redeemed the son with a horned creature caught in the shrub²²²²
 Thus earning the Fathers merit²²²³
 That was to be the salvation of their descendents
 From the menace of horned animals²²²⁴
- 57 He was behind his brother in the womb²²²⁵
 And then he²²²⁶ was named²²²⁷
 And from him He exalted²²²⁸
 The battalions²²²⁹ of Hid pride

²²¹¹ Referring to Abraham who was thrust into the crucible fire by Nimrod, after Gen. Rabba 38:13.

²²¹² Gen. 14:14-15.

²²¹³ Gen. 12:1.

²²¹⁴ Psalm 107:41; Psalm 148:13; Psalm 73:12; Prov. 18:10; Deut. 2:36 The Paytan writes **סיגבו** using non-standard orthography [with the letter *Samech*], whereas the standard spelling is **שיגבו** [with the letter *Sin*]. The root is often associated with God. Thus the Paytan ties Abraham's elevated status to his abiding faith in God.

²²¹⁵ Gen. 12:2-3.

²²¹⁶ Referring to Isaac, after Song of Sol. 2:13.

²²¹⁷ The miraculous fruit from a dried up branch, after Ezek. 17:24 : Gen. 18:12.

²²¹⁸ Abraham.

²²¹⁹ Gen. 22:1.

²²²⁰ Referring to the sacrifice of Isaac, after Gen. 22:2.

²²²¹ Abraham woke up early to fulfill God's request, after Gen. 22: 3.

²²²² Gen. 22:13.

²²²³ Gen. 22:16-18; Gen. Rabba 63:2.

²²²⁴ Referring to the nations of the world that threatened Israel, after Daniel 8:3-8.

²²²⁵ Referring to Jacob, after Gen. 25:23; Hosea 12:4.

²²²⁶ Jacob, after Gen. 25:26.

²²²⁷ Gen. 25:26.

²²²⁸ Exod. 15:21.

²²²⁹ A reference to the Twelve Tribes that hailed from Jacob, after Gen. 49:28.

צוֹרֵף בָּאֵשׁ וְנִרְדָּף בְּמַלְחַמָּתוֹ הָאוֹמֵר לוֹ: לֵךְ לָהּ, לְעַד סִיגְבוֹ.

פְּרֵי הַחֲנִיט לּוֹ מִפְּרִיחַ יְבוֹשִׁים בְּחָנוֹ וְנָס בּוֹ לְשֵׁי וְלֹא אֵיחָרוּ

פָּדְאוּ בְּנִסְכָּף בְּקָרוֹ קַחַת לְאֲבוֹת צָדֵק וּלְבָנִים יֵשַׁע מִנּוֹגְחוֹת קָרוֹ.

עוֹקֵב בְּבֶטֶן אֲזוֹ קְרוֹא בְּשֵׁם כִּי בּוֹ גִידְלוֹ גְּדוּדִים לְגִיאָה

- 58 His Might²²³⁰ he studied²²³¹
 Residing in tents²²³²
 And God decreed for his descendants²²³³
 A mighty inheritance.
- 59 He left²²³⁴ and supplicated the heavens²²³⁵
 And his tormentor²²³⁶ was enfeebled before him²²³⁷
 Secured by the promise of his Nurturer²²³⁸
 Who stood over and above him²²³⁹
- 60 Blessed by his forefathers²²⁴⁰
 To bear magnificent fruits²²⁴¹
 He²²⁴² indeed bore fruit
 In the manner of his ancestors' benedictions.²²⁴³
- 61 counted in the number of
 The signs²²⁴⁴ in the firmament
 And they have no measure
 Like His battalions²²⁴⁵
- 62 A secret was revealed to the mother²²⁴⁶
 In the third son²²⁴⁷
*"Now this time my husband will be joined unto me"*²²⁴⁸
 Said the Modest one.²²⁴⁹

²²³⁰ An epithet to God's Torah, after Psalm 68:34-36.

²²³¹ Gen. Rabba 63:10.

²²³² Jacob studied Torah, after Gen. 25:27.

²²³³ Deut. 33:4.

²²³⁴ Jacob left the Land of Israel in order to find a wife in Padan Aram, after Gen. 28:7.

²²³⁵ Jacob prayed in Beit El, after Gen. 28:20.

²²³⁶ Esau, after Gen. 33:4; Sifre BeHa'alotcha, 11.

²²³⁷ Gen. 33:16.

²²³⁸ A reference to God, after Esther 2:7.

²²³⁹ A reference to the ladder, after Gen. 28:13-15.

²²⁴⁰ Jacob was blessed by the merit of his forefathers, after Gen. 28:4.

²²⁴¹ The twelve Tribes of Israel, after Gen. 28:3.

²²⁴² Jacob.

²²⁴³ Gen. 48:16.

²²⁴⁴ The Twelve Tribes parallel the twelve zodiac signs.

²²⁴⁵ God's countless stars, after Gen. 15:5.

²²⁴⁶ Referring to Leah who was told that her third son would be elected to serve God, after Gen. 29:34.

²²⁴⁷ Levi.

²²⁴⁸ Gen. 29:34.

²²⁴⁹ Leah.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| עוז דַת שִׁינֹן | בְּמוֹשֵׁב אוֹהֲלִים | וְאֵל חֶק לְנִינְיֹו | מִוֹרְשָׁה עוֹז. |
| סֵר חִינֹן לְרוֹם | וְצָר הֶוֶכַחֶשׁ מִמָּוֶו | כְּבִטְיַחֹת אוֹמֵן | נֶצֶב עָלָיו |
| שׁוֹבַח קְרוֹמִים | לְיוֹפֵי פִירוֹתָיו | וְהוּא נִשָּׂא פְרִי | כְּבִרְכּוֹת הַוֹרִיו. |
| נִימְנִים בְּמִסְפָּר | כְּמִזְלוֹת רְקִיעַ | וְאִין לָמוּ מִסְפָּר | כְּאִין לְגִדּוּדָיו |
| נִיגְלָה סוֹד לָאֵם | בְּבֶן הַשְּׁלִישִׁי | בְּזֶה יִלְנֶה אִישִׁי | דִּיבְרָה צְנוּעָה. |

- 63 The appeaser of God²²⁵⁰
 Through the work of the hands²²⁵¹
 By offering incense for God's nose
 And burnt offerings at the Altar.²²⁵²
- 64 From the vineyard of my beloved²²⁵³
 Who was anointed with oil²²⁵⁴
 There sprang forth a bloom-making vine²²⁵⁵
 Which delivered three tendrils²²⁵⁶
- 65 To the Prince²²⁵⁷ among them
 He appeared in the burning bush²²⁵⁸
 To Zoan,²²⁵⁹ to shallows of the sea²²⁶⁰
 And to His commandment [...] ²²⁶¹
- 66 To the Prophetess²²⁶²
 The dancing woman of the people's encampments²²⁶³
 A well pursued them²²⁶⁴
 And quenched the people's thirst.
- 67 As [...]
 A covenant to His consecrated people
 To be His servants²²⁶⁵
 To [...]

²²⁵⁰ Referring to the Kohanim who offer sacrifices to God, after Gen. Rabba 71:4.

²²⁵¹ Referring to the Avodah at the Temple, after Deut. 33:11.

²²⁵² Deut. 33:10.

²²⁵³ Referring to Levi, who hailed from Jacob, after Isa. 5:1.

²²⁵⁴ 1 Sam. 16:17-18.

²²⁵⁵ Referring to Amram, after Psalm 80:12.

²²⁵⁶ The Paytan uses non-standard orthography again, writing **סריגים** with a Samech, instead of **שריגים** with a Sin. [Note: שריג is a branch, and סריג is a woven or knitted fabric]. Referring to Aaron, Miriam, and Moses, after Gen. Rabba 88:5; Gen. 40:10; Joel 1:7.

²²⁵⁷ A reference to Moses, after Isa. 55:4; 2 Kings 20:5.

²²⁵⁸ Exod. 3:2.

²²⁵⁹ Referring to the Exod. which redeemed Israel from Egypt, after Num. 13:22.

²²⁶⁰ Referring to the crossing of the Red Sea on Israel's flight from Egypt, after Exod. 14:15-31; Isa. 40:12.

²²⁶¹ An apparent reference to Moses' ascent to Mount Sinai, after Exod. 24:12-17

²²⁶² A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

²²⁶³ Song of Sol. 7:1; Exod. 15:20.

²²⁶⁴ Babylonian Talmud Tractate Ta'anit Folio 9:A.

²²⁶⁵ Deut. 18:5.

מְרַצָּה אָב לְבֵן בְּרִיצוּי פּוֹעֵל יָדַיִם וְשֵׁם קְטוֹרֶה בְּאֵף וְכִלִּיל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ
 מְכַרֵּם יְדִידֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶן בֶּן שָׁמוֹן צֶזַע מִפְּרִיחַ בְּגִפְזוֹן שְׁלֵשֶׁת סְרִיגִים.
 לְנִגְיֵד מֵהֶם נִיגְלָה בְּסִנְהָה לְצוּעוֹן לְשַׁעַל לְצִיּוֹהָ לַח...
 לְנִבּוֹאת אִשָּׁת מַחֹלֶת מַחְנָנִים רָצָה בְּאֵר וְרִיזָה צְמֵאִים.
 כ... בְּרִית לְקְדוּשָׁיו הָיֹת לוֹ מְשָׁרְתִים וּלְצ...

68 As [...]
 Their eternal inheritance²²⁶⁶
 And from the surplus of their King's table²²⁶⁷
 To [...]

69 They sit at the gate
 Of His tent for seven days²²⁶⁸
 Washing their hands²²⁶⁹
 And offering sanctification and oil²²⁷⁰

70 Appointed to [...]
 From before the Tent was erected²²⁷¹
 For all their generations to come
 To welcome the Tenth Day.²²⁷²

As it is written:

“And it shall be a statute for ever unto you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work, the home-born, or the stranger that sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; it is a statute for ever.”²²⁷³

71 The sanctified members of the Tribe²²⁷⁴
 Cast a lot
 Who will rise to be the Head²²⁷⁵
 To be master of his brethren²²⁷⁶

²²⁶⁶ Num. 18:19.

²²⁶⁷ The “Kin’s repast” is a reference to the sacrifices made to God at the Temple. The priests received a portion thereof for their sustenance. The two stanzas (67 and 68) appear to make reference to Aaron and his descendents who were chosen to serve God at the Temple. Given the preceding stanzas which describe Moses and Miriam respectively, it is logical that Aaron would be next. The incomplete verses recall verses in *אתה כוננת* for instance, which speak of the three eminent elect siblings.

²²⁶⁸ Lev. 8:35.

²²⁶⁹ A reference to the ablutions and sanctifications required of the priests, after Lev. 8:6; Exod. 30:21.

²²⁷⁰ Lev. 8:30.

²²⁷¹ The Paytan emphasizes the elected status of the Priestly Caste, which preceded the erection of the Traveling Tabernacle and the Temple as well. Their status is above Time, eternal and immutable, after Exod. 29:9.

²²⁷² A reference to the Day of Atonement, the subject of the Piyut, after Lev. 16:29.

²²⁷³ Lev. 16:29-31.

²²⁷⁴ Referring to the Priests who are cautioned to remain sanctified, after Lev. 21:1.

²²⁷⁵ The High Priest is elected by his brethren to serve and to be the preeminent of the caste, after 1 Chron. 16:40; Lev. 21:10.

²²⁷⁶ Gen. 27:29.

כ... ברית לקדוֹשׁיו הָיֹת לוֹ מִשְׁרָתִים וּלְצ...
 יֵשְׁבוּ עַל פֶּתַח אֹהֶלוֹ שְׂבָעָה בְּרַחֲצוֹת יָדַי וְקִידוֹשׁ וְשָׁמֶן
 יוֹמְנֵנוּ ל... קִם טָרֵם הוֹקֵם אֵהֶל וְכֵן לְדוֹרוֹתֵם טָרֵם יוֹם עָשׂוֹר.

ככתוב כאשר עשה וג'

טְהוֹרֵי שַׁבָּט יִפִּילוּ גֹרָל מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּרֹאשׁ הָיֹת גְּבִיר אַחִים

- 72 The mansion of his residence²²⁷⁷
 His abode is in the holy Temple
 To stand on the threshold²²⁷⁸
 And abide by the Law fully.²²⁷⁹
- 73 The men who are charged with finding a replacement for him²²⁸⁰
 A replacement Kohen
 Lest [...]
 And the Avodah will be disrupted²²⁸¹
- 74 His disciples sprinkle on him
 Purifying waters²²⁸²
 Because the reward²²⁸³ of the blood
 Has been given as law for all generations.
- 75 They portion the offering
 Half the fragrant surplus
 And not in equal shares
 As with the bequest of a father to his sons²²⁸⁴
- 76 For seven days he makes sacrifices
 And follows the order of the service for each
 With the blood and the incense and the oil lamps
 And offering the head and the leg first.²²⁸⁵

²²⁷⁷ The High Priest had a residence at the Temple, after Tosefta Tractate Kippurim 1:2.

²²⁷⁸ Referring to the threshold of the Temple, after Psalm 84:11.

²²⁷⁹ Lev. 8:34.

²²⁸⁰ This is the first Piyyut in which Yosse ben Yosse does not assert full priestly control over the Temple proceedings and “allows” rabbinic intrusion in the appointment and preparation of the High Priest prior to the Yom Kippur service. In all other Piyyutim the Paytan insists on priestly autonomy. Referring to the rabbis who appoint a substitute High Priest in case the elected one is defiled, after Mishnah Yoma 1:1.

²²⁸¹ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:1.

²²⁸² Referring to the sanctifying waters of the Red Heifer, after Num. 19:1-13; Num. 31:23.

²²⁸³ The reward of the High Priest is a measure-for-measure, equal to his service at the Temple during which he sanctified elements of the Temple with the blood as a “ritual detergent” [Brettler, *How to read the Jewish Bible*, 79-80 regarding the rituals of Lev. 16:16]. Mirsky offers a different interpretation of the line, regarding the sanitizing waters as a substitute for the blood and oil with which Moses sanctified Aaron and the priests in the desert, after Lev. 8:30. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי. *ישיבת ברנא*. p. 232, footnotes 75.

²²⁸⁴ The High Priests receives a larger share of the sacrifices than do his kinfolk, after Lev. 2:10.

²²⁸⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:2.

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| חוק מילואים. | להסתופף בם | מעונו בקדש | טירת גירות |
| ותופר עבודה | פן...ם | כהן משנה | חולפיו יכינו |
| גיתנו לדורות. | כי תמור דמים | מי טוהר | חניכיו יזו עליו |
| ממפר אבות | ולא חלק כחלק | חצי יתר הניחח | זה יחלוקו |
| וראשון בראש ורגל. | בדום ורקח ונירות | וחפצם יעשה | זבחי שבעה |

- 77 And [...]
 And elders²²⁸⁶ surround him²²⁸⁷
 And together they study
 The Laws of the Tenth Day²²⁸⁸
- 78 And [...]
 The Central [...]²²⁸⁹
 The sacrifices of the day
 They march in procession before him.²²⁹⁰
- 79 They [...] mark for [...]
 [...]
 And he places [...]
 [...]
- 80 The [...]
 In the evening they reduce his victuals²²⁹¹
 [...] so he will not fall asleep
 Lest he have a nocturnal emission.²²⁹²
- 81 His associates²²⁹³ join him
 [...]
 [...] Incense²²⁹⁴
 And they make him take an oath in the Name
- 82 Do not stray from the Law²²⁹⁵
 [...] do not burn incense
 But only before
 The Lord of Mysteries.²²⁹⁶

²²⁸⁶ In his other Piyutim, Yosse ben Yosse asserts that the priests had sole jurisdiction over the proceedings, but here he appears to assert rabbinic supervision over the High Priest, after Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

²²⁸⁷ The High Priest.

²²⁸⁸ Mishnah Yoma 1:3; Mishnah Yoma 1:6.

²²⁸⁹ An apparent reference to the Central Gate of the Temple, after Mishnah Yoma 1:1:3; Palestinian Talmud Tractate Eruvin 5:1.

²²⁹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

²²⁹¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:4.

²²⁹² Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:4.

²²⁹³ The Paytan uses the word **דבקים** which may be translated as “those who cleave to him,” after Deut. 4:4; Psalm 63:9; Job 41:9. Mirsky interprets the associates as being the rabbinic elders, after Mishnah Yoma 1:3 [See: פיוט (1991). אהרון מירסקי p. 233, footnotes 82] but my reading proposes that the Paytan is referring to priestly associates, especially in view of the Job 41:9 citation, which connects the associates with brothers, or kin. The High Priest is not sworn in by the Sanhedrin, but by his priestly cohorts.

²²⁹⁴ Referring to the Incense Ward, which the Mishnah calls בית אבטינס in Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

²²⁹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

²²⁹⁶ Psalm 91:1.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ...ו | וְזָקְנִים יְסֻבְבוּהוּ | וַיִּשְׁנֶנּוּ יַחַד | בְּחֻקֵי עֲשׂוֹר |
| ...ו | הַתִּיכּוֹן... | זָבַחֵי הַיּוֹם | לְפָנָיו יוֹבִילוּ. |
| הֵן ע... אות לה | ...מר | וישם ב... | ... |
| ה... ..ו | עָרַב טָרְפוֹ יַמְעֹיטוֹן | ... שר לא יישן | פֶּן יִקְרָה קָרִי. |
| דְּבִיקָיו יַחְבְּרוּהוּ | ...ע | ...רקח | בְּשֵׁם יְשִׁיעוּהוּ |
| דַּת אֶל תִּשְׁנֶה | ...אל תקטיר | כי אם לפני | אֲדוֹן נִסְתָּרוֹת. |

- 83 Weeping and sobbing
 Because he had been considered thoughtless²²⁹⁷
 And they²²⁹⁸ also weep lest they find fault
 With one who is innocent of transgression
- 84 He turns to seek knowledge
 As a wise and insightful person
 But he will, before those who are wiser than him,
 Not be haughty.²²⁹⁹
- 85 Should his heart
 Be obscured from wisdom²³⁰⁰
 And from reading scripture
 They²³⁰¹ occupy him with speech
- 86 If he is unschooled
 And if he has not learned doctrine²³⁰²
 They recount the deeds of the Kings of old
 They thus slacken his heart.²³⁰³

²²⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 1:5 narrates the tearful goodbyes between the High Priest and the Sanhedrin sages, but does not explain why so lachrymose the moment. The Talmud fills the gap by telling the tale of an errant Boethusite priest [Boethus was one of the High Priests who was beloved by the people, but whose interpretation of Jewish tradition contradicted rabbinic views. He came to be regarded as the epitome of error by the rabbis. See: Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5:13.1], alleged to have disobeyed rabbinic instruction as to how to correctly mix the incense, as a cautionary tale which interjects the proceedings and is purposefully inserted into the narrative. Here, the elders of the Sanhedrin swear in the High Priest so he will follow their instruction and not fall into the Boethusite error; and they cry because they may have suspected an innocent man of being a Sadducee, a Zaddokite heretic, while the High Priest cries for having been thus been the object of calumny. According to the Mishnah the High Priest is mandated to follow the Sanhedrin's instruction, and he is not a priestly agent but a rabbinic agent in this discourse. The Paytan often uses a Qumranic term -the word פתי, paralleling but not identifying with the Talmudic expansion that the suspicion was that the High Priest was a Zaddokite heretic. Here Yosse ben Yosse disagrees somewhat and casts the elders' suspicion not in sectarian terms but in intellectual terms. A פתי is an un-informed person, a person who is in error because of his thoughtlessness and stupidity, after Prov. 14:15. The DSS 4Q177 9,7 equates אויל and פתי unschooled and foolish. The Paytan does not think that being a Zaddokite is an error, but that being a fool can jeopardise the efficacy of the ritual and that, he thinks, is worth crying about.

²²⁹⁸ The elders, after Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

²²⁹⁹ This statement is unique in the Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutic oeuvre. It even goes further than Mishnah Yoma 1:6 in attributing pre-eminence to the rabbis at the Temple. The verse here asserts that the High Priest must be diffident and submit to the rabbis, honouring their greater wisdom. In all other Piyyutim the Paytan insists on the very opposite. In the Piyyut אזכיר גבורות the Paytan describes the High Priest's humility with regard to the golden vestments [stanza 152]. But in this Piyyut, the author relates humility to the rabbinic authorities. This brings into question, for me at least, and based on stanzas 73 and 77 above.

²³⁰⁰ In Mishnah Yoma 1:6 the narrative proffers that the High priest could wither be schooled or unschooled. The author of this Piyyut "spends" two stanzas describing a limited High Priest who is unschooled, not literate, and needs the elders to read to him from scripture. This is yet another instance where I note a departure from the other Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim.

²³⁰¹ The elders, after Mishnah Yoma 1:6.

²³⁰² An epithet for the Torah, after Prov. 4:2.

²³⁰³ The couplet יפג ליבו comes from Gen. 45:26 where the narrative speaks of Jacob's heart growing faint upon hearing of the alleged death of Joseph. In Hab. 1:4 a similar verse speaks of the Law being slacked. In his other Piyyutim, Yosse ben Yosse speaks of delighting the High Priest with Torah, or occupying his mind with the Law; but here his heart grows faint upon hearing the recitation of Torah. It is a curious choice of words.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| גועש בבכי | כי נחשב לפתי | והם פו אירשיעו | חף מיצוון |
| גש לדרוש שכל | כחכם ונבון | ולפני גדולים | אל יגביה לב. |
| בהיות לבו | צפון משכל | בהגיה כתבי קדש | בפה יעסיקוהו |
| בער אם יהיה | ולא למד לקח | בשיח מלכי קדם | לבו יפיגו. |

- 87 Should slumber overtake him
 And if he wishes to doze
 With the snapping of fingers
 Singers²³⁰⁴ waken him
- 88 The sound of the din²³⁰⁵
 Of the City he hears
 And his sleep is cast off
 Until the night is cleaved in half.²³⁰⁶
- 89 Those who are of the Noble Tribe²³⁰⁷
 Thus was their custom
 Since ancient times, and each would vigorously
 Pursue commandments.²³⁰⁸
- 90 The chiefs²³⁰⁹ witnessed
 The pushing and breaking of limbs
 And so they²³¹⁰ prepared a lottery
 To decide who will clear the ashes from the altar
- 91 As the [...]
 [...] the dawn
 And for clearing the ashes of the internal altar
 And oil lamps in [...]²³¹¹
- 92 In [...]
 To cast a lot [...]
 To earn a blessing²³¹²
 “Bless, LORD, his family”²³¹³

²³⁰⁴ In the Mishnah Yoma 1:7 account, and in every Yosse ben Yosse Piyyut, the High Priest is kept awake by novice *priests*. Here, the author recounts *Levites*, the Singers at the Temple after 1 Chron. 6:17, are in charge of keeping the High Priest awake.

²³⁰⁵ Isa. 66:6; Isa. 22:2 In Mishnah Yoma the narrative presents an insular Temple, within whose confines the ceremonies and rituals are conducted by lofty men, independent of the people. The Paytan adds an interesting element in this stanza, similar to stanza 140 in **אספר גבורות**, which entirely absent from the Mishnah narrative. Here the city sounds enter the Temple. The two way “traffic” suggests an organic connection between the Temple and the people, for whom the ceremonies and rituals are being performed.

²³⁰⁶ Mishnah Yoma 1:8.

²³⁰⁷ A reference to the Priestly Caste, after Exod. 24:11.

²³⁰⁸ Mishnah Yoma 2:1-2.

²³⁰⁹ Referring to the elders of the Beth Din, the rabbis, after Mishnah Yoma 2:2 and after 1 Sam. 21:8. This is another departure from the usual Yosse ben Yosse narrative which minimizes, excludes and negates rabbinic presence at the Temple elsewhere, but follows the Mishnah closely in this particular Piyyut.

²³¹⁰ The rabbinic sages.

²³¹¹ Mishnah Yoma 2:3.

²³¹² Mishnah Yoma 2:4.

²³¹³ Deut. 33:11.

אם תגבר עליו שנה ובקש להתנמנם בחיך נועם צרדה משוררים יעוררוהו

את קול שאון מעיר ישמע ותפרד שנתו עד יחצה לילה.

אצילי שבט זאת היתה למו קודם, בכשרון כוח לקחו מצוות

אבירים שרו הדיפת שבר והיכינו פייס מי ירים דשן.

במ... השחר... ועל דישון מזבח פנימי ונירות ב...

ב... להפיס... לנחול בכרך יי חילו.

- 93 The man Chamberlain²³¹⁴
 [...] sends an emissary²³¹⁵
 And he will give a signal
 When the glowing light²³¹⁶ has flashed across the sky²³¹⁷
- 94 They treat him²³¹⁸ with pomp and reverence
 To the one who is greater than his brethren²³¹⁹
 And they draw a screen²³²⁰
 Between him and the People.
- 95 He rushes to make his ablutions outside²³²¹
 And he dons eight²³²²
 And he hastens to sanctify
 His hands and his feet
- 96 He holds the Daily Sacrifice
 And slaughters²³²³ it in accordance with the Law
 And another one stirs
 But he²³²⁴ receives it.
- 97 He sprinkles the blood
 And services the oil lamps
 And offers meat
 And meal offerings and liquid libations²³²⁵

²³¹⁴ Jer. 20:1; Mishnah Yoma 3:1 Note: Yosse ben Yosse employs a different technical term for the supervisor of the rites. He calls him **פקיד**. The Mishnah calls him the **ממונה**, the appointed man. Interestingly, the Qumran community's technical term for the role of overseer, (who was the second most important officer who was at the head of the community and oversaw the reception of new members to the Yahad) was.

פקיד [James H. Charlesworth, "Community Organization," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Vol. 1, edited by L. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 135].

²³¹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

²³¹⁶ The word **נוגה (נוגה)** suggests a bright glowing light that has some holiness attached to it, after Ezek. 10:4; Prov. 4:18

²³¹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 3:1 uses the word **ברקאי** which has an Aramaic origin, after Tosefta Kippurim 1:15; Palestinian Talmud 3:5 The word **ברקאי** is unique. It is "unpacked" in the Talmud through a story and a "recorded" conversation, which illustrate the essential importance of noting the first rays of sun as they pierce the night sky. The word **ברקאי** derives from the word **ברק**, lightning, which evokes a dagger-like image of a light that vanquishes the darkness. It is at once a poetic word and a legal word, as it is used in the Mishnah.

²³¹⁸ The High Priest.

²³¹⁹ Lev. 21:10.

²³²⁰ Mishnah Yoma 3:4 In his other Piyyutim, Yosse ben Yosse specifies the type of fabric the screen was made of, usually **שש** [See: **אזכיר גבורות**, stanza 149 for example]. Here there is no mention of the type of fabric.

²³²¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

²³²² Referring to the eight golden priestly vestments, after Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

²³²³ The Paytan uses the words from Mishnah Yoma 3:4 almost verbatim. This phase of the Avodah is usually omitted in the other Piyyutim.

²³²⁴ The High Priest.

²³²⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| אם בָּרַק נוֹגֵה | וְהוּא יִתֵּן אוֹמֵר | ...שֶׁלַח צִיר | גִּבּוֹר הַפְּקִיד |
| בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עָם. | וַיִּפְרְסוּ מָסָךְ | לְגִדּוֹל מְאֹחִיו | גְּדוֹלָה יַעֲשֶׂה |
| דָּדָיו וְרַגְלָיו | וּמִיָּהָר וְקִיָּדָשׁ | וְעָטָה שְׁמוֹנָה | דִּילֵג וְטָבֵל בַּחוּץ |
| אֵךְ הוּא יִקְבֹּל. | וְאַחֵר יִמְרָס | קָרָצוּ כְּצִוּוֵי | דָּבַק בַּתְּמִיד |
| חֲבָתִים וְנָסָךְ | וְהֵעֵלָה נְתָחִים | (יְהִי) טִיב גֵּירוֹת | הִיתִיו דָּם |

- 98 The bring him to the Pravah
 To the Ward of the Sacred Ablutions
 And they draw a screen²³²⁶
 Between him and the People.
- 99 And he further sanctifies
 His hands and his feet
 And he disrobes and bathes
 And dons the sacred linen vestments²³²⁷
- 100 And he approaches the bullock
 Which is of his²³²⁸ own wealth
 Which is standing between
 The Chamber and the Altar.²³²⁹
- 101 The glow of his face²³³⁰ is beautiful for the People
 He approaches his bullock
 And puts his two hands²³³¹
 Solemnly upon the bullock
- 102 He divulges his trespasses
 He confesses his errors
 For himself and for
 His home²³³² he thus atones.

And thus did he say: "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"²³³³

²³²⁶ Mishnah Yoma 3:6 specifies the type of fabric as **בוץ** and Yosse ben Yosse in his other Piyyutim specifies it as **שש** [see **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 190], but the author here remains silent as to the type of fabric.

²³²⁷ Mishnah Yoma 3:6.

²³²⁸ The High Priest purchased the bullock.

²³²⁹ Mishnah Yoma 3:8.

²³³⁰ The Paytan uses the words **זיו פניו** to denote the High Priest's beautiful countenance. The word **זיו** is an Aramaic word, which appears but once in the Bible, in I Kings 6:37 to denote the name of the seventh month. It appears four times in *Targum Onkelos*, the Aramaic translation of the Bible, but never in any of the other Yosse ben Yosse Piyyutim which, as has been noted, are conspicuously devoid of foreign words and are written in Hebrew.

²³³¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:8 and Mishnah Menachot 9:8 claim the High Priest placed *two* hands on the bullock, based on Lev. 16:21. The Paytan claims in **אזכיר גבורות** [stanza 193] that the High Priest place *one* hand on the bullock. Here the Paytan adopts the Mishnaic account unchanged.

²³³² The Paytan uses the word **נוה** to denote the family of the High Priest, after (inter alia) Isa. 33:20; Jer. 31:20 where the word refers to "place of habitation" rather than "family." The emphasis of place over the people of the household, after Lev. 16:30.

²³³³ Lev. 16:30; Mishnah Yoma 3:8.

הִבִּיאֹהוּ לַפְּרוּהָ לְבֵית טְבִילַת קֹדֶשׁ וַיִּפְרְסוּ מִסָּדָה בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עָם.

וְקִידָשׁ עוֹד יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו פֶּשֶׁט וְטָבֵל וְעָטָה כְּלֵי בַד וְקִידָשׁ

וְנִיגַשׁ אֵצֶל פֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר מִיְהוֹנָה הָעוֹמֵד בֵּין הָאוֹלָם וְלַמְזֻבְחָה.

זֵיו פָּנָיו יָפוּ הָעַם פָּנָיו פָּרוּ גָשׁ וְסִמָּה שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו בְּכוֹבֵד

זְרוֹנוֹת יִגְלָה שְׁגָגוֹת יוֹדָה וּבְעָרוֹ וּבְעָד נוֹיָהוּ יְכַפֵּר.

וכך היה או' א' הש' חטאתי וגו'

- 103 He hastens to the Itton Gate
Which is north of the Altar
And his Deputy and the Head of the Household²³³⁴
Are one this side and on that side²³³⁵
- 104 Golden lots²³³⁶
He finds in a vessel
Prepared to snag
The People's he-goats.²³³⁷
- 105 He rummages and raises them²³³⁸
In his right hand and in his left
This one engraved for The Name²³³⁹
And that one for the wilderness²³⁴⁰
- 106 Joy and happiness²³⁴¹
Are granted to the generation
As the right hand raises
The lot of the People's he-goats.²³⁴²
- 107 His Deputy tells him:
Raise your right hand,
As he raises it
In the right hand²³⁴³
- 108 And the Head of the House hold retorts:
Raise your left hand,
As he raises it
In the left hand.²³⁴⁴

²³³⁴ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

²³³⁵ Meaning "on either side of the High Priest." The orthography used here **מיפו ומיפו** is unusual, whereas the letter *Yod* is superfluous and the word has to end not with a *Vav* but with the letter *Hey*. Similar orthography [although without the excessive *Yod*] appears in Ezek. 40:34. It is the only iteration of this phrase in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre.

²³³⁶ The author uses the word **חלש** [read as CHELESH] to denote the lots. It is the only such use in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre. It does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. The Mishnah refers to them as **גורלות** as does Yosse ben Yosse in **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 195.

²³³⁷ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

²³³⁸ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²³³⁹ Referring to the Name of God, after Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²³⁴⁰ Lev. 16:22.

²³⁴¹ Isa. 60:15.

²³⁴² This stanza appears to be de novo, whereas the Mishnah does not recount this, and Yosse ben Yosse follows the Mishnaic narrative and also makes no mention of the delight cited here.

²³⁴³ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²³⁴⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| חַשׁ לְשַׁעַר אֵיתוֹן | שֶׁהוּא צָפוֹן לְמִזְבֵּחַ | וְסָגַן וְרֹאשׁ בַּיִת אָב | מִיָּפוֹ וּמִיָּפוֹ |
| חֲלָשֵׁי פֶז | שֵׁם יִמְצָא בְּכָלִי | מוֹכְנִים צַד | שְׁעֵירֵי עָם. |
| טָרַף וְהֶעֱלָם | בְּיָמַיִן וּבְשִׁמְאוֹל | זֶה חֲקוּק לְשֵׁם | וְזֶה לִיגְזָרָה |
| טוֹב לֵב וּמִשׁוֹשׁ | יִנְתֵּן לְדוֹר | בְּעֲלוֹת בְּיָמַיִן | גּוֹרֵל שְׁעִיר עָם. |
| יִשְׁמִיעַ לוֹ סָגָן: | הַגְּבֵהָ יִמְיָנָה, | בְּעֲלוֹתוֹ | בְּיַד הַיְמָנִית |
| יַעַן רֹאשׁ בַּיִת אָב: | הַגְּבֵהָ שְׁמֵאוֹלָהּ, | בְּעֲלוֹתוֹ | בְּיַד הַשְּׁמֵאוֹלִית. |

109 As they²³⁴⁵ are given²³⁴⁶ he says
 For The Name, for expiation
 And he marks them with crimson²³⁴⁷
 One to be sacrifices and one for the desert cliffs²³⁴⁸

110 As he speaks he approaches
 His bullock a second time
 To confess
 For himself and for his Standard.²³⁴⁹

And thus did he say,

"O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house and the children of Aaron [the priests], your holy people. O Lord, forgive, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you, I, my house, and the children of Aaron, your holy people. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: *"For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord."*²³⁵⁰

111 He is commanded to slaughter it
 And he drains the blood into a vessel²³⁵¹
 And another one²³⁵² stirs it
 At the level of the Sanctuary.²³⁵³

112 He ascends to the Altar²³⁵⁴
 Facing the west
 And draws the burning embers²³⁵⁵
 With a full Brazier made of red hued gold.²³⁵⁶

²³⁴⁵ The lots.

²³⁴⁶ Each lot is "given" to the appropriate he-goat.

²³⁴⁷ Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

²³⁴⁸ Mirsky comments on the unusual phrasing here, whereas the author is untypically brief and does not specify the manner and location of the red crimson mark on either of the two he-goats. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). ק. אהרון מירסקי. 235, footnotes 111.

²³⁴⁹ Meaning the House of Aaron.

²³⁵⁰ Lev. 16:30; Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

²³⁵¹ The orthography used here is untypical, whereas the word **כלי** appears 17 times in Yosse ben Yosse's works, always as **כלי** and never except here as **כילי** [read KEYLI]. Similarly in the last line of this stanza, the author writes **רוביד** [read ROVEYD] instead of the typical **רובד** [read ROVED].

²³⁵² Another priest.

²³⁵³ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 specifies that that the blood was placed on the fourth stair in the Courtyard.

²³⁵⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:3.

²³⁵⁵ Ezek. 1:13; Lev. 16:12.

²³⁵⁶ Mishnah Yoma 4:4.

- 113 From below him
At the Courtyard level
They bring out for him
A Ladle and a Tureen²³⁵⁷ for the incense²³⁵⁸

כְּהִינְתָּם יֹאמֵר לְשֵׁם חֲטָאת וַיִּתְּוִים בְּשָׁנִי לְזֹבַח וּלְהָרִי צוֹק

כְּדוֹבְרוּ בָּא לּו אֶצֶל פְּרוּ שֵׁינִית לְהַתְּוֹדוֹת בְּעַד עֲצָמוֹ וּמִטְּיָהוּ.

וְכַךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם וּבְנֵי אֹהֶרֶן עִם קְרוֹשִׁיךְ וְגו'

לְשַׁחֲטוּ צִוָּה וְדָם הַזֹּחֵל לְכִילֵי וְאַחַר יִמּוֹגְגָנוּ בְּרוֹבִיד הַהֵיכָל

לְמִזְבַּח עָלָה לְצַד פְּנֵי מַעְרֵב וְחָתָה בּוֹעֲרוֹת מְלֵא מַחְתֵּת אוֹדָם.

מִטָּה בְּרוֹבֵד עֲזָרָה נְתָנָה וַיִּצְיָאוּ לוֹ כֶּף וּמִגָּס קְטוֹרֶת

²³⁵⁷ Mishnah Yomah 5:1 recounts that the High Priest received the Ladle and a Brazier. [מחיתה] The Paytan recounts a Ladle and a Tureen, [מגס] as it also appears in **אתה כוננת** [stanza 136, footnote 394]. Elsewhere the Paytan speaks of the Brazier, therefore Mirsky's assumption that Yosse ben Yosse refers to the **מגס** as a **מחיתה** interchangeably is not supported, in my opinion, and the two vessels are not interchangeable. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). *פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי*. p. 198, footnote 155. This Tureen is not mentioned in the Mishnah, but it is not clear where the Paytan draws information from.

²³⁵⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

- 114 He takes a Brazier heaped²³⁵⁹
With finely ground incense²³⁶⁰
And takes a handful
And places it in the Ladle.
- 115 He takes it²³⁶¹ in his left hand
And holds the Brazier in his right²³⁶²
And he places the weigh
Of his right arm on his left arm²³⁶³
- 116 He enters the Sanctuary
And enters the space between the Ornamental Curtains²³⁶⁴
And he enters from the side²³⁶⁵ and reaches to touch
The northern wall.
- 117 He faces [... south]²³⁶⁶
And walks to the middle of the Hall²³⁶⁷
While the Ark of the Covenant was there²³⁶⁸
He met with the Staves
- 118 He draws the Ornamental Curtain
Backwards very forcefully²³⁶⁹
And he extricates himself and he stands
Before [...]

²³⁵⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1; The language here [the root **גדש**] recalls the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 47:A.

²³⁶⁰ Mishnah Yoma 4:4; Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²³⁶¹ The Ladle.

²³⁶² Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²³⁶³ This element is not mentioned in the Mishnah. See: **אזכיר גבורות**, stanza 207, footnote 682.

²³⁶⁴ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 debates whether there was a single Ornamental Curtain or two, but concludes that there were two. The Paytan only mentions *one* in [**אזכיר גבורות** stanza 207, footnote 685 for example], but here the author *harmonizes his narrative* with the Mishnah. This is the only instance in the entire Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre that the Paytan mentions two Ornamental Curtains. In all the other Piyyutim he consistently mentions only a single Ornamental Curtain.

²³⁶⁵ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 recounts that the High Priest walked between the two Ornamental Curtains going north, then he turned south and walked to his left along the Ornamental Curtain to the Ark. Here the Paytan says that the High Priest came from “the side,” which refers to the right side, after the *Aramaic Targum* for Deut. 31:26 In Psalm 89:13 the right side is equal to the north. This is a convoluted way of referring to the north, but it works, although in other piyyutim Yosse ben Yosse does not rely on Aramaic Targum and bases his narrative on the Bible.

²³⁶⁶ פִּיּוּטֵי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי ק. 237, Line 120.

²³⁶⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 The orthography is “*yod* rich” here, spelling **בית** with an extra *yod*, as **ביית**.

²³⁶⁸ Referring to the First Temple period, after Mishnah Yoma 5:2.

²³⁶⁹ This element is not mentioned in the Mishnah, but in the Piyyut **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 210, footnote 690 the High Priest is called **רב כוח**, meaning strong and mighty, hence the adaptation in this stanza regarding the forceful pulling of the Ornamental Curtain.

119 On a Foundation Stone²³⁷⁰
 He prepares a Brazier
 And puts spices in a vessel
 And the smoke rises²³⁷¹

מגדישת דקת הרק מלא חפניו ונתן לתוך קרי.

נטלה בשמאל ומחתה בימין העמים כובר ימין על שמאל

נכנס בהיכל והכניס בפרכות ובא מצד ומש בקיר צפון.

שם פניו לדרום ובא עד חצי בית בעוד ארון שם בפדים פגש

סילק פרוכת לאחריו ברוב כוח נחלץ וניצב מול...

על אבן שתיה היכין מחתה ושם סמים בכלי ותימר עשן

²³⁷⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:2; Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:4.

²³⁷¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

- 120 He turns right²³⁷² on his heels
And exits back
And briefly supplicates in the Sanctuary
Lest the People be frightened.²³⁷³
- 121 The novice priest who stirs the blood²³⁷⁴
Presents the blood of the bullock
And he²³⁷⁵ returns and stands
Before the Ark Cover
- 122 Once upward at its forehead²³⁷⁶
And seven times downward on its face²³⁷⁷
Counting the sprinkles
As he whips²³⁷⁸ the blood with his finger.
- 123 He walks over and places it on a Stand²³⁷⁹
And he slaughters the People's he-goat
And he returns and does with it
As he has done with the blood of the bullock²³⁸⁰

²³⁷² The Paytan turns the word **צד** into a third person past tense verb. **הצדיד**. This appears in **אתה כוננת** stanza 140, footnote 405] I translate it as 'turned right' following the discussion in footnote 350 above.

²³⁷³ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²³⁷⁴ Mishnah Yoma 5:3 speaks of an anonymous person who stirs the blood, diminishing the status of the priests. In **אתה כוננת** [stanza 142] and in **אזכיר גבורות** [stanza 214, footnote 705] Yosse ben Yosse refers to the stirrer as a "stirrer," not as a novice priest who stirs. Here the Paytan specifies that it is a novice priest, but it is not clear where he draws information from. In Num. 17:23 the staff of Aaron brings forth flowers, and in Mishnah Yoma 1:7 the narrative makes reference to novice priests, scions of Aaron, as **פרחי כהונה** which may explain the reference made in this particular stanza. The orthographic oddity of this Piyyut is once again noted whereas the Paytan writes **הממריס** instead of **הממרס**, adding a *yod*. The same occurs in the following lines with the word **הגיש** which becomes **היגיש**, and the word **נתייצב** which becomes **ניתייצב**. The verb **נתייצב** is written in Mishnaic Hebrew, rather than the Biblical form of **התייצב**.

²³⁷⁵ The High Priest.

²³⁷⁶ The order of the sprinkling of blood is mentioned in Lev. 16:14, and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3 The phrasing in this stanza is unique and appears only in this Piyyut, referring to the top of the Ark Cover as **מיצחה** meaning "her forehead" (with the customary extra *yod*).

²³⁷⁷ The phrasing here repeats the poetic reference to the Ark Cover as a human face. Mishnah Yoma 5:3 only mentions that the blood was sprinkled downward, as does Yosse ben Yosse in his accounts, but here the phrase is **למטה בפניה**, a singular such poetic expression in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre.

²³⁷⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

²³⁷⁹ The interesting orthography becomes problematic here. In the Piyyut **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 216 and in Mishnah Yoma 5:3 the stand is called **קן** [read as KAN]. The word **כאן** [also read as KAN] as it appears here ought to be translated as "here" because of the additional aleph. Such orthography appears in Neh. 13:16 where the word **דג** [fish] appears as **דאג** with the extra *aleph*.

²³⁸⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

- 124 He walks over and places it on a Stand²³⁸¹
 And replaces²³⁸² it with the blood of the bullock
 And he exits and stands²³⁸³
 Before the Ornamental Curtain.²³⁸⁴

עָקִיבֵי הַיְצִדִּיד וַיֵּצֵא לְאַחֹר וְשִׁוּוּעַ בְּהֵיכַל בְּקוֹצָר פֶּן יוֹבֵעַת עֵם.

פָּרַח הַמְּמָרִיס הִיגִישׁ דָּם פָּר וְשָׁב וְנִיתִי־יֵצֵב נוֹכַח הַכַּפּוֹרֶת

פָּעַם לְמַעַלָּה בְּמִיצְחָה וְשָׁבַע לְמַטָּה בְּפָנֶיהָ בְּמִסְפַּר הַזֵּיזוֹת בְּאַצְבַּע יְצִלְיָהּ.

צָעַד נִתְּנוּ בְּכַאן וְשָׁחַט שְׁעִיר עֵם וּבָא וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּמִשְׁפַּט דָּם פָּר

צָעַד וּנְתָנוּ בְּכֶן וְהִמִּירוּ בְּדָם פָּר וְחוּץ נִתְּיֵצֵב מוּל הַפְּרוֹכֶת.

²³⁸¹ Here the Paytan uses the more common orthography, spelling the word for Stand as כן [read KAN].

²³⁸² The yod-rich orthography is noted.

²³⁸³ The Mishnaic Hebrew form of the verb is noted.

²³⁸⁴ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

125 In the rhythm²³⁸⁵ of what he has done inside
 He does outside
 And he does the same with the blood of the he-goat
 And then he mixes them together at the end²³⁸⁶

126 He approaches the Altar²³⁸⁷
 Which is made of gold and cleanses it²³⁸⁸
 He squares²³⁸⁹ its corners
 And seven times for its sanctification.²³⁹⁰

And as he completed these tasks he approached the he-goat that was destined to be cast off, and he put both his hands on its head and confessed. And thus he would say: I beg of You...²³⁹¹

127 An experienced appointed man²³⁹²
 Pulls it²³⁹³ to cast it²³⁹⁴
 Laden with the People's sins²³⁹⁵
 And their transgressions²³⁹⁶

128 He offers the flesh of the bullock
 And of the he-goat and the incense²³⁹⁷
 And others²³⁹⁸ burn
 Their flesh²³⁹⁹ according to the directives²⁴⁰⁰

²³⁸⁵ The word קצב [read KETSEV] appears only once in the entire Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre, here.

²³⁸⁶ Mishnah Yoma 5:4 The phrase here is בעקב literally "at the heel," meaning "at the end," after Gen. 25:25; Gen. 27:36

²³⁸⁷ Referring to the Golden Altar, after Lev. 16:18.

²³⁸⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:5.

²³⁸⁹ He cleanses the four corners of the Altar.

²³⁹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:6.

²³⁹¹ Mishnah Yoma 6:2.

²³⁹² Lev. 16:21; Mishnah Yoma 6:3; See: אתה כוננת stanza 153, footnote 435; See: אזכיר גבורות stanza 222.

²³⁹³ The he-goat intended to be cast off in the desert.

²³⁹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 6:3.

²³⁹⁵ See: אתה כוננת stanza 153; Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 66:B.

²³⁹⁶ The yod-rich orthography is noted.

²³⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 6:7.

²³⁹⁸ The yod-rich orthography is noted.

²³⁹⁹ The Paytan uses an uncommon word for meat לחומם after Zeph. 1:17 It is the only such instance in the Yosse ben Yosse oeuvre.

²⁴⁰⁰ Lev. 16:27.

- 129 He sends the he-goat
 To the edge of the desert²⁴⁰¹
 And he reviews the order of the Day²⁴⁰²
 From the written text, by heart²⁴⁰³

קָצַב מַעֲשֵׂה פְּנִימָה עָשָׂה בַחוּץ וְכֵן בָּרַם שְׁעִיר וּבְלָלָם בְּעֶקֶב

קָרַב לְמִזְבֵּחַ זָהָב וְחֹטְאָו וְרִיבֵעַ קָרְנָיו וְשָׁבַע עַל טְהָרוֹ.

וככלותו בא לו אצל שעיר המשתליח וסמך שתי ידיו עליו ונתודה. וכך היה או' אנא
 השם.

רָגִיל וְעִיתִי מְשָׁכוֹ לְשִׁלְחוֹ עָמוּס עֲוֹנוֹת עִם וּפִישְׁעֵיהֶם

רָצוֹן חֲלָבֵי פֶרֶוֹ וְשְׁעִיר וְהִיקָטִיר וְיִשְׂרְפוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם לְחֹמֶם בְּמִיפְקָדוֹ.

שִׁלַּח שְׁעִיר לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר שִׁנָּן סִדְרֵי יוֹם בְּמִיכְתָּב, עַל פֶּה

²⁴⁰¹ Mishnah Yoma 6:5.

²⁴⁰² Mishnah Yoma 7:1.

²⁴⁰³ The High Priest reads Scripture from the written text. In this particular Piyyut the Paytan adds the פה recitation. It is not clear where he draws information from, but it may be related to the beginning of the Piyyut where the Paytan discusses the lack of erudition of the High Priest in stanza 86, footnote 282.

- 130 He makes eight benedictions²⁴⁰⁴
 And he sanctifies himself and disrobes²⁴⁰⁵
 And he bathes and he dons
 Eight Vestments and he makes a benediction.²⁴⁰⁶
- 131 He sacrifices the Mussaf offerings²⁴⁰⁷
 In their entirety and sanctifies himself²⁴⁰⁸
 And he bathes and he dons
 Linen clothes and he makes a benediction²⁴⁰⁹
- 132 He turns²⁴¹⁰ and enters
 And takes out the vessels of the incense
 And he sanctifies himself and disrobes²⁴¹¹
 And stows the linen clothes for safekeeping.²⁴¹²
- 133 He completes the full five
 Ablutions as directed
 And he bathes and he dons
 Eight vestments and makes benedictions²⁴¹³
- 134 He offers the evening sacrifice
 As he did before²⁴¹⁴
 And he burns the allotted incense²⁴¹⁵
 Between the sacrificed meat and the liquid libations.²⁴¹⁶

²⁴⁰⁴ Mishnah Yoma 7:1.

²⁴⁰⁵ In the “typical” Yosse ben Yosse narratives on the Avodah, much attention is paid to the various ablutions and wardrobe changes of the High Priest. This particular Piyyut uses uncharacteristic “short hand” narration regarding the ablutions and clothing of the High Priest.

²⁴⁰⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:3.

²⁴⁰⁷ Mishnah Yoma 7:3.

²⁴⁰⁸ The *yod*-rich orthography is noted.

²⁴⁰⁹ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴¹⁰ The phrase **תאר ליפנים**, aside from its *yod*-rich spelling, is singular, whereas the verb **תאר** does not appear elsewhere in Yosse ben Yosse’s work. Mirsky cites Joshua 15:9 where the word **תאר** is translated as “drawn” (drawing of an outline), [see: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי ק. 238, footnote 137], but this does not fit the context of the stanza or the Mishnaic narrative, which is why I disagree with Mirsky on this point. It appears to me that the word **תאר** as it is written here is based on the word **תאר** [read TAR], which is translated as “walked, moved, ambled” with an added *aleph*, as in stanza 123, footnote 364 above.

²⁴¹¹ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴¹² Lev. 16:23; Sifre **מות אחרי מות** 6:7 recounts that the fine linen vestments used by the High Priest on Yom Kippur were cached eternally and could not be subsequently reused. This account is absent from Mishnah Yoma 7:4 but appears in **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 230.

²⁴¹³ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴¹⁴ Sifre **מות אחרי מות** 6:5.

²⁴¹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴¹⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| שְׁמוֹנֶה בִּירָךְ | וְקִידֵשׁ וּפְשֵׁט | וְטָבֵל וְעָטָה | שְׁמוֹנֶה וְקִידֵשׁ. |
| תּוֹכֵן מוֹסְפֵי יוֹם | הֵיכָלִיל וְקִידֵשׁ | וְטָבֵל וְעָטָה | כְּלֵי בֵד וְקִידֵשׁ |
| תְּאֵר לִיפְנֵים | וְהוֹצִיא כְּלֵי קְטוֹרֶת | וְקִידֵשׁ וּפְשֵׁט | וְהִיכֵמִין כְּלֵי בֵד. |
| תְּכַלִּית חֲמֵשׁ | טְבִילוֹת הַיְשָׁלִים | וְטָבֵל וְעָטָה | שְׁמוֹנֶה וְקִידֵשׁ |
| תְּמִיד עֲרַב עֲשֵׂה | כְּחֹק הָרֵאשׁוֹן | וְהִקְטִיר פָּרֶס קְטוֹרֶת | בֵּין נְתָחִים לְנֶסֶךְ. |

135 The orders of the Avodah are done
 And he lights²⁴¹⁷ the oil lamps
 And makes a tenth benediction
 And disrobes of his golden vestments²⁴¹⁸

136 The attire of his wealth²⁴¹⁹
 Brought to him by his young coterie
 As he wears them and the dear ones²⁴²⁰ accompany him
 To his abode.²⁴²¹

137 Give us a sign²⁴²²
 They say in his ears
 How shall we know
 That our transgressions have been forgiven?²⁴²³

138 The cord of our hope
 From crimson is now white,
 The loyal emissary
 Responds to those who dispatched him.²⁴²⁴

²⁴¹⁷ Note the *yod*-rich spelling.

²⁴¹⁸ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴¹⁹ Meaning the High Priest's personal clothes. The word **הון** appears in Mishnah Yoma 3:8 referring to the bullock purchased by the High Priest, thus typing the end of the Avodah with its beginning rituals. The word **הון** also appears in the Piyyut **אספר גדולות** [stanza 44, footnote134]. The word **הון** appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible, denoting wealth and property. It never appears in the Mishnah and in other rabbinic texts it only appears in quotes from the bible [Tosefta, BT, PT, Mekhilta, Gen. Rabba, Exod. Rabba, Lev. Rabba, Numbers Rabba, Song of Solomon Rabba, Esther Rabba, and in Aggadic Midrashim] In the Qumran literature this word appears no less than 110 times [Abegg, Bowley and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, Vol. 1, The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003)].

²⁴²⁰ I translate **יקרים** as "elders"), based on the *Aramaic Targum* of Num. 24:11, where the Hebrew reads **כבד אכבדך** and the Aramaic reads **יקרא איקריןך** whereas the Hebrew root **כבד** parallels the Aramaic root **יקר** and both mean 'respect, honour,' and in the context of this stanza refers to "the respected elders."

²⁴²¹ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁴²² Exod. 7:9.

²⁴²³ This is an almost verbatim copy of the **אזכיר גבורות** text in stanza 239.

²⁴²⁴ Mishnah Yoma 6:8.

תָּמוּ הַעֲבוֹדוֹת וְהִבְעִיר נִירוֹת וְקִידֵשׁ עֲשִׂירִית וּפָשַׁט כְּלֵי פָז

תִּלְבוֹשֶׁת הוֹנוֹ צָעִירָיו הֶחִישׁוּ לְבָשָׁם וְלִיוֵהוּ יְקָרִים לְנֹוֹיָהוּ.

תָּן לָנוּ מוֹפֶת בְּאֶזְנוֹ יֵאמְרוּ בְּמָה נִדְעַ כִּי יִכּוּפֵר עוֹוֹן?

תִּיקוּנוֹת חוֹט שְׁנֵי הִלְבִּינָה, צִיר הַנְּאֻמָּן לְשׁוֹלְחָיו יְעוֹ.

אז בדעת חקר
IN THE BEGINNING HE SCRUTINIZED

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Genesis | 119 |
| Exodus | 12 |
| Leviticus | 27 |
| Numbers | 6 |
| Deuteronomy | 16 |
| Joshua | 4 |
| Judges | 1 |
| I Kings | 1 |
| II kings | 1 |
| I Samuel | 5 |
| II Samuel | 2 |
| Isaiah | 30 |
| Jeremiah | 10 |
| Ezekiel | 10 |
| Hosea | 2 |
| Joel | 2 |
| Amos | 3 |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | |
| Micah | 1 |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | 1 |
| Zephaniah | 3 |
| Haggai | |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Zechariah | 1 |
| Malachi | |
| Psalms | 47 |
| Proverbs | 20 |
| Job | 10 |
| Song of Songs | 2 |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | 2 |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Esther | 2 |
| Daniel | 4 |
| Ezra | 1 |
| Nehemiah | 3 |
| I Chronicles | 4 |
| II Chronicles | 2 |
| Genesis Rabba | 9 |
| Mishnah | 95 |
| PT | 5 |
| BT | 4 |
| Sifre | 4 |
| Tosefta | 1 |
| DSS | 1 |
| Josephus | 1 |
| | |

חסד ברוב עולם כוננת אתה – You Have Created the World with Compassion

TITLE: You Have Created the World with Compassion

אתה כוננת עולם ברוב חסד...

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Starts with Creation, leads to the Three Fathers, to introduce the Kohanim as a privileged caste charged with serving God at the Temple. Review of High Priest service [Avodah] on Yom Kippur.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 176
- **Acrostic system:** (א"ב x 4) x 2
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete, although ends abruptly.
- **Other:** --

NOTES: After the introduction of the Piyyut there are some readings from scripture and Mishnah. May be recited by the congregation.

חסד ברוב עולם כוננת אתה – You Have Created the World with Compassion

- 1 You have created the world²⁴²⁵
With great compassion²⁴²⁶
And with compassion it will conduct itself
Until the end of days.²⁴²⁷
- 2 The world will not falter²⁴²⁸
Because of its creatures' offence
And it will not stumble
Under the weight of sin and transgressions.
- 3 Even when the Earth was as yet
Desert and in deep darkness
With the light of faith You delighted²⁴²⁹
And it lay enchanted at Your feet²⁴³⁰
- 4 You intended to give it²⁴³¹
As a panacea²⁴³² for every human²⁴³³
Even before You created man
You had his Life²⁴³⁴ prepared.
- 5 You distinguished²⁴³⁵ the heavens
As Your dwelling place²⁴³⁶
And You made spacious the upper chambers²⁴³⁷
For Your Throne of Glory²⁴³⁸

²⁴²⁵ Psalm 119:100.

²⁴²⁶ Psalm 89:3.

²⁴²⁷ Daniel 12:13.

²⁴²⁸ Psalm 93:1; Psalm 104:5.

²⁴²⁹ Prov. 8:30; A reference to the Torah which had been written prior to Creation, after Gen. Rabbah 1:4.

²⁴³⁰ 1 Sam. 25:27.

²⁴³¹ The Torah.

²⁴³² Prov. 3:8.

²⁴³³ Psalm 19:8.

²⁴³⁴ A reference to the Torah, after Deut. 32:47.

²⁴³⁵ The Paytan uses the root **ברר** here, which has (i) A connotation of selecting, after Ezek. 20:38; 1 Chron. 16:41, and (ii) A sense of cleansing and purifying something, making it sacred, after Job 33:3; Eccles. 9:1; Zeph. 3:9.

²⁴³⁶ I Kings 8:39.

²⁴³⁷ Psalm 104:3.

²⁴³⁸ Isa. 63:1.

אתה כוננת עולם ברב חסד

אתה כוננת עולם ברב חסד ובו יתנהג עד קץ הימיו

אשר לא ימוט מעון יצורים ולא ימער מכבוד פשע וחטאים.

אדמה בעודה ציה וצלמות באור דת שעשעת ורגלה שחקה

אמרת לתתה מרפא לכל־אנוש טרם תפעלנו חיו הכינות.

בררת שחקים למכון שבתך ורוחת עליות לכס הדרריך

- 6 There You are ensconced²⁴³⁹
 No eye can behold You
 And from there Your eyes
 Scrutinize²⁴⁴⁰ all creatures.
- 7 You had wisely²⁴⁴¹ constructed²⁴⁴² a scaffold
 For the earth in the void²⁴⁴³
 To serve as Your footstall²⁴⁴⁴
 And to be the habitation of Your creations²⁴⁴⁵
- 8 Midst the void²⁴⁴⁶, and in tumult²⁴⁴⁷
 You suspended its foundations
 And when You pay heed
 The Earths very underpinnings tremble²⁴⁴⁸ in horror.
- 9 You drove out darkness
 And beckoned light
 You named them²⁴⁴⁹
 And set as law their measure
- 10 You set a boundary for them²⁴⁵⁰
 And You fractured²⁴⁵¹ them
 Lest they fail to obey Your Law²⁴⁵²
 And lest they change the order of things.

²⁴³⁹ Psalm 101:1.

²⁴⁴⁰ The Paytan describes this scrutiny by describing God's eyes roaming "to and fro," after I1 Chron. 16:9.

²⁴⁴¹ Prov. 3:19.

²⁴⁴² Psalm 104:3.

²⁴⁴³ Literally "on absence of matter," after Job 26:7.

²⁴⁴⁴ Isa. 66:1.

²⁴⁴⁵ Isa. 45:18.

²⁴⁴⁶ Here begins the account of Creation, with the First Day. Job 226:7.

²⁴⁴⁷ Job 9:6.

²⁴⁴⁸ Psalm 104:32.

²⁴⁴⁹ Gen. 1:5.

²⁴⁵⁰ The Second Day of Creation. Psalm 104:9; Gen. Rabba 3:6.

²⁴⁵¹ The Paytan uses the word פור which on the face of it would be translated as "lot" after Esther 3:7 or Esther 9:24 but in fact the word come from the root פּרר and pertains to a shattering, after Isa. 24:19 and Psalm 74:13.

²⁴⁵² Ezek. 16:27.

בַּם תִּסְתֵּר בְּלִי תִשׁוּרָה עֵינַי וּמִשֵּׁם עֵינַיִךָ מִשׁוֹטְטוֹת בְּכָל־פֶּעַל.

בְּנֵת לְקָרוֹת אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִי מָה לְהֵרוֹם רַגְלֶיךָ וּמוֹשֵׁב יְצוּרֶיךָ

בְּתֵהוּ וּבִסְעָרָה יְסוּדֶיךָ תְּלִית וְעַת תִּשְׁגִּיחַ בָּהּ עֲמוּדֶיךָ יִתְפַּלְצוּן.

גִּרְשֵׁת אוֹפֵל וַתִּקְרָא אוֹר בְּשֵׁם קִרְאתֶם וּבַמִּדָּה חִקְקֶתֶם

גְּבוּל לָהֶם שִׁמַּת וּפּוֹר בֵּינֹתֶם לְבַל יִגְרְעוּ חֹק וּבַל יִשְׁנוּ סֶדֶר.

- 11 You have trammed the firmament²⁴⁵³
 And therein concealed²⁴⁵⁴ half the waters²⁴⁵⁵
 And from their crop²⁴⁵⁶
 Clouds becloud
- 12 You have also kindled
 Brimstone²⁴⁵⁷ for your antagonists
 And from both fire and water
 You save your adherents.
- 13 The radiant image of the Earth
 You purposed²⁴⁵⁸ be unveiled²⁴⁵⁹
 You suppressed²⁴⁶⁰ the rest of the waters
 And gathered them in one place²⁴⁶¹
- 14 The grasses of the land²⁴⁶²
 Sprouted at Your command
 Grass and herbs yielding seed after their kind
 And a Garden of Eden²⁴⁶³ for those who dwell under Your protection.
- 15 Wind of Your mouth lit²⁴⁶⁴
 The torches in the firmament
 To reckon by them
 The ages and the times

²⁴⁵³ Gen. 1:7.

²⁴⁵⁴ The Paytan uses the verb **סמך** which pertains to hiding, secreting, sequestering, and concealing something, after Deut. 32:34.

²⁴⁵⁵ Gen. Rabba 4:4.

²⁴⁵⁶ Braita Tractate Ta'anit, Folio 10:A; Psalm 104:13.

²⁴⁵⁷ Isa. 30:33.

²⁴⁵⁸ The Third Day. Isa. 14:24.

²⁴⁵⁹ Gen. 1:9.

²⁴⁶⁰ The Paytan uses the verb **סכך** after Psalm 143:3 which suggests that this suppression involved a humbling and a crushing of something powerful.

²⁴⁶¹ Gen. 1:9.

²⁴⁶² Gen. 1:12.

²⁴⁶³ Gen. Rabba 11:9.

²⁴⁶⁴ The Fourth Day. Gen. 1:14.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| גְּדֵרֶת רְקִיעַ | וְכַמְסַת חֲצֵי מַיִם | וּמְפִירוֹתָם | עֲבִים יַחְשׁוּרוּ |
| גַּם מְדוּרַת אֵשׁ | לְשׁוֹנָאֵיהֶּ הַסִּקָּת | וּמֵאֵשׁ וּמַמִּים | אוֹהֲבֵיהֶּ תְּצִיל. |
| דְּמוֹת זֵיו אֲדָמָה | יַעֲצֵת לְגִלּוֹת | דְּכִיתָ שְׁאֵר מַיִם | צָרְרָתָם בְּמִקְוֵה |
| דְּשֵׁאי אֶרֶץ | צָצוּ בְּמֵאמְרֵיהֶּ | דְּשֵׁא עֵשֶׁב מְזֹרִיעַ זֶרַע | וְגַן עֵדֶן לְחֹסֶיהֶּ. |
| דְּלִקוֹ בְּרוּחַ פִּיהֶּ | נְרוֹת רְקִיעַ | לְהַפְקֹד בָּם | תְּקוּפוֹת וְעֵתִים |

- 16 Through windows²⁴⁶⁵
 You instructed them
 This for the day and that for the night
 Lest their strides²⁴⁶⁶ tarry.
- 17 From water You spawned²⁴⁶⁷
 Creatures of wing
 And multitudes of fish
 And mighty sea creatures
- 18 You indicated for those who know You²⁴⁶⁸
 The scale covered fish²⁴⁶⁹
 And the leviathan serpent²⁴⁷⁰
 For the Meal of Eternity.²⁴⁷¹
- 19 From the very soil²⁴⁷²
 You created multitudes²⁴⁷³
 Beasts and crawling creatures
 And the animals of the Earth
- 20 You instructed the signs
 Of the pure ones to be eaten²⁴⁷⁴
 And for the commonwealth of the just
 You made Kosher certain beasts.²⁴⁷⁵

²⁴⁶⁵ Exod. Rabba 15:22.

²⁴⁶⁶ Judges 5:28 [the theme of windows appears in both the stanza and its source].

²⁴⁶⁷ The Fifth Day. Gen. 1:20-21.

²⁴⁶⁸ Exod. 6:7.

²⁴⁶⁹ Deut. 14:9.

²⁴⁷⁰ Isa. 27:1.

²⁴⁷¹ Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra, Folio 4:B.

²⁴⁷² The Sixth Day. Gen. 1:24.

²⁴⁷³ The Paytan uses the word **העדפת** which in Modern Hebrew connotes a preference for something, but in Biblical Hebrew indicates a surplus, after Exod. 16:23; Num. 2:46.

²⁴⁷⁴ Deut. 14:6.

²⁴⁷⁵ Deut. 14:4.

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| לְכַל יֵאָחֲרוּ פְעַם. | זֶה בַּיּוֹם וְזֶה בַּלַּיְלָה | לָהֶם הוֹרִיתִי | דֶּרֶךְ חֲלוֹנוֹת |
| וְתוֹקֶף תְּנִינִים | צְבָאוֹת דְּגִים | מְעוֹפְפֵי כָנָף | הַשְּׂרֻצָּת מִמֵּיִם |
| לְאַרוּחַת נְצַח. | וְנָחַשׁ בְּרִיתִי | עֲטוּיֵי קִשְׁקֶשֶׁת | הַתּוֹיֵת לְיוֹדְעֵיהֶן |
| וְחַיֵּיתוֹ אֶרֶץ | בְּהֵמָה וְרֶמֶשׁ | לְרֹב הָעֵדֻפֹּת | הֵלֹא מֵאֲדָמָה |
| בְּהֵמוֹת הַכְּשָׁרֹת. | וְלַחֲבוּרַת צֶדֶק | מֵאֲכָל לְטֹהֲרָה | הוֹדְעַת סִימְנֵי |

- 21 And as the world was constructed
 In wisdom,²⁴⁷⁶
 And Your table set with satisfaction²⁴⁷⁷
 And bounty
- 22 And You laboured
 To invite a guest²⁴⁷⁸
 And feed him
 Of Your bounty.
- 23 And to have him rule²⁴⁷⁹
 Over the creatures of Your hand
 To be like a god²⁴⁸⁰
 To control and to govern²⁴⁸¹
- 24 And to wrestle with an angel,²⁴⁸²
 And to tear open²⁴⁸³ the sea,²⁴⁸⁴
 To make the heavenly lights stand,²⁴⁸⁵
 And to revive the dead.²⁴⁸⁶
- 25 You fashioned his body
 From clay²⁴⁸⁷ that You had gathered²⁴⁸⁸
 And You adroitly embroidered his innards²⁴⁸⁹
 In the figure of Your image²⁴⁹⁰

²⁴⁷⁶ Psalm 104:24; Prov. 24:3.

²⁴⁷⁷ Job 36:16.

²⁴⁷⁸ A reference to Man.

²⁴⁷⁹ Gen. 1:28.

²⁴⁸⁰ Gen. 3:5.

²⁴⁸¹ Prov. 6:7.

²⁴⁸² Referring to Jacob, after Gen. 32:29.

²⁴⁸³ A reference to the Red Sea which Moses had cleaved, after Exod. 14:5-28.

²⁴⁸⁴ Isa. 40:12.

²⁴⁸⁵ A reference to Joshua who conquered the Land of Israel miraculously, whereas even the sun and the moon assisted, after Joshua 10:12.

²⁴⁸⁶ A reference to Jeremiah, who revived a child, after I Kings 17:22; and to Elisha who revived the Shunammite's son, after 2 Kings 4:35.

²⁴⁸⁷ Gen. 2:7.

²⁴⁸⁸ Job 33:6.

²⁴⁸⁹ Psalm 139:15.

²⁴⁹⁰ Gen. 1:26-27.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| וּבְהַבְנוֹת | עוֹלָם בְּחִכְמָה, | וּבְהַעֲרֹף נַחַת | שְׁלַחַן וְדֶשֶׁן |
| וְתִשְׁקֹד | לְהַזְמִין אוֹרַחַ | וּלְהַאֲכִילוֹ | טוֹב מֵאֲכָלָהּ. |
| וּלְהַרְדוֹתוֹ | בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָהּ | הֵיּוֹת כְּאֱלֹהִים | שׁוֹטֵר וּמוֹשֵׁל |
| וְלִשׁוֹר אֶל מִלְאָךְ, | וְלִקְרוֹעַ מִי שׁוֹעַל, | לְהַדְמִים מְאוֹרוֹת, | וּלְהַחֲיוֹת רְדוּמִים. |
| זְכוֹרֹן גּוֹלְמוֹ | מִחוּמֵר קוֹרֶצֶת | רִקְמָתוֹ בְּסִתֵּר | בְּצֶלֶם חַזְיוֹנִיָּה |

- 26 The glow of a candle, a soul,²⁴⁹¹
 You set at his core
 To reside in the depths
 Of the dark chambers of his heart.
- 27 You endowed²⁴⁹² him with a resplendent one,²⁴⁹³
 Under the canopy of Eden,
 And with gold and with gemstones²⁴⁹⁴
 You made his abode more beautiful
- 28 You filled him²⁴⁹⁵
 With the spirit of insight²⁴⁹⁶
 To name every creature²⁴⁹⁷
 And all Your creations.
- 29 Ever-Living²⁴⁹⁸
 You wanted to test him
 With an easy decree²⁴⁹⁹
 To see if he can heed it
- 30 Refrain from the Tree of Knowledge
 Lest you falter
 But from the fruit bearing trees
 Have your fill.²⁵⁰⁰
- 31 You saw that he was solitary²⁵⁰¹
 And You said: I shall make a help meet for him,
 If he stray from the path
 She will be a stumbling block unto him²⁵⁰²

²⁴⁹¹ Prov. 20:27.

²⁴⁹² Gen. 30:20.

²⁴⁹³ A reference to Eve, Adam's wife, after Psalm 45:14.

²⁴⁹⁴ Ezek. 28:13.

²⁴⁹⁵ A reference to Adam.

²⁴⁹⁶ Prov. 20:5.

²⁴⁹⁷ Gen. 2:20.

²⁴⁹⁸ An epithet for God, after Daniel 12:7.

²⁴⁹⁹ A reference to the decree that Adam not eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, after Gen. 2:17.

²⁵⁰⁰ Gen. 2:16.

²⁵⁰¹ Gen. 2:18.

²⁵⁰² Gen. Rabba 17:3.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| זָהָר נֵר נְשָׁמָה | בְּגוֹו עֲרֹכֶת | כִּי הִיא תַחֲפֵשׂ | חֲשָׁכֵי חֲדָרָיו. |
| זְבֻדְתּוֹ כְּבוֹדָה, | בְּתוֹךְ חוֹפֵת עֵדוֹ | בְּפִז וְאַבֵּן יִקְרָה | יִצוּעוּ יִפִּית |
| זֶה מְלֵאתוֹ | רוּחַ תְּבוּנָה | לְכֹלֵל שְׁמוֹת | לְכֹל מִפְעָלָיָהּ. |
| חֵי עוֹלָמִים | לְבַחְנוּ רְצִית | בְּמִצּוֹה קְלָה | אִם יוּכַל קוּם |
| חֲדַל מֵעֵז הַדַּעַת | פֶּן תִּנְקֶשׂ | וּמַעְצֵי תְנוּבָה | תִּמְלֵא בְטָנָהּ. |
| חֲזִיתוֹ לְבַד | וְשַׁחַת: אַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ עֵזר, | אִם יִסְלַף אוֹרַח | תְּהִי לוֹ לְמִכְשׁוֹל |

- 32 A hasty sleep²⁵⁰³
 You sweetened upon him
 And You cleaved²⁵⁰⁴ his rib
 And from it You fashioned flesh.
- 33 You nurtured her²⁵⁰⁵ with grace
 And beautified her with kindness
 And brought them²⁵⁰⁶ under the marriage canopy²⁵⁰⁷
 And You graced them with Your blessings;²⁵⁰⁸
- 34 To make a mistake borne of falsehood
 A reptile seduced her²⁵⁰⁹
 And pulled her like a beast to the slaughter²⁵¹⁰
 To disobey a command.
- 35 They were warned not to eat²⁵¹¹ of the fruit²⁵¹²
 But she englutted²⁵¹³ herself and her mate²⁵¹⁴
 And they were stripped naked by their villainy
 And were covered by a wilting leaf²⁵¹⁵

²⁵⁰³ Gen. 2:21.

²⁵⁰⁴ The Paytan uses the root **צל** which refers to a removal of something in order to imbue it with spiritual qualities and grant it to another, after Num. 11:17; Num. 11:25; Gen. 26:36.

²⁵⁰⁵ A reference to Eve.

²⁵⁰⁶ A reference to Adam and Eve.

²⁵⁰⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Niddah, Folio 45:B.

²⁵⁰⁸ Gen. 1:28.

²⁵⁰⁹ Gen. 3:1-4.

²⁵¹⁰ Isa. 53:7; Prov. 7:22.

²⁵¹¹ The Paytan write טעם which in many cases can mean "to taste," but here refers to the act of eating, after Jonah 3:7.

²⁵¹² Gen. 2:17.

²⁵¹³ The root לעט refers to eating gluttonously, after Gen. 25:30.

²⁵¹⁴ Gen. 3:3:6.

²⁵¹⁵ Gen. 3:7 The Paytan displays a wortspleie here, using the root **נבל** to denote both villainy, after Deut. 32:6, and **נבל** to denote wilting of a fig leaf, after Isa. 34:4, suggesting the fig leaf with which Adam and Eve covered their nakedness was a fragile, vain measure, after Exod. 18:18 [vanity and villainy].

חֲטִיפַת שִׁינָה עָלְיוֹ הַמִּתְקָתָ צָלַע אֲצִלָּתָ וּבָשָׂר כּוֹנְנָתָ.

טַפְחָתָהּ בְּחֶן יִפִּיתָהּ בְּחֶסֶד הִבֵּאתֶם בְּחוֹפָהּ חֲנִנְתֶּם בְּרֻכּוֹת;

טְעוֹת כָּזָב רָמַשׁ הַשִּׂיאָה מִשְׁכָּה כְּשׁוֹר לְטַבַּח לְהִנְיָא צוּוּי.

טַעַם פְּרִי הַזֶּהָרוֹ לְעֵטָה וְהַלְעִיטָה הוֹעֲרָמוּ בְּנִבְלֹת וְכּוֹסוּ בְּנוֹבְלָת

- 36 The paces²⁵¹⁶ were driven²⁵¹⁷ away
 From the one with the tongue²⁵¹⁸
 And his fare was transmuted
 Never to be repaired.²⁵¹⁹
- 37 He will be hated²⁵²⁰ with loathing
 And have his head crushed,
 And he will chafe the heels²⁵²¹
 Of those who use their tongues²⁵²² surreptitiously²⁵²³
- 38 His²⁵²⁴ sentence of mortality was pronounced
 To toil in endeavour,
 And she²⁵²⁵ was sentenced to hardship in labour,
 And the infertile land²⁵²⁶ was cursed to harden.²⁵²⁷
- 39 His²⁵²⁸ nature was inured
 To lust after fornication²⁵²⁹
 And she sent forth her young ones²⁵³⁰
 A farmer²⁵³¹ and a shepherd²⁵³²

²⁵¹⁶ Isa. 26:6.

²⁵¹⁷ The root **טוד** can be understood as (i) driven away, after Daniel 4:22; or (ii) as busy, preoccupies, after Prov. 27:15. In my reading of the Piyyut, the first interpretation is more accurate, given Gen. 3:14.

²⁵¹⁸ A reference to the Snake, after Eccles. 10:11; Psalm 140:12.

²⁵¹⁹ Gen. 3:14.

²⁵²⁰ The Paytan uses the word **יושטן** derived from **משטמה**, extreme hatred, to refer to the eternal antagonism between Man and Snake, after Gen. 3:15.

²⁵²¹ Gen. 3:15.

²⁵²² The Paytan plays on the word **לשון**, tongue, and turns it into a verb in the third person plural form of **מלשנים**. The *niqud* vocalization marks here are important. It is not MALSHINEY, those who betray others, but MELASHNEY, those who use their tongue for evil. It is an interesting wortspiele.

²⁵²³ Psalm 101:5.

²⁵²⁴ The decree against Man.

²⁵²⁵ A reference to Eve, as Woman.

²⁵²⁶ The word **ציה** refers to the desert, a desolate, barren earth whose cultivation is challenging and effortful, after Jer.

51:43.

²⁵²⁷ Gen. 3:16-19.

²⁵²⁸ A reference to the male of the species of humans.

²⁵²⁹ The verb **רבע** insinuates fornication that is unfettered by moral guidance, after Lev. 20:16.

²⁵³⁰ The Paytan uses the word **עויליה** derived from the word **עול ימים** which refers to an infant or a young person, after Isa.

65:20.

²⁵³¹ A reference to Cain, after Gen. 4:2.

²⁵³² A reference to Abel, after Gen. 4:2.

טוֹרְדוּ פְּעָמַי בְּעַל הַלְשׁוֹן וְנִהַפְּףָּ מֵאֲכָלוֹ לְכַל יִרְפָּא נְצַח.

יֹשֶׁטֶן בְּאִיבָה לְהִרְצִץ בְּרֹאשׁ, וְהוּא יְשׁוּף עֵקֶב לְמִלְשָׁנִי בַסֶּתֶר

יָצָא דִין לַמּוֹת וַיִּגִּיעַת עָמֶל, וְהִיא לְקוֹשֵׁי לִידָה, וְצִיָּה לְשֹׁמֵר.

יָצְרוּ הַוּרְגָל לְתַאֲוֹת רַבְעוּ וְשִׁלְחָה צוּיְלִיָּה עוֹבֵד וְרוֹעָה

- 40 They wished to honour²⁵³³ with offerings
 The Creator of all²⁵³⁴
 The older one with the fruit of the land²⁵³⁵
 And the young one with suckling lambs.²⁵³⁶
- 41 As You gazed, oh Lofty One,²⁵³⁷
 On the humility of the feeble one²⁵³⁸
 You accepted his offering
 And snubbed the aroma of his brother's²⁵³⁹ offering²⁵⁴⁰
- 42 And he²⁵⁴¹ extinguished²⁵⁴² his mercy
 And did not control his urge
 And he killed one who was created in God's image²⁵⁴³
 And began the spilling of blood.²⁵⁴⁴
- 43 As You heard, impetrating,
 The voice of the crying blood²⁵⁴⁵
 And You punished him²⁵⁴⁶ with being a fugitive and a wanderer
 And with futile toil and vanity²⁵⁴⁷
- 44 When he²⁵⁴⁸ confessed,²⁵⁴⁹
 You marked him with a sign,
 To mete upon anyone who slays him
 Sevenfold vengeance, in retribution.²⁵⁵⁰

²⁵³³ Honour someone precious, after Isa. 43:4; Isa. 13:12; 1 Sam. 26:21.

²⁵³⁴ Jer. 10:16; Jer. 51:19.

²⁵³⁵ A reference to Cain's offering, after Gen. 4:3.

²⁵³⁶ A reference to Abel's offering, after Gen. 4:4.

²⁵³⁷ Psalm 138:6.

²⁵³⁸ A reference to Abel.

²⁵³⁹ A reference to Cain.

²⁵⁴⁰ Gen. 4:4-5.

²⁵⁴¹ A reference to Cain.

²⁵⁴² Isa. 43:17.

²⁵⁴³ A reference to Abel, an individual who epitomizes all humans.

²⁵⁴⁴ The murder of Abel marked the beginning of all bloodshed, after Esther Rabba, Petichta 10.

²⁵⁴⁵ Gen. 4:10.

²⁵⁴⁶ A reference to Cain.

²⁵⁴⁷ Gen. 4:12.

²⁵⁴⁸ Cain.

²⁵⁴⁹ Gen. 4:13.

²⁵⁵⁰ Gen. 4:15.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| יָקָרוּ בְּמִנְחָה | לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל | רַב בְּפִרְי הָאָרֶץ | וְרַף בְּחֻלְבֵי צֹאן. |
| כְּהִיטָה, רֵם, | דְּכֹאוֹת שָׁפֵל | שְׁעִית מִנְחָתוֹ | וְקִצְתָּ בְּנִיחֹחַ אָח |
| כָּפָה רַחֲמָיו | וְלֹא כִבֵּשׂ יֵצֵר | שָׁלַח יָד בְּצֹלָם | הַחֵל שְׁפוּף דָּם. |
| כְּשִׁמְעָה, דוֹרֵשׁ, | קוֹל זַעֲקַת דָּם | עֲנֵשְׁתוּ בְּנֵעַ וְנָד | וַיִּגִיעַת רִיק וְהֶבֶל |
| כְּהַתְּנֻדוֹתוֹ, | אוֹת לוֹ חֲקוֹת, | לְהָשִׁיב לְהוֹרְגוֹ | נָקָם שְׂבָעֵתַיִם. |

- 45 They strove to annoy You, God,
The generation of Enosh²⁵⁵¹
Who began to supplant Your Glory
And to call upon the name of an idol
- 46 Just as You put the sand to bound the sea²⁵⁵²
You gave the Law to be followed and not to be abrogated
And You called upon it²⁵⁵³
As a measure for measure for their uttering another name.²⁵⁵⁴
- 47 They learned to offend
Full of evil they were²⁵⁵⁵
They grew fat and became self assured²⁵⁵⁶
And they said to God- be gone²⁵⁵⁷
- 48 Therefore You rebuked²⁵⁵⁸ them²⁵⁵⁹
With the brooks of the deep²⁵⁶⁰
And a river-full of water²⁵⁶¹
You poured upon them.
- 49 From amongst them²⁵⁶² You found
A righteous and whole-hearted man²⁵⁶³
And You ensconced him²⁵⁶⁴ in a protective vessel²⁵⁶⁵
Until the wrath had abated²⁵⁶⁶

²⁵⁵¹ Gen. 4:26.

²⁵⁵² Jer. 5:22.

²⁵⁵³ A reference to the sea, the water of the flood that annihilated the sinners, after Amos 5:8.

²⁵⁵⁴ Gen. Rabba 23:7.

²⁵⁵⁵ Gen. 6:11.

²⁵⁵⁶ Jer. 5:28.

²⁵⁵⁷ Job 21:14.

²⁵⁵⁸ The root **בַּיַר** denotes indignation, after Isa. 66:14, and a curse, after Num. 23:8. I conflated both meanings into the word "rebuke."

²⁵⁵⁹ The generation of the Flood.

²⁵⁶⁰ Gen. 7:11.

²⁵⁶¹ Psalm 65:10.

²⁵⁶² Gen. 6:9.

²⁵⁶³ A reference to Noah, after Gen. 7:1.

²⁵⁶⁴ Psalm 27:5.

²⁵⁶⁵ A reference to the ark, after Gen. 7:1.

²⁵⁶⁶ Isa. 26:20; Gen. 8:1.

לְהַכְעִיֶסְהָ, אֵל, הַחַל דּוֹר אָנוֹשׁ לְהַמִּיר כְּבוֹדָךְ וּלְקַרֵּא בְשֵׁם אֱלִיל

לַיָּם חוֹל שְׁמַתָּ חֵק לֹא יַעֲבוֹר קְרֵאתוֹ לְאַבְדָּם תִּמְוֹר קְרָאוּ בְשֵׁם.

לְמַדּוֹ הַעֲוֶה מְלֵאֵי חָמַס שְׁמַנּוֹ עָשְׂתוּ וְאָמְרוּ לְאֵל סוֹר

לְכֹן וְעַמְתָּם בְּמַעֲיִנוֹת תְּהוֹם וּפְלֶג מְלֵא מַיִם עָלֵיהֶם שְׁפָכְתָּ.

מֵהֶם מְצֵאתָ צְדִיק תָּמִים צַפְנָתוֹ בְּסוֹכָה עַד יַעֲבוֹר זַעַם

- 50 From him²⁵⁶⁷ You made legion
 The families of every created being²⁵⁶⁸
 And having found consolation in him²⁵⁶⁹
 You said, I shall damn them no more.
- 51 They rebelled against Your Name
 Those inhabitants of Shinar²⁵⁷⁰
 And they sought to rise above Your Throne²⁵⁷¹
 And there make a name for themselves²⁵⁷²
- 52 You made their wishes come true
 By mocking them²⁵⁷³
 And You dispersed them to all the winds²⁵⁷⁴
 And You garbling their language.²⁵⁷⁵
- 53 A candle in the darkness
 The Father of a Multitude²⁵⁷⁶ was renowned
 And to the spark of his fire²⁵⁷⁷
 The stumbling ones²⁵⁷⁸ had ran
- 54 The path of righteousness
 He instructed to those who were lost²⁵⁷⁹
 Lean in faith on the Ever living God
 How can a statue benefit you.

²⁵⁶⁷ A reference to Noah's descendents.

²⁵⁶⁸ Gen. 9:19.

²⁵⁶⁹ Gen. 8:21.

²⁵⁷⁰ Gen. 11:2.

²⁵⁷¹ A reference to the Tower of Babel.

²⁵⁷² Gen. 11:4.

²⁵⁷³ Psalm 2:4.

²⁵⁷⁴ Gen. 11:9.

²⁵⁷⁵ Gen. 11:7.

²⁵⁷⁶ An epithet for Abraham, after Gen. 22:17; Gen. 17:5.

²⁵⁷⁷ Job 18:5.

²⁵⁷⁸ A reference to idol worshippers, after Ezek. 14:3.

²⁵⁷⁹ Gen. Rabba 39:11.

מִמֶּנּוּ הֶעֱצַמְתָּ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת כָּל יִצִיר וּבִהֲנַחְמָהּ בּו לֹא אֶקְלֵל, שְׁחַתָּ.

מָרוּ בְשִׁמָּה יוֹשְׁבֵי שְׁנָעַר לְרוֹם עַד כֶּס וְלַעֲשׂוֹת לְמוֹ שֵׁם

מִלֵּאתָ חֶפְצִים בְּהִלְעִיגָה לְמוֹ נִפְצַתֶם בְּכָל־רוּחַ בְּסִלְפָּה לְשׁוֹנָם.

גַּר עָרוּךְ בְּתֵהוּ אָב הַמּוֹן נוֹדַע וְלִשְׁבִיב אֲשׁוּ רָצוּ נִכְשָׁלִים

נָתִיב מִיִּשְׁרָיִם הוֹדִיעַ לְתוֹעִים הִשְׁעֲנוּ בְּאֵל חַי וּמֵה־יּוֹעִיל פָּסַל.

- 55 He²⁵⁸⁰ left his abode²⁵⁸¹
 And was drawn unto You
 And You were there with him
 In fire²⁵⁸² and war²⁵⁸³
- 56 He wallowed²⁵⁸⁴ in the blood of the covenant²⁵⁸⁵
 And his progeny after him too
 Because it²⁵⁸⁶ shall save
 Those who bear His mark²⁵⁸⁷, from evil.²⁵⁸⁸
- 57 You made him rejoice
 With the Fruit of Mirth²⁵⁸⁹
 Even as he said: I have been made wretched
 And my roots have withered²⁵⁹⁰
- 58 Like a hero he²⁵⁹¹ bore the burden
 Of weighty trials²⁵⁹²
 Even to slaughter his one and only²⁵⁹³
 You tested him, and he persevered
- 59 The father rejoiced in binding²⁵⁹⁴
 And the son rejoiced in being bound²⁵⁹⁵
 And because of this binding they are considered just
 Those who shoulder His law²⁵⁹⁶ and His reproach

²⁵⁸⁰ A reference to Abraham, who had set forth from his homeland to Canaan, at God's command.

²⁵⁸¹ Gen. 12:1-4.

²⁵⁸² Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pssachim, Folio 118:A.

²⁵⁸³ Gen. 14.

²⁵⁸⁴ Ezek. 16:6.

²⁵⁸⁵ A reference to Abraham's circumcision, after Gen. 17:26.

²⁵⁸⁶ A reference to the covenantal circumcision rite.

²⁵⁸⁷ Isa. 46:3.

²⁵⁸⁸ Exod. Rabba 19:4.

²⁵⁸⁹ A reference to Isaac, after Gen. 21:6.

²⁵⁹⁰ Gen. 17:17.

²⁵⁹¹ Abraham.

²⁵⁹² Abraham was tested in ten ever-more-challenging trials, the **עקדה** – the binding of Isaac, was the tenth, he most difficult test of his faith.

²⁵⁹³ Gen. 22:2.

²⁵⁹⁴ Gen. Rabba 56:8.

²⁵⁹⁵ Gen. 22:8.

²⁵⁹⁶ A reference to Israel, after Isa. 46:3.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| בָּאֵשׁ וּבַמִּלְחָמָה | וְנִמְצְאָתָ לּוֹ | וְנִמְשָׁה אַחֲרֶיהָ | נָטַשׁ מְגוּרָיו |
| עָמוּסִיו מִשְׁחַת. | כִּי הִיא תִצֵּיל | וְזָרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו | נִתְבוֹסֵס בְּדָם בְּרִית |
| וַיִּבְשׁוּ שְׂרָשֵׁי | בְּאִמְרוֹ: אֹמְלֵלָתִי | בְּפָרִי שְׁעִשׂוּעִים | שִׁמְחָתוֹ |
| בְּחִנְתּוֹ, וְעָמַד. | וּבִיחִידוֹ לְטְבוֹחַ | כְּכֹד נִסְיוֹנוֹת | סָבַל כְּגִבּוֹר |
| עָמוּסִיו בְּתוֹכָהּ | כִּי בָהּ יִצְדָּקוּ | וּבֵן לְהֵעָקֹד | שֵׁשׁ אָב לְעֵקוֹד |

60 You found a ram in his²⁵⁹⁷ stead²⁵⁹⁸
 But the deed was counted as his²⁵⁹⁹ merit,
 On this Day²⁶⁰⁰ we will hear You say:
 I found a ransom in your stead.²⁶⁰¹

As it is written in Your Torah:

“And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-Yireh; as it is said to this day: ‘In the mount where the LORD is seen.’”²⁶⁰²

61 Even before You inscribed
 Your Law with fire in Your right hand²⁶⁰³
 The Impeccable one²⁶⁰⁴
 Guarded its gates²⁶⁰⁵

62 Then You made him²⁶⁰⁶ sleep in the lodging place²⁶⁰⁷
 Where he found You²⁶⁰⁸
 And You vowed, promising him
 To be his mighty fortress.²⁶⁰⁹

63 You sheltered him²⁶¹⁰
 From the sword of his pursuer²⁶¹¹
 And a fiery angel
 You weakened before him²⁶¹²

²⁵⁹⁷ A reference to Isaac who was bound to be sacrificed in a faith-full offering to God.

²⁵⁹⁸ Gen. 22:13.

²⁵⁹⁹ A reference to Isaac.

²⁶⁰⁰ A reference to the Day of Atonement.

²⁶⁰¹ Job 33:24; The word “ransom” is **כֹּפֶר**, meaning a covering of something, like the coating of Noah’s ark, after Gen. 6:14. It thus means a ransom, or a payment in the stead of a person. The root **כֹּפֶר** is transformed into the name for the Day of Atonement, **יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים** in which God covers up the sins of Israel who repent, and Israel through prayer and fasting “pay” the ransom for their sins and are thus saved from God’s wrath.

²⁶⁰² Gen. 22:14.

²⁶⁰³ Deut. 33:2.

²⁶⁰⁴ An epithet for Jacob, after Gen. 25:27.

²⁶⁰⁵ Prov. 8:34.

²⁶⁰⁶ A reference to Jacob.

²⁶⁰⁷ Exod. 4:24; Referring to bet El, where Jacob slept, on his journey from the Land of Israel to Aram, after Gen. 28:11-15.

²⁶⁰⁸ Hosea 12:5.

²⁶⁰⁹ Psalm 9:10; Gen. 28:15.

²⁶¹⁰ A reference to Jacob.

²⁶¹¹ A reference to Esau who pursued Jacob with ill intent, After Amos 1:11.

²⁶¹² A reference to Jacob’s encounter with the angel, after Gen. 32:25-29.

שְׁמַתָּ כָּפְרוּ אֵיל וְנַחֲשֵׁב לוֹ צָדֵק, בְּיוֹם זֶה נִקְשִׁיב: מִצָּאֲתֵי כּוֹפֵר.

ככתוב בתורתך ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא יי יראה אשר יאמר היום בהר יי יראה.

עַד לֹא הוֹרֵת דַּת אֵשׁ מִיַּמִּין נִצְרָה אִישׁ תָּם וְשָׁקֵד דְּלִתִּיהָ

עַת הִרְדַּמְתוּ בְּמִלּוֹן שָׁם מִצָּאֵךְ וְתִבְטִיחֻמוּ הֵיחֵת לוֹ לְמִשְׁגָּב.

עָלְיוֹ סִכּוֹת מִחָרֵב רוֹדֵף וְשָׂר אֵשׁ לוֹהֵט לְפָנָיו הַחֲלֵשֶׁת

- 64 You adorned²⁶¹³ him
 With a number of Tribal Standards²⁶¹⁴
 And like coins, as numerous as the waters in the seas²⁶¹⁵
 You made numerous his congregations.²⁶¹⁶
- 65 One of the blossoms²⁶¹⁷ of Your tribes²⁶¹⁸
 You made him as a tithe²⁶¹⁹, to serve You²⁶²⁰
 For in payment he²⁶²¹ offered You at tithe
 Of his fortune, at the site of the pillar.²⁶²²
- 66 The Righteous Fruit²⁶²³ You made grow
 From the staff of Levi:
 Amram and his descendants²⁶²⁴
 Like a vine²⁶²⁵ and its branches.²⁶²⁶
- 67 You remembered Your flock²⁶²⁷
 In the hands of the Faithful one²⁶²⁸
 To extract it²⁶²⁹ from Zoan²⁶³⁰
 And to have it traverse the waters of the sea²⁶³¹

²⁶¹³ Prov. 17:6.

²⁶¹⁴ A reference to the twelve tribes that hailed from Jacob.

²⁶¹⁵ Isa. 48:19.

²⁶¹⁶ Gen. 28:14; Psalm 22:23.

²⁶¹⁷ A reference to one of the sons of Jacob, after Job 30:12; Num. 17:23.

²⁶¹⁸ Psalm 122:4.

²⁶¹⁹ Gen. 28:22.

²⁶²⁰ A reference to Levi whose scions serve God as Levites and Priests.

²⁶²¹ A reference to Jacob.

²⁶²² A reference to the memorial pillar erected by Jacob at Bet-El, after Gen. 28:18.

²⁶²³ Prov. 11:30.

²⁶²⁴ The Paytan uses the word **דניני** which in Modern Hebrew means "great grandchildren," but here refers to the descendents of several generations, after Gen. 21:23.

²⁶²⁵ A reference to Aaron, Miriam, and Moses, after Gen. 40:10.

²⁶²⁶ Joel 1:7.

²⁶²⁷ Ezek. 34:17; Exod. 3:15-16.

²⁶²⁸ A reference to Moses, after Num. 12:7.

²⁶²⁹ The people of Israel, God's flock.

²⁶³⁰ Another name for Egypt, after Num. 13:22.

²⁶³¹ A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea, after Isa. 40:12; Exod. 14:24.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| עֲטָרְתּוֹ | בְּמִסְפַּר דָּגָלִים | וְכַמְעוֹת יָמִים | קָהָלָיו הִרְבֵּתָּ. |
| פָּרַח מִשְׁבֵּטָךָ | לְשָׂרְתֶךָ עֲשֵׂרְתָּ | תִּמְוֹר עֲשָׂרוּ לָךְ | הוֹנוּ בְּמִצְבֹּת |
| פְּרֵי צְדִיק הַצְּמִחָתָּ | מִגֹּזַע לִוִּי: | עֲמָרִם וְנִינְיֹו | כְּגִפְזוֹ וְשָׂרִיגֵיהָ. |
| פְּקֻדֹת צִאֲנֶךָ | בְּיַד נֶאֱמָן | לְחֻלְצָה מְצוּעָן | וּלְהַעֲבִירָהּ בְּמִי שׁוֹעֵל |

- 68 You adorned him with a day of sanctification
 And with a canopy of cloud²⁶³²
 Until he brought forth²⁶³³ the reward²⁶³⁴
 And the bounty²⁶³⁵ of God's abode.²⁶³⁶
- 69 The ornamental Diadem of priesthood²⁶³⁷
 You endowed to the one who sanctifies²⁶³⁸ You
 And he bequeathed it
 To his sons after him
- 70 Reserved and pledged
 For all generations²⁶³⁹
 And those who disparage their²⁶⁴⁰ honour
 Will suffer²⁶⁴¹ and will be afflicted.²⁶⁴²
- 71 Oh Rock²⁶⁴³ You have bestowed upon them
 A multitude of gifts²⁶⁴⁴
 And from the Table of the King²⁶⁴⁵
 You prepared their victuals

²⁶³² Exod. 24:15.

²⁶³³ The Paytan uses the words **שבי שבי** which would be translated as "you took something into captivity," but my reading of the stanza leads me to believe that this is a *wortspiele*, which rests on the foundation of the root **שבב**, which insinuates gladness. My reading of the verse in effect interprets it as saying: "You have brought a gift that gladdened those who turned to you," because the root **שבב** also insinuates a return unto someone or something, in this case, to God.

²⁶³⁴ Referring to the Torah, after Psalm 68:19.

²⁶³⁵ The root **שלל** can be translated as "booty," or as a "negation." In the context of this stanza, it is clear that the Paytan refers to the Temple as the reward, the gift, and the munificent bounty that God had granted His people.

²⁶³⁶ Jer. 31:22.

²⁶³⁷ Zech. 6:11; Lev. 8:9.

²⁶³⁸ A reference to Aaron the High Priest, after Psalm 106:16.

²⁶³⁹ A reference to the Priesthood which is exclusively promised and preserved for the scions of Aaron, after Exod. 40:15.

²⁶⁴⁰ Referring to the Priests.

²⁶⁴¹ A reference to the fate of Korach and his assembly, who disparaged the exclusivity of the Priests and demanded a share as well, after Num. 16:32.

²⁶⁴² A reference to Uzziah the King who sinfully entered the Sanctuary of the Temple to burn incense, and was afflicted with leprosy as a result, after I Chron. 26:16-21.

²⁶⁴³ The word **צור** literally means "a hard rock" and is at times used as such, as in Psalm 78:20. In this case, however, the word **צור** is an epithet for God, after Deut. 32:4; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 22:47.

²⁶⁴⁴ Tosefta Challah 2:8 enumerates 24 gifts that were granted to the Priests ("The meaning of the word 'seresh' is interpreted." Rosh Chodesh Shvat. <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/shmaatin/kehuna.htm>). See: Exod. 13:13; Lev. 2:3, 7:7, 7:8, 7:14, 7:34, 23:19-20, 24:9, 27:21; Num. 6:19-20, 15:20, 18:4, 18:9, 18:13, 18:15, 18:17-18, 18:26-28; Deut. 18:3-4.

²⁶⁴⁵ Referring to the sacrifices at the Temple, a portion of which was reserved for the Priests and their kin, after Deut. 18:3 [See additional sources in footnote 220 above].

פֶּאֶרְתּוֹ בְּקִדּוֹשׁ יוֹם וּבִסְכוּף עֲנָן עַד יִשְׁבֶּה שָׁבִי וַיִּשְׁלַל נֹת בַּיִת.

צִיץ עֲטָרַת כְּהוֹנָה לְקִדּוֹשֵׁי הָעֵטִית וַיִּנְחַלְנָה לְבָנָיו אַחֲרָיו

צְפוּנָה שְׁמוּרָה לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם וּבוֹזֵי כְבוֹדָם יְבֹלְעוּ וַיִּנּוּגְעוּ.

צוּר הָעֲנֻקְתֶּם רֹב מִתְּנוֹת וּמִשְׁלַחַן מֶלֶךְ מֵאֲכָלֵם הַכִּינּוֹת.

- 72 You commanded them to sit
At the gate of Your Tents²⁶⁴⁶
To fill their hands²⁶⁴⁷
Seven days.

As it is written in Your Torah:

“As hath been done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make atonement for you”²⁶⁴⁸

- 73 Consecrated men²⁶⁴⁹ will separate
The man²⁶⁵⁰ from his abode
To keep him in the Ward²⁶⁵¹
In accordance with the service law²⁶⁵²
- 74 The sanctify him and sanitize him²⁶⁵³
With the cleansing water²⁶⁵⁴ of the heifer-ash²⁶⁵⁵
As a reward for²⁶⁵⁶ the cleansing by blood
And the anointing oil.

²⁶⁴⁶ Lev. 8:35.

²⁶⁴⁷ To keep the charge of God, after Lev. 8:35.

²⁶⁴⁸ Thus begins the Paytan’s narrative concerning the Day of Atonement, Lev. 8:34.

²⁶⁴⁹ Mishnah Yoma 1:1 does not specify the identity of the men who remove the High Priest from his home in preparation for the Day of Atonement services. The Paytan suggests they were priests, consecrated men.

²⁶⁵⁰ A reference to the High Priest, after Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²⁶⁵¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:1 called the Ward the Palhedrin Ward. The Ward was in the northern quadrant of the Temple, to the best of our contemporary knowledge. The word פלהדרין which is mentioned in the Mishnah is originally Greek, meaning ‘The King’s Agents’. In a Talmudic Braitā (Yoma 8:2) it is mentioned that the Ward was initially called ‘The Ward of the Nobles’ but since during the Second Temple the priesthood was subject to corruption and bribery, the Ward was named for the King’s agents whose service was limited to a year, to make note of the priestly service which was also limited and regulated. The paytan Yosse ben Yosse only speaks of the original appellation of the Ward of the Temple where the High Priests gathered.

²⁶⁵² Lev. 8:34.

²⁶⁵³ Lev. 8:30.

²⁶⁵⁴ The water of sprinkling, after Num. 19:1-13; Num. 31:23.

²⁶⁵⁵ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma, Folio 1, 1:1.

²⁶⁵⁶ The reward of the High Priest is a measure-for-measure, equal to his service at the Temple during which he sanctified elements of the Temple with the blood as a “ritual detergent” [Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, 79-80 regarding the rituals of Lev. 16:16].

צויתם שבת פתחי אהליך למלא ידם ימים שבָּעָה.

ככתוב כאשר עשה ביום הזה צוה יי לעשות לכפר עליכם.

קדושים יבדילו איש מנהו לעצרו בלשכה כחק מלואים

קדשוהו וחסאוהו במי נדה תמור חטוי דם ושמן המשחה.

- 75 Presiding²⁶⁵⁷ men of knowledge²⁶⁵⁸
 Team up²⁶⁵⁹ with him
 Like brethren who dwell together in unit²⁶⁶⁰
 To instruct him in the order of the Day²⁶⁶¹
- 76 He slays and sprinkles
 Burns incense and arranges²⁶⁶²
 Offering first the head and the leg
 And taking part of the head as his share.²⁶⁶³
- 77 His own appeasing sacrifices²⁶⁶⁴
 And the sacrifices of the congregation
 Are driven before him
 So that he will be familiarized with them²⁶⁶⁵
- 78 Excessive sleep and food
 Are inhibited from him
 In the eve of the Day of Pardon²⁶⁶⁶
 Lest he be prone²⁶⁶⁷ to nocturnal emissions.²⁶⁶⁸

²⁶⁵⁷ Mishnah Yoma 1:3 recounts that the men who instructed the High Priest were the elders of the Beit Din, or Sanhedrin. The Paytan does not insinuate any rabbinic presence into the Temple, or as part of the Yom Kippur Ritual. He maintains that priestly specialists oversaw the preparation of the High Priest. He uses the word **קציין**, which can be translated as “superintendents” or “overseers” who preside over a complex set of actions, at times military, but in this context, the Yom Kippur temple rites, after Prov. 25:15; Prov. 6:7.

²⁶⁵⁸ Mishnah Yoma 1:3 appears to suggest that the High Priest was potentially unschooled in the order of the Avodah, and that he was taught by the rabbis. The Paytan inserts the word “wisdom” to suggest that the priests knew well the order of the Avodah and did not require non-priestly instruction. The Paytan uses the word **מזימה** which can be understood as a conspiracy by Modern Hebrew speakers, but in Biblical Hebrew suggests wisdom, after Prov. 1:4.

²⁶⁵⁹ The root **עמת** employed by the Paytan suggests that the assistants were colleagues and team-mates of the High Priest, coadjutors in the Avodah and in the Temple service.

²⁶⁶⁰ Psalm 133:1.

²⁶⁶¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

²⁶⁶² Referring to the Candelabra, the Menorah at the Temple.

²⁶⁶³ Mishnah Yoma 1:2.

²⁶⁶⁴ The Paytan refers to the sacrifices the High Priests makes on behalf of his own homestead, and in the next verse, the sacrifices of the Congregation of Israel, on the Day of Atonement.

²⁶⁶⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

²⁶⁶⁶ Mishnah Yoma 1:4.

²⁶⁶⁷ Defiled by.

²⁶⁶⁸ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:4.

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| קְצִינֵי מְזֻמָּה | הֵם נֶעְמְתוּ לוֹ | כְּשֶׁבַת אַחִים יַחַד | לְהוֹרוֹתוֹ סֶדֶר |
| קוֹרֵץ וְזוֹרֵק | מִקְטִיר וּמְטִיב | רֵאשׁוֹן בְּרֵאשׁ וְרֵגֵל | וְרֵאשׁ לִיטוֹל חֶלֶק. |
| רְצוּי זְבָחִיו | וְזִבְחֵי עֲדָה | לְפָנָיו יוֹבִילוּ | הָיֹת רְגִיל בָּם |
| רַב שִׁנָּה וְאוֹכֵל | מִמֶּנּוּ יִמְעִיטוּ | עָרַב יוֹם סְלִיחָה | פֶּן יוֹרְגֵל לְקָרִי. |

- 79 The leaders of his tribe²⁶⁶⁹
 Join him²⁶⁷⁰
 To administer an oath in the Name
 In the Chamber of incense mixtures²⁶⁷¹
- 80 He²⁶⁷² decamps in tears
 Because he was considered inexperienced²⁶⁷³
 And they²⁶⁷⁴ shed tears
 Because they were required to instruct him thusly.²⁶⁷⁵
- 81 Delighting²⁶⁷⁶ in Midrash
 And the words²⁶⁷⁷ of scripture
 Which, if he is wise,
 They discuss with him²⁶⁷⁸
- 82 Reviewing the teachings
 Of ancient kings²⁶⁷⁹
 And if he is unschooled²⁶⁸⁰
 They occupy him with these matters.

²⁶⁶⁹ Mishnah Yoma 1:5 suggests that the rabbis administered the oath to the High Priest, but Yosse ben Yosse recounts that the Priests swore him in the Name of God in preparation for the Yom Kippur rituals.

²⁶⁷⁰ See footnote 235 above.

²⁶⁷¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:5 calls the Chamber **בית אבטינס** but the Paytan refrains from this post-Biblical appellation and refers to it as Referring to the Temple Ward in which incense was mixed.

²⁶⁷² The High Priest.

²⁶⁷³ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:5 suggests that the High Priest was suspected of not knowing the proper Zaddokite preparation of the incense.

²⁶⁷⁴ The elders.

²⁶⁷⁵ Suggesting that the elders lamented the High Priest's lack of knowledge, after Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

²⁶⁷⁶ Psalm 119:92.

²⁶⁷⁷ Joshua 1:8.

²⁶⁷⁸ Mishnah Yoma 1:6.

²⁶⁷⁹ Mishnah Yoma 1:6 specifies that the Books that were read to the High Priest were Job, Ezra, and Chronicles, and possibly also the Book of Daniel, according to Rabbi Zechariah ben Kevutal. The Paytan remains more vague.

²⁶⁸⁰ Mishnah Yoma 1:6 ; Josephus recounts the case of Phineas ben Samuel High Priest who was in effect a farmer, not to say a rube, who was dressed in the High Priest vestments and instructed to perform the Yom Kippur rites to the chagrin of the other priests in attendance. See: Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Book 4, 3:8.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| רָאִשֵׁי שְׁבֻטוֹ | הֵם נִעְמְתוּ לוֹ | לְהִשְׁבִיעוֹ בְּשֵׁם | בְּעֲלִיַּת רִקְחִים |
| ךָד בְּדַמְעוֹת | כִּי נִחְשַׁב לְפָתִי | וְהֵם בְּכִי הִזִּילוּ | כִּי לָקַף הוֹצַרְכוּ. |
| שֶׁעָשׂוּעַ מִדְּרָשׁ | וְהִגָּא כְּתָבִי קֹדֶשׁ | אִם יִחַפֵּם | לְפָנָיו יְשׁוּחָהוּ |
| שְׁנוֹן שְׁחֹת | מְלָכִים קְדֻמוֹנִים | אִם יִהְיֶה בְּעַר | בָּם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ. |

- 83 A song is sung to him²⁶⁸¹
 By the novice Kohanites²⁶⁸²
 With sweet melodious voices²⁶⁸³
 Accompanied by snapping fingers²⁶⁸⁴
- 84 They increase the din
 The multitude in the Great City²⁶⁸⁵
 Because from the voices²⁶⁸⁶
 His sleep is vitiated.²⁶⁸⁷
- 85 Collectors of ashes
 Gather at midnight²⁶⁸⁸
 To fulfill the directive in the correct manner
 Of observing the Avodah of the night²⁶⁸⁹
- 86 A lottery is set up
 Prepared for them²⁶⁹⁰
 Lest they shove
 Running to the ramp²⁶⁹¹
- 87 Immediately they draw a lot
 For those standing in the Courtyard²⁶⁹²
 For the daily requirement
 Of collecting the ashes from the inner altar and preparing the oil lamps²⁶⁹³

²⁶⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:7 does not recount any sort of musical accompaniment to the snapping of fingers used to awaken the dozing High Priest. The Paytan adds this element, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:7.

²⁶⁸² Mishnah Yoma 1:7.

²⁶⁸³ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:7.

²⁶⁸⁴ Mishnah Yoma 1:7.

²⁶⁸⁵ A reference to Jerusalem, after Lam. 1:1.

²⁶⁸⁶ Braita Yoma 19:2.

²⁶⁸⁷ Mirsky offers a different version to the word **תפורר** which appears here, meaning “crushed,” or “pulverized” based on the Syriac translation of Esther 6:1-- The other version reads **תופרד** which may be translated as “separated from him.” Both suggest insomnia, after Gen. 31:40. See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991) אהרון מירסקי (1991) p. 190, footnote 86.

²⁶⁸⁸ Mishnah Yoma 1:8.

²⁶⁸⁹ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma, Folio 39:B.

²⁶⁹⁰ For the priests whose turn it was to perform the act.

²⁶⁹¹ Priests shoving one another in eager disorder, ascending the ramp of the Altar, after Mishnah Yoma 2:1-2.

²⁶⁹² One could not sit in the Courtyard, according to Palestinian Talmud tractate Yoma 3:2.

²⁶⁹³ Mishnah Yoma 2:3.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| שִׁיר יִשׁוּרְרוּ לוֹ | פְּרָחֵי כְּהוֹנָה | בְּפֶה וּבַחֲיִף עָרַב | וּבְנַעֲיַמַּת צָרְדָּה |
| שָׂאוֹן יִגְבִּירוּ | הַמּוֹן רַבְתֵּי עֵם | כִּי מִקּוֹלָם | שָׁנְתוּ תַפּוּרָה. |
| תּוֹרְמֵי דָשָׁן | מַחְצוֹת נוֹעְרוּ | לְקַיִּים מִצּוֹת חֶק | עֲבוֹרַת לִילָה |
| תִּקְנַת פִּיס | לָהֶם הוֹכְנָה | פֶּן יִהְדָּפוֹן | בְּרִיצָתָם לְכַבֵּשׁ. |
| תִּכְף לוֹ יִפִּיסוּ | עוֹמְדֵי עֲזָרָה | לְמַעֲשֵׂה תְמִיד | וְדָשׁוֹן פְּנִימֵי וְנֵרוֹת |

- 88 Those²⁶⁹⁴ eager for blessings²⁶⁹⁵
 From the mouth of their mentor²⁶⁹⁶
 The lot for putting the incense
 Is cast for the young novices.²⁶⁹⁷
- 89 One of those who are skilled at knowing the correct times²⁶⁹⁸
 Is sent to the calescent east²⁶⁹⁹
 To see if the glow²⁷⁰⁰ of the crack²⁷⁰¹ of dawn
 And he²⁷⁰² turns to slaughtering
- 90 His brethren²⁷⁰³ accompany him
 To the external Ward of Ablutions
 Wherein one is purified
 Before entering the Courtyard.²⁷⁰⁴

²⁶⁹⁴ Referring to the priests, after Mishnah Yoma 2:4.

²⁶⁹⁵ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 2:4.

²⁶⁹⁶ Psalm 84:7.

²⁶⁹⁷ The novice priests who had hitherto not been elected to burn incense, after Mishnah Yoma 2:4; Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 2:4; Babylonian Talmud Folio 26:A.

²⁶⁹⁸ Referring to the correct schedule for the daily sacrifices, after Isa. 33:6; Num. 28:2.

²⁶⁹⁹ The Paytan uses the word **קדים** to denote the eastern direction, rather than using the word **מזרח**. The word **מזרח** is more commonly used to denote the direction whence the sun rises. The word **קדים** is often associated with an easterly wind that blows dry and hot from the desert, after Jonah 4:8; Exod. 14:21. In Ezek. 44:1 the word only denotes a direction. The English word “calescent” captures the heat associated with the easterly wind and, I think, more accurately reflects the poetic choice of words.

²⁷⁰⁰ The word **נוגה (נוגה)** suggests a bright glowing light that has some holiness attached to it, after Ezek. 10:4; Prov. 4:18. The word **נוגה** however, which appears only 4 times in the bible (all describing the righteous individual, not the physiognomy of sunlight), and thrice in the Qumran scrolls [4Q468b1; 11Q22,1,2; 1QH_a, xiv, 18] is an almost painterly lexical choice. It speaks of a glow, a brightness more diffuse than lightning-like ray of sun, it evokes a softer dawn and captures the chilly air of morning when the sky blushes with anticipation of the day. Given the biblical tendency to employ the term in describing God’s glory and the righteous person’s glow, and given the Qumranic tendency to use the word **נוגה** to evoke a person’s love for God, I think Yosse ben Yosse’s choice speaks about the same point of order as does the Mishnah, with an artistic “twist.”

²⁷⁰¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:1 uses the word **ברקאי** to refer to the dawn. The word is singular and rare, it has an Aramaic origin, and appears in Tosefta Kippurim 1:15; Palestinian Talmud 3:5. The word **ברקאי** derives from the word **ברק** meaning “lightning,” which evokes a dagger-like image of a light that vanquishes the darkness. This is why I used the words “the crack of dawn,” recalling the crack of lightening. Yosse ben Yosse “replaces” **ברקאי** with a compound word: **ברק נוגה**. The word **ברק** mirrors the Mishnaic terminology and also evokes a lightning-like first ray of sun; the Qumranic texts also use the word [4Q169, 3-4ii4; 4Q392, 1,9] for it is a common one in scripture (appearing 18 times in the Hebrew Bible) as well as in the quotidian speech.

²⁷⁰² The High Priest in the Yosse ben Yosse narrative does not require rabbinic assistance in determining the correct moment for commencing the rites, unlike the account in Mishnah Yoma 3:1-2.

²⁷⁰³ Mishnah Yoma 3:2 describes an anonymous group of people who accompany the High Priest to the Ward of Ablutions, but the Paytan specifically refers to them as priests.

²⁷⁰⁴ Mishnah Yoma 3:2-3.

תַּאֲבִי בְּרָכוֹת מִפִּי מוֹרָה לְשִׁים קִטְרֶת חֲדָשִׁים יִפְּיֶסוּ.

אֲמוּנֵי עֲתִים יְשׁוּלַח לְקָדִים אִם בְּרַק נוֹגֶה יִפֹּן לְשַׁחֲטָה

אָחִיו יִלְוֶהוּ לְבֵית טְבִילָה חוּצָה אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם יִטְוֶהּ בָּאֵי עֲזָרָה.

- 91 Thereafter they treat him
 With solemnity and respect
 And they pull a curtain
 Between him and the people²⁷⁰⁵
- 92 His own attire²⁷⁰⁶
 He quickly²⁷⁰⁷ removes
 And he goes down to bathe
 And rises and dries himself.
- 93 With chequer-woven²⁷⁰⁸ cotton undergarments
 That look like riding breeches²⁷⁰⁹
 He first covers
 His loins²⁷¹⁰ and his thighs²⁷¹¹
- 94 He covers himself with them
 To atone²⁷¹² for the sin of harlotry in Shittim²⁷¹³
 And he appears before us²⁷¹⁴
 As a meritorious gated garden.²⁷¹⁵

²⁷⁰⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

²⁷⁰⁶ The Paytan specifically mentions that the High Priest disrobed of his own clothes, whereas the Mishnah remains vague and simply recounts the act of disrobing, Mishnah Yoma 3:4 .

²⁷⁰⁷ The Paytan imbues his narrative with a sense of urgency which is missing in the Mishnaic account.

²⁷⁰⁸ Exod. 28:4.

²⁷⁰⁹ Lev. 6:3.

²⁷¹⁰ Song of Sol. 7:2.

²⁷¹¹ Exod. 28:42.

²⁷¹² The priestly vestments are symbolic remedies for misdeeds of the nation, whereas "same cures same," in this case the breeches that cover the High Priest's genitals is a ritual remedy for a sin of fornication, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

²⁷¹³ Num. 25: 1.

²⁷¹⁴ The Paytan's narrative is presented in the present continuous tense, in order to transmit the continuous nature of the events described in the Piyut, and in order to allow the audience to feel personally involved in the narrated ritual. The Mishnah in Yoma 3:4 describes the events in a legalistic tone, implying that the events took place in the distant past and are only relevant in so far as they signify sacred texts and rabbinic authority over them.

²⁷¹⁵ Referring to the High Priest's modesty which brings divine reward in its wake, after Song of Sol. 4:12.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| אָז יִנְהַגוּ בּוֹ | גְּדוּלָה וְכָבוֹד | וַיִּפְרְשׂוּ מִסֶּדֶךְ | בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עָם |
| אֶת־כֶּסֶת עֲצָמוֹ | יִמְהַר וַיִּפְשׁוּט | וַיִּרְדּוּ וַיִּטְבּוּל | וַיַּעַל וַיִּסְתַּפֵּג. |
| בְּשִׁבוּץ מִכְנָסֵי בָר | כַּעֲיוֹן פְּרָשִׁים | תְּחַלֶּה יְכֶסֶה | חֲמוּקֵי יִרְכִּיּוֹ |
| בָּם יְכֶסֶה | פֶּשַׁע עֲרוֹת שֹׁטִים | וַיִּגְלֶה לָנוּ | זְכוֹת גַּן נְעוּל. |

- 95 In a two layered²⁷¹⁶ cloth gown
 He covers his flesh
 From the wrist²⁷¹⁷
 To the ankle²⁷¹⁸
- 96 Clad in those he turns to Him
 Whose glory fills the earth entire²⁷¹⁹
 And he will thus atone for the agony²⁷²⁰
 Of the coat of many colours.²⁷²¹
- 97 And he also adds a Girding Belt²⁷²²
 Which is changed for the Day of Fasting²⁷²³
 Because it is entirely woven linen cloth²⁷²⁴
 With no mixed threads
- 98 He unfurls it²⁷²⁵ and wraps his body
 Thrice all around
 And thus atones for the people who girded their loins
 Like the idol worshipping Chaldeans.²⁷²⁶

²⁷¹⁶ There are two possible explanations for the reference to the doubling insinuated in the text: (i) The High Priest wore a double overcoat. See: According to Josephus Flavius the High Priest's overcoat was ankle-length, and wrapped the entire body. See: Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:2 ; מוסד ביאליק; ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. אהרון מירסקי (1991), p. 155, footnote 159, and p. 191 footnote 97; Ben Sira 45:12-13; (ii) The doubling is of the linen fibre, making the garment especially elegant and sumptuous, after Exod. 39:27.

²⁷¹⁷ Braitā Yoma 2:2.

²⁷¹⁸ Lev. 6:3; Josephus Flavius, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:2.

²⁷¹⁹ Isa. 6:3.

²⁷²⁰ Gen. 37:31.

²⁷²¹ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

²⁷²² Psalm 109:19; Exod. 28:4.

²⁷²³ Referring to Yom Kippur, after Lev. 23:27-32; Joel 1:14; Isa. 58:5.

²⁷²⁴ The Girdle worn throughout the year may be woven of varied fibres, but on Yom Kippur it must be woven of pure linen, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

²⁷²⁵ Referring to the Girdle, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:4.

²⁷²⁶ Ezek. 23:14-15.

בְּכַפֵּל כְּתוֹנֶת בֶּדֶד יִכְסֶה שְׂאֵרוֹ מִפְּסֵי יָד עַד עֲקֵבֵת רֶגֶל

בָּם יִפֹּן מְלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ וַיִּסֵּר דָּאֲגַת כְּתוֹנֶת הַפָּסִים.

גַּם מִזֶּה אֲבָנֵט יִשְׁנֶה בַּיּוֹם צוֹם כִּי כוֹלוֹ בֶּדֶד בְּלֵי אַרְוֵג כְּלָאִים

גוֹלֵל וּמְקִיף וּמִשְׁלָשׁוֹ לְכָל־עֶבֶר בְּעַד חֲגוּרֵי אֲזוּר צְלָמֵי כְּשָׁדִים.

- 99 He²⁷²⁷ is resplendent
 In his Royal Crown²⁷²⁸
 As he lifts his head²⁷²⁹
 In the fine twined linen²⁷³⁰ Mitre
- 100 With which he also cleanses
 The blemish of the loosening of hair²⁷³¹
 And thus removes the shame
 From the harlot's forehead.²⁷³²
- 101 His²⁷³³ countenance is like aquamarine²⁷³⁴
 Like the sky²⁷³⁵
 As he dons the turquoise Overcoat
 Which is woven in a bee-hive pattern²⁷³⁶
- 102 The upper edge²⁷³⁷ of the coat
 Is trimmed with lace²⁷³⁸
 Surrounding its edging
 Lest the fabric fray.
- 103 Attached to its hems
 Are colourful pomegranates
 And golden bells
 All around²⁷³⁹

²⁷²⁷ The High Priest.

²⁷²⁸ Exod. 39:30.

²⁷²⁹ The verse may describe the High Priest raising his head majestically, or may be referring to the tradition that the High Priest was taller than all other priests and physically more imposing than others, or was set apart from his priestly kin by being elevated in status, wealth, and appearance, after Lev. 21:10.

²⁷³⁰ The Paytan uses the word שש after Exod. 39:28.

²⁷³¹ Referring to the sin of harlotry, and the ritual loosening of the sinful adulteress's hair, after Num. 5:18.

²⁷³² Referring to the sinful nation, after Jer. 3:3; Isa. 1:21.

²⁷³³ The High Priest.

²⁷³⁴ Jonah 1:3; Daniel 10:6.

²⁷³⁵ The word תכלית denotes both the colour turquoise and the sky, after Exod. 28:31.

²⁷³⁶ Exod. 28:36.

²⁷³⁷ Isa. 38:12.

²⁷³⁸ Exod. 28:32.

²⁷³⁹ Exod. 28:33.

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| בְּמִצְנַפֶּת הַשֵּׁשׁ | בְּהִגְבִּיהוֹ רֹאשׁ | בְּנֹזֵר הַמְּלוּכָה | גְּדוֹל נְהַדָּר |
| אֲשֶׁת זוֹנָה מִצַּח. | וַיַּעֲבִיר כְּלִימַת | דּוֹפִי פְּרִיעַת רֹאשׁ | גַּם בָּהּ יִנְקָה |
| אָרוּג כְּכוֹרֶת | בְּלִבָּשׁוֹ מְעִיל תְּכֵלֶת | כְּמִרְאֵה רְקִיעַ | דְּמוּתוֹ כְּתִרְשִׁישׁ |
| בְּלִי לְהִקְרַע. | מוֹקֶפֶת לוֹ | גְּדִילָה כְּתַחֲרָא | דְּלַת שְׁפָתוֹ |
| עֲגוּל סְבִיב | וּפְעֻמוֹנֵי פֹז | רְמוֹנֵי צְבָעִים | דְּבִק לְשׁוּלְיוֹ |

- 104 The Pre-eminent One,²⁷⁴⁰ upon hearing
 The knell of his²⁷⁴¹ steps²⁷⁴²
 Pardons the sin of giving voice
 To the evil tongue.²⁷⁴³
- 105 He is attired in an Ephod
 Which resembles a kind of felt²⁷⁴⁴
 Woven with gold and scarlet threads
 And fine twined linen and turquoise and crimson²⁷⁴⁵
- 106 And on his epaulettes
 Two onyx stones²⁷⁴⁶
 Upon which are names of the Tribes
 In the number of their Standards.²⁷⁴⁷
- 107 Their names are legible
 Even as their letters are bisected²⁷⁴⁸
 Engraved with a diamond lathe²⁷⁴⁹
 But fashioned at the moment of Creation²⁷⁵⁰
- 108 Through those He finds virtuous
 Those who had transgressed with an ephod²⁷⁵¹
 And those who replaced God²⁷⁵²
 With a grass-eating ox.²⁷⁵³

²⁷⁴⁰ Song of Sol. 5:10.

²⁷⁴¹ The High Priest.

²⁷⁴² Exod. 28:35.

²⁷⁴³ Deut. 22:14.

²⁷⁴⁴ Braita Yoma 71:B.

²⁷⁴⁵ Exod. 28:6.

²⁷⁴⁶ Exod. 28:12.

²⁷⁴⁷ Exod. 28:9-10.

²⁷⁴⁸ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Sottah 7:4.

²⁷⁴⁹ The Paytan uses the word **שמייר** which evokes the sin of Judea, after Jer. 17:1.

²⁷⁵⁰ Mishnah Avot 5:6.

²⁷⁵¹ Referring to the sin of vanity, after Judges 8:27.

²⁷⁵² Exod. 32:1; Psalm 106:20.

²⁷⁵³ Referring to the sin of the golden calf, after Exod. 32:4.

דגול בשמעו קול פֶּעַמִּיו מִכֹּפֶר בְּעַד קוֹל מוֹצִיא שֵׁם רַע.

הֶעֱטוּהוּ בְּאֶפֶוד דוֹמָה כַּמִּין לְבָד אָרוּג פָּז וְשָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן

הֲלֹא בִכְתָפָיו שְׁתֵּי אֲבְנֵי שׁוֹהֵם וּבֵם שְׁמוֹת שְׁבָטִים כַּמִּסְפֵּר דְּגָלִים.

הַגּוּיִים בְּשֵׁמוֹת הַצּוּיִים בְּאוֹתוֹת בְּפִתּוֹחַ שְׁמִיר נוֹצַר מִבְּרֵאשִׁית

הַצְּדִיק בָּם לְנוֹקְשֵׁי בְּאֶפֶוד וּמַחְלִיפֵי אֵל בְּשׁוֹר אוֹכֵל עֵשֶׂב.

- 109 Set upon his heart²⁷⁵⁴
The Breastplate, doubled
A squared span by span²⁷⁵⁵
Woven like the Ephod²⁷⁵⁶
- 110 Comprised of rows of precious stones²⁷⁵⁷
One for each Tribe²⁷⁵⁸
Surrounded in gold²⁷⁵⁹
And carved with a diamond lathe.²⁷⁶⁰
- 111 He²⁷⁶¹ attaches them with rings
Properly, lest it²⁷⁶² shift
And with chainmail ropes²⁷⁶³
Its attachments²⁷⁶⁴ are covered²⁷⁶⁵
- 112 And the Lover of Justice²⁷⁶⁶
Named it²⁷⁶⁷ of Judgment
So that He will judge them innocent²⁷⁶⁸
Those who strayed from the Law.²⁷⁶⁹

²⁷⁵⁴ Exod. 28:29.

²⁷⁵⁵ Exod. 28:16.

²⁷⁵⁶ Exod. 28:15.

²⁷⁵⁷ Exod. 28:17.

²⁷⁵⁸ Exod. 28:21.

²⁷⁵⁹ Meaning "set in gold" whereas each gem is "walled in" with gold upon the Breastplate, after Exod. 28:20.

²⁷⁶⁰ See: footnote 325 above, stanza 107.

²⁷⁶¹ Exod. 28:28 reports that the anonymous 'they' "*shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod* with a thread of blue, that it may be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod." The Paytan here claims that the High Priest himself attached the Breastplate to the Ephod.

²⁷⁶² The Breastplate.

²⁷⁶³ The chains were "*plaited chains of wreathen work of pure gold*," after Exod. 28:22.

²⁷⁶⁴ The Paytan uses the word **דבקים**, translated as attachments [the root **דבק** refers to gluing, attaching, and joining two things, but it also has a martial reference, whereas it describes a scale armour], which imply that the Ephod is like a military armour, and the Breastplate is attached to the Ephod like a shield, after I Kings 22:34.

²⁷⁶⁵ Josephus adds that the space between the Breastplate and the Ephod was covered with turquoise embroidery, Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Book 4, 3:8.

²⁷⁶⁶ An epithet for God, after Psalm 99:4.

²⁷⁶⁷ Referring to the Breastplate, called the Breastplate of Judgment in Exod. 28:15.

²⁷⁶⁸ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

²⁷⁶⁹ The Paytan delights his audience with the different meanings of the word **משפט**, used in this stanza in the sense of "justice," "judgment," "trial," and "law."

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| וְקִבּוּעַ בְּלֵב | חֶשֶׁן, כְּפֹל | רְבוּעַ זֶרֶת עַל זֶרֶת | אָרוּג כְּאֶפֶד |
| וְבוֹ טוֹרֵי אֶבֶן | אֶחָת לְכָל־שֶׁבֶט | מוֹסְבוֹת פֶּזַז | חֻקּוֹת בְּשִׁמְיֵר. |
| וַיִּרְכָּסֶם בְּטַבָּעוֹת | כַּחַק לֹא יִזַּח | וּבִשְׂרָשְׁרוֹת גְּבִלוֹת | דְּבַקִּימוּ יִכְסֶה |
| וְאוֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט | קִרְאוּ מִשְׁפָּט | לְהַצְדִּיק בְּמִשְׁפָּט | מַעֲוֹתֵי מִשְׁפָּט. |

- 113 He put on a wreath of gold²⁷⁷⁰
Above the fastener²⁷⁷¹ of the Ephod
From ear to ear
On the front of the Mitre²⁷⁷²
- 114 The Exalted Name²⁷⁷³ is
Engraved upon the Diadem
Which is set upon his forehead
Attached to the Crown.²⁷⁷⁴
- 115 The wickedness of blood and meat defilement
And fat and incense and liquid libations
Will be atoned for by the Diadem
And will appease Him²⁷⁷⁵
- 116 Eight vestments²⁷⁷⁶ are prepared
For him who is preeminent over his brethren²⁷⁷⁷
To serve and to consult
The Urim.
- 117 He girds them in accordance with the Law
And wears them in order
And he sanctifies
His hands and his feet²⁷⁷⁸

²⁷⁷⁰ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:6 describes a golden wreath worn by the High Priest on the back of his head, extending from ear to ear. The golden Diadem was a similar wreath worn on the front of the High Priest's head, also extending from ear to ear, after Exod. 28:37.

²⁷⁷¹ The Paytan writes “על תכיפת האפוד” and Mirsky is not clear about the meaning of the word תכיפת. I think that the Paytan refers to the root כפת which is a verb that denotes tightly tying something with a rope, such as כפתור which is a button, used for binding, closing, tying of clothes.

²⁷⁷² Exod. 28:37.

²⁷⁷³ A reference to the Name of God, after Exod. 28:36.

²⁷⁷⁴ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:6.

²⁷⁷⁵ Errors in preparing the various offerings are forgiven, in compliance with the “same cures same” dynamic, by the Diadem upon which God's name is etched. Tosefta Menachot 1:6.

²⁷⁷⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:5 describes the vestments in this order: Tunic, Trousers, Mitre, Girding Belt, Breastplate, Ephod, Overcoat, Diadem. The Paytan lists the vestments in a different order, which is the order of actually donning the items: Trousers, Tunic, Girding Belt, Mitre, Overcoat, Ephod, Breastplate, Diadem.

²⁷⁷⁷ The High Priest was taller than all other priests and physically more imposing than others, or was set apart from his priestly kin by being elevated in status, wealth, and appearance, after Lev. 21:10.

²⁷⁷⁸ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

זר זהב שם על תכיפת האפור מאזן ועד און מול פני המצנפת

זכר שם נערץ חקוק על ציץ נתנו על מצח מחובר לנזר.

זרון טומאת דם ובשר וחלב וקומץ ונסכים ירצו בציץ ויעלו לרצון

זומנו שמונה לגדול מאחיו לשרת ולשאל עצה באורים.

חגרם פדת לבשם כסדר ויקדש ידיו ורגליו

- 118 His disciples²⁷⁷⁹ present
The daily morning sacrifice
He slaughters it and collects
Its blood in the Basin.
- 119 He divides and apportions the incense
And arranges the oil lamps
And sacrifices the head and the organs
The daily offerings and the libations²⁷⁸⁰
- 120 He makes haste for the Parvah
The site of bathing and sanctification
And he sanctifies his hands
And his feet and disrobes.²⁷⁸¹
- 121 He bathes and dries himself
And dons linen clothes
And further sanctifies
His hands and his feet²⁷⁸²
- 122 Purified,²⁷⁸³ he approaches
The bullock which he had purchased²⁷⁸⁴
Who stands between
The Sanctuary and the Altar.
- 123 He reveals his caches²⁷⁸⁵
To the Creator of Everything²⁷⁸⁶
And will not cover up any transgression
Because only thusly will he obtain mercy²⁷⁸⁷

²⁷⁷⁹ Mishnah Yoma 3:4 uses the anonymous "they," where the Paytan specifically mentions the priestly novices.

²⁷⁸⁰ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

²⁷⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:6 reports that a linen screen was drawn to shield the nakedness of the High Priest. The Paytan does not, in this stanza.

²⁷⁸² Mishnah Yoma 3:6.

²⁷⁸³ Referring to the High Priest.

²⁷⁸⁴ Lev. 16:11.

²⁷⁸⁵ The High Priest confesses his own sins, Mishnah Yoma 3:8.

²⁷⁸⁶ Jer. 10:16.

²⁷⁸⁷ Prov. 28:13.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| חַנִּיקְיוֹ יִגִּישׁוּ | אֶת־תְּמִיד הַשַּׁחַר | קָרְצוּ וְקָבַל | דָּמוֹ בְּמִזְרְקוֹ. |
| חֵילֶק פָּרֶס וְהִקְטִיר | וְנֵרוֹת הַטֵּיב | הַקָּרִיב רֹאשׁ וְנִתַּח | חֲבִיתִים וְנָסֹף |
| חֵשׁ לְגַב פְּרוּהָ | לְבַיִת טְבִילַת קֹדֶשׁ | וְקִדְּשׁ יָדָיו | וְרַגְלָיו וּפָשָׁט. |
| טָבַל וְסָפַג | וְעָטָה כָּלֵי בָד | וַיִּקְדַּשׁ עוֹד | יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו |
| טְהוֹר נִגְשׁ | אֶצֶל פֶּר מְמוֹנֹו | הָעוֹמֵד בֵּין | הָאוֹלָם וְלִמְזַבַּח. |
| טְמוֹנוֹתָיו יִגְלֶה | לְיוֹצֵר הַכֹּל | וְלֹא יִכְסֶה פָּשַׁע | כִּי בָכֹן יִרוּחֶם |

- 124 The Good One²⁷⁸⁸ will forgive him²⁷⁸⁹
 As he confesses
 Laying both his hands
 Solemnly²⁷⁹⁰ upon his bullock.

And thus did he say:

"O Lord,²⁷⁹¹ I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"²⁷⁹² And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves²⁷⁹³, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."²⁷⁹⁴ And he too would intend to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed." And You in Your abundant goodness arouse Your mercy and forgive the man who is of Your servants.

- 125 At by his side are the Deputy
 And the Head of the Household²⁷⁹⁵
 And thus he approaches the Central Gate²⁷⁹⁶
 At the eastern side of the Courtyard²⁷⁹⁷

- 126 There he finds
 Two he-goats for the People²⁷⁹⁸
 And Golden Lots
 In the Lottery Box.²⁷⁹⁹

²⁷⁸⁸ An epithet for God, after Psalm 34:9.

²⁷⁸⁹ The High Priest.

²⁷⁹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 3:8 does not add the adjective and only reports that the High Priest lay his hands upon the bullock's head.

²⁷⁹¹ The first appeal is **אנא השם**, literally "please *the Name*," and the second appeal is **אנא בשם**, literally "please *in the Name*." It is a nuanced difference between the Paytan's narrative and the Mishnaic narrative in Yoma 3:8, where both instances are reported as **אנא השם**. The difference between the two appeals is directional, whereas **אנא השם** is a direct appeal to God, and the second appeal is in the Name of God, a more indirect appeal.

²⁷⁹² Lev. 16:30.

²⁷⁹³ Mishnah Yoma 3:8 does not mention the prostrations, but in Tractate Yoma 3:7 the Palestinian Talmud recounts that the people who were close to the High Priest would prostrate themselves, and those far from him only say the verse: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."

²⁷⁹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 3:8.

²⁷⁹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

²⁷⁹⁶ Mishnah Yoma 3:9 does not specify the Gate, only stating that the High Priest approached the Altar from the north.

²⁷⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

²⁷⁹⁸ Lev. 16:5.

²⁷⁹⁹ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

טוב יסלח לו בהתנדדותו בסמכו שתי ידיו על פרו בכבוד.

וּכְךָ הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם חָטָאתִי עֲוִיתִי וּפָשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי, אֲנִי בְשֵׁם כְּפָר־נָא
 לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְשָׁעִים שְׁחָטָאתִי וּשְׁעִוִיתִי וּשְׁפָשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי כְּכַתּוּב
 בַּתּוֹרָת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל־חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנָי יי.
 וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעִזְרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מְפֹרָשׁ
 יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדּוּשָׁה וּבְטַהֲרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִין עַל פְּנֵיהֶם
 וְאוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְאִף הוּא הָיָה מְכוּוֵן לְגִמּוֹר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם
 כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם: תְּטַהְרוּ. וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבָךָ הַגָּדוֹל תַּעֲוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסִלַּח
 לְאִישׁ חֲסִידְךָ.

יְקִיפוּהוּ סָגוּן וְרֹאשׁ בֵּית אָב וּבֹא לְשַׁעַר הַתִּיכּוֹן לְמִזְרַח עֲזָרָה

יִמְצָא שָׁם שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירֵי עֵם וְגוֹרְלוֹת זָהָב נְתוּנִים בְּקַלְפֵי.

- 127 He rummages in the Box
And draws Lots
One for the Hallowed Name
And one for Azahzel²⁸⁰⁰
- 128 Should his right hand raise
The Lot of the he-goat for the Name
His Deputy will tell him
Gleefully: Raise your right hand.²⁸⁰¹
- 129 As he raises it²⁸⁰² in his
Left hand
The Head of the Household will say:
Raise your left hand
- 130 As they²⁸⁰³ are placed
On the two he-goats
He calls out loudly
This is done for the sake²⁸⁰⁴ of expiation.
- 131 He turns and approaches
His bullock a second time
To confess his sins
And transgressions and offences²⁸⁰⁵
- 132 He places his hands
Solemnly²⁸⁰⁶ between the horns of the bullock
To further confess
For the transgressions of his household and his Standard²⁸⁰⁷.

²⁸⁰⁰ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²⁸⁰¹ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²⁸⁰² Referring to the lot with the Hallowed Name upon it, after Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

²⁸⁰³ Referring to the golden lots.

²⁸⁰⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:1 adds: "an expiation for God" whereas the letter ל is annotated with a פתח [LAshem] indication "to the Name" which is an epithet for God. The Paytan annotates the ל with a שווא which turns the word לשם [LEshem] into "for the sake of." This difference may be intentional, or the result of errors of transcription over time.

²⁸⁰⁵ Mishnah Yoma 4:2 recounts the same series of actions, but adds that before these, the High Priest tied the red cord on the he-goat that is to be cast away to the desert. The Paytan skips this ritual here.

²⁸⁰⁶ The Paytan adds to the Mishnah Yoma 4:2 account a sense of solemnity, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Chagigah 2:2.

²⁸⁰⁷ Referring to the Priestly Caste, as distinct from the Levites, both of which groups are scions of a single Tribe, but subject to different laws and regulations.

יִטְרוֹף בָּהּ וַיַּעַל גּוֹרְלוֹת זֶה לְשֵׁם נַעֲרִץ וְזֶה לְשֵׁם לַעֲזֹאזֵל

יְמִינוֹ עִם תַּעַל גּוֹרֵל שְׁעִיר שֵׁם סִגְוֹ יִשְׁמִיעַ לוֹ בְּגִיל: הַגְּבָה יְמִינָהּ.

בְּהַעֲלוֹתוֹ בְּיַד הַשְּׂמֵאלִית רֹאשׁ בֵּית אָב יְשִׁיחַ: הַגְּבָה שְׂמֵאלָהּ

בְּהִנָּתְנָם עַל שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים קוֹרָא בְּקוֹל רֶם זֶה לְשֵׁם חֲטָאת.

כִּנּוֹן וּבֵא לוֹ אֶצֶל פָּרוֹ שְׁנֵיהָ לְהַתְּנוּדוֹת בְּעַד חֲטָא עוֹן וּפְשַׁע

כִּבֵּשׂ יָדָיו בֵּין קַרְנָיו בְּכוֹבָד לְהַתְּנוּדוֹת עוֹד בְּעַד עוֹן בֵּיתוֹ וּמִטְהוֹ.

And thus did he say, "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house and the children of Aaron [the priests], your holy people. O Lord, forgive, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you, I, my house, and the children of Aaron, your holy people. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"²⁸⁰⁸ And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."²⁸⁰⁹ And he too would intend to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed." And You in Your abundant goodness arouse Your mercy and forgive the man who is of Your servants.²⁸¹⁰

- 133 He turns to slaughter it
And collects its blood
And orders the blood to be stirred
At the Courtyard level²⁸¹¹
- 134 To the firewood upon the Altar²⁸¹²
He ascends and circumambulates it
Holding a Brazier
Made of slaughtered²⁸¹³ gold.

²⁸⁰⁸ Lev. 16:30.

²⁸⁰⁹ Mishnah Yoma 4:2 does not mention the prostrations, but in Tractate Yoma 3:7 the Palestinian Talmud recounts that the people who were close to the High Priest would prostrate themselves, and those far from him only say the verse: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."

²⁸¹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

²⁸¹¹ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 recounts that the priest whose task it was to stir the blood stood on the fourth stair leading to the Sanctuary. The Paytan's account places the priest at the floor level of the Courtyard, before the stairs. His account in the Piyyut **אזכיר גבורות** is similar. According to Mishnah Tractate Midot 3:6 there were 12 stairs leading from the priestly Courtyard to the Sanctuary. Yosse ben Yosse and the Mishnah seem to be in a dispute over the precise placement of the brazier on these stairs, whereas the Mishnah asserts it was placed on the fourth step, and Yosse ben Yosse, at least in these two Piyyutim, claims it was placed on the floor level of the Courtyard, at the foot of the stairs. It is not clear which sources the Paytan draws upon for this information.

²⁸¹² Lev. 6:2.

²⁸¹³ Meaning that it [**זהב שחוט**] was red hued gold, after Mishnah Yomah 4:4. In the Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 4:4, and in a Braita in the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yomah Folio 45:A, the reddish gold is called **זהב פרוויים**, Mirsky is not certain about the source of either expressions: **זהב פרוויים**/ **זהב שחוט** See: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי p. 198, footnote 153; but perhaps I would venture to assume that the poetic expressions are both a "nod" to the two bullocks = **פר 1, פרוויים 2** which are slaughtered and bled.

וְכַף הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם חָטָאתִי עֲוִיתִי פָשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי וּבְנֵי עַם אֲהָרֹן
 עִם קְדוֹשִׁיךָ, אֲנִי בְשֵׁם כְּפָר־נָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְשָׁעִים שְׁחַטָּאתִי וְשַׁעֲוִיתִי
 וְשַׁפְשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי וּבְנֵי אֲהָרֹן עִם קְדוֹשִׁיךָ כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ
 כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יי. וְהִכְהַנִּים וְהָעַם
 הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מְפֹרָשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי
 כְּהֵן גְּדוֹל בְּקְדוּשָׁה וּבְטָהֳרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִין עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים
 בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְאִף הוּא הָיָה מְכוּיֵן לְגַמּוֹר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם
 כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם: תִּטְהָרוּ. וְאִתָּה בְּטוֹבָה הַגְּדוֹל תִּעֲזָר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסִלַּח
 לְשִׁבְט מִשְׁרֵתֶיךָ.

לְשׁוֹחֲטוֹ נִפְנָה וְקָבַל דָּמוֹ וְצוּה לְמַרְסוֹ בְּרוּכֵךְ הָעֶזְרָה

לְמִזְבַּח מוֹקְדָה עָלָה וְהִקְיָה וּבִידוֹ מִחַתַּת זָהָב שְׁחוּט.

- 135 He draws the soughing²⁸¹⁴ cinders²⁸¹⁵
 From the western side of the Altar
 And descends and places them
 On the Courtyard level²⁸¹⁶
- 136 He is presented
 With the golden Ladle²⁸¹⁷
 And the Tureen²⁸¹⁸ which
 Contains the fine²⁸¹⁹ incense.
- 137 He fills his hands²⁸²⁰
 And pours it²⁸²¹ in the Ladle
 And takes it in his left hand
 And holds a Brazier in his right hand²⁸²²
- 138 He walks in the Sanctuary
 Until he reaches the Ornamental Curtain²⁸²³
 And marches behind it
 Until he reaches the Holy Ark.
- 139 He places the Brazier
 Between the two Staves²⁸²⁴
 And in the absence of the Holy Ark²⁸²⁵
 On the Foundation Stone²⁸²⁶

²⁸¹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 simply calls the cindered remains “embers,” but the Paytan adds an aural element, better to make the narrative palpable to the audience at a multi-sensory level.

²⁸¹⁵ Lev. 16:12.

²⁸¹⁶ Mishnah Yoma 4:3. See stanza 133, footnote 387 above.

²⁸¹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²⁸¹⁸ Mishnah Yomah 5:1 recounts that the High Priest received the Ladle and a Brazier. [מחתה]. The Paytan recounts a Ladle and a Tureen. [מגס]. Elsewhere the Paytan speaks of the Brazier, therefore Mirsky’s assumption that Yosse ben Yosse refers to the **מגס** as a **מחתה** is not supported and the two vessels are not interchangeable. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. p. 198, footnote 155. I think the Paytan adds a new element here, which is not mentioned in the Mishnah, but it is not clear where he draws information from.

²⁸¹⁹ Mishnah Yoma 4:4.

²⁸²⁰ Mishnah Yoma 4:4 and 5:1.

²⁸²¹ The fine incense.

²⁸²² Mishnah Yoma 5:1 concurs but recounts that the Brazier was taken before the Ladle.

²⁸²³ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 recounts two Curtains, separated by about a foot of space. The Paytan recounts a single Curtain, here as well as in the Piyyut **אזכיר גבורות** stanza 207.

²⁸²⁴ The carrying poles of the Ark that helped carry the Ark like a palanquin, after Exod. 27:6.

²⁸²⁵ After the destruction of the First Temple, the Ark had disappeared. By the time of the Second Temple the Ark had already been long lost. The ritual proceeded *as if* the Staves and the Ark were still present in the Holy of Holies.

²⁸²⁶ Mishnah Yoma 5:2.

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| לֹחֲשׁוֹת חָתָה | מִפְּנֵי מַעֲרָב | וַיֵּרֶד וְשָׁמָּה | בְּרוֹכֵד הָעֲזָרָה |
| לְפָנָיו יוֹבִילוּ | כַּף הַזָּהָב | וְהִמָּגַס אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ | קִטְרֵת הַדִּקְּהָ. |
| מִלֵּא חֲפָנָיו | וְנָתַן לְתוֹךְ כַּף | נִטְלָה בְּשִׁמְאֵל | וּמַחֲתָה בְּיָמִין |
| מִהֲלֹךְ בְּהִיכָל | עֲדִיבָא לְפָרְכָת | צוּעַד בְּקִרְבָּהּ | עַד גִּשְׁתָּ לְאָרוֹן. |
| מַחֲתָה שָׁם | בֵּין שְׁנֵי בַדִּים | וְאִם אֵין אָרוֹן | בְּאֶבֶן שְׁתַּיִּיה |

- 140 He piles the incense
On flaming coals²⁸²⁷
And as the cloud envelopes²⁸²⁸
He turns²⁸²⁹ and exits.
- 141 He hastens²⁸³⁰ to supplicate
Briefly, in the Holy of Holies
Lest the Holy Nation be tyrannized²⁸³¹
By the prominent ones over the lesser ones
- 142 He growls, commanding²⁸³² the stirrer:
Hand me the blood of the bullock,
And he takes it and enters
And stands between the two Staves.²⁸³³
- 143 Against the Ark-Cover²⁸³⁴
He sprinkles with his finger²⁸³⁵
Once upward
And seven times downward as if whipping²⁸³⁶
- 144 He places it²⁸³⁷ on a Stand
Made of gold in the Sanctuary²⁸³⁸
And slaughters the he-goat of the People
And collects its blood.²⁸³⁹

²⁸²⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²⁸²⁸ The Holy of Holies, after Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²⁸²⁹ The Paytan adds the element of the High Priest turning away from the Holy of Holies. The Mishnah in Yoma 5:1 only recounts that he exited it.

²⁸³⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

²⁸³¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 recounts that the High Priest rushed his prayer, lest the People be terrified for fear he had died in the Holy of Holies because of his iniquity [after Lev. 10:1; Num. 17:2-5], but the Paytan explains that the High Priest hastened, lest the prominent men among the People tyrannize them by interpreting the length of time, and thus claiming authority over the people, after Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:3

²⁸³² The Paytan uses the word **נַחַח** to record the High Priest telling the junior priest what to do. I think the word is derived from **נָחַח** which denotes a more guttural and rushed telling, like a commanding growl, after Prov. 20:2

²⁸³³ Mishnah Yoma 5:3 is less detailed and less poetic in its description, narrating that the High Priest “entered where he entered before, and stood where he stood before.”

²⁸³⁴ Mishnah 5:3 does not specify that the blood was sprinkled at the **כַּפֹּרֶת**, the Ark-Cover, but the Paytan is more specific, after Exod. 325:17; Exod. 37:6.

²⁸³⁵ Mishnah Yoma 5:3 does not recount that the sprinkling was done with the High Priest’s finger.

²⁸³⁶ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

²⁸³⁷ Referring to the Basin in which the blood had been collected and stirred, see stanza 133 above.

²⁸³⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

²⁸³⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| מַעֲרָה קְטָרֶת | עַל גַּחְלֵי אֵשׁ | כֶּסֶה עֵנָו | צִדָּד וַיֵּצֵא. |
| נִבְהַל לְשׁוֹעַ | בְּקוֹצֵר בְּהִיכָל | לְבַלְתִּי רְרוֹת עִם קֹדֶשׁ | רַב בְּצַעִיר |
| נָם לְמַמְרָס: | הַגֵּשׁ דָּם פָּר, | נָטְלוּ וַנִּכְנַס | וְקָם לְבִין הַבְּדִים. |
| נוֹכַח הַכַּפֹּרֶת | הִזָּה בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ | אֶחָת לְמַעְלָה | וְשָׁבַע לְמַטָּה כַּמְצַלִּיף |
| נָתַנוּ עַל כֹּן | זָהָב בְּהִיכָל | וְשַׁחַט שְׁעִיר עִם | וְקִבַּל דָּמוֹ. |

- 145 He turns around as he did
And stands where he stood before
And whips the blood
Like he did with the blood of the bullock²⁸⁴⁰
- 146 He places it on a second Stand²⁸⁴¹
In the Sanctuary
And takes the blood of the bullock
And approaches the Ornamental Curtain.²⁸⁴²
- 147 He counts and sprays the blood
Opposite the Ark from the outside²⁸⁴³
Once upward
And seven times downward, in the correct number
- 148 He leaves²⁸⁴⁴ that and replaces it²⁸⁴⁵
With the blood of the he-goat
And does with it
As he did in the first directive.²⁸⁴⁶
- 149 He comingles the two
For a single offering of expiation²⁸⁴⁷
And exits toward the Altar
Made of gold²⁸⁴⁸ to cleanse it
- 150 He sprays its four corners²⁸⁴⁹
And sprinkles with his finger
Around its four walls
To cleanse it.²⁸⁵⁰

²⁸⁴⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

²⁸⁴¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:4 debates whether there was a single stand for the Basin or two. The Paytan recounts two.

²⁸⁴² Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

²⁸⁴³ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

²⁸⁴⁴ The site of the Ornamental Curtain that shields the Ark.

²⁸⁴⁵ The blood of the bullock.

²⁸⁴⁶ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

²⁸⁴⁷ The blood of the bullock is one offering, after Lev. 16:3; the blood of the he-goat is a second offering, after Lev. 16:5.

Now they are comingled and turned into a single offering of expiation, after Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

²⁸⁴⁸ Referring to the Incense Altar, after Mishnah Yoma 5:5; Lev. 16:18.

²⁸⁴⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:5.

²⁸⁵⁰ Referring to ritual cleansing with blood as a "ritual detergent," See: Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, 79-80 regarding the rituals of Lev. 16:16.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| כְּמִשְׁפַּט דָּם פָּר | וְהִצְלִיף מִמֶּנּוּ | וְעָמַד בְּעִמְדוֹ | סוֹבֵב בְּדַרְכּוֹ |
| וּבֹא לְפָרְכָת. | נָטַל דָּם פָּר | שְׁנֵי בַּהֲיָכָל | שָׁמוּ עַל כֵּן |
| וְשִׁבַע לְמִטָּה כְּמִסְפָּר | אַחַת לְמַעְלָה | מִוֶּל אֲרוֹן חוּצָה | סֵפֶר וְהִזָּה |
| כְּסֹדֶר הָרֵאשׁוֹן. | וַיַּפְעַל בּוֹ | בְּדָם הַשָּׁעִיר | סָר וְהִחֲלִיפוּ |
| הִזָּהֵב לְחֹטְאוֹ | וַיֵּצֵא לְמִזְבֵּחַ | חֹטְאת אֶחָד | עָשָׂאוּ בְּתַעֲרוּבָת |
| רִבְעִיו וְחֹטְאוֹ. | סָבִיב עַל אַרְבַּעַת | וְנָתַן בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ | עַל קַרְנוֹתָיו הִזָּה |

- 151 Standing at the eastern wall of the Altar
 As he completes the purification
 From there he sprays
 Seven times for its cleansing²⁸⁵¹
- 152 When he finishes he approaches
 The living he-goat²⁸⁵²
 And places both his hands upon it
 To confess the sins of the People.²⁸⁵³

And thus he would say: I beg of You, LORD, they have erred, been iniquitous and wilfully sinned before Your-Your People, the Family of Israel. I beg of You- with Your Name LORD forgive now the errors, iniquities and wilful sins by which Your People, the Family of Israel have erred, been iniquitous and wilfully sinned before You. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant, from Your glorious expression: "For on this day he shall atone for you to cleanse you from all of your sins before the LORD."²⁸⁵⁴ And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."²⁸⁵⁵ And he too would intend to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed." And You in Your abundant goodness arouse Your mercy and forgive the man who is of Your servants. And may You in Your abundant goodness arouse Your mercy and forgive the Congregation of Yeshurun.²⁸⁵⁶

²⁸⁵¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:5.

²⁸⁵² As opposed to the one that had already been sacrificed. This he-goat is intended to be cast away in the desert. See stanza 127 above.

²⁸⁵³ Mishnah Yoma 6:2.

²⁸⁵⁴ Lev. 16:30.

²⁸⁵⁵ Mishnah Yoma 6:2 does not mention the prostrations, but in Tractate Yoma 3:7 the Palestinian Talmud recounts that the people who were close to the High Priest would prostrate themselves, and those far from him only say the verse: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever." The addition of the section on the priests and the people in attendance, who kneel and bow before God as His name is called out, appears in Mishnah Yomah 6:2, only after the third confession made by the High Priest. Yosse ben Yosse maintains throughout his oeuvre the position that this participation by the priests and the people in the Courtyard in There may be a different tradition at play here, or a redaction error, or a silence that speaks to yet other possible reasons.

²⁸⁵⁶ An epithet for the people of Israel, after Isa. 44:2.

עַל צִלְע מִזְרַח גָּמַר חֲטָאֵיו וּמָשָׁם הִזָּה שָׁבַע עַל טְהָרוֹ

עַת גָּמְרוּ בָּא אֶצֶל שְׁעֵיר חַי וְסָמָךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו לְהַתְּוֹדוֹת בְּעַד עָם.

וְכֹךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם חֲטָאֵי עַוּוֹ וּפְשָׁעָיו לְפָנַי עֲמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. אֲנִי בַשֵּׁם כִּפְרֵנָּא לְחֲטָאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְשָׁעִים שְׁחֲטָאוּ וְשָׁעוּ וּשְׁפָשְׁעוּ לְפָנַי עֲמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדָךְ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהַר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חֲטָאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יי. וְהִכְהַנִּים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעִזָּרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־שֵׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מְפוֹרָשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כְהֵן גְּדוֹל הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמְשַׁתְּחָוִים וְנוֹפְלִין עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעַד. וְאֵף הוּא הָיָה מְכוּוִּין לְגַמּוֹר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם כְּנִגְדַּת הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם: תְּטַהְרוּ. וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבָךְ הַגְּדוֹל תְּעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסִלַּח לְעַדְתִּי יְשׁוּרוּן.

- 153 He²⁸⁵⁷ orders it²⁸⁵⁸ to be sent forth
By the hand of an Appointed Man²⁸⁵⁹
Laden with the sins²⁸⁶⁰
Of the Community, and its transgressions
- 154 He turns toward
The bullock and the he-goat
And tears them apart and removes
Their fat and burns them.²⁸⁶¹
- 155 Novice priests
Carry them on poles²⁸⁶²
And they burn outside the City
The hide the flesh and the excrement
- 156 When the he-goat reaches
The edge of the desert
The men turn their shawls in the air
To convey the message from one to the other.²⁸⁶³

²⁸⁵⁷ The High Priest.

²⁸⁵⁸ The living he-goat.

²⁸⁵⁹ The term **אִישׁ עֵינִי**, translated here as “An appointed man” is rare. It appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in Lev. 16:21, it never appears in the Mishnah, never in Yerushalmi, never in Tosefta, and only once in the Bavli as a direct quote from Lev. It is also rare in the extant Qumranic literature, appearing once in 11QT col. xxvi. Yosse ben Yosse uses it twice in his work, but this is not, I think, a mere stylistic preference or affectation. Mishnah Yoma 6:3 takes a subtle jibe at the priests. First, the person who was appointed is said to be not important enough to merit a technical title, he was just the guy who walked the goat to the desert. Secondly, the High Priests wanted to have a designated priest, but as the story goes, when an Israelite once walked the animal to the desert things went just as smoothly, the ritual was just as efficacious, and nothing untoward really took place. In other words, the priests are dispensable. The ritual is legally sound and correct regardless of the clan association of the man pulling the rope of the condemned he-goat. This militates against priestly importance and for rabbinic importance, for after all, the important thing is to have the he-goat cast off in accordance with rabbinic edict, so the rabbis are central and essential, and not the politically presumptuous priestly caste. Yosse ben Yosse challenges the rabbinic implications, in all his Avodah Piyyutim. In his narrative it is always a priestly agent, always a minor priest who is pre-appointed by the High Priest himself. By employing the rare term, the Paytan links his Piyyut to scripture, distancing it from the Mishnah, and asserting a more authentic understanding of historic events. He underscores priestly dominion over the Yom Kippur ritual, priestly centrality and importance, and entreat his audience to remember that the priestly connection to the ritual is based in Torah, not in fallible human claims to power.

²⁸⁶⁰ The sins of the Nation are ritually placed upon the head of the he-goat, to be cast off in the desert, after Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 66:B.

²⁸⁶¹ Mishnah Yoma 6:7.

²⁸⁶² Mishnah Yoma 6:7 recounts that the High Priest prepared the meat of the slaughtered animals for burning, but does not mention the novice priests carrying the meat away to be burned. It treats as equally important the High Priest and the novice priests, by way of diminishing the ritual status of the High Priest and asserting control over the proceedings both inside and outside the Temple. Their supervisory role breaches the Temple walls, it covers the space beyond, it therefore

establishes rabbinic authority over holy and profane spaces, over the land and its people all, while subtly reducing to irrelevance priestly claims to authority. The Mishnah narrative implies that while priestly dominion over elements in the ritual are indeed “factual,” priestly authority stops at the Temple’s outer wall, while rabbinic authority spans both the inside and the outside of the sacred space. Yosse ben Yosse disagrees.

²⁸⁶³ Mishnah Yoma 6:8.

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| פָּקְדוֹ לְשִׁלְחוֹ | בֵּיד אִישׁ עֵתִי | עָמוּס עֲוֹנוֹת | אוֹם וּפְשָׁעֶיהָ |
| פָּנָיו שָׁם | בְּפֶרֶשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר | קָרְעָם וְהוֹצִיא | חֶלְבָם וְהִקְטִיר. |
| פָּרְחֵי כְהוֹנָה | יִסְבְּלוּם בְּמוֹטוֹת | וַיִּשְׂרְפוּ חוּץ לְעִיר | עוֹר וּבָשָׂר וּפָרָשׁ |
| פָּשַׁט שְׁעִיר | לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר | מְנִיפֵי צְנִיפוֹת | זֶה לָזֶה יִבְשָׁרוּ. |

- 157 Delighted to show
His abundant magnificence
And to be adorned
In his majestic attire²⁸⁶⁴
- 158 He marches and sanctifies
His hands and his feet
And disrobes of the linen clothes
And wears his own clothes.²⁸⁶⁵
- 159 The order of the Day's Service
Is read to the Congregation²⁸⁶⁶
And the Laws of the Tenth Day
Is spoken by heart²⁸⁶⁷
- 160 Upon completing the necessary benedictions²⁸⁶⁸
He sanctifies himself and disrobes²⁸⁶⁹
And goes down to bathe
And rises and dries himself.
- 161 The holy vestments
Of gold he now dons
And he further sanctifies
His hands and his feet²⁸⁷⁰
- 162 He hastens to make
The Mussaf he-goat offering
And sacrificed together his ram and the ram of the People
Included with the daily offerings of fat.²⁸⁷¹

²⁸⁶⁴ Esther 1:4.

²⁸⁶⁵ Mishnah Yoma 7:1 simply refers to the High Priest's personal (i.e. non ritual) clothes as his "white overcoat," diminishing the grandeur of the High Priest and, per force, his status and pre-eminence.

²⁸⁶⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:1 makes no mention of the recitation by the High Priest of the order of the Avodah.

²⁸⁶⁷ Mishnah Yoma 7:1 recounts that the Laws of Yom Kippur [Lev. 16; Lev. 23:26-32] are read to the congregation of Israel by the High Priest. The ritual is important, for it now involves direct contact between the people and God, mediated by the High Priest's voice. But in the rabbinic narrative, the ritual is governed by the Sanhedrin. The head of the Sanhedrin is the facilitator, the real link between Torah and the people, he is the one who gives the scroll to the High Priest, and the High priest in turn becomes a disembodied voice, the loudspeaker, the mechanism of communication. The Paytan disagrees. He removes any mediating elements between the High Priest and the People, and recounts that the High Priest knew these laws by heart.

²⁸⁶⁸ Mishnah Yoma 7:1 lists the eight blessings the High Priest must make. The Paytan uses "short hand" here.

²⁸⁶⁹ Mishnah Yoma 7:3 refers back to Mishnah Yoma 7:1 where it debates whether the High Priest wore pure linen vestments or his own, non-ritual clothes. The Paytan does not make the following ablutions contingent on the type of clothing worn by the High Priest while reading and recounting the order of the Day.

²⁸⁷⁰ Mishnah Yoma 7:3.

²⁸⁷¹ Mishnah Yoma 7:3 (according to R. Eliezer).

צֶהַל לְהִרְאוֹת עוֹשֶׁר תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ וּלְהִתְנַאוֹת בְּמַלְבוּשׁ יְקָרוֹ

צָעַד וְקִדְשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו וּפִשְׁט כְּלֵי בָד וְעָטָה כְּסוּתוֹ.

צוּי סֵדֶר יוֹדִיעַ לְעֵדָה וַיִּוְרַגַּל בְּפֶה חֶק הָעֵשׂוֹר

צָרָף בְּרִכּוֹת הַשָּׁלִים וְקִדְשׁ וּפִשְׁט וַיִּרְדּוּ וְטָבַל וְעָלָה וְסַפָּג.

קְדוּשַׁת בְּגָדָי זֶהָב לְבָשׁ וַיִּקְדַּשׁ עוֹד יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו

קָדַם וְעָשָׂה שְׁעִיר הַמּוֹסֵף וְהַכִּלִּיל אֵילוֹ וְאֵיל עֵם עִם חֶלְבֵי יוֹם.

- 163 He sanctifies his hands
And his feet and disrobes,
And goes down to bathe
And rises to dry himself²⁸⁷²
- 164 White clothes
Are brought to him
And he wears them and sanctifies
His hands and his feet.²⁸⁷³
- 165 He rushes like a swift man²⁸⁷⁴
To the spot between the two Staves
And removes from there
The Ladle and the golden Brazier²⁸⁷⁵
- 166 His feet and his hands
He sanctifies as is his habit²⁸⁷⁶
And he disrobes of the linen clothes²⁸⁷⁷
And puts them aside forever.²⁸⁷⁸
- 167 He bathes and dries himself
And dons golden vestments
And further sanctifies
His hands and his feet²⁸⁷⁹
- 168 The daily offering
Of dusk he now offers
And burns incense
Between the pieces of flesh and the liquid offering.²⁸⁸⁰

²⁸⁷² Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁷³ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁷⁴ In Exod. 32:8 the text attests that the People were swift in straying from the right path and turned quickly to the golden calf. Here the Paytan offers a “remedy” for that swiftness, by painting urgency into the actions of the High Priest. Mishnah Yoma 7:4 does not indicate urgency.

²⁸⁷⁵ Mishnah Yoma 8:4.

²⁸⁷⁶ Isa. 5:17.

²⁸⁷⁷ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁷⁸ Mishnah Yoma 7:4 does not mention the tucking away of the ritual vestments, but the Paytan refers to Lev. 16:23.

²⁸⁷⁹ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁸⁰ The *תמיד של בין ערביים*, the offering at dusk, is performed after the Ladle and the Brazier had been removed from the Sanctuary. The vessels were removed while the High Priest wore white linen, and the dusk sacrifices were performed while he wore the golden vestments. See Mirsky’s comments: *פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי*. (1991). p. 201-202, footnotes 189 and 195.

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| קֹדֶשׁ יָדָיו | וְרַגְלָיו וּפְשָׁט, | וַיֵּרֶד וְטָבַל | וְעָלָה וְסָפַג |
| קָרְבוֹ לְפָנָיו | בְּגָדֵי לְבָן | לְבָשָׁם וְקֹדֶשׁ | יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו. |
| רָץ כְּאִישׁ מְהִיר | לְבֵין הַבְּדִים | וְהוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם | כַּף וּמַחְתָּה פֶּזַז |
| רַגְלָיו וַיָּדָיו | קֹדֶשׁ כְּדַבְּרוֹ | וּפְשָׁט כְּלֵי בָד | וְהִנִּיחָם נָצַח. |
| רַחֵץ וְסָפַג | וְעָטָה כְּלֵי פֶזַז | וַיִּקְדָּשׁ עוֹד | יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו |
| רְצוּי תָמִיד | הִגִּישׁ בְּעַרְבִים | וְהִקְטִיר קְטֹרֶת | בֵּין גְּתָחִים לְנֶסֶךְ. |

- 169 He saves for the evening
The lighting of the oil lamps²⁸⁸¹
Because the commandment in their regard
Is from evening to evening
- 170 He returns to raise his hands
And bless the People²⁸⁸²
And he sanctifies his hands
And his feet and he disrobes.
- 171 He covers his body
In his own clothes
And eminent men²⁸⁸³ accompany him
With pomp to his abode
- 172 Safely did he emerge²⁸⁸⁴
Without any blemish²⁸⁸⁵ upon him
And the Congregation²⁸⁸⁶ rejoices
In happiness and with a glad heart.
- 173 First he tells them that the emissary
Who drove the he-goat to the desert had announced
That the transgressions have been forgiven
To the Backsliding Daughter²⁸⁸⁷
- 174 Give us a sign
Those who dispatched him²⁸⁸⁸ say
How shall we know
That the sin has been atoned.

²⁸⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁸² This benediction is absent from Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

²⁸⁸³ Mishnah Yoma recounts only that the anonymous “they” accompany the High Priest back to his home.

²⁸⁸⁴ From the Holy of Holies, implying atonement had been achieved safely.

²⁸⁸⁵ The Paytan uses the word **הוקרה** which harks back to the beginning of the Avodah when the High Priest is secluded from his wife lest he be defiled with **קרי**, meaning nocturnal emissions (see stanza 78 above). I think the Paytan chooses to end the Piyut tying the High priest’s purity to the early stages of the Avodah, indicating a constant state of ritual purity throughout.

²⁸⁸⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:4 relates that the High Priest’s family celebrated his safe return. Yosse ben Yosse narrates that the entire Congregation celebrated, thus extending the circle of influence of the High Priest, direct and unmediated as this influence is.

²⁸⁸⁷ An epithet for the nation of Israel, after Jer. 31:21.

²⁸⁸⁸ The High Priest is the People’s emissary.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| שֹׁמֵר לְעֶרְב | דְּלִיקַת נְרוֹת | כִּי מִצּוֹתֶם | מֵעֶרֶב וְעַד עֶרֶב |
| שָׁב שָׂאת כַּפַּיִם | לְבָרְךָ אֶת־הָעַם | וְקִדַּשׁ יָדָיו | וְרָגְלָיו וּפְשָׁט. |
| שָׂאֲרוּ יִכְסֶה | בְּבִגְדֵי עֲצָמוֹ | וְשָׂרִים יְלוּוֶהוּ | בְּהִדָּר לְנֹוֹיָהוּ |
| שְׁלוֹם בְּצִאתוֹ | בְּלִי הוֹקְרָה פִּיסוּל | תִּרְנֹן עָרָה | בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב. |
| תַּחֲלִילָה יִבָּשֶׁר | שְׁלִיחַ הַשְּׁעִיר | כִּי נִרְצוּ עֹנוֹת | בֵּת הַשׁוֹבְבָה |
| תָּן לָנוּ מוֹפֵת | שׁוֹלְחָיו יֵאֱמִירוּ | בְּמָה נִדְעֶ כִּי | כּוֹפֵר פֶּשַׁע. |

175 The aspect of the scarlet
Thread had become white²⁸⁸⁹
And the he-goat that I had driven
Was pushed and it had died²⁸⁹⁰

176 They²⁸⁹¹ don majesty²⁸⁹²
And wear glory²⁸⁹³
They find gladness²⁸⁹⁴
And discover joy.²⁸⁹⁵

תּוֹאֲרֵת לְשׁוֹן הַשְּׁנֵי הַלְּבִינָה וְשֵׁעִיר הַחֹלְכֵתִי וְנִדְחָה וּמֵת

תַּפְאֲרֵת יַעֲטוּ וְהָדָר יִלְבְּשׁוּ שִׂמְחָה יִמְצְאוּ וְשִׁשׁוֹן יִשִּׁיגוּ.

²⁸⁸⁹ Mishnah Yoma 6:8. The red thread suspended at the Sanctuary turned white, indicating atonement, after Isa. 1:18.

²⁸⁹⁰ The second sign is that the condemned he-goat had died in the desert.

²⁸⁹¹ The entire People, now forgiven.

²⁸⁹² Psalm 96:6.

²⁸⁹³ Psalm 149:9.

²⁸⁹⁴ Isa. 51:3 is worth citing here in full: "For the LORD hath comforted Zion; He hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

²⁸⁹⁵ Isa. 35:10.

אתה כוננת
YOU HAVE CREATED THE WORLD

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Genesis | 81 |
| Exodus | 46 |
| Leviticus | 39 |
| Numbers | 22 |
| Deuteronomy | 13 |
| Joshua | 2 |
| Judges | 2 |
| I Kings | 3 |
| II kings | 1 |
| I Samuel | 3 |
| II Samuel | 1 |
| Isaiah | 36 |
| Jeremiah | 11 |
| Ezekiel | 10 |
| Hosea | 1 |
| Joel | 2 |
| Amos | 2 |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | 3 |
| Micah | |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | |
| Zephaniah | 1 |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | 1 |
| Malachi | |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Psalms | 44 |
| Proverbs | 17 |
| Job | 12 |
| Song of Songs | 3 |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | 1 |
| Ecclesiastes | 2 |
| Esther | 2 |
| Daniel | 4 |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | |
| I Chronicles | 1 |
| II Chronicles | 2 |
| Genesis Rabba | 8 |
| Mishnah | 10 |
| | 3 |
| PT | 26 |
| BT | 8 |
| Exodus Rabba | 2 |
| Esther Rabba | 1 |
| Tosefta | 3 |
| Josephus | 6 |
| DSS | 3 |
| Ben Sira | 1 |
| | |

אלוה גבורות אזכיר – Recount God's Great Works

TITLE: I Recount God's Great Works.....אזכיר גבורות אלוה

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Very detailed historiographic review of Creation, the Three Fathers, Amram's three descendants, and culminating in the privileged Priestly caste. God is centrally involved in human history. A thorough account of the High Priest service [Avodah] on Yom Kippur at the Temple.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES:

- **Stanzas:** 243
- **Acrostic system:** (10 x א"ב) + (22 x repetition of letter ה as cap).
- **Complete/Incomplete:** Appears complete.
- **Other:** --

NOTES: Avodah account relies on scripture and on Mishnah Yoma. Recitation of the quotes may be by the congregation, or by the Paytan/cantor, lending authority to the detailed description of the Avodah, and connecting the congregants to the service.

אלוה גבורות אזכיר – Recount God's Great Works

- 1 I am reminded of the great deeds²⁸⁹⁶
Of my mighty²⁸⁹⁷ God
Who is the only One and there are none but Him²⁸⁹⁸
He exists²⁸⁹⁹ and He has no match,
- 2 There is none after Him on earth²⁹⁰⁰
Before Him there existed no other in the firmament
None existed in the past²⁹⁰¹
And none shall ever exist after Him²⁹⁰².
- 3 As Master He devises²⁹⁰³
As God He creates
He reflects on all creatures, and none is overlooked²⁹⁰⁴
He speaks, and nothing tarries after His Word
- 4 He speaks and thus creates²⁹⁰⁵
He confers²⁹⁰⁶ and thus constructs²⁹⁰⁷
He endures²⁹⁰⁸ burden of sins
And boundless²⁹⁰⁹ in tolerating transgressions.

²⁸⁹⁶ 1 Chron. 16:4.

²⁸⁹⁷ Exod. 15:11 The Paytan adds a YOD to the word **נאדר**, making a possessive and intimate claim, after **שרתי** and **רבתי** in Lam. 1:2.

²⁸⁹⁸ Isa. 45:14.

²⁸⁹⁹ The word **אפס** can be read as “naught” but in Biblical Hebrew it can mean the opposite, after 2 Sam. 9:3.

²⁹⁰⁰ Psalm 49:2; Psalm 39:6.

²⁹⁰¹ The word **קדם** refers both to the direction of the East, after Gen. 25:6; but the same word refers to the Past, after Psalm 139:5 for example. I chose the temporal interpretation because of the contextual reference to God's omnipresence over time.

²⁹⁰² The word **עקב** can mean “as a consequence,” after Gen. 26:5; it can also mean “subsequently,” after Hosea 12:4; and it can mean “forever” or “to the end,” after Psalm 41:10, Psalm 119:33, and Psalm 119:112. I chose the latter, for its temporal and special implications. See: Isa. 43:10.

²⁹⁰³ A reference to God's plan for Creation, after Exod. 35:33.

²⁹⁰⁴ Isa. 40:26.

²⁹⁰⁵ Psalm 33:9.

²⁹⁰⁶ Isa. 14:27.

²⁹⁰⁷ Prov. 19:21.

²⁹⁰⁸ Isa. 46:4.

²⁹⁰⁹ Neh. 9:32.

אזכיר גבורות אלוה

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| אֶפֶס וְאִין שְׁנִי, | יְחִיד וְאִין עוֹד | אֱלֹהֵי נְאֻדְרִי | אֲזַכִּיר גְּבוּרוֹת |
| וְאִין זוּלְתוֹ בְּעַקְבִּי. | אִין בְּלְתוֹ קְדָם | לְפָנָיו אִין בְּשַׁחֲקִי | אַחֲרָיו אִין בְּחֻלְדִּי |
| שָׁח וְאִין מְאַחֲרִי | נִמְלֵךְ וְאִין נִעְדָר | אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת | אֲדוֹן לְחֻשׁוֹב |
| וְגִבּוֹר לְסִבּוּלִי. | אֲמִיץ לְשֹׂאת | יֹעֵץ וּמְקִים | אוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה |

- 5 It is to Him that hymns are sung²⁹¹⁰
 From the mouth of His creatures
 Those above²⁹¹¹ and those below²⁹¹²
 They each sing His praise²⁹¹³
- 6 There is but one God on earth²⁹¹⁴
 Who is sanctified in the heavens²⁹¹⁵
 He is greater than the vast waters
 He is high and He is mighty up.²⁹¹⁶
- 7 Praised²⁹¹⁷ from the abyss²⁹¹⁸
 Adoration from the stars
 By day through speech
 And by night through song²⁹¹⁹
- 8 Fire makes known His Name²⁹²⁰
 The trees of the forest sing praises²⁹²¹
 Every beast attests²⁹²²
 To the might of His tremendous acts.²⁹²³

²⁹¹⁰ Psalm 100:2.

²⁹¹¹ God's creatures "above" are the angels, after Ezek. 10:20 and Isa. 6:2 See: Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 35.

²⁹¹² By inference, God's creatures "below" are humans.

²⁹¹³ Psalm 24:5.

²⁹¹⁴ Deut. 6:4.

²⁹¹⁵ Isa. 6:3.

²⁹¹⁶ Psalm 93:4.

²⁹¹⁷ The word **אדר** can have two meanings: (1) A robe, **אדרת**, or mantle, after Micah 2:5; or (2) A variant of **אדיר** or great, mighty. Contextually, the word appears to refer to praises and adorations of God by the forces and elements of Nature.

²⁹¹⁸ Hab. 3:10.

²⁹¹⁹ Psalm 19:3.

²⁹²⁰ Isa. 64:1.

²⁹²¹ Psalm 96:12.

²⁹²² Job 35:11.

²⁹²³ Psalm 145:6.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| אֲשֶׁר לוֹ רִנָּנוֹת | מִפִּי יִצְוֲרִיו | מִמַּעַלָּה וּמִטָּה | יֵשָׂא תְהִלָּה |
| אֵל אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ | וְקֹדֶשׁ בְּשָׁמַיִם | מִמַּיִם רַבִּים | אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם. |
| אֲדָר מִתְהוֹמֹת | שָׁבַח מִמְּאֹרוֹת | אוֹמֵר מִיָּמַיִם | וְזֹמֵר מִלֵּילוֹת |
| אֵשׁ תּוֹדִיעַ שְׁמוֹ | עֲצֵי יַעַר יִרְנְנוּ | בְּהִמָּה תִלְמַד | עֲזוֹז נוֹרְאוֹתָיו. |

- 9 His daily delight²⁹²⁴
 Is the Law²⁹²⁵ with which He amuses²⁹²⁶ Himself
 It²⁹²⁷ is the fruit of His cogitation²⁹²⁸
 Until His Treasured Chosen²⁹²⁹ stood²⁹³⁰
- 10 It²⁹³¹ existed before²⁹³² and was given to a thousand generations²⁹³³
 And it arose from His contemplation
 And from it arose
 The template for Creation.²⁹³⁴
- 11 In the soaring heights He prepared²⁹³⁵
 The throne of His Majesty²⁹³⁶
 His cloud is spread²⁹³⁷ upon His throne
 And the mists of heaven are His tent²⁹³⁸
- 12 His tent shall not be removed²⁹³⁹
 And its stakes shall never be plucked up²⁹⁴⁰
 Until the end of the world²⁹⁴¹
 And it²⁹⁴² will be renewed²⁹⁴³ by the Word²⁹⁴⁴.

²⁹²⁴ Prov. 8:30.

²⁹²⁵ A reference to the Torah.

²⁹²⁶ The word **שעשוע** in Modern Hebrew refers to entertainment, or to a game. In Biblical Hebrew the word refers to “paying attention,” after Gen. 4:5; it also implies that this attentiveness is a pleasurable preoccupation, after Isa. 5:7, and Psalm 119:24.

²⁹²⁷ The Torah.

²⁹²⁸ Joshua 1:8.

²⁹²⁹ A reference to the people of Israel, after Psalm 135:4.

²⁹³⁰ At Sinai, to receive the Tablets, the Torah, after Exod. 19:2.

²⁹³¹ The Torah.

²⁹³² The Torah existed before Creation, according to Gen. Rabbah 1:4.

²⁹³³ Psalm 105:8.

²⁹³⁴ 1 Chron. 28:19.

²⁹³⁵ Psalm 103:19.

²⁹³⁶ Jer. 17:12.

²⁹³⁷ The word **פרש** occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible, Job 26:9 Its origin is not clear, but contextually it refers to “spreading” as of a canopy.

²⁹³⁸ Isa. 40:22.

²⁹³⁹ The word **יען** appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, Isa. 33:20 It appears in a different form in Jer. 48:12, making reference to tilting an anchor off its mooring.

²⁹⁴⁰ Isa. 33:20.

²⁹⁴¹ Ezek. 7:6; Daniel 8:17; Daniel 8:19; Isa. 51:6.

²⁹⁴² The world.

²⁹⁴³ Isa. 66:22.

²⁹⁴⁴ Of God, whose creative force is enveloped in His Word, after Psalm 33:9.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| אָמוֹן שִׁחֲקוּ | דַּת שְׁעִשׂוּעֵיוֹ | הִיא הַגִּיוֹנוֹ | עַד עָמוֹד סְגוּלָהּ |
| אִז קָדַם לְאַלְף דּוֹר | עָלְתָה בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתָּ | מִמְנַה תְּכוּנַת | מִלְאַכּוֹת הַתְּבִנִית. |
| בְּמָרוֹם הַכִּין | כֶּסֶף הֶדְרוֹ | פָּרְשׂוּ עָנְנוֹ | וְדוֹק נָטָה לְאַהֲלֵ |
| בַּל יִצְעֹן | וּבַל יִסַּע יְתְרוֹתָיו | עַד בֵּא קִצּוֹ | וַיִּתְחַדֵּשׁ בְּאוֹמְרוֹ. |

- 13 He arranged²⁹⁴⁵ upon the waters
 The pillars of the world²⁹⁴⁶
 And girded her²⁹⁴⁷ loins
 With void²⁹⁴⁸ and storm²⁹⁴⁹
- 14 Lest it crumple
 And lest its foundations stumble²⁹⁵⁰
 Until it is worn old like a piece of clothing²⁹⁵¹
 To be replaced²⁹⁵² as has always been the case.²⁹⁵³
- 15 Desolation²⁹⁵⁴ and darkness
 Covered the face of the world
 And a flash of light²⁹⁵⁵
 Reflected the illuminated face of the King²⁹⁵⁶
- 16 He flashed²⁹⁵⁷ brightness into a day²⁹⁵⁸
 For Man to go to his toil²⁹⁵⁹
 And He assigned darkness to the small of the night
 To allow the animals of the forest to roam.²⁹⁶⁰

²⁹⁴⁵ The root **ברר** signifies a choosing. פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק. אהרון מירסקי (1991). p. 129, footnote 13 maintains that the root **ברר** in this case refers to a strengthening. In the Hebrew Bible the root is more often construed in the sense of choosing, selecting the best object from among a variety of others. See: Ezek. 20:38; Eccles. 9:1; 1 Chron. 16:41. I chose to translate the word **בירר** as “arranged” which implies a choosing of form and function, and complies with the Biblical meaning more closely.

²⁹⁴⁶ Psalm 49:2. In Chagigah Tractate 12, Folio B the Midrash on Prov. 8:31 the world is described as resting upon pillars that are anchored in the waters of the sea.

²⁹⁴⁷ The Earth.

²⁹⁴⁸ After Gen. 1:1.

²⁹⁴⁹ In a Braita for Chagigah tractate 12:1 the earth is described as being girded by a green belt of tempestuous chaos which emanates physical and spiritual darkness. It is a strengthening device for the world, according to the Sage.

²⁹⁵⁰ Psalm 93:1.

²⁹⁵¹ Isa. 51:6.

²⁹⁵² God creates worlds and destroys them in a cyclical process of endless Creation. After Eccles. Rabba 3: 14A.

²⁹⁵³ Isa. 66:22.

²⁹⁵⁴ The word **בהו** usually appears as a compound word with **תהו** after Gen. 1:1 signifying the chaos and desolation of the world before Creation. The previous stanza (13, line 4) features the word **תהוהו** which is here complemented with its associated **בוהו**.

²⁹⁵⁵ Prov. 16:15.

²⁹⁵⁶ Gen. Rabba 3:3.

²⁹⁵⁷ The word **בהק** in Lev. 13:39 signifies a skin eruption. Here the flare-up is associated with light and with a glow that dawned upon the world in the First Day of Creation.

²⁹⁵⁸ Gen. 1:3-5.

²⁹⁵⁹ Psalm 104:22-23.

²⁹⁶⁰ Psalm 104:20.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| בִּירַר עַל־מַיִם | עֲמוּדֵי חֶלֶד | וְשִׁנָּס מִתְנִיָּה | בְּתוֹהוּ וּבְסֻעָרָה |
| בַּל תִּמּוּט | וּבַל יִמְעָדוּ מִכּוֹנֵיָהּ | עַד תִּבְלֶה כִּבְגָד | וְתוֹמַר כְּמֵאֵז. |
| בוֹהוּ וְאַפְלָה | כֶּסֶף פְּנֵי חֶלֶד | וְתִבְהַק אֹר | מֵאֹר פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ |
| בִּיהַק נוֹגֶה לְיוֹם | לְצֹאת אָדָם לְפֹעֵל | וְשֵׁת חֶשֶׁךְ לְאִישׁוֹן | לְרַמֵּס חֵיתוֹ יָעַר. |

- 17 As the Spirit hovered
 Between the heavens and the water²⁹⁶¹
 He set a ceiling in between
 To carry the load of half²⁹⁶² the measure²⁹⁶³ of the waters²⁹⁶⁴
- 18 Through them will be manifest
 The wonder of His deeds
 In the bounty of fruit²⁹⁶⁵ after the rain²⁹⁶⁶
 And in the rivers full of water.²⁹⁶⁷
- 19 When He differentiated²⁹⁶⁸
 Between waters and waters²⁹⁶⁹
 He also set a leeching fire²⁹⁷⁰
 To lure²⁹⁷¹ in the ones who are lawless²⁹⁷²
- 20 It is a fire that requires no bellows²⁹⁷³
 And which will not be dimmed for all eternity²⁹⁷⁴
 And even the gush of great waters²⁹⁷⁵
 Will not reach this realm.
- 21 He banished to a single basin²⁹⁷⁶
 All the great waters
 And put sand to circumscribe²⁹⁷⁷ them
 As a door and its lock²⁹⁷⁸

²⁹⁶¹ Gen. 1:2.

²⁹⁶² Gen. Rabba 4:4.

²⁹⁶³ Isa. 40:12.

²⁹⁶⁴ Gen. 1:6.

²⁹⁶⁵ Psalm 104:13.

²⁹⁶⁶ In a Braita for Ta'anit 10, Folio A; Gen. Rabba 4:4.

²⁹⁶⁷ Psalm 65:10.

²⁹⁶⁸ On the Second Day of Creation.

²⁹⁶⁹ Gen. 1:7.

²⁹⁷⁰ Prov. 30:15 referring to Hell which was created on the Second Day, according to Gen. Rabba 4.

²⁹⁷¹ Isa. 30:33.

²⁹⁷² Isa. 5:14.

²⁹⁷³ Job 20:26.

²⁹⁷⁴ Isa. 66:24; Pesachim Tractate 54, Folio A.

²⁹⁷⁵ Psalm 32:6.

²⁹⁷⁶ On the Third Day of Creation, after Gen. 1:9.

²⁹⁷⁷ Jer. 5:22.

²⁹⁷⁸ Deut. 3:5.

בְּרַחֵף רוּחַ בֵּין שְׁחָקִים לְמִים שֶׁת תִּקְרָה בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאֵת חֲצֵי מְדוּרָיִם

בָּם יִנְדַע פְּלֹאוֹ לְפַעֲלוֹ בְּטוֹב פְּרֵי גֶשֶׁם פֶּלֶג מַלְא מַיִם.

בְּהַבְדִּילוֹ בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם הִסִּיק עֲלוּקָה תִּפְתָּה לְבָלֵי חֶק

בְּאֵשׁ לֹא נֹפֶחַ וְלֹא נִכְבָּה נֶצַח וְשֹׁטֵף מַיִם רַבִּים לֹא יִגִּיעֲנוּ.

גֶּרֶשׁ לְמִקְוֵה מַיִם אֲדִירִים וְשֵׁם לָהֶם חוּל דְּלָתַיִם וּבְרִית

- 22 He hedged them²⁹⁷⁹
 Lest they cover the earth²⁹⁸⁰
 Until the Faithful of His Abode²⁹⁸¹
 Split them asunder.²⁹⁸²
- 23 He revealed the soil²⁹⁸³
 To be for Man's toil²⁹⁸⁴
 And He sewed a thicket upon it²⁹⁸⁵
 And herb yielding seed²⁹⁸⁶
- 24 And in Eden He also planted²⁹⁸⁷
 A refreshing garden
 Wherein His glory is the canopy²⁹⁸⁸
 For the holy excellent ones of His desire.²⁹⁸⁹
- 25 He resolved to conceal
 The sevenfold light²⁹⁹⁰
 And set out the oil lamps²⁹⁹¹
 To govern the day and the night²⁹⁹²
- 26 They cannot breach their borders
 And they shall not tarry in their journey²⁹⁹³
 Until the servant of the Tent²⁹⁹⁴
 Will make them still in the valley.²⁹⁹⁵

²⁹⁷⁹ The waters.

²⁹⁸⁰ Psalm 104:9.

²⁹⁸¹ An epithet for Moses, after Num. 12:7.

²⁹⁸² Psalm 136:13.

²⁹⁸³ Gen. 1:9 regarding the Third Day of Creation.

²⁹⁸⁴ Gen. 2:15.

²⁹⁸⁵ Psalm 104:14.

²⁹⁸⁶ Gen. 1:11.

²⁹⁸⁷ Gen. 2:8.

²⁹⁸⁸ Psalm 68:14.

²⁹⁸⁹ An epithet for Israel, after Psalm 16:3.

²⁹⁹⁰ The full light of Creation has been stored and hidden for the righteous, for the time of the Eschaton, after Gen. Rabba 3:6; Isa. 30:26.

²⁹⁹¹ An epithet for the heavenly bodies, the stars created on the Fourth Day of Creation.

²⁹⁹² Gen. 1:18.

²⁹⁹³ Gen. 1:16.

²⁹⁹⁴ An epithet for Joshua, after Exod. 33:11.

²⁹⁹⁵ Joshua 10:12.

גֵּדֵר בַּעֲדָם בַּל יִכְסּוּ אֶרֶץ עַד נֶאֱמַן בַּיִת יַעֲשֶׂם גְּזָרִים.

גִּילָה אֲדָמָה לְעִבּוּדֵת אָנוּשׁ וְהִדְשִׂיָּאָה שִׁיחַ וְעֹשֵׁב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע

גַּם נָטַע בַּעֲדָן גַּז רַעֲנָנָה לְחֹפֶת כְּבוֹדֵת אֲדִירֵי חֶפְזִי.

גָּמַר לְהַעֲלִים אֹר שִׁבְעָתַיִם וְעָרַף גְּרוֹת לְמִשׁוֹל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה

גְּבוּל לֹא יִשְׁיגוּ וּלְכַת לֹא יֵאָחֲרוּ עַד מִשְׁרַת אֹהֶל יִדְמִימִם בְּעַמְּקֵי.

- 27 From the waters there rose
 The great serpents²⁹⁹⁶ of the abyss²⁹⁹⁷
 Strong of shield²⁹⁹⁸
 And possessed of sharpened barbs²⁹⁹⁹
- 28 He set aside some of them
 For the Eternal Feast³⁰⁰⁰
 And within them He prepared confinement
 For his fleeing emissary.³⁰⁰¹
- 29 Soaring flying creatures³⁰⁰²
 Appeared from a droplet of water³⁰⁰³
 To serve as a King's repast³⁰⁰⁴
 And for the multitude of His Hosts³⁰⁰⁵
- 30 He decreed as abomination³⁰⁰⁶
 Impure fowl³⁰⁰⁷
 Until the Tishbite³⁰⁰⁸ arrives
 And will be fed on crows.³⁰⁰⁹
- 31 From the soil there spawned a multitude³⁰¹⁰
 Horned animals for sacrifices³⁰¹¹
 Animals to serve as food
 From the great beasts to the smallest insect³⁰¹²

²⁹⁹⁶ Isa. 27:1.

²⁹⁹⁷ Gen. 1:21.

²⁹⁹⁸ Job 41:7.

²⁹⁹⁹ Isa. 5:28.

³⁰⁰⁰ The great serpents, created on the Fifth Day of Creation, are stored and hidden for the righteous, for the time of the Eschaton, when the righteous will feast upon the serpents, after Bava Batra 74, Folio C.

³⁰⁰¹ A reference to Jonah, after Jonah 1:3.

³⁰⁰² Job 5:7.

³⁰⁰³ Tractate Chulin 27:2.

³⁰⁰⁴ Ezek. 41:22.

³⁰⁰⁵ Exod. 7:4.

³⁰⁰⁶ Lev. 11:13.

³⁰⁰⁷ Deut. 14:3.

³⁰⁰⁸ An epithet for Elijah, after I Kings 17:1.

³⁰⁰⁹ I Kings 17:1; Gen. Rabba 5:5.

³⁰¹⁰ Gen. 48:16.

³⁰¹¹ Psalm 69:32; Tractate Chulin 60, Folio A.

³⁰¹² Gen. 1:24.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| גָּאוּ מַמִּים | בְּרִיחֵי תְהוֹמוֹת | אֲפִיקֵי מַגֵּן | שְׁנוֹנֵי חֲצִים |
| גִּנְזוּ מֵהֶם | לְמִשְׁתֵּה נִצָּחִים | וְהִכִּין בָּם כָּלֵא | לְצִיר הַבּוֹרֶחַ. |
| גְּבִיֵּי עוֹף | צָצוּ מִרְקַק מַיִם | לְאוֹכְלֵי שׁוֹלְחַן מֶלֶךְ | וְחֵיל צְבָאוֹתָיו |
| גָּזַר לְתוֹעֵבֹת | עוֹף לֹא טָהוֹר | עַד בּוֹא תִשָּׁבִי | וְעוֹרְכִים יִכְלָפוּהוּ. |
| דָּגוּ מִחֶלֶד | מוֹקְרָנִים לְזָבַח | חַיּוֹת מֵאֲכָל | עַד בְּהֵמָה וְרֶמֶשׂ |

- 32 He fattened the beasts
 With the crop³⁰¹³ of a thousand mountains³⁰¹⁴
 So that on the day he³⁰¹⁵ offered to sacrifice him³⁰¹⁶
 He³⁰¹⁷ will put a sword³⁰¹⁸ to one such beast.³⁰¹⁹
- 33 The Creator rejoiced
 And was glad of His creations
 As he saw
 That His works were goodly³⁰²⁰
- 34 Green pasture for resting³⁰²¹
 And delicious food³⁰²²
 And a set table³⁰²³
 But there was no one yet³⁰²⁴ to be pleased by it.
- 35 He spoke in His heart³⁰²⁵
 Who will come hither³⁰²⁶
 To slaughter sacrifices³⁰²⁷
 And to make wine libations
- 36 If such a creature will heed My Word
 He will be in the image of God
 And if He disobey My Instruction
 I will return him to dust.³⁰²⁸

³⁰¹³ Job 40:20.

³⁰¹⁴ Psalm 50:10.

³⁰¹⁵ A contextual reference to Abraham.

³⁰¹⁶ A contextual reference to Isaac and the עקדה, after Gen. 22:1-19 As in the case of Jonah and Elijah above, the Paytan infers that all of human history was foreseen and prepared for prior to Creation.

³⁰¹⁷ A contextual reference to Abraham.

³⁰¹⁸ Job 40:19.

³⁰¹⁹ Gen. 22:13.

³⁰²⁰ Gen. 1:25.

³⁰²¹ Psalm 23:2.

³⁰²² Deut. 33:14.

³⁰²³ Psalm 23:5.

³⁰²⁴ At this stage of Creation Man had not yet created, even as the world was prepared for his benefit, after Gen. 2:5.

³⁰²⁵ Gen. 1:26.

³⁰²⁶ Prov. 9:4.

³⁰²⁷ Prov. 9:2.

³⁰²⁸ The dust of the earth, the primordial clay of which Man was fashioned, Gen. 3:19.

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| דִּישׁוֹן בְּהִמּוֹת | בְּבוֹל הָרִי אֶלֶף | כִּי בַיּוֹם זָכָחוּ | יִגַּשׁ חֲרָבוֹ. |
| דָּץ יוֹצֵר | וְשָׂמַח בְּמַעֲשָׂיו | בְּהִבִּיטוֹ | כִּי טוֹב פָּעָלוֹ |
| דָּשָׂא מְנוּחֹת | וְאָכְלֵי מְגָדִים | וְשׁוֹלְחַן עָרוֹף | וְאוֹן מִי יְדוֹשָׁן. |
| דְּבַר בְּלָבוֹ | מִי יִסּוֹר הִנֵּה | לְטַבַּח הַטְּבוּחַ | וַיִּזֵּן הַמְּסוּף |
| דְּבָרֵי אִם יַעַשׂ | יִהְיֶה כְּאֱלֹהִים | וְאִם יִמִּיר אוֹמֵר | לְחַוְּמָרוֹ אֲשִׁיבָנּוּ. |

- 37 He scrutinized and understood
 And knew that mere mortals
 Would not have the insight³⁰²⁹
 To live naturally in holiness³⁰³⁰
- 38 He created Man in His image³⁰³¹
 And shaped³⁰³² him in His form
 So that both in the mists of the firmament and on the earth
 The fearful³⁰³³ glory of Him will be made manifest.
- 39 The Pre-eminent One³⁰³⁴ prepared in Eden
 And adorned his bedstead³⁰³⁵
 With gold and precious stone
 And provided him shelter in His abode³⁰³⁶
- 40 He imbued³⁰³⁷ Man with reason³⁰³⁸
 And graced³⁰³⁹ him the gift of insight³⁰⁴⁰
 To learn about his past and his future
 From the intimations of letters.³⁰⁴¹
- 41 He appointed Man as ruler³⁰⁴²
 Like a righteous governor³⁰⁴³
 To husband the animals that he had named³⁰⁴⁴
 To glorify God³⁰⁴⁵ and His creations³⁰⁴⁶

³⁰²⁹ Psalm 49:13.

³⁰³⁰ Gen. Rabb 11:2.

³⁰³¹ Gen. 1:26.

³⁰³² Ezek. 4:1.

³⁰³³ Ben Sira 17:3.

³⁰³⁴ An epithet for God, after Song of Sol. 5:10.

³⁰³⁵ For Man.

³⁰³⁶ Ezek. 28:13.

³⁰³⁷ The Paytan uses the word **יִשְׁטִי** implying that reason is a beautiful gift from the Creator, after Prov. 3:4.

³⁰³⁸ Ben Sira 17:6.

³⁰³⁹ Ben Sira 18:13.

³⁰⁴⁰ Isa. 11:2.

³⁰⁴¹ Isa. 41:23.

³⁰⁴² Psalm 8:7; Gen. 1:28.

³⁰⁴³ 2 Sam. 23:3.

³⁰⁴⁴ Gen. 2:20; Ben Sira 17:4.

³⁰⁴⁵ Ben Sira 17:10.

³⁰⁴⁶ Psalm 112:5.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| דָּרַשׁ וְהִבִּין | וַיֵּדַע מִתִּי שׁוֹא | כִּי לֹא יָבִין | לָלִין בִּיקָר |
| דִּימָהּ בְּצִלָּם | חִקְקוּ בְּתַבְנִית | הֵיוֹת בְּרוּק וְחִלָּד | פָּחַד מוֹרְאוֹ. |
| דָּגוּל בְּתוֹךְ עֵדוֹן | יִיפָּה יִצּוּעוֹ | בְּפִזּוֹ וְאָבוֹן יִקְרָה | חָק מְסוּכָתוֹ |
| דַּעַת קִישָׁטוֹ | וְרוּחַ חֲנָנוֹ | לְהַשְׁכִּיל מִקְדָּם | קִץ אוֹתִיּוֹת. |
| הַמְּשִׁילוֹ | כְּצַדִּיק וּמוֹשֵׁל | לְכָל־כָּל שִׁמוֹת | לְאֵל וּמַפְעָלָיו |

- 42 He cautioned Man³⁰⁴⁷
 About the Tree of Knowledge³⁰⁴⁸
 Lest they³⁰⁴⁹ be ensnared³⁰⁵⁰
 By eating the delightful foods.³⁰⁵¹
- 43 He made him³⁰⁵² fall asleep³⁰⁵³
 And while he revelled in his slumber
 He lifted a bone from his body³⁰⁵⁴
 And fashioned a young maiden³⁰⁵⁵
- 44 He decked her³⁰⁵⁶ like a bride³⁰⁵⁷
 With attractive jewels³⁰⁵⁸
 And cleaved them³⁰⁵⁹ together
 To be of one flesh.
- 45 The guileless³⁰⁶⁰ Woman³⁰⁶¹ was led astray
 By the dust crawling creature³⁰⁶²
 To defy God's instruction³⁰⁶³
 And thus to return to dust³⁰⁶⁴

³⁰⁴⁷ Gen. 3:3.

³⁰⁴⁸ Gen. 2:17.

³⁰⁴⁹ A reference to Adam and Eve, after Gen. 3:3.

³⁰⁵⁰ The root **שנק** refers to a snare upon which a person stumbles, or a mine, a trap that causes injury and falling. See: Psalm 9:17; Psalm 109:11; Deut. 12:30; 1 Sam. 28:9 The Paytan emphasizes the Snake's role in ensnaring Adam and Eve, after Gen. 3:1.

³⁰⁵¹ Gen. 3:6; Num. 11:4.

³⁰⁵² A reference to Adam.

³⁰⁵³ Gen. 2:21.

³⁰⁵⁴ Gen. 2:21-22.

³⁰⁵⁵ The root **עלמ** implies a mystery, after Lev. 4:13; Num. 5:13; Job 28:21; Eccles. 12:14. The word **עלמה** refers to youthfulness, and is translated as "young maiden", after Isa. 7:14; Gen. 24:23; Prov. 30:19. The Paytan insinuates something about the mystery and miraculous creation of Eve as a young woman wrought from Adam's flesh.

³⁰⁵⁶ Note the **שדג** in the last letter of the word **העדה** which refers to a compound verb: **העדה אותה**. The word **העדה** is drawn from the word **עדי** which translates as a jewel, or an ornament, after Ezek. 16:1.

³⁰⁵⁷ Isa. 61:10.

³⁰⁵⁸ Jer. 2:32.

³⁰⁵⁹ Adam and Eve, after Gen. 2:24.

³⁰⁶⁰ Prov. 9:13.

³⁰⁶¹ A reference to Eve.

³⁰⁶² A reference to the Snake, after Gen. 3:14.

³⁰⁶³ Jon 22:28.

³⁰⁶⁴ A reference to Man's new mortality, following the sin of Adam and Eve, after Gen. 3:19.

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| הִזְהִירוּ | עַל עֵץ הַדַּעַת | פֶּן יִנְקָשׁוּ | בְּמֵאֵכֶל תְּאוֹה. |
| הִרְדִּימוּ | בְּנוֹעַם שִׁינָה | הַרִים מִנּוּ עֶצֶם | וְכוֹנֵן עֲלֶמָה |
| הֶעֱדָה כְּכֹלָה | עַדֵי קְשׁוּרִים | הַדְּבִיקִם יַחַד | הָיֹת שָׂאֵר אַחֵר. |
| הִשִּׂיא פוֹתָה | זוֹחַל עֶפֶר | לְהִנְיֵא אוֹמֵר | וְלָשׁוּב לְעֶפֶר |

- 46 She³⁰⁶⁵ made Man mortal
 With her lust for the tree
 And thereby made the multitudes fall³⁰⁶⁶
 And killed even the greatest humans.³⁰⁶⁷
- 47 He³⁰⁶⁸ was chastised by means of his food³⁰⁶⁹
 And was punished by way of his paces forever³⁰⁷⁰
 And he³⁰⁷¹ will be sent as an emissary³⁰⁷²
 To chasten those who breach God's Law
- 48 They³⁰⁷³ were made naked and they were coated³⁰⁷⁴
 With a leaf of a wilting plant³⁰⁷⁵
 With which they were now gowned instead of³⁰⁷⁶ the frock of cloud
 The swaddlingband of fog.³⁰⁷⁷
- 49 A sorrowful pregnancy³⁰⁷⁸
 Was bequeathed to all descendants
 And he was decreed to toil and to suffer³⁰⁷⁹
 As are all men who enter in the world.³⁰⁸⁰

³⁰⁶⁵ A reference to Eve.

³⁰⁶⁶ Prov. 7:26.

³⁰⁶⁷ Gen. Rabba 21:2.

³⁰⁶⁸ A reference to the Snake.

³⁰⁶⁹ Gen. 3:14.

³⁰⁷⁰ Gen. Rabba 20:5.

³⁰⁷¹ A reference to the Snake.

³⁰⁷² God's emissary, after Gen. Rabba 10:7.

³⁰⁷³ A reference to Adam and Eve.

³⁰⁷⁴ Gen. 3:7.

³⁰⁷⁵ A reference to the fig tree, a deciduous arbore, that sheds its leaves seasonally- emphasizing the frailty and temporary nature of Adam and Eve's girdles. After Isa. 34:4.

³⁰⁷⁶ Temurah Tractate 1:3-5.

³⁰⁷⁷ God's cloud, after Job 38:9.

³⁰⁷⁸ Gen. 3:16 --- Note: Mirsky indicates that stanza 49, as well as stanzas 52, 60, 64, 95, 161, 162, 178, 179 and 193 do not appear in all the Yosse ben Yosse manuscripts, and represent additional sections (these stanzas add more iterations of the letter HEY for instance, over the morphologically original ten), which were probably added later on by redactors and copiers of the manuscripts. I therefore present the relevant stanzas in grey ink rather than in black, whereas Mirsky presents them in a smaller font than the historically original stanzas. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. p. 135, footnote 49.

³⁰⁷⁹ Gen. 3:17.

³⁰⁸⁰ The compound term **באי עולם** does not appear in the Hebrew Bible, and does not appear in the Mishnah or either of the Talmuds. A variant of the term appears in the DSS **סִרְרִי הַיְחִיד** (Rule of the Community): **באי הברית** 1QS Col. 1, 16 and 20 where the term is translated as "those who enter in the Rule of the Community" and "those who enter in the covenant" respectively [See: García Martínez and Tigchellar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 71]. In Rabbinic sources **בא לעולם** refers not to people but to events, as in **פורענות באה לעולם** in Avot 5:8, the Paytan's style is more closely aligned with the DSS example.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| וְהִרְגָה עֲצוּמִים. | הַפִּילָה רַבִּים | בְּתֵאוֹת הָעֵץ | הַמֵּיתָה אִישׁ |
| לְפוֹרְצֵי גֶדֶר | הוּא יְשׁוּלַח צִיר | וּבִפְעָמָיו לְנֹצַח | הוֹכָה בְּטִרְפוֹ |
| חֲתוּלַת עֲרֶפֶל. | תָּמוּר לְבוֹשׁ עֲנָן | בְּעֵלָה נוֹבֶלֶת | הוֹעֲרָמוּ וְכוֹסוּ |
| לְכָאֵי עוֹלָם. | וְהוּא לְעֵמֶל וְעֲצָבוֹן | נִיתַן לְתוֹלְדוֹת | הִירְיוֹן עֲצָב |

- 50 Their glorious countenance was replaced³⁰⁸¹
 And the fear they inspired was removed
 To dread all the creatures
 Rather than to rule over all of them.³⁰⁸²
- 51 They were removed³⁰⁸³ from Eden
 And expelled from the Garden³⁰⁸⁴
 And a cave in the rock was prepared
 To be their abode henceforth.³⁰⁸⁵
- 52 The creature of guilelessness³⁰⁸⁶ was tempted³⁰⁸⁷
 By the enticing words of the asp³⁰⁸⁸
 And the ground³⁰⁸⁹ was cursed for their sake³⁰⁹⁰
 Like a mother for her sons.³⁰⁹¹
- 53 And the Creator made haste
 To imbue His creature with desire³⁰⁹²
 And He customized his helpmeet³⁰⁹³
 To lay with³⁰⁹⁴ lustfully
- 54 And He made her receptive and He made her ovulate
 And He made her pregnant and He made her give birth
 And she gave birth³⁰⁹⁵ to her first born who tilled the soil³⁰⁹⁶
 And who ploughed its furrows.³⁰⁹⁷

³⁰⁸¹ Gen. Rabba 12:6.

³⁰⁸² Gen. 1:26.

³⁰⁸³ Num. 17:10 refers to the root **הרמ** as “to remove” rather than to “raise.”

³⁰⁸⁴ Gen. 3:23-24.

³⁰⁸⁵ Isa. 42:11.

³⁰⁸⁶ Psalm 19:8; Prov. 1:22, 9:4, 9:16, 14:15, 21:11; Ben Sira 21:26.

³⁰⁸⁷ Deut. 11:16.

³⁰⁸⁸ The Paytan does not use the word נחש which appears in Gen., but the word פתן which appears in Psalm 58:5 and Isaiah 18:5.

³⁰⁸⁹ The word **גיא** as a synonym for **אדמה** appears in Lev. Rabba 29:11.

³⁰⁹⁰ Gen. 3:17.

³⁰⁹¹ The term **אם על בנים** appears in Tractate Chulin 12:5.

³⁰⁹² Gen. 3:16.

³⁰⁹³ Gen. 2:18.

³⁰⁹⁴ Lev. 18:23.

³⁰⁹⁵ The five elements of conceptions took place on the same day, as this was the first birth, after Gen. Rabba 22:2.

³⁰⁹⁶ A reference to Cain who worked the land, after Gen. 4:2.

³⁰⁹⁷ The word **תלם** appears in Tractate Makkot 3:9.

הוֹמֵר תֵּאָרֵם וְהוֹסֵר פִּחְדָּם לְהִרְדּוֹת מִכֹּל וְלֹא לְרִדּוֹת בְּכֹל.

הוֹרְמוֹ מֵעֶדֶן וְגוֹרְשׁוֹ מִגֵּן וְהוֹכֵחַ נְקִיק סֹלַע בַּיִת מְלוֹן לְמוֹ.

הוֹפְתָה יְצִיר פְּתֵי בְּשִׁיחַ פְּתִיּוֹן פֶּתֶן וְגִיא בַּם קוֹלָהּ כָּאֵם עַל בְּנִים.

וְיוֹצֵר הַחַיִּשׁ תֵּאֲוֹת יְצוּרוֹ וְהַרְגִּיל עֲזָרוֹ לְרִבַּע תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ

וְיִיחַמָּה וְהִזְרִיעָה וְחִיבְלָה וְיִלְדָה וּבִיכָרָה מְשִׁידָד תִּלְמִי אֲדָמָה.

- 55 And again she swelled³⁰⁹⁸
 And she kneeled down and released into the world
 A lamb-like³⁰⁹⁹ holder of the sceptre³¹⁰⁰
 The shepherd of flocks³¹⁰¹
- 56 They³¹⁰² proffered a gift offering of gratitude
 To welcome the King³¹⁰³
 One³¹⁰⁴ with the fruit of the land
 And one³¹⁰⁵ with the firstborns of his flock.³¹⁰⁶
- 57 And the Holy One looked
 Into their heart not at that which is visible to the eye³¹⁰⁷
 And He accepted as valuable³¹⁰⁸
 The aroma of the young one's³¹⁰⁹ offering
- 58 And the mournful³¹¹⁰ brother raised his eyes
 To the heavens
 Having wanted his gift to be accepted through
 The scent of his sacrifice³¹¹¹
- 59 The older brother's face darkened³¹¹²
 And it had deeply hurt him³¹¹³
 Because God rejected his offering
 The surplus he had brought from his own foodstuffs

³⁰⁹⁸ Gen. 4:2.

³⁰⁹⁹ Job 21:11; or עויל derived from עול ימים meaning "young," after Gen. Rabba 36:1.

³¹⁰⁰ Amos 1:5.

³¹⁰¹ A reference to Abel, after Gen. 4:2.

³¹⁰² A reference to Cain and Abel.

³¹⁰³ To God.

³¹⁰⁴ Referring to Cain.

³¹⁰⁵ Referring to Abel.

³¹⁰⁶ Gen. 4:4.

³¹⁰⁷ 1 Sam. 16:7.

³¹⁰⁸ Gen. 4:4.

³¹⁰⁹ Referring to Abel.

³¹¹⁰ Job 5:11.

³¹¹¹ Gen. 4:5.

³¹¹² Gen. 25:23.

³¹¹³ Gen. 4:5.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| וְהוֹסִיפָה שְׁנִית | וְהִבְרִיכָה וְשִׁלְחָה | עוֹיֵל תּוֹמֵךְ שֶׁבֶט | רוּעָה עֲדָרִים |
| וּבֵת־שׁוֹרֵת שִׁי | קִידְמוּ פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ | זֶה בְּפָרֵי אֶרֶץ | וְזֶה בְּפִטְרֵי צֹאן. |
| וְהַבֵּיט קָדוֹשׁ | לֵלֵב וְלֹא לְעֵינַיִם | וְשַׁע עֶרֶךְ | נִיחֹחַ צָעִיר |
| וְשִׁיגֵב אָח | קוֹדֵר לְמָרוֹם | בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ שִׁי | רֵיחַ קֶרְבָּנוֹ. |
| וְהַקְדִּיר פְּנֵי רַב | וְגַם חָרָה לוֹ | כִּי מֵאֵס בְּשִׁי | יֵתֵר מֵאֲכָלוֹ |

- 60 And he³¹¹⁴ acted
 As did his father³¹¹⁵
 By not keeping
 The instruction of His Creator.
- 61 And consumed³¹¹⁶ by his wrath³¹¹⁷
 He maintained his anger³¹¹⁸
 And he³¹¹⁹ eliminated from the earth
 His brother³¹²⁰ and his potential progeny³¹²¹
- 62 And a howling scream came forth
 From the spilled blood³¹²²
 And he³¹²³ was punished by roaming the land as a fugitive
 The first of all subsequent blood spilling murderers.³¹²⁴
- 63 And he³¹²⁵ confessed his crime³¹²⁶
 And a mark was etched upon him³¹²⁷
 Lest his blood be shed³¹²⁸
 By any person³¹²⁹

³¹¹⁴ A reference to Cain.

³¹¹⁵ A reference to Adam, who defied God.

³¹¹⁶ Gen. 37:33.

³¹¹⁷ Amos 1:11.

³¹¹⁸ Psalm 78:49.

³¹¹⁹ A reference to Cain.

³¹²⁰ A reference to Abel, murdered by Cain, after Gen. 4:8.

³¹²¹ Gen. Rabba 22:9.

³¹²² Gen. 4:10.

³¹²³ A reference to Cain.

³¹²⁴ Esther Rabba, Petichta 10.

³¹²⁵ A reference to Cain.

³¹²⁶ Gen. 4:13.

³¹²⁷ Gen. 4:15.

³¹²⁸ Gen. 4:15.

³¹²⁹ Gen. 9:6.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| וַיַּעַל זֶה | כְּמִשְׁפַּט הוֹרָהוּ, | כִּי לֹא נָצַר | מִצֹּת מְצוּוֹהוּ. |
| וְטָרַף אֶף | וְשָׁמַר עֲבָרָה | וַחֲבִיבֵל מֵאֶרֶץ | אָח וּמִשְׁפּוּחֹתָיו |
| וְהִצְרִיחַ זַעֲקָה | דָּם הַשְּׁפוּף | וַנְּעַנֵּשׁ בְּנֵעַ וְנָדַר | רֹאשׁ לְשׁוֹפְכֵי דָם. |
| וְנִיתְּנָה עַל פֶּשַׁע | וְנִיתַן לוֹ אוֹת | פֶּן יִשְׁפֹךְ | דָּמוֹ בְּאָדָם |

- 64 And this was the beginning of repentance³¹³⁰
 For all who enter in the world³¹³¹
 Because any one who confesses and repents
 In true penitence is shown mercy.³¹³²
- 65 And The One³¹³³ found solace³¹³⁴ for His sadness
 Over the first creature³¹³⁵
 Because He began to drink of the cup of sorrow³¹³⁶
 Because of those who confess.³¹³⁷
- 66 And He remembered to give
 A seed to the sewer of seeds³¹³⁸
 To find a replacement³¹³⁹
 For his unfortunate achene.³¹⁴⁰
- 67 His³¹⁴¹ seed took root
 And became a root that bears gall and wormwood³¹⁴²
 But its sapling was alloyed³¹⁴³
 And brought forth spoilt fruit³¹⁴⁴

³¹³⁰ Gen. Rabba 22:13.

³¹³¹ See footnote 185 above.

³¹³² Prov. 28:13.

³¹³³ An epithet for God, after Exod. 15:2.

³¹³⁴ Psalm 147:3.

³¹³⁵ A reference to Adam.

³¹³⁶ Psalm 75:9.

³¹³⁷ A variant of the Piyyut reads: **לדורות** (instead of **להודות** in this version) meaning “for all future generations.” See: אהרון פיינטי יוסי בן יוסי. מירסקי (1991). p. 138, footnote 65.

³¹³⁸ A reference to Adam.

³¹³⁹ A reference to Seth, after Gen. 4:25 and after Job 14:7.

³¹⁴⁰ The Paytan uses the word **פרי** to denote the notion of a son as the fruit of his father’s loins. I translate the term not as “fruit” but as an “achene” which is defined as: a small dry indehiscent one-seeded fruit (as of a sunflower) developing from a simple ovary and usually having a thin pericarp attached to the seed at only one point [“Achene,” Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/achene>], which better approximates the poetic intent.

³¹⁴¹ Referring to Adam’s progeny.

³¹⁴² Deut. 29:17.

³¹⁴³ The word **שגשג** may be translated as “flourished,” but this does not make sense in context of the stanza. It therefore has to be read contextually as **סגסג** in the sense of a mixing of metals, as in becoming alloyed, impure, an amalgam of sin, after Isa. 17:11; Ezek. 22:18.

³¹⁴⁴ Isa. 5:2.

וְהַחֵל תְּשׁוּבָה לְבֹאֵי עוֹלָם כִּי כָל מוֹדָה וְעוֹזֵב בְּתִשׁוּבָה יִרוּחָם.

זֶה חֶבֶשׁ עֶצֶב יִצִּיר קַרְמוֹנִי כִּי הֵחֵל שְׁתוֹת כּוֹס מְסוּדָה לְהוֹדוֹת

זָכַר לְתַת זָרַע לְזֹרַע לְהַחֲלִיף לוֹ פְּרֵי הָאֹמֶלֶל.

זָרְעוּ הַשְּׂרִישׁ שׁוֹרֵשׁ פּוֹרָה רֹאשׁ וְשִׁגְשֵׁג נִטְעוּ עֲשׂוֹת פְּרֵי בְּאוֹשִׁים

- 68 They conspired³¹⁴⁵ and began,³¹⁴⁶
 The crooked³¹⁴⁷ generation,³¹⁴⁸
 To replace the Name of God with an idolatrous
 Name of another god.
- 69 He³¹⁴⁹ summoned³¹⁵⁰ the fury of the stored waters³¹⁵¹
 Upon them
 And the waters breached their boundaries³¹⁵²
 And overturned³¹⁵³ the earth
- 70 The memory of the hopes of men³¹⁵⁴
 He³¹⁵⁵ erased from the earth
 And He washed the foundations
 Of the clumps³¹⁵⁶ of the dust of the earth.
- 71 The branches³¹⁵⁷ of
 The trees of the forest³¹⁵⁸
 To the tenth generation³¹⁵⁹
 Did not bear good fruit³¹⁶⁰

³¹⁴⁵ Deut. 19:19.

³¹⁴⁶ Gen. 4:26.

³¹⁴⁷ Judges 5:6.

³¹⁴⁸ Referring to the generation of Enosh.

³¹⁴⁹ A reference to God.

³¹⁵⁰ Amos 5:8.

³¹⁵¹ Job 12:15.

³¹⁵² Job 28:4.

³¹⁵³ Jer. 20:16.

³¹⁵⁴ Job 14:19.

³¹⁵⁵ God.

³¹⁵⁶ A reference to humans who were created from the dust of the earth. The root **נפג** refers to a joining of a lesser thing to a greater object, after 1 Sam. 2:36; Isa. 14:1; Hab. 2:15.

³¹⁵⁷ A reference to the descendants, after Isa. 18:5.

³¹⁵⁸ A reference to humans, after Deut. 20:19.

³¹⁵⁹ Ten generations from Adam to Noah, see Gen. 5:1-32.

³¹⁶⁰ A reference to good deeds, after Gen. Rabba 30:4.

זָמְמוּ וְהַחֲלוּ דֹר עֲקֻלְקֻלוֹת לְהַמִּיר בְּשֵׁם אֱלִיל שֵׁם אֵל אֶחָד.

זַעַף מַיִם עֲצוּרִים עָלֵיהֶם קָרָא פָּרְצוּ גְבוּלָם וַיִּהְפְּכוּ אֶרֶץ

זָכַר תְּקוּת אָנוּשׁ הָאָבִיד מֵאֶרֶץ וְשָׁטַף יְסוּדֵי סְפִיחֵי עֶפְרָאֶץ.

זִלְזָלִים אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵצֵי יַעַר עַד דֹּר עֲשִׂירֵי לֹא עָשׂוּ פְּרִי

- 72 A pure and wholesome one³¹⁶¹
 Was found among them
 And the pleasing scent of his good works³¹⁶²
 Was the sweet confection of his age.
- 73 They were contemptuous³¹⁶³ and they rebelled
 By gluttony during the seven doleful³¹⁶⁴ days³¹⁶⁵
 Even as they lived in abundance and bounty³¹⁶⁶
 They told God to move aside³¹⁶⁷
- 74 They were castigated³¹⁶⁸ with the waters from above
 And were subdued by the waters from the abyss below³¹⁶⁹
 And the righteous one³¹⁷⁰ appeased Him with an offering³¹⁷¹
 When the Noahite waters³¹⁷² subsided.
- 75 The face of the earth³¹⁷³ was renewed
 And returned to its former state³¹⁷⁴
 And from the few in number
 Who emerged out of confinement³¹⁷⁵
- 76 They schemed and conspired,
 The fifth generation,³¹⁷⁶
 To rise and to sit themselves
 In a lofty nest in the heights of heaven.³¹⁷⁷

³¹⁶¹ An epithet for Noah, after Gen. 6:9.

³¹⁶² Gen. Rabba 32:9.

³¹⁶³ Isa. 13:11; Mal. 3:19; Psalm 119:21.

³¹⁶⁴ A reference to a Midrash in Gen. Rabba 32:7 according to which the sinners rebelled against God even during the seven days of mourning for Methuselah.

³¹⁶⁵ Gen. 7:10.

³¹⁶⁶ Sifre (Ekkev) 11:16 Folio 80/B.

³¹⁶⁷ Job 21:10-14.

³¹⁶⁸ Isaiah 66:14.

³¹⁶⁹ Gen. 7:11.

³¹⁷⁰ An epithet for Noah, after Gen. 6:9.

³¹⁷¹ Gen. 8:20.

³¹⁷² Isa. 54:9.

³¹⁷³ Psalm 49:2.

³¹⁷⁴ Gen. 10:32.

³¹⁷⁵ A reference to the Ark, after Psalm 142:8.

³¹⁷⁶ Noah bore Shem, who bore Arpachshad, who bore Shelach, who bore Eber, who bore Peleg—the fifth generation, during whose time the earth's population was fragmented, after Gen. 10:25.

³¹⁷⁷ Gen. 11:4.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| זָדוּ וְתָמִים | בְּקִרְבָּם נִמְצָא | וְרִיחַ מִפְעֻלָּיו | כָּרַח בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו. |
| זָדוּ וּמְרָדוּ | בְּשִׁבְעַת יָמֵי נֹגְהָ | בְּטוֹב וּמְרַב כֹּל | אָמְרוּ לְאֵל סוֹר |
| זוֹעְמוֹ בְּמִי מַעֲלָה | וְדוֹכָאוֹ בְּמִי מָטָה | וְרִיצָהוּ צַדִּיק בְּשִׁי | מַעֲבוֹר מִי נוֹחַ. |
| חֹדְשׁוֹ פָּנֵי חֶלֶד | וְשָׁבוּ לְקִדְמָתוֹ | מִימָתִי מִסֶּפֶר | יּוֹצְאֵי מִמִּסְגָּר |
| חָשְׁבוּ וְנוֹעְצוּ | אֲזֵ דוֹר חַמִּישִׁי | לָרוֹם וְלָשׁוֹם | קִזּוּ בְּמָרוֹם. |

- 77 The Living God³¹⁷⁸ did not prevent³¹⁷⁹
 Their plot from becoming reality
 He scorns the scornful³¹⁸⁰
 He allowed that their desire be completed³¹⁸¹
- 78 He rived the language³¹⁸²
 Of those who were riven³¹⁸³
 And they were made into factions
 And fought one another to destruction.³¹⁸⁴
- 79 They were swept away
 As the storm of castigation passed, and they were gone³¹⁸⁵
 And a righteous one³¹⁸⁶ was elevated
 To be the foundation of the world entire³¹⁸⁷
- 80 He wanted to understand
 The mystery of God's works³¹⁸⁸
 That perform
 As if they have a guiding hand and a ruler.

³¹⁷⁸ Num. 14:21.

³¹⁷⁹ Gen. 11:6.

³¹⁸⁰ Prov. 3:34.

³¹⁸¹ Isaiah 44:28.

³¹⁸² Gen. 11:9.

³¹⁸³ The root **כתת** is usually used to imply a grinding action, as in Deut. 9:21. It can also be used to denote a crushing action, usually for the extraction of oil, as in Exod. 27:20. In Isa. 2:4 the verb describes a beating of metal and a changing of its essential use (swords into ploughshares). My understanding, however, in the context of this stanza, is that even as the words **בזה וכותתו זה בזה** could indeed be used to describe the internecine conflict among the nations who had built the tower of Babel after they were dispersed therefrom and made to live in opposition to one another; the Paytan means that the nations became riven, as they **הפכו להיות כיתות כיתות** from the root of **כת** meaning "sect" or **כיתה** (סיעה, עדה, as in "faction").

³¹⁸⁴ 1 Chron. 20:23.

³¹⁸⁵ Gen. 11:9.

³¹⁸⁶ An epithet for Abraham, after Gen. 14:19.

³¹⁸⁷ Prov. 10:25.

³¹⁸⁸ Gen. Rabba 39:1.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| חֵי לֹא בִיצֵר | מֵהֶם מְזִימָה | מְלִיץ לְלִצִּים | חִפְצָם הַשְּׁלִים |
| חִילֵק שִׁפְת לְשׁוֹן | בְּעֲלֵי מַחְלוֹקֶת | וְכוֹתְתוּ זֶה בְּזֶה | וְנִלְחָמוּ לְמִשְׁחִית. |
| חָלְפוּ כְעָבוֹר | סוּפָה וְאֵינָמוּ | וְהוֹקֵם צְדִיק | יְסוֹד עוֹלָם |
| חָשַׁב לְהַבִּין | סוֹד מַפְעָלוֹת | הַמְתַּנְהֲגִים | בְּשׁוֹטֵר וּמוֹשֵׁל. |

- 81 He gazed upon the journey³¹⁸⁹
Of the waning and waxing aglow
That emerges triumphant³¹⁹⁰
And feebly fades.³¹⁹¹
- 82 The windows of the firmament³¹⁹²
Which are on the East and the West³¹⁹³
Where the hoary moon bounds
Day in and day out.
- 83 The lightening arrows³¹⁹⁴
And the galloping³¹⁹⁵ luminous stars
Running forth and returning³¹⁹⁶
And none is absent³¹⁹⁷
- 84 A wise man with a silvery³¹⁹⁸ heart
Who educated himself
And said: The Master of those
I shall run to follow Him.³¹⁹⁹

³¹⁸⁹ Eccles. 1:5.

³¹⁹⁰ Psalm 19:6.

³¹⁹¹ Referring to the moon.

³¹⁹² The expression **חלוני שחק** does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. It does appear, however, in **ספרות ההיכלות** [P. Schäfer, M. Schlüter, and H.G. von Mutius, *ההיכלות לספרות סינופסיס : Volume 2 of Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1981)] in sections 178-179, and 807-808, which speak of an angel named **שמעאל** or **שמועל** stands upon the **חלוני רקיע**, the heavenly windows. The expression is found in the Shabbat morning service in "הכל" .28:14 Gen. ³¹⁹³ יודוך.

³¹⁹³ Gen. 28:14.

³¹⁹⁴ Psalm 18:15.

³¹⁹⁵ A variant of the word **דוהר** appears in other copies of the Piyut as **זוהר**, which translates as "luminous" probably due to scribal errors, whereas the letter DALED ד and the letter ZAYIN ז resemble one another closely. (See: אהרון מירסקי: **פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי**, (1991) p. 141, footnote 83). I have therefore chosen to employ both adjectives in this translation.

³¹⁹⁶ Ezek. 1:13-14.

³¹⁹⁷ Isa. 40:26.

³¹⁹⁸ Prov. 14:14 speaks of a "dissembling heart," but I think the Paytan suggests Abraham was possessed of a heart in which there were amalgamated the wisdom of Torah with the prevalent notions of Ur, whence Abraham hailed [Gen. 11:26-32].

³¹⁹⁹ Tractate Brachot 7, Folio B.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| חֲזוֹתַי מְרוֹצֵת | שׁוֹאֵף וְזוֹרֵחַ | שֶׁשׁ כְּגִבּוֹר בְּצִאתוֹ | וְחִלָּשׁ בְּבוֹאוֹ |
| חֲלוֹנֵי שַׁחַק | אֲשֶׁר בְּקִדְמָה וַיִּמָּה | אֲשֶׁר בִּם תִּנְתָּר | לְכַנֶּה יוֹם יוֹם. |
| חֲצֵי בְרָקִים | וְדוֹהַר כּוֹכָבִים | רְצִים וְשָׁכִים | וְאִישׁ לֹא נִעְדָּר |
| חֲכָם סוּג לֵב | וְשָׁכַל מֵאֲלֵיו | וְשָׁח: אָדוֹן לְאֵלֶּה | אֲחֲרָיו אָרוּצָה. |

- 85 Even before God spoke to him³²⁰⁰
 He sought a path for himself
 To go forth³²⁰¹ from the path of death
 To the path of life³²⁰²
- 86 Pure in his deeds³²⁰³
 He spoke to the Mighty One³²⁰⁴.
 Please, oh God of Justice
 Judge³²⁰⁵ with compassion.
- 87 He³²⁰⁶ scoffed noble rulers³²⁰⁷
 Without a shield or a sword³²⁰⁸
 And He saved him³²⁰⁹ from the fire
 And He helped him in battle³²¹⁰
- 88 His generation with folly
 Did not recognize the Rock³²¹¹
 And he³²¹² made known to them, at the tamarisk-tree³²¹³
 The Name of the Everlasting God.
- 89 The seal of covenant
 He branded on his flesh³²¹⁴
 So that when the maw³²¹⁵ will regard it³²¹⁶
 It will slam shut³²¹⁷ its lips.³²¹⁸

³²⁰⁰ Gen. 12:1; Gen. Rabba 39:4.

³²⁰¹ Gen. 12:1.

³²⁰² Prov. 6:23.

³²⁰³ An epithet for Abraham, after Gen. 17:1.

³²⁰⁴ An epithet to God, after Job 41:4.

³²⁰⁵ A reference to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, after Gen. 18:23.

³²⁰⁶ A reference to Abraham.

³²⁰⁷ A reference to the four kings, after Gen. 14:9-15.

³²⁰⁸ Gen. Rabba 43:3.

³²⁰⁹ A reference to Abraham, after Gen. Rabba 38:13.

³²¹⁰ Gen. 14:19.

³²¹¹ An epithet for God, after Deut. 32:4.

³²¹² A reference to Abraham.

³²¹³ A reference to Beer Sheba, after Gen. 21:33.

³²¹⁴ Gen. 17:2; Gen. 17:24.

³²¹⁵ A reference to the netherworld, after Isa. 5:14.

³²¹⁶ A reference to the mark of circumcision.

³²¹⁷ Job 5:16.

³²¹⁸ Exod. Rabba 19:4; Psalm 107:42.

טָרַם הַקָּדִים אֵל בִּירַר לוֹ דָּרֶךְ לֹדֶ-לָהּ מִמּוֹת לְדָרֶךְ הַחַיִּים

טָהוּר בְּמַעֲשָׂיו דְּבַר גְּבוּרוֹת: נָא אֱלֹהֵי הַמְּשַׁפֵּט שְׁפוּט בְּרַחֲמִים.

טָרַף רוֹזְנִים בְּלֹא מִגֵּן וְחָרֵב שִׁיגְבוּ מֵאֵשׁ עֲזְרוּ בְּמַלְחָמָת.

טָפַשׁ דּוֹרוֹ וְצוּר לֹא הִכִּירוּ וְהוֹדִיעַם בְּאֵשׁ ל שֵׁם אֵל עוֹלָם.

טָבַע חוֹתָם בְּרִית שֵׁם בְּשָׂארוֹ בָּהּ תִּפְּן פּוֹעֶרֶת וְאֵז תִּקְפֹּץ פִּיהָ

- 90 A sprouting leaf³²¹⁹
 Budded in his³²²⁰ old age
 When the fount³²²¹ was opened
 In the parched flowerbed³²²²
- 91 The burden³²²³ mandated by the One who tried him³²²⁴
 He shouldered upon him³²²⁵
 And constrained his nature³²²⁶
 In order to give his own lamb³²²⁷ in sacrifice
- 92 The creel³²²⁸ of the first-fruit³²²⁹
 He led as an offering³²³⁰
 The father did not have pity³²³¹
 And the son did not tarry.³²³²
- 93 Slaughterer³²³³ of the lamb³²³⁴
 As he held his knife³²³⁵
 The angels of peace³²³⁶
 Wailed³²³⁷ bitterly with sorrow³²³⁸

³²¹⁹ A reference to Isaac, scion of Abraham, after Ezek. 17:9.

³²²⁰ A reference to Abraham, Gen. 21:2.

³²²¹ A reference to the Sarah's womb, after Gen. 21:2-7.

³²²² Gen. 18:11.

³²²³ A reference to the wood for Isaac's sacrifice, after Gen. 22:3.

³²²⁴ Gen. 22:1.

³²²⁵ Upon Isaac, after Gen. 22:6.

³²²⁶ Gen. Rabba 56:4.

³²²⁷ An epithet for Isaac, after Gen. 22:8.

³²²⁸ Deut. 26:2.

³²²⁹ An epithet to Isaac who was Sarah's first-born child, after Gen. 21:7.

³²³⁰ Gen. 22:10.

³²³¹ Gen. Rabba 56:8.

³²³² Gen. 22:8.

³²³³ A reference to Abraham.

³²³⁴ A reference to Isaac, after Gen. 22:13.

³²³⁵ Gen. 22:10.

³²³⁶ Isa. 33:7.

³²³⁷ Gen. Rabba 56:5.

³²³⁸ Gen. 22:11-12.

טְרַפֵּי צֶמַח זְכוּנִים הֶצִיץ בְּהִפְתַּח מְקוֹר לְעֲרוּגַת חוֹרֵב.

טוֹרַח בּוֹחֵן מְנַסִּיהוּ עֵמֶס עַל־שִׁכְם וְגַם מִשַׁל בִּיצָר תַּת שִׁיו לְזֹבַח

טָנָא בְּפוֹרִים מְנַחֶה הוֹבִיל אָב לֹא חָמַל וַיְבֹן לֹא אַחֲרֵי.

טוֹבַח בְּעַד שָׁה בְּעַת תַּפֵּשׁ חָרֵב מִלְּאֲכֵי שְׁלוֹם מִר צָעֲקוּ בְּכִי

- 94 The Beneficent and Merciful³²³⁹ One said:
 Do not slay the young man³²⁴⁰
 Your deeds have been received with approbation³²⁴¹
 The sacrifice-maker and the sacrificed³²⁴²
- 95 The lamb³²⁴³ was reprieved
 And for his ransom a ram was placed³²⁴⁴
 But he was considered as if he had been burnt³²⁴⁵
 So that his merit will expiate those who bear God's Law.³²⁴⁶
- 96 The wholesome one³²⁴⁷ settled himself
 At the doorways of tents³²⁴⁸ of study³²⁴⁹
 Even before She³²⁵⁰ was spoken
 He learned by heart her edicts
- 97 God, since the beginning of time,
 Took pride in him³²⁵¹
 And in his name-sake³²⁵² forever
 He³²⁵³ will dwell in glory.³²⁵⁴

³²³⁹ Epithets for God, after Psalm 145:9.

³²⁴⁰ Gen. 22:12.

³²⁴¹ Gen. 22:16-19.

³²⁴² Gen. Rabba 56:9.

³²⁴³ A reference to Isaac.

³²⁴⁴ Gen. 22:13.

³²⁴⁵ Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera Portion, Section 23.

³²⁴⁶ Isa. 46:3.

³²⁴⁷ An epithet for Jacob, after Gen. 25:27.

³²⁴⁸ Gen. 25:27.

³²⁴⁹ Gen. Rabba 63:10; Isa. 8:16.

³²⁵⁰ A reference to the Torah, after Gen. Rabba 95:3.

³²⁵¹ In Jacob, after Isa. 49:3.

³²⁵² Referring to the people of Israel.

³²⁵³ Referring to God.

³²⁵⁴ Psalm 22:4.

טוֹב וְרַחוּם שָׁח: אֵל תִּשְׁחַת נָעַר נְרֻצָּה פְּעֻלְכֶם כְּזוּבַת וְנִזְבַּח.

טָלָה הוֹחֵן וְהוֹשֵׁת כְּפָרוּ אֵיל וְיוֹחֵק שְׂרוּף לְהִצְדִּיק עֲמוּסָיו.

יֹסֵד אִישׁ תָּם בְּפִתְחֵי תְּעוּדָה טָרָם תֹּאמֶר שִׁינֹן אֲמַרְיָהּ

יְהִי מֵעוֹלָם בּוֹ נִתְפָּאֵר וּבְשֵׁמוֹ לְעוֹלָם יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת.

- 98 The Omniscient One³²⁵⁵ stood³²⁵⁶
 Over him in the place where he slept³²⁵⁷ on his journey³²⁵⁸
 And He said: I am your Keeper³²⁵⁹
 The shadow that walks by your right hand side³²⁶⁰
- 99 Ascending and descending³²⁶¹
 Holy ones³²⁶² are there for his sake
 Having recognized his countenance
 Which is engraved in the heavens.³²⁶³
- 100 The Creator³²⁶⁴ made him
 A little lesser than God³²⁶⁵
 To make his flock conceive at the sight of the rods³²⁶⁶
 They were like clay in the hands of a potter³²⁶⁷
- 101 Awe-filled visions
 Terrified the Aramaic one³²⁶⁸
 Hurt not my son³²⁶⁹
 Who is the bearer of My Law since before he was born.³²⁷⁰

³²⁵⁵ Psalm 1:6.

³²⁵⁶ Gen. 28:13.

³²⁵⁷ A reference to Beit-El, after Gen. 28:19.

³²⁵⁸ Gen. 28:11.

³²⁵⁹ Gen. 28:15.

³²⁶⁰ Psalm.

³²⁶¹ Gen. 28:12.

³²⁶² A reference to God's angels, after Psalm.

³²⁶³ Gen. Rabba 68:12.

³²⁶⁴ Isa. 43:1.

³²⁶⁵ Psalm 8:6; Midrash Psalm 8: Jacob created his "designer flocks" through the miraculous use of the carved rods. The sages refer to him as a little "lesser than God" for all that was missing was his ability to give life.

³²⁶⁶ Gen. 30:39.

³²⁶⁷ Jer. 18:6.

³²⁶⁸ An epithet for Laban, after Gen. 31:20.

³²⁶⁹ Gen. 31:24.

³²⁷⁰ Isa. 46:3. The word עֲמוּסִים can have two meanings here: (i) The ones who bear God's Law; or (ii) The one whom God bears or shoulders. In both cases the epithet refers to the people of Israel, and in the case of this stanza, to Jacob. In my understanding the first meaning fits better with the tone and substance of the piyyut.

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| יֹדְעוּ נֹצֵב | עָלְיוּ בְּמִלּוֹן | וְשָׁח: אֲנִי שׁוֹמְרָה | צֵל עַל יְמִינָה |
| יֹרְדִים וְעוֹלִים | קְרוֹשִׁים לְמַעְנֵהוּ | לְהַכִּיר תְּאָרוֹ | חֲקוֹק בְּמַרוֹמִים. |
| יֹצֵר חֶסֶד | מַעֲט מַאֲלֵהִים | לְיַחַם בְּמַקְלוֹת | כַּחֲמוֹר בֵּיד יוֹצֵר |
| יִרְאֵת חֲזוֹן | אֲרַמִּי בַעֲתָתוֹ | אֶל תִּגַע בְּבֶן | עָמוֹס מִנִּי בְּטָן. |

- 102 The blazing fiery one³²⁷¹ fled
 Having wrestled with him³²⁷²
 But he³²⁷³ could not overpower him³²⁷⁴
 And he pleaded in tears³²⁷⁵
- 103 He was miraculously saved
 From the one who bears sword³²⁷⁶
 Who hated and held a grudge³²⁷⁷ against him
 With eternal loathing.³²⁷⁸
- 104 He³²⁷⁹ inherited, because of gluttony³²⁸⁰
 The blessings of his parents³²⁸¹
 And twelve tribes emerged from him
 Like the stars guarding Time in the firmament³²⁸²
- 105 The third son³²⁸³ was chosen especially³²⁸⁴
 To see the countenance of the King³²⁸⁵
 To sing and to serve³²⁸⁶
 And enter the King's holy Chambers.

³²⁷¹ An epithet for God's angel, after Psalm 104:4.

³²⁷² Gen. 32:25-26.

³²⁷³ The angel.

³²⁷⁴ Jacob.

³²⁷⁵ Hosea 12:5.

³²⁷⁶ An epithet for Esau, after Gen. 27:40.

³²⁷⁷ Gen. 27:41.

³²⁷⁸ Ezek. 35:5; Amos 1:11.

³²⁷⁹ A reference to Jacob.

³²⁸⁰ Referring to the gluttony of Esau that was at the root of Jacob's deceptive ruse to receive Isaac's blessing in his brother Esau's stead. After Gen. 25:34.

³²⁸¹ Gen. 27:1-45.

³²⁸² The twelve tribes are symbols of the twelve monthly signs, after Gen. 37:9.

³²⁸³ A reference to Levi, after Gen. 29:34.

³²⁸⁴ A reference to Aaron and his priestly scions who were chosen to serve God at the Temple, after Lev. 21.

³²⁸⁵ Num. 8:5-26.

³²⁸⁶ 1 Chron. 6:16-32.

יְדוּד אֵשׁ לוֹהֵט עִמּוֹ בְּהֶאֱבָקוֹ לוֹ כִּי לֹא יָכוֹל נִתְחַנֵּן בְּבִכִּי

יֵשַׁע הַפְּלִיא לוֹ מִחֲגוֹר חָרֵב שׁוֹטֵם וְשׁוֹמֵר אֵיבַת עוֹלָם.

יֵרֵשׁ תַּאֲוֹת בְּרָכוֹת הוֹרְיוֹ שָׁנִים עָשָׂר שִׁבְט כְּשׁוֹטְרֵי רְקִיעַ

יוֹחַד שְׁלִישֵׁי לְרֵאוֹת פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ לְשׁוֹרֵר לְשֶׁרֶת לְבֹא חֲדָרָיו.

- 106 Like a tree that is planted
 By streams of water³²⁸⁷
 His³²⁸⁸ staff blossomed³²⁸⁹
 To three³²⁹⁰ holy³²⁹¹ branches³²⁹².
- 107 Those who were bent with borne weight³²⁹³
 Of the Tent and its beams,
 Those who hammered the stakes³²⁹⁴
 And cloaked it with bolts of cloth,
- 108 Those whose shoulder bent³²⁹⁵
 Like a tamed heifer³²⁹⁶
 To bear the yoke of the Holy Avodah
 To the Master of the Universe³²⁹⁷ entire.
- 109 Like a stately vine³²⁹⁸
 Heavy with fruit and branches
 Amram grew
 From the root of Levi,³²⁹⁹

³²⁸⁷ Psalm 1:3.

³²⁸⁸ A reference to Aaron.

³²⁸⁹ Num. 17:23.

³²⁹⁰ A reference to the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kehat, and Merari, after Gen. 46:11.

³²⁹¹ The scions of Levi became the priests at the Temple, hence their holy status.

³²⁹² Branches are the descendants, after Ezek. 17:6.

³²⁹³ The sons of Merari carried the structural components of the Traveling Tent of Meeting during the Israelites' desert sojourn, after Num. 3:36-37.

³²⁹⁴ The sons of Gershon were responsible for hammering the stakes of the Tent of Meeting and for covering the structure with the curtains, after Number 3:25-26; see Exod. 36.

³²⁹⁵ A reference to the sons of Kehat, who tended to the Holy Ark, the Table, the Menorah, the Altars and the holy vessels, after Num. 3:31.

³²⁹⁶ Hosea 10:11.

³²⁹⁷ Hosea 3:13.

³²⁹⁸ Ezek. 17:8.

³²⁹⁹ Exod. 6:18.

כְּעֵץ שְׁתוּל עַל פְּלִגֵי מַיִם הַפְּרִיחַ מִטְהוֹ שְׁלֶשֶׁת בְּדֵי קֹדֶשׁ:

כְּפוּפֵי סֶבֶל לְאֵהֵל וּקְרָשָׁיו, תּוֹקְעֵי יְתֵד פּוֹרְשֵׁי יְרִיעוֹת,

כְּתֵף נְטוּיָה כְּעִגְלָה מְלוּמְדֵת לְעוֹל עֲבוֹדַת קֹדֶשׁ אֲדוֹן כְּלֵי־הָאָרֶץ.

כְּגֹפֶן אֲדָרַת יֶפֶת פְּרִי וְעִנְףָּהּ הַצְּמִיחַ עֲמָרִם מְשׁוֹרֵשׁ לֵוִי,

- 110 And the vine³³⁰⁰ sent forth³³⁰¹ three
 Exquisite tendrils:
 A priest³³⁰² and a shepherd³³⁰³
 And a prophetess³³⁰⁴.
- 111 When the time of love³³⁰⁵ had come
 His blossom³³⁰⁶ rose
 To break the reins³³⁰⁷ of Zoan³³⁰⁸
 And to breach³³⁰⁹ the barrier³³¹⁰ of the sea.³³¹¹
- 112 It was covered by the Cloud of the Glory of God
 And sanctified for a week³³¹²
 He³³¹³ stood in the middle
 On the day God's Word was given³³¹⁴
- 113 A mighty powerful force³³¹⁵
 Was subdued before him³³¹⁶
 His awesome dread
 No angel³³¹⁷ could withstand.³³¹⁸

³³⁰⁰ A reference to Amram, after Psalm 128:3.

³³⁰¹ Psalm 80:12.

³³⁰² A reference to Aaron, after Exod. 28:1.

³³⁰³ A reference to Moses, after Exod. 3:1.

³³⁰⁴ A reference to Miriam, after Exod. 15:20.

³³⁰⁵ A reference to redemption, after Ezek. 16:8.

³³⁰⁶ A reference to Moses, after Num. 17:23; Job 30:12 (blossoms as sons).

³³⁰⁷ A reference to the enslavement in Egypt, after Jer. 2:20.

³³⁰⁸ An epithet for Egypt, after Num. 13:22; Isa. 19:11 and 19:13; Psalm 78:12 and 78:43.

³³⁰⁹ A reference to the cleaving of the Red Sea during Israel's flight from Egypt, after Exod. 14:5-28.

³³¹⁰ Jer. 5:22.

³³¹¹ The sea is called **שועל** after Isa. 40:12.

³³¹² A reference to Mount Sinai, which was covered by God's cloud of glory for six days, after Exod. 24:17.

³³¹³ A reference to Moses to alone scaled the mountain, after Exod. 19:3.

³³¹⁴ Psalm 68:12.

³³¹⁵ Exod. Rabba 28:1 offers a Midrash, that God's angels wrestled with Moses in order to prevent the transfer of the Torah from their hands to Israel's. Moses won.

³³¹⁶ A reference to Moses.

³³¹⁷ The word **איש** refers to an angel, after Daniel 10:5.

³³¹⁸ Esther 9:2.

כִּי שְׁלַחַה שְׁלֶשֶׁת שְׂרִיגֵי חֶמְדָּה: מִכֵּהֶן וְרוּעָה וְאִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה.

כְּגִשַׁת עֵת דֹּדִים פָּרְחוּ הַיּוֹקֵם לְשִׁבּוֹר מוֹסְרוֹת צוּעֵן וְלִפְרוּץ גְּדָר שׁוֹעֵל.

כּוֹסָה בְּעֵנֹו וְנִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁבוּעַ נֶצֶב בַּתּוֹךְ בְּיוֹם תַּת אָמַר

כַּח אֲדִירִים לְפָנָיו הֹכְנַע מִמּוֹרָאוֹ לֹא עָמַד אִישׁ.

- 114 He³³¹⁹ sustained the Holy Flock³³²⁰
 With meat in the wilderness³³²¹
 And heavenly bread³³²² as well
 Until they reached the Land³³²³
- 115 She³³²⁴ dug a well for the People³³²⁵
 That young woman of timbrel fame³³²⁶
 When she died and was taken by God
 There was no longer a well of water.
- 116 Escorted by the Magnificent Clouds³³²⁷
 The beloved people³³²⁸ were saved
 Because of the priestly one³³²⁹
 Who walked with God in peace and righteousness³³³⁰
- 117 With him and his descendants a covenant³³³¹
 Of salt was made³³³²
 So that the Covenant with God will never be annulled³³³³
 And fragrant salts will continue to be offered on the Altar.

³³¹⁹ A reference to Moses.

³³²⁰ An epithet for the people of Israel, after Ezek. 36:38.

³³²¹ Psalm 78:27.

³³²² A reference to the Manna, after Psalm 78:23-25.

³³²³ A reference to the Promised Land, after Exod. 16:35.

³³²⁴ A reference to Miriam.

³³²⁵ The Midrash speaks of a miraculous well that travelled in the desert to quench the thirst of Israel. When Miriam died, the well ceased flowing. See: Lev. Rabba 27:6; Tosefta Sottah 11:1; Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit 9:1; Num. 21:17-20.

³³²⁶ Exod. 15:20.

³³²⁷ Exod. 13:20-22.

³³²⁸ An epithet for the people of Israel, after Jer. 12:7.

³³²⁹ An epithet for Aaron, after Lev. Rabba 27:6.

³³³⁰ Mal. 2:6.

³³³¹ Num. 18:19.

³³³² Num. 25:13.

³³³³ The priesthood has been given exclusively to the scions of Aaron for all eternity, after Lev. 2:13.

כָּל־כֶּלֶל צֹאן קֹדֶשׁ שְׂאֵר בִּישִׁימוֹן מְלָחִם שְׁחָקִים עַד בּוֹאֵם לְאֶרֶץ.

כָּרְתָהּ בְּאֵר לְעַם עֲלָמָה מְתוּפָפֶת גּוֹעָה וְנֹאֲסָפָה וְלֹא הָיָה מַיִם.

לְוַיֵּי עֲנַנֵי הוֹר יְדִידִים נְחֻנָּנוּ עַל יְדֵי מַכְהוֹן בְּשָׁלוֹם וּבְמִישׁוֹר

לוֹ וּלְזֶרְעוֹ בְּרִית מְלַח נְחֻקָּה לְכָל תְּשׁוּבֵית בְּרִית מְלַח הַנִּיחָח.

- 118 The man who was jealous for his God³³³⁴
 Was recompensed by God³³³⁵
 And He renewed the Covenant³³³⁶
 For all generations eternally
- 119 It³³³⁷ is not appropriate for any outsider³³³⁸
 The birthright is their³³³⁹ exclusive privilege
 And no human will challenge³³⁴⁰
 The gift of their share.
- 120 Lowered to the valley of the shadow of death³³⁴¹
 The assemblage of patrician men³³⁴²
 Who enthroned a strong man as king
 In the house set apart³³⁴³
- 121 Lest they would envy the estate
 Of the brothers' birthright³³⁴⁴
 Calling God³³⁴⁵
 Is their destiny.³³⁴⁶
- 122 The bread of the nobles³³⁴⁷
 Was set for them
 Because they drew near to God³³⁴⁸
 And recoiled from the calf

³³³⁴ A reference to Phineas, after Num. 25:11.

³³³⁵ Isa. 59:17.

³³³⁶ A reference to the covenant of everlasting priesthood, given to Phineas, after Num. 25:13.

³³³⁷ A reference to the Priesthood.

³³³⁸ The Priesthood is the exclusive province of the scions of Aaron, after Num. 3:10.

³³³⁹ The Aaronite priestly caste.

³³⁴⁰ Lev. 22:10.

³³⁴¹ Psalm 23:4; Psalm 107:10-14; Job 38:17; Job 16:16.

³³⁴² A reference to the Korach assemblage, who rebelled against Moses' and Aaron's claim to the priesthood, after Num.

16:2.

³³⁴³ A secluded place reserved for lepers and excommunicated people, after I1 Chron. 26:16-21; 2 Kings 15:5.

³³⁴⁴ A reference to Moses and Aaron, and their divine birthright to the priesthood, after Lev. 21:10.

³³⁴⁵ Num. 18:20.

³³⁴⁶ Psalm 16:5.

³³⁴⁷ A reference to the food set aside for the priests, after Num. 28:2.

³³⁴⁸ While the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, Moses called out: "*Whoso is on the LORD'S side, let him come unto me, and all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.*" Exod. 32:26.

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם | וְחִידֵשׁ חֻקוֹ | גְּמוּלַ גְּמֹל אֵל | לְקִנְיַת חֶמֶת גִּבֹּר |
| מִתַּת חֻלְקָם. | לֹא יִירָשׁ אָנוּשׁ | נִחֲלַת כְּבוֹדָם | לְזֶרֶ לֹא יֵאָתֶה |
| בְּבֵית הַחִפְּשִׁית | וְהוֹשִׁיבוּ עוֹז מֶלֶךְ | עֲדַת אַנְשֵׁי שֵׁם | לְצַלְמוֹת הוֹרְדוֹ |
| מִנֶּת גּוֹרְלָם. | אֱלֹהִים נִקְרָא | אַחֲזַת אַחִים | לֹא יִקְנְאוּ בַחֲבֵל |
| בְּעַת רְחוּק עֲגָל | בְּהִתְקַרְבָּם לְאֵל | לָהֶם הוֹכֵן | לֶחֶם הָאֲשִׁים |

123 The Guardian of the Law³³⁴⁹ taught them
 The order of the Avodah³³⁵⁰
 And as they sat at the entrance of the Tent³³⁵¹
 He was appointed to watch over them and teach them

124 To bathe³³⁵² and to anoint themselves³³⁵³
 To sanctify hand and foot³³⁵⁴
 To wear white linen clothes
 And to be girded with a girdle³³⁵⁵

125 To fill their hands³³⁵⁶
 For seven days.
 And he made it³³⁵⁷ a Law
 For all generations eternally,

As it is written:

*"As hath been done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make atonement for you."*³³⁵⁸

126 The chosen³³⁵⁹ families
 Drew lots³³⁶⁰
 To elevate a lieutenant³³⁶¹
 And to exalt him on the Tenth Day³³⁶²

³³⁴⁹ An epithet for Moses, after Deut. 33:21.

³³⁵⁰ Lev. 8.

³³⁵¹ A reference to the Tent of Meeting, after Lev. 8:35.

³³⁵² Lev. 8:6.

³³⁵³ Lev. 8:12.

³³⁵⁴ Lev. 8:23-24.

³³⁵⁵ Lev. 8:7; Lev. 8:12.

³³⁵⁶ Meaning: to be occupied, after Lev. 8:33.

³³⁵⁷ A reference to the Avodah of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the exclusive priestly cultic duties in the Temple, as divinely mandated, after Lev. 8:34.

³³⁵⁸ Lev. 8:34.

³³⁵⁹ 1 Chron. 7:40.

³³⁶⁰ Prov. 16:33.

³³⁶¹ The High Priest was set apart from his priestly kin, and was elevated in status, wealth, and appearance, after Tosefta; Lev. 21:10.

³³⁶² A reference to Yom Kippur, after Lev. 23:27.

לִימָדֶם מִחֻקֵּי סִדְרֵי עֲבוּדָה כִּי בְשִׁבְתֵּם פֶּתַח עֲלֵיהֶם הוֹפְקֹד

לְרַחוּץ וְלִסוּךְ לְקַדֵּשׁ יָד וְרֶגֶל לְלְבוֹשׁ בְּדִים וְלַחְגוֹר בְּמִזַּח

לְמֵלֵא יָדָם יָמִים שְׁבַעָה. וַיְשִׁמָּה לְחֹק לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם,

ככת' כאשר עשה ביום הזה צוה יי לעשות לכפר עליכם.

מִשְׁפָּחוֹת בְּרוּרִים גוֹרֵל יִטִּילוּ לְגִדֵּל סָגוּן לְעֲלוֹתוֹ בְּעֶשׂוֹר

- 127 From his bedstead
They separate his wife³³⁶³
Lest he defile himself during the week
By inadvertently sullied³³⁶⁴ by an aching³³⁶⁵ woman.³³⁶⁶
- 128 In the Lieutenants' Ward³³⁶⁷
He resided
And there he slept
During the seven days³³⁶⁸
- 129 Making burnt offerings³³⁶⁹
And tendering incense
And setting the oil lamps
And sacrificing the head and the foot.³³⁷⁰

³³⁶³ Lev. 21:2.

³³⁶⁴ Num. 15:25.

³³⁶⁵ The word **דוה** literally means 'aching, unwell, ill', but it has a connotation of flowing liquid and is associated with menstruation, after Lev. 20:18; Lev. 15:33; Isa. 30:22 ["Dawa (דוה)," Abarim Publications' Online Biblical Hebrew Dictionary, <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Dictionary/d/d-w-he.html.XDt51xKjIV>]. In the context of this stanza, the High Priest is prevented from lying with his wife, lest he be polluted during the week of seclusion prior to Yom Kippur.

³³⁶⁶ A reference to the defilement of menstrual blood, after Tosefta. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 150, footnote 128.

³³⁶⁷ The *Palhedrin Ward*, after Mishnah Yoma 1:1 The Ward was northern, to the best of our knowledge. The word **פלהדרין** which is mentioned in the Mishnah is originally Greek, meaning 'The King's Agents'. In a Talmudic Braitā (Yoma 8:2) it is mentioned that the Ward was initially called 'The Ward of the Nobles' but since during the Second Temple the priesthood was subject to corruption and bribery, the Ward was named for the King's agents whose service was limited to a year, to make note of the priestly service which was also limited and regulated. The paytan Yosse ben Yosse only speaks of the original appellation of the Ward of the Temple where the High Priests gathered.

³³⁶⁸ In Mirsky's book, the verse reads: **כל ימי שנה** [All year round], which is (i) not mentioned in the bible or in Mishnah Yoma 1:1, (ii) contradicts the ending of the Piyyut, whereas the High Priest returns to his own estate and home following the successful completion of the Avodah at the end of Yom Kippur, and (iii) appears to be out of place even in the context of this stanza. Mirsky mentions another version in which the verse reads **כל ימי שבועה** [during the seven days] of the High Priest's seclusion. This version appears to be a better fit with the rest of the narrative and I therefore chose it for this translation. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 150, footnote 129.

³³⁶⁹ Isa. 66:3.

³³⁷⁰ Mishnah Yoma 1:2.

מְעַרְשׁ יִצְוֶעוּ שְׁאֲרוּ יִבְדִּילוּ פֶּן יִטְמָא שְׁבוּעַ בְּשִׁגְגוֹת דְּוָה.

מְקוֹם עֲצָרַת סְגָנִים בֵּית מוֹשָׁבו הֲלֵא שָׁם יִלִּין כָּל יְמֵי שָׁנָה

מַעֲלָה מְנַחָה וְנֹתֵן סַמִּים וְעוֹרֵךְ גְּרוֹת וְרֵאשׁוֹן בְּרֵאשׁ וְרֵגֵל.

- 130 They³³⁷¹ traded the Sabbath Services with each other
 And their share of the Service shifts
 But his³³⁷² share³³⁷³ as the head³³⁷⁴
 Was equal to all their shares combined
- 131 Teachers³³⁷⁵ of the guileless³³⁷⁶
 Are partnered³³⁷⁷ with him
 To review with him and to teach him
 In the Laws of the Tenth Day.³³⁷⁸
- 132 They present him
 On the eve of the Day of Atonement
 With his bullock and his ram
 And with the sacrifices of his congregation³³⁷⁹
- 133 How substantial
 Is your Avodah, they say,³³⁸⁰
 Be strong and brave
 As all these are for your work to be done.
- 134 They reduce his victuals³³⁸¹
 At eventide
 Lest he fall asleep and lest a nocturnal emission
 Should happen to him over night

³³⁷¹ A reference to the priests who trade their service days with one another in order to secure their turn to serve on the Day of Atonement, after Sifre Judges 169.

³³⁷² A reference to the High Priest whose share was greater than his kin's, after Lev. 2:10.

³³⁷³ Of the meat offerings.

³³⁷⁴ Meaning the leader of all priests, who received his share before everyone else, after Tosefta.

³³⁷⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

³³⁷⁶ Psalm 19:8.

³³⁷⁷ The paytan uses the root **עמית** which refers to associates, co-workers, partners, or assistants.

³³⁷⁸ An epithet for Yom Kippur.

³³⁷⁹ Mishnah Yoma 1:3.

³³⁸⁰ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 18:1.

³³⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 1:4.

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| מִמְכַר שַׁבָּתוֹת | וְחָלַק מִשְׁמֵרוֹת | חָלְקוּ בְּרֹאשׁ | כַּנְגַד כּוֹלָם |
| מִמְכִּימֵי פְתֵי | יִועַמְתּוּ לוֹ | לְשַׁנְנוּ לְחֲנֹכוֹ | בְּחֻקֵי עֲשׂוֹר. |
| מִבְּיָאִים לוֹ | בְּעָרֵב יוֹם סְלִיחָה | פָּרוּ וְאִילוֹ | וְזָבְחֵי קָהְלוֹ |
| מֵה נָאָה | עֲבוֹדָתְךָ יֵאמְרוּ, | חֲזֹק וְאַמֵּץ | כִּי כָל אֱלֹהֵי פְעֻלָּה. |
| מֵאֲכָל יִמְעִיטוּ | מִנּוּ לְעֵת עָרֵב | פֶּן יִירָדִם וַיִּקָּר | מִקְרָה לַיְלָה |

- 135 His instructors will unite him
 With the elders of his tribe³³⁸²
 And in the Ward³³⁸³ of the Incense Mixers³³⁸⁴
 They will make him take an oath³³⁸⁵ in the Name of God.
- 136 He³³⁸⁶ cries, forlorn and weeping,
 Because he had been accused of being guileless³³⁸⁷
 And they³³⁸⁸ also cry
 Lest they falsely accuse a righteous man³³⁸⁹
- 137 The sweet compositions of Midrash
 They³³⁹⁰ exchange with him³³⁹¹, along with Scripture³³⁹²
 Or with sacred writings³³⁹³
 They occupy him.
- 138 They regale his soul³³⁹⁴
 With the teachings of the Kings of Yore³³⁹⁵
 If he is unschooled
 And has not studied doctrine³³⁹⁶

³³⁸² Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

³³⁸³ Referring to the Temple Ward which Mishnah Yoma calls **בית אבטינס**, Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

³³⁸⁴ Exod. 30:35.

³³⁸⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

³³⁸⁶ The High Priest, after Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

³³⁸⁷ The Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma 19:2 the Gemara explains that the high Priest cries because he had been accused of being a Zaddokite. The Paytan does not specify the type of lacuna in the High Priest's knowledge, but at the same time he does not appear to conform to the Talmudic exegesis.

³³⁸⁸ Referring to the elders, after Mishnah Yoma 1:5.

³³⁸⁹ Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma 19:2.

³³⁹⁰ Referring to the elders.

³³⁹¹ Referring to the High Priest.

³³⁹² Mishnah Yoma 1:6 asserts that some High Priests were not fully literate and had to be read to by the elders. The Paytan does not describe the High Priest as one who needs lecturers, but as an equal among equals in discussing Midrash and Scripture with the elders.

³³⁹³ Mishnah Yoma 1:6 and the Palestinian Talmud assert that the elders read Job, Ezra, and Chronicles to the High Priest, as well as Proverbs and Psalms. The Paytan offers a less specific list of readings, suggesting that the conversation was more general and involved a variety of biblical and sacred books.

³³⁹⁴ Psalm 23:3.

³³⁹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 1:6 suggests that the book of Zachariah and possibly Daniel as well were read to the High Priest. The Paytan does not refer to prophetic works, but to the wisdom of past kings like David and Solomon, who ruled and whose verdicts provide guidance for Halachic decisions.

³³⁹⁶ Prov. 4:2.

מְחַנְּכִיו יַחְבְּרוּהוּ לְזִקְנֵי מַטֵּהוּ וּבְבֵית רוֹקְחֵי רֶקַח בְּשֵׁם יִשְׁבִיעוּהוּ.

נֶעְגַם בְּבָכִי כִי הוֹרֵשֶׁעַ כִּפְתִּי וְהֵמָּה יִכְבוּ פֶן צַדִּיק יִרְשִׁיעוּ

נְעִימוֹת מִדְרָשׁ וּמִקְרָא יִשׁוּחָחוּ אוֹ בְּכַתְּבֵי קֹדֶשׁ הֵם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ.

נִפְשׁוּ יִשׁוּבְבוּ בְּשִׁיחַ מַלְכֵי קָדָם אִם בָּעַר הוּא וְלֹא לָמַד לָקַח

- 139 Should he doze off³³⁹⁷
 They³³⁹⁸ interrupt sleep
 By melodious singing and by snapping their fingers
 Singing with their voice and not playing on violins.³³⁹⁹
- 140 They allow in the din³⁴⁰⁰
 Of the tumultuous city³⁴⁰¹
 To give him his fill
 Of sleeplessness³⁴⁰² until the midnight hour³⁴⁰³
- 141 The keepers of statutes³⁴⁰⁴
 The grabbers of opportunities to fulfill God's Commandments³⁴⁰⁵
 Vie for cleaning the ashes of the Altar³⁴⁰⁶
 Even before the midnight hour.³⁴⁰⁷

³³⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 1:7; Jer. 14:8.

³³⁹⁸ The Mishnah (Yoma 1:7) asserts that priestly novices made sure that the High Priest remained awake all night. The Paytan is less specific.

³³⁹⁹ The Mishnah (Yoma 1:7) only describes the snapping of fingers. The Paytan is more specific and adds the element of vocal singing, stipulating that no musical instruments were used. This detail is not mentioned in the Mishnah or the Talmuds.

³⁴⁰⁰ Jer. 51:55.

³⁴⁰¹ Isa. 22:2 Note: In Mishnah Yoma the narrative presents an insular Temple, within whose confines the ceremonies and rituals are conducted by lofty men, independent of the people. The Paytan adds an interesting element in this stanza, entirely absent from the Mishnah narrative. Here the city sounds enter the Temple. The two way "traffic" suggests an organic connection between the Temple and the people, for whom the ceremonies and rituals are being performed.

³⁴⁰² Job 7:4.

³⁴⁰³ The word נשף in Modern Hebrew is translated as "ball," a "sumptuous party." In Biblical Hebrew the word speaks of time, and means something like "the dead of night" and sometimes "twilight," after Job 7:4; 1 Sam. 30:17; Isa. 5:11; Isa. 29:10; Jer. 13:16; 2 Kings 7:5; Prov. 7:9. In the DSS the word also has a connotation of time, specifically the darkest hour of the night, as in: 4Q184, Frg. 1:5; 4Q88 x,6; 4Q184, 1,5; 4Q162 II,2. Interestingly, the Qumran scrolls¹⁵⁹ also use this distinctive word, in the same manner and meaning as does Yosse ben Yosse. In 4Q88 X,6 the text reads: יחד יהללו נא כל כוכבי נשף referring to the doxological song of the midnight stars. In this reading, therefore, Yosse ben Yosse disagrees with the Mishnah regarding the time reference. The Mishnah claims that the High Priest was kept awake [with snapping fingers and the acolytes' voices] until the early dawn [when the Tamid sacrifice is to be offered] (Tractate Tamid 3:2) but Yosse ben Yosse says till midnight. The Qumranic word, coupled with a different understanding of the time bracket, is indicative of an alternate discourse. It is not the rabbinic discourse, it is something else. The same but quite different.

³⁴⁰⁴ An epithet for the priests, after Psalm 119:145.

³⁴⁰⁵ A reference to the priests, after Mishnah Yoma 2:1-2; Lev. Rabba 34:2.

³⁴⁰⁶ Lev. 6:3.

³⁴⁰⁷ Psalm 119:62.

נְטָה לְנוֹם שְׁנָתוֹ יִפְרִירוֹ בְּנוֹעַם שִׁיר צָרָה בְּפֶה וְלֹא בְּכִנּוֹר.

נֹתְנִים שְׁאוֹן עִיר הַוְּמִיָּה לְהִשְׁבִּיעוּ נְדוּדִים עַדִּי נִשְׁפָּה

נוֹצְרֵי חֲקִים בּוֹזֵי מִצּוֹת לְהָרִים דָּשָׁן חֲצוֹת לִילָה יִקְדִּימוּ.

- 142 The priests used to pushed each other, running
Up the gangway³⁴⁰⁸ to the Altar³⁴⁰⁹
So the elders devised a lottery
In order to put an end to the quarrels³⁴¹⁰
- 143 They convene and bathe³⁴¹¹
And don their headdresses³⁴¹²
And they cast the first lot³⁴¹³
For the removal of the ashes from the Altar.³⁴¹⁴
- 144 They vote³⁴¹⁵ a second time
On the preparation of the sheep for slaughter
And on the clearing of the ashes from the interior Altar
And on the preparation of the oil lamps.³⁴¹⁶
- 145 Priestly novices³⁴¹⁷
Draw the third lot for the preparation of the spices,
The fourth lot for the mixing of incense³⁴¹⁸
And for setting the carved meat on the Altar.
- 146 The Chamberlain³⁴¹⁹ of the House
In charge of the Sacred Avodah
Sends to the East
His faithful emissaries³⁴²⁰

³⁴⁰⁸ Ezek. 11:5; Exod. 20:26.

³⁴⁰⁹ Mishnah Yoma 2:2.

³⁴¹⁰ Prov. 18:18.

³⁴¹¹ The priests who are vying for ritual tasks cast the four lotteries. In Mishnah Yoma there is *no mention* of the ritual ablution which the Paytan says took place before the casting of the lots. But in Yoma 3:3 the Mishnah does say that no one could enter the Courtyard of the Temple without first taking a purifying ritual ablution.

³⁴¹² Job 31:36; Tosefta Yoma 1:10 describes the priests who don headdresses in order to cast the lots.

³⁴¹³ The Paytan turns the object **פיס** into a verb **הפיסו** in an unusual wortspele.

³⁴¹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 2:2.

³⁴¹⁵ The Paytan turns the word **אצבע** [finger] into a verb which means “they voted,” after Mishnah Yoma 2:1.

³⁴¹⁶ Mishnah Yoma 2:3.

³⁴¹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 2:4 asserts that the third lot was cast among priestly novices for whom this was a first experience in preparing the spices for the incense.

³⁴¹⁸ Mishnah Yoma 2:4.

³⁴¹⁹ Jer. 20:1; Mishnah Yoma 3:1 Note: Yosse ben Yosse employs a different technical term for the supervisor of the rites. He calls him **שר פקיד**. Interestingly, the Qumran community’s technical term for the role of overseer, (who was the second most important officer who was at the head of the community and oversaw the reception of new members to the Yahad) was **פקיד** (Charlesworth, “Community Organization,” 135).

³⁴²⁰ Prov. 25:13.

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| נְהַדְפוּ רָצִים | בְּמַעֲלוֹת מִזִּבְחַ | וְשָׁקְדוּ בְּפִיס | לְהִשָּׁבִית מְדָנִים |
| נוֹעְדוּ וְטָבְלוּ | וְעִינְדוּ עֲטָרָה | וְהִפִּיסוּ תַחֲלָה | עַל־תְּרוּמַת דָּשָׁן. |
| נִצְבְּעוּ שְׁנִית | עַל־מַעֲשֵׂה כְּבֹשׁ | וְעַל־דִּישׁוֹן מִזִּבְחַ | פְּנִימֵי וְנֵרוֹת. |
| נִתְחַדְּשׁוּ | שְׁלִישֵׁי לְסַמִּים, | רְבִיעֵי לְתַעֲרוֹכַת | לְעֶרְךָ הַנְּתַחִים. |
| שֶׁר פָּקִיד נִגִּיד | מִלְּאֲכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ | יִשְׁלַח לְקָדָם | צִירֵי אֲמוֹנָה |

- 147 He says to them: Look
If the dawn has risen³⁴²¹
If day light is aglow
Coming from the East³⁴²² to light the earth.
- 148 When they tell him³⁴²³
That the glowing light³⁴²⁴ has flashed across the sky³⁴²⁵
He runs to the Basin of Ablutions
Intended for all who come into the Courtyard of the Temple³⁴²⁶
- 149 They draw a screen³⁴²⁷ of fine linen³⁴²⁸
Between him³⁴²⁹ and the People
Treating him with reverence
And not see his nakedness.
- 150 The gown upon his skin³⁴³⁰
He quickly disrobes
And he goes down to bathe
And he rises and dries himself³⁴³¹

³⁴²¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:1.

³⁴²² Ezek. 40:23.

³⁴²³ Referring to the Chamberlain.

³⁴²⁴ The word (נוגה) נוגה suggests a bright glowing light that has some holiness attached to it, after Ezek. 10:4; Prov. 4:18

³⁴²⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:1 uses the word ברקאי which has an Aramaic origin, after Tosefta Kippurim 1:15; Palestinian Talmud 3:5 The word ברקאי is unique. It is “unpacked” in the Talmud through a story and a “recorded” conversation, which illustrate the essential importance of noting the first rays of sun as they pierce the night sky. The word ברקאי derives from the word ברק, lightning, which evokes a dagger-like image of a light that vanquishes the darkness. It is at once a poetic word and a legal word, as it is used in the Mishnah.

³⁴²⁶ Mishnah Yoma 3:2-3.

³⁴²⁷ Hosea 2:8.

³⁴²⁸ Mishnah Yoma 3:4 uses the word בויץ whereas Yosse ben Yosse uses the word שש, both which words may be translated as “fine linen.” The distinction between the types of fabric has been lost and the two words are currently understood as synonymous. Professor Lawrence Schiffman helped me resolve the problem when he pointed out the Greek etymology of בויץ, namely Βύσσος [Býssos]. Rabbinic literature freely weaves Hebrew, as well as foreign “invading” words and sentences in Aramaic and Greek words in its narrative (Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 179). Yosse ben Yosse argued for a return to national purity and was an advocate of Hebrew, at a time when the vast majority of Jews living in Byzantine Palestine spoke only Aramaic and were not conversant in Hebrew. It is also possible, therefore, that the Paytan was not an advocate for a return to pure Hebrew, but a poet who was good at his craft, who chose “fun and interesting” words, better to delight his audience.

³⁴²⁹ Referring to the High Priest, after Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

³⁴³⁰ Exod. 22:26.

³⁴³¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| שח למו: הביטו | אם עֵלָה הַשָּׁחַר | אם הַפִּיץ אֹר | קָדִים עָלַי אֶרֶץ. |
| סִפְרוּ לוֹ | כִּי בָרַק נוֹגֵה, | וְרָץ לְמִקְוֵה טוֹהַר | לְבָאֵי עֲזָרָה |
| סָכוּ מְחִיצַת שֶׁשׁ | בֵּינוּ לְבֵין עָם | לְנֶהוֹג בּוֹ בְּגוֹדֵל | בְּלֵי חֲזוֹת מְעַרְהוּ. |
| שְׁמֵלֶת עוֹרוֹ | יִמְהַר וַיִּפְשׁוּט | וַיִּרְדּוּ וַיִּטְבּוֹל | וַיַּעַל וַיִּסְתַּפֵּג |

- 151 The assistant dresser³⁴³²
Cloaks him with linen³⁴³³
And proceeds to bedeck him
With bejewelled golden vestments³⁴³⁴
- 152 Even as he rejoices in the cloak of splendour
His heart grows not haughty³⁴³⁵
As he wears the vestments for the glory of God
And not for his own
- 153 To glean the direction of battles
He consults them³⁴³⁶
His eyes are set on his Instructor
Like an apprentice looking up to his teacher.³⁴³⁷
- 154 The mystery is revealed³⁴³⁸ to him³⁴³⁹
Through the judgment of the Urim³⁴⁴⁰
Whether to rise up³⁴⁴¹ or to cease
Whether to sword or salvation
- 155 Sing praises unto God³⁴⁴²
Oh Children of a Great Nation³⁴⁴³
For He is close by at all times³⁴⁴⁴
And ready to bring good tidings of salvation.³⁴⁴⁵

³⁴³² The Mishnah Yoma 3:4 narrative suggests that the High Priest dressed himself.

³⁴³³ A reference to the linen vestments of all Temple Priests: The Tunic, Trousers, Mitre, and Girdle. See: Exod. 28; Mishnah Yoma 7:5.

³⁴³⁴ A reference to the golden vestments exclusively worn by the High Priest: The Breastplate of Judgement, Ephod, Golden Diadem, and Robe. See: Exod. 28; Mishnah Yoma 7:5.

³⁴³⁵ Palestinian Talmud tractate Yoma 7:3.

³⁴³⁶ A reference to the Urim and Thummin, after Num. 27:21.

³⁴³⁷ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 1:1.

³⁴³⁸ Amos 3:7.

³⁴³⁹ A reference to the High Priest, who has prophetic powers when donning the vestments.

³⁴⁴⁰ Num. 27:21.

³⁴⁴¹ In war.

³⁴⁴² Psalm 68:5.

³⁴⁴³ Deut. 4:7.

³⁴⁴⁴ Isa. 50:8.

³⁴⁴⁵ Isa. 52:7.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| סֵגֶן הַמְּלָכִישׁ | יַעֲטִיהוּ בְּדִים | וַיֹּסִיף לְגָדְלוֹ | בְּעָרֵי בְּגָדֵי פָז. |
| שָׁשׁ בְּמַעֲטָה הוֹד | וְלֵב לֹא יִגְבִּיהַ | לְבָשָׁם לְכָבוֹד אֵל | וְלֹא לַמַּעֲנָהוּ |
| סֵדֶר מְלַחְמוֹת | בָּהֶם יִשְׁאַל | עֵינָיו לְמוֹרָהוּ | פֶתֶלְמִיד לְרַב. |
| סוֹד יִגְלֶה לוֹ | בְּמִשְׁפַּט הָאוֹרִים | אִם עָלָה אִם חָדַל | אִם לְחָרַב אִם לִישָׁע |
| סוּלוֹ לְאֱלֹהִים | בְּנֵי גוֹי גָּדוֹל | קָרוֹב בְּכָל־עֵת | לְבָשָׁר יִשׁוּעוֹת. |

- 156 He³⁴⁴⁶ exults like an angel³⁴⁴⁷
 In his fine linen Trousers
 Like a rider who is ready for war³⁴⁴⁸
 To be a truthful emissary for his dispatchers³⁴⁴⁹
- 157 His lustful nakedness
 Is covered with the Trousers
 As this is what their purpose is
 To cover the flesh of nakedness.³⁴⁵⁰
- 158 His youthful body
 Fills his Robe³⁴⁵¹
 Which is doubled³⁴⁵² and made of fine linen³⁴⁵³
 And covers him up to his wrists³⁴⁵⁴
- 159 The transgression of the House of Jacob
 Is thereby atoned³⁴⁵⁵
 For the sin of having sold the Righteous One³⁴⁵⁶
 Because of the coat of many colours.

³⁴⁴⁶ A reference to the High Priest.

³⁴⁴⁷ A euphemism for Messenger, after Num. 22:5; I Kings 19:2; Gen. 32:4 inter alia.

³⁴⁴⁸ 2 Sam. 1:9.

³⁴⁴⁹ Prov. 25:13.

³⁴⁵⁰ Exod. 28:42.

³⁴⁵¹ Lev. 6:3.

³⁴⁵² There are two possible explanations for the reference to the doubling insinuated in the text: (i) The High Priest wore a double overcoat. See: According to Josephus Flavius the High Priest's overcoat was ankle-length, and wrapped the entire body. See: Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:2 ; ביאליק מוסד ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק (1991), p. 155, footnote 159; Ben Sira 45:12-13; (ii) The doubling is of the linen fibre, making the garment especially elegant and sumptuous, after Exod. 39:27.

³⁴⁵³ Exod. 28:39. In modern Hebrew the word **משובץ** refers to a checkered pattern or plaid. Alternatively, it refers to a surface which is set with gems. In Biblical Hebrew the word **משובץ** appears once in connection with the gemstones of the Breastplate, in the sense of a setting in gold.

³⁴⁵⁴ According to: Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:2); מוסד ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק (1991), p. 156, footnote 159; Gen. Rabba 84:8.

³⁴⁵⁵ Isa. 27:9; Gen. Rabba 84:8.

³⁴⁵⁶ An epithet for Joseph who was sold by his brothers who had envied his coat of many colours, after Gen. 37:28.

עֲלֵץ כְּמֵלֶאֱדָה בְּשִׁבוּץ מִכְנָסִי בָד כְּפָרֶשׁ מוֹכֵן צִיר אַמֶּת לְשׁוֹלְחָיו

עֲרוֹת זְמָה בָּהֶם יִכְסֶה כִּי כֵן מִצְוֹתָם לְכֶסוֹת עָרוֹה.

עֲלָמוֹת קוֹמָה יִמְלֵא בְּכַתְנַת כְּפוּלָה מְשׁוֹבְצַת עַד פְּסֵי יָד

עוֹן בֵּית יַעֲקֹב יִכְפֹּר בְּזֹאת מוֹכְרֵי צְדִיק עַל כְּתוֹנַת פָּסִים.

- 160 His³⁴⁵⁷ headdress
Is like a majestic crown³⁴⁵⁸
Wearing a Mitre³⁴⁵⁹ of fine linen³⁴⁶⁰
For greater glory and splendour
- 161 The cumbrance³⁴⁶¹ of the sin of the loosened hair³⁴⁶²
It³⁴⁶³ alleviates³⁴⁶⁴ from harlots³⁴⁶⁵
And he finds the righteous innocent³⁴⁶⁶
By donning the Diadem as frontlets.³⁴⁶⁷
- 162 And he further turns his cheek³⁴⁶⁸
To expiate, by girding himself with a Girdle,³⁴⁶⁹
Those who stray after idols
Who wear belts on their waists³⁴⁷⁰

³⁴⁵⁷ The High Priest.

³⁴⁵⁸ 1 Chron. 29:25.

³⁴⁵⁹ The Paytan uses the word **צפירה** rather than calling the Mitre **מצנפת**, but he turns the Mitre into a passive verb **צנף** thus parsimoniously adding a layer of understanding that connects the diadem worn by the High Priest to the Glory of God, after Isa. 28:5; Isa. 62:3; According to Josephus, the Mitre and its diadem resembled a royal crown: (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:3; מוסד ביאליק: ירושלים: פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. (1991). אהרון מירסקי, p. 156, footnote 161.

³⁴⁶⁰ The Paytan uses the word **שש** after Exod. 39:28.

³⁴⁶¹ Onkelos's Aramaic translation [Onkelos (Hebrew: אונקלוס), also called Aquila of Pontus or Aquila of Sinope, was a Roman national who converted to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE). He is considered to be the author of the famous Targum Onkelos (c. 110 CE) equates the word **משא**, translated as burden or cumbrance, and the word **עסק**, which appears in Deut. 1:12.

³⁴⁶² A reference to an adulterous woman whose hair is let loose, after Num. 5:18.

³⁴⁶³ The Mitre.

³⁴⁶⁴ The Paytan connects the High Priest's vestments to atonement, whereas "same cures same." A garment worn on the head, for instance, atones for a sin in which a woman's head is shamed. A belt worn by idol worshippers is atoned for by the High Priest's girdle. The Mitre worn by the High Priest atones for the sin of adulterous women whose hair is let loose, after Babylonian Talmud tractate Zevachim Folio 84/B in reference to Lev. 8:9.

³⁴⁶⁵ Gen. 38:21.

³⁴⁶⁶ Lev. 11:44.

³⁴⁶⁷ The Paytan relates the High Priest's diadem to the Tefillin, after Exod. 13:16; Deut. 6:8; Deut. 11:18.

³⁴⁶⁸ Ezek. 29:4.

³⁴⁶⁹ Jer. 13:11.

³⁴⁷⁰ A reference to idol worshippers, after Ezek. 23:14-15.

עֲטָרַת רֵאשׁוֹ כְּהוֹד הַמְּלוּכָה צְנוּף צְפִירַת שֶׁשׁ לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֳרַת

עֶסֶק פְּרִיעַת רֵאשׁ יָסִיר מִקְדָּשׁוֹת וַיִּצְדִּיק קְדוֹשִׁים בְּנִזְר טוֹטְפוֹת.

עוֹד יִדְבֵק בְּלַחֵי כְּאֹזֹר מְתַנִּים תּוֹעֵי בְצַלְמֵי חֲגוּרֵי מְתַנִּים

- 163 Wearing the sash spells might³⁴⁷¹
 He wears a Belt³⁴⁷²
 Which is made of woven cloth³⁴⁷³, that is not made of two different threads
 As he does every day of the year³⁴⁷⁴
- 164 Gowned in a turquoise Overcoat³⁴⁷⁵
 As dazzling as the brightness of the firmament³⁴⁷⁶
 He fills the housing³⁴⁷⁷ of his arms
 With his rod-like³⁴⁷⁸ arms
- 165 The neckline of the Coat is round
 And trimmed with lace³⁴⁷⁹
 And woven braids³⁴⁸⁰
 To prevent it from fraying.
- 166 On the hems of the Coat
 Are embroidered multicoloured pomegranates³⁴⁸¹
 And golden carillon bells³⁴⁸²
 Around the hem betwixt and between

³⁴⁷¹ Psalm 93:1.

³⁴⁷² Psalm 109:19; Exod. 28:4. In Job 12:21 the word **חַי** has a connotation of fierceness, which is echoed in the Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:4.

³⁴⁷³ Exod. 28:32.

³⁴⁷⁴ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:3 [referring to fine linen as **בָּוִי** whereas the Paytan refers to the fabric repeatedly as **שֵׁשׁ** as in Lines 150 and 161 above] explains that only on Yom Kippur the girdle or belt of the High Priest's vestments is made of pure fine linen, unadulterated by other fibres, whereas during the year his girdle can be woven with various fibres of linen intermingled.

³⁴⁷⁵ Exod. 28:31.

³⁴⁷⁶ Daniel 12:3.

³⁴⁷⁷ Meaning the sleeves of his garment, after Mishnah Tractate Nidah 8:1.

³⁴⁷⁸ Song of Sol. 5:14.

³⁴⁷⁹ Exod. 28:32.

³⁴⁸⁰ I Kings 6:29.

³⁴⁸¹ Exod. 28:33.

³⁴⁸² Ben Sira 45:13.

עוֹז אֲבֵנֵט בְּמִזַּח יִתְאַזֵּר אָרוּג בַּד, וְלֹא כְּלָאִים כְּכִלְיָמֵי שָׁנָה.

עָטוּי מְעִיל תִּכְלֶת כְּזוֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מִמְּלֵא בֵּית יָד גְּלִילֵי זְרוּעוֹתָיו

עָגוּל שֶׁפֶת פִּיו רֹאשׁוֹ כְּתַחֲרָא מִסַּב קֶלַע בְּלִי לְהִקְרַע.

עַל שֶׁפֶת שׁוּלְיוֹ רְמוֹנֵי צְבָעִים וּפְעֻמוֹנֵי פֶז סָבִיב בְּתוֹךְ

- 167 When they chime
 Their voices mingling
 Their sound will be atonement
 For the sin of hurting a fellow person with stealth³⁴⁸³
- 168 Woven masterfully³⁴⁸⁴
 The fabric of the Ephod
 Woven with linen and scarlet thread
 And turquoise and crimson
- 169 A golden thread
 Is woven into every fibre³⁴⁸⁵
 And he³⁴⁸⁶ is clothed in it
 From his chest to his midsection.³⁴⁸⁷
- 170 Its³⁴⁸⁸ two epaulettes
 Glow like the sun
 Brilliant with reflected light³⁴⁸⁹
 From the onyx stones³⁴⁹⁰
- 171 Carved with a point of diamond³⁴⁹¹
 Each Tribe's name is memorialized³⁴⁹²
 Dividing them³⁴⁹³
 In names and letters³⁴⁹⁴

³⁴⁸³ Slander, a sound uttered furtively, is likened to outright physical assault, after the Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

³⁴⁸⁴ Exod. 28:6.

³⁴⁸⁵ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 2:1 explains that each coloured fibre was looped with golden thread.

³⁴⁸⁶ The High Priest.

³⁴⁸⁷ Josephus describes the Ephod as a vest that covered the High Priest from his chest area to his belly button (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:5). Later exegetes, such as Rashi, describe it more like a woman's horse-riding apron that is tied in the back at the level of the heart and reaches down to the priest's heels in the back. See: פיוטי (1991). פיוטי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 158, footnote 170.

³⁴⁸⁸ The Ephod's.

³⁴⁸⁹ Josephus describes the miraculous light that emanated from the right onyx epaulet, when God's Presence appeared during Temple services. It could be seen, claims Josephus, like a bolt of light, by a great many people across great distances (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 8:9). The Paytan describes *both* epaulets as emitting miraculous light.

³⁴⁹⁰ Exod. 28:9.

³⁴⁹¹ Jer. 17:1.

³⁴⁹² Exod. 28:12.

³⁴⁹³ Each epaulet was crowned with a stone, and each of the stones was carved with the names of six tribes, totalling twelve, after Exod. 28:10.

³⁴⁹⁴ In a Braita to Tractate Sottah 36:1 the sages explain that the names of the tribes totalled fifty letters, and thus each epaulet bore twenty-five letters making up the names of the six tribes.

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| עַת יִשְׁקוּ | קוֹל זֶה בְּזֶה | יְכוּפֵר בְּעַד קוֹל | מִכֶּה רֵעֵהוּ בַּסֶּתֶר. |
| פְּעוּלַת חוֹשֵׁב | אַרְיֵגַת הָאֵפוֹד | מִשְׁזֹר שֵׁשׁ וְשָׁנִי | תִּכְלַת וְאַרְגָּמָן |
| פְּתִיל זָהָב | נְטוּוּהָ בְּכָל־חַוֵּט | וְנִתְלַבֵּשׁ בּוֹ | מִלֵּב וְעַד טְבוּר. |
| פְּנֹת כְּתָפָיו | כְּזוֹהַר הַמְּאֹרוֹת | מִבְּהִיקוֹת אֹר | מֵאַבְנֵי הַשָּׁהִם |
| פְּתָחֵם בְּשִׁמִּיר | זְכוֹרֹן שְׁבָטִים | הַמִּתְחַלְּקִים | בְּשִׁמּוֹת וְאוֹתוֹת. |

- 172 Extending from it³⁴⁹⁵
And made as intricately as the Ephod
Woven like it
He tied it in the back
- 173 This atones for the transgression of the decree³⁴⁹⁶
The first directive among the Holy Commandments³⁴⁹⁷
Wearing the golden vest
Atones³⁴⁹⁸ for the sin of making a golden god.³⁴⁹⁹
- 174 On the front of the Ephod
There is an exposed part³⁵⁰⁰ measuring one small finger over one small finger³⁵⁰¹
The place where the Breastplate is fastened
With golden rings³⁵⁰²
- 175 The number of the rows of precious stones
Is like the number of the Tribal Standards³⁵⁰³
Their names are engraved upon the precious stones³⁵⁰⁴
And fill the Breastplate.³⁵⁰⁵
- 176 The precious stones are set in gold³⁵⁰⁶
Completely enclosed
Their appearance is
Like eyes³⁵⁰⁷

³⁴⁹⁵ Two strips of fabric extend from the Ephod, to be tied in the back. They were as artfully woven of coloured fibres looped with gold, as the rest of the Ephod.

³⁴⁹⁶ The Ephod atones for transgressing against the second Commandment, Exod. 20:3-4.

³⁴⁹⁷ Jer. 23:9.

³⁴⁹⁸ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5.

³⁴⁹⁹ Exod. 20:23; Isa. 30:22.

³⁵⁰⁰ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:5.

³⁵⁰¹ Exod. 28:16.

³⁵⁰² Exod. 28:23-28.

³⁵⁰³ Each standard comprised four tribes, each of whom was marked with an ensign, after Num. 2.

³⁵⁰⁴ Exod. 28:21.

³⁵⁰⁵ Exod. 28:17.

³⁵⁰⁶ Exod. 28:20.

³⁵⁰⁷ Meaning that they glow like eyes, bordered by "eyelids" of gold.

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| פֶּרֶשׁ מִמְּנוּ | חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד | אֲרוֹג בְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ | וַיַּעֲנֵדוּ לְאַחֲרָיו |
| פּוֹרֵק עֵוֹן צוֹ | רֹאשׁ דִּיבְרוֹת קֹדֶשׁ | אֶפֶדֶת מַסַּכַת | אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב. |
| פְּנֵי לֵב הָאֶפֶד | קְרוּעַ זֹרֶת עַל זֹרֶת | מְקוֹם יְרוּכָס חֹשֶׁן | בְּטַבְּעוֹת זָהָב |
| פְּקֹד טוֹרֵי אֲבֹן | כְּמִסְפַּר דְּגָלִים | שָׁמֶם חֲקוּק בָּם | וַיִּמְלְאוּ חֹשֶׁן. |
| פֶּז מוֹסֵבֹת | בְּמִלּוֹאוֹתָם | מִרְאֵה דְמוֹתָם | כְּמִרְאֵה עֵינָיִם |

- 177 The space between the two attached vestments
The vest and the Breastplate
Is covered with golden rings³⁵⁰⁸
And golden cords.³⁵⁰⁹
- 178 The sin of distorted sentencing at court³⁵¹⁰
It is erased by the wearing of the Breastplate of Justice³⁵¹¹
And He will find us innocent
The God of Justice
- 179 Surrounded by golden carillon bells
Between the Ephod and the Breastplate
Connecting them to the Holy Wreath
Over his two shoulders.³⁵¹²
- 180 A golden Diadem is surrounded
By tiny pearls
And is attached and is connected
To the Holy Wreath³⁵¹³
- 181 On his brow he wears a magnificent Woollen Cap³⁵¹⁴
And on it the headdress
And some of his hair
Is seen between his head and the Mitre³⁵¹⁵

³⁵⁰⁸ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:5.

³⁵⁰⁹ Exod. 28:24-25. Josephus describes the cords as turquoise, but earlier on (stanza 170) both he and the Paytan explain that each separate fibre was looped in gold cords, hence the apparent discrepancy (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*).

³⁵¹⁰ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 7:5; Mal. 2:17.

³⁵¹¹ Continuing the narrative theme of "same cures same."

³⁵¹² Mirsky is confounded by this stanza, finding no textual references for the description. See: פּיּוּטִי (1991). אהרון מירסקי (1991). *פּיּוּטִי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי*. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 160, footnote 180. As noted above [stanza 49] this may be due to the extraneous source of the stanza.

³⁵¹³ Exod. 28:36; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 7:6. The Paytan agrees with the Josephus description, that the Diadem and the Wreath were attached, thus clarifying the apparent contradiction between Exod. 28:36 and 29:30 which appears to conflate the Diadem and the Wreath. Thus, it appears that the front part was called the Diadem, and the back part was called the Wreath. Ben Sira also refers to the two parts independently in 45:20; פּיּוּטִי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי (1991). אהרון מירסקי (1991). *פּיּוּטִי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי*. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 160-161, footnote 181.

³⁵¹⁴ Zachariah 3:5; Braita for Tractate Chulin Folio 138:A; Exod. 28:37.

³⁵¹⁵ The description of the Woollen Cap here is unlike the later description provided by רש"י and by רמב"ם. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). *פּיּוּטִי יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹסֵי*. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 161, footnote 182.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| פְּרִץ דְּבָקִים | בֵּין אֶפֶוד לְחֹשֶׁן | יִכְסֶה בְּשָׂרָשְׁרוֹת | עֲבוֹתוֹת זָהָב. |
| פָּשַׁע הוֹפְכֵי מִשְׁפָּט | יִמָּחַהּ בְּחֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט | וַיִּצְדִּיקֵנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט | אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט |
| פְּעֻמוֹנֵי פֹז מוֹקֶף | בֵּין אֶפֶוד לְחוֹשֶׁן | חוֹבֵר לְנֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁ | עַל־שְׁתֵּי כְּתָפוֹי. |
| צִיץ פֹּז מוֹקֶף | צִיצי פְּנִינִים | דִּיבֶק וְחֶבֶר | לְנֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁה |
| צָנִיף הוֹד שֶׁם בְּמִצְחוֹ | וְעֲלִיָּה הַצִּיץ | וְשִׁיטַת שִׁיעָר | בֵּינוּ לְמִצְנָפֶת. |

- 182 The Rock of Eternity³⁵¹⁶
 The Venerated Name³⁵¹⁷
 Is etched on the Diadem
 Carved there by hand³⁵¹⁸
- 183 The filth of impurity
 The transgressions of blood and unholy libations³⁵¹⁹
 Are atoned for through the merit of the Diadem
 Leaving behind them a scent of purity.
- 184 A fading bloom³⁵²⁰
 A worm rather than a person³⁵²¹
 He is only worthy³⁵²²
 To serve Him that liveth forever.³⁵²³
- 185 He³⁵²⁴ regards the countenance of the King
 And enters the Holy Chambers
 Wearing white linen³⁵²⁵
 And not in golden vestments.³⁵²⁶
- 186 To avert the penalty of death
 For any who enter the Courtyard of the Temple³⁵²⁷
 It is obligatory to sanctify the hands
 And the feet before entering

³⁵¹⁶ Isa. 26:4.

³⁵¹⁷ Psalm 89:8.

³⁵¹⁸ Exod. 28:30.

³⁵¹⁹ Tosefta Menachot 1:6.

³⁵²⁰ Reference to Man, after Isa. 28:1; Job 14:2.

³⁵²¹ Psalm 22:7.

³⁵²² Mal. 3:16.

³⁵²³ A reference to God, after Daniel 12:7.

³⁵²⁴ The High Priest.

³⁵²⁵ Lev. 16:3-4.

³⁵²⁶ Note: This marks the end of the description of the High Priest's vestments and their spiritually salubrious role, which began in stanza 152. Henceforth the Paytan returns to the order of the Avodah.

³⁵²⁷ Exod. 30:19-20; Mishnah Yoma 3:3.

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| צור עולמים | שם הנערץ | חקוק על-ציץ | במכתב חותם |
| צואת טומאת | עון דם ונסוד | ירצה הציץ | כניחות טהור. |
| ציץ נובל | תולעת ולא איש | נחשב לשרת | לחי העולמים |
| צופה פני מלך | ובא בחדר קדש | לבוש בדים | ולא בכתם אופיר. |
| צו עונש מיתה | לבאי צורה | לקדש ידים | ורגלים בבואם |

- 187 Therefore the emissary³⁵²⁸ does so prior
 To his commencing the Service
 He hastens to sanctify
 His hand and his feet.³⁵²⁹
- 188 Novice priests³⁵³⁰ present him
 With the daily morning sacrifice
 He slaughters it and receives
 Its blood and flings it³⁵³¹
- 189 He walks over to light the incense
 And fix the oil lamps³⁵³²
 He then sacrifices the head and the flesh
 The flour offering and the libations.³⁵³³
- 190 He hurries to leave
 For the Parvah Ward³⁵³⁴ in holiness³⁵³⁵
 And a linen³⁵³⁶ curtain is drawn
 Between him³⁵³⁷ and the People
- 191 He sanctifies himself and disrobes
 And bathes and dries himself
 And dons linen garments
 And further sanctifies himself.³⁵³⁸

³⁵²⁸ A reference to the High Priest, see: stanza 157.

³⁵²⁹ Mishnah Yoma 3:3-4 elaborates on the procedure and notes that a sheet of linen [בוץ] was drawn between the High Priest and the people. The Paytan does not mention the screen here at all.

³⁵³⁰ Jer. 14:3; Mishnah Yoma 3:4 does not specify who brought the sacrifice, whereas the Paytan is more specific.

³⁵³¹ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

³⁵³² These activities take place in the Sanctuary. The following activities take place in the Courtyard. This is why the Paytan does not begin the third line with the word "and," whereas the Mishnah [Mishnah Yoma 3:4] connects all the activities with "and," as taking place in a single continuum. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 162, footnote 190.

³⁵³³ Mishnah Yoma 3:4.

³⁵³⁴ The Northern Ward at the Temple.

³⁵³⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:6.

³⁵³⁶ Mishnah Yoma 3:6 describes the curtain as a sheet of בוץ but the Paytan refers to it as שש. See my note 531 for stanza 150 above.

³⁵³⁷ The High Priest.

³⁵³⁸ Mishnah Yoma 3:6.

צִיר לְכֹן בְּטָרִם גִּשְׁתוּ לְשָׂרֵת יִמְהַר יְקַדֵּשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו.

צָעִירָיו יִגִּישׁוּ אֶת־תְּמִיד הַשָּׁחַר קָרְצוּ וְקִיבֵל דָּמוֹ וְזָרַק

צָעַד לְהַקְטִיר קְטוֹרֶת וּלְהַטִּיב נְרוֹת לְהַקְרִיב רֹאשׁ וְנִתַח חֲבָתִים וְנִסְדָּ.

קִידָם בְּצֵאתוֹ לְבַיִת פְּרוּהָ בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְסָכוּ מְחִיצַת שֵׁשׁ בֵּינוֹ לְבֵין עָם

קִידָשׁ וּפִשֵׁט וְטָבֵל וְסִיפֵג וְעָטָה כְּלֵי בָד וְשָׁב וְנִתְקַדֵּשׁ.

- 192 He approaches
The bullock of his sin-offering
Which is standing
Between the Chamber and the Altar³⁵³⁹
- 193 He raises his hand³⁵⁴⁰ and places it
Solemnly upon the bullock's head
To confess
For himself and his family.

And thus did he say: "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*"³⁵⁴¹ And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."³⁵⁴² And he too would intend to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed." And You in Your abundant goodness arouse Your mercy and forgive the man who is of Your servants.

- 194 Eastward of the Itton Gate³⁵⁴³
North of the Altar
He is escorted with honour
By deputy priests.³⁵⁴⁴
- 195 The he-goats there stand
Because that is where is located
The vessel³⁵⁴⁵ in which were put
The golden³⁵⁴⁶ lots.

³⁵³⁹ Mishnah Yoma 3:8.

³⁵⁴⁰ The Paytan claims that the High Priest place one hand on the bullock, whereas the Mishnah Yoma 3:8 and in Menachot 9:8 claims he placed two hands on the bullock, based on Lev. 16:21.

³⁵⁴¹ Lev. 16:30.

³⁵⁴² Mishnah Yoma 3:8; Lev. 16:30.

³⁵⁴³ Ezek. 40:15; Palestinian Talmud Tractate Eiruvin 5:1; Mishnah Yoma 3:9 does not name the Gate, but calls it "east of the Courtyard."

³⁵⁴⁴ Mishnah Yoma 3:9.

³⁵⁴⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:9 calls the vessel **קלפי** which is of Greek origin but the Paytan does not use any foreign words, remaining true to Hebrew, even at the "cost" of poetic elegance and parsimony. For the etymology, see: "Greek: kalpis," Sapphire Dictionary, <https://www.milononline.net/etim.php?vldid=994313>.

³⁵⁴⁶ Mishnah Yoma 3:9 says that the lots were made of beech wood, and later gilded in gold. The Paytan simply refers to them as golden.

קרב אצל פר חטאתו והוא עומד בין אולם ולמזבח

קם תת ידו על-ראשו בסבל להתנדות בעד עצמו ונזיחו.

סוּמָה שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וּמִתְנַדָּה, וְכַף הָיָה אוֹ אֲנָה הַשֵּׁם חֲטָאתִי עוֹיִתִי
פִּשְׁעֵתִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי אֲנָה הַשֵּׁם כִּפְר־נָא עַל הַחֲטָאִים עַל־הַעוֹנוֹת
וְעַל הַפִּשְׁעִים שְׁחֲטָאתִי שְׁעוֹיִתִי שִׁפְשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי. כִּכְתּוּב
בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְךָ לֵאמֹר כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם [לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם]
מִכָּל חֲטָאתֵיכֶם לְפָנֵי הַשֵּׁם. וְהִכְהַנִּים וְהָעַם, הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה
וְהַמְשַׁמְּשִׁים [שִׁים] בְּהִיכָל, בְּזִמְנֵן שְׁשׁוּמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַמְפּוֹרָשׁ הַמְפּוֹאָר
שְׁיֹצֵא מִפִּי כְהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדּוּשָׁה וּבִטְהָרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים
וְנוֹפְלִים עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹ בְרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלִכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. אִף
הוּא מִתְכַּוֵּן לְגַמּוֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבַרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם: תִּטְהָרוּ.

קדמה לשער איתון לצפון מזבח ילווהו בכבוד כהני משנה.

קימת שעירים הלא שם היתה וכלי בית הנחת גורלות זהב.

- 196 He gathers them in his hand³⁵⁴⁷
 And rummages and raises lots³⁵⁴⁸
 This one for Him that liveth forever³⁵⁴⁹
 And this one for death in the desert cliff.³⁵⁵⁰
- 197 If he³⁵⁵¹ grasps in his right hand
 The lot³⁵⁵² engraved for the Name³⁵⁵³
 His Deputy tells him
 Raise your right hand,³⁵⁵⁴
- 198 Should the dire deeds of the generation
 Cause the left lot to be raised
 The Head of the Household tell shim
 Raise your left hand.³⁵⁵⁵
- 199 He bounds and puts the lots
 On the heads of the two he-goats
 And he yells loudly³⁵⁵⁶
 This one is for God as a sin-offering

³⁵⁴⁷ Prov. 13:11.

³⁵⁴⁸ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

³⁵⁴⁹ Daniel 12:7.

³⁵⁵⁰ Mishnah Yoma 4:1 refers to the specific location as Azazel.

³⁵⁵¹ The High Priest.

³⁵⁵² The Paytan uses the word פור interchangeably with the word גורל [which Mishnah Yoma uses exclusively], after Esther 9:24 where it is noted that the two words are synonymous.

³⁵⁵³ The Name of God.

³⁵⁵⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

³⁵⁵⁵ Mishnah Yoma 4:1.

³⁵⁵⁶ Mishnah Yoma 4:1 gives a more laconic account. The Paytanic portrayal is more dramatic. He focuses on the details of the ritual, describing it to his audience with as many literary and poetic sensory devices as he can. He makes the memory “come to life” as real, as factual, inviting the congregation to feel as though they are witnessing true events.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| קוֹבְצָם עַל יָד | וּטוֹרֵף וּמַעֲלָה | זֶה לְחֵי עוֹלָם | וְזֶה לְמִיתַת צוֹק. |
| קָחְתוּ בְיָמַיִן | פּוֹר חֲקוֹק לְשֵׁם | סָגַן יִשְׁמִיעַ לוֹ | הַגְּבִיָּה יְמִינָה, |
| קָשִׁי מֵעַלְלִי דוֹר | בְּשִׂמְאֵל אִם יַעַל | רֹאשׁ בַּיִת אָב יִשִׁיחַ | הַגְּבִיָּה שְׂמֵאלָהּ. |
| קִפֵּץ וּנְתַנֵּם | עַל שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים | וְהִצְרִיחַ בְּקוֹל רֶם | זֶה לְשֵׁם יִהְיֶה חֲטָאת |

200 He ties a crimson cord³⁵⁵⁷
 On the head of the he-goat that is being sent away
 He turns its head toward the desert³⁵⁵⁸
 And this one is for the place of slaughter.

201 He rises and again approaches
 His bullock
 And he places his two hands
 On the bullock and confesses³⁵⁵⁹

And thus did he say, "O Lord³⁵⁶⁰, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house and the children of Aaron [the priests], your holy people. O Lord, forgive, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you, I, my house, and the children of Aaron, your holy people. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant: "*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.*" And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard- upon hearing the glorious, awesome Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity, they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever." And he too would intend to complete the Name³⁵⁶¹ simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: "You will be cleansed."³⁵⁶²

202 He kills³⁵⁶³ the bullock as he is mandated to do
 And receives its blood in a vessel
 And another priest stirs it
 On the staircase³⁵⁶⁴ that lead to the Chamber³⁵⁶⁵

³⁵⁵⁷ Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

³⁵⁵⁸ The Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 41:B explains that the crimson cord was tied around the neck of the he-goat, referring to **בית שחיטתו** as the neck, the organ upon which the slaughter is to be performed. The Paytan however reports that the he-goat was turned toward the desert, referring to **בית שחיטתו** as the geographic or physical location where the animal is to be slaughtered. Mirsky regards this disagreement as proof that Yosse ben Yosse was living in Palestine and that he was not aware of the Babylonian Talmud. I humbly disagree. In this Piyut alone there have thus far been 11 references to the Babylonian Talmud. See: **פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי**. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק (1991), אהרון מירסקי, p. 165, footnote 210.

³⁵⁵⁹ Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

³⁵⁶⁰ Yosse ben Yosse does not only cite "The Name" as does Mishnah Yoma 4:2, but adds the Tetragrammaton, both here and in the penultimate line of this citation of the Confession.

³⁵⁶¹ The second mention of the Tetragrammaton by Yosse ben Yosse. Again, Mishnah Yoma 4:2 only uses the more nonspecific The Name.

³⁵⁶² Mishnah Yoma 3:8; Lev. 16:30.

³⁵⁶³ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 simply says "Slaughters."

³⁵⁶⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 is more specific here, reporting that the stirring took place on the fourth step.

³⁵⁶⁵ The staircase between the Chamber and the Courtyard.

קָשֶׁר שְׁנֵי בְּרֵאשׁ הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח הִפְכוּ לְמַדְבָּר וְזֶה לְבֵית הַשְּׁחִיטָה.

קָם וּבָא לוֹ שְׁנֵיָה אֶצֶל פְּרוֹ וְסָמַךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְהִתְנַדָּה

וְכִף הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם יְהוָה חָטָאתִי עֲוִיתִי פָשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי
 וּבְנֵי אֶהְרֹן עִם קְדוֹשֶׁךָ אֲנִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּפְרִינָא לְחַטָּאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְשָׁעִים
 שְׁחָטָאתִי שְׁעוֹתִי שְׁפָשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי וּבְנֵי אֶהְרֹן עִם קְדוֹשֶׁיךָ
 כִּפְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהַר אֶתְכֶם
 מִכָּל חַטָּאוֹתֵיכֶם לְפָנֵי יְהוָה. וְהִכְהַנִּים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעִזְרָה בְּשַׁעַת
 שְׁהִיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַמְּפֹרָשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כ"ג בְּקְרוֹשָׁה וּבְטָהֳרָה הָיוּ
 כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ
 לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְאַף הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּוֵּין לְגַמּוֹר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם אַחַר הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר
 לָהֶם: תְּטַהְרוּ.

רָצְחוֹ כְּדָת וְקָבַל דָּם בְּכָלִי וְאַחַר יְמַרְסִינוּ בְּמַעֲלוֹת אוֹלָם

- 203 He tramples³⁵⁶⁶ the gangway
And ascends to the Altar
And in his hand is a Brazier
Made of red³⁵⁶⁷ gold.
- 204 He fills the Brazier with glowing³⁵⁶⁸ coals
From the Western side of the Altar³⁵⁶⁹
He descends and places it³⁵⁷⁰
On the level floor³⁵⁷¹
- 205 His colleagues³⁵⁷² take out for him
The Ladle
And the collection vessel³⁵⁷³
For the finely ground incense.³⁵⁷⁴
- 206 He takes a handful³⁵⁷⁵ of mixed spices³⁵⁷⁶
And places it in the Ladle
He takes the Ladle in his left hand
And holds the Brazier in his right hand³⁵⁷⁷

³⁵⁶⁶ The Paytan uses the root טמא to denote a hurried, rough kicking action, after Isa. 1:12; Isa. 41:25. Mishnah Yoma 4:3 reports a less dramatic ascent to the Altar.

³⁵⁶⁷ Mishnah Yoma 4:3-4.

³⁵⁶⁸ Yosse ben Yosse's poetic dramatization enhances the "dry" Mishnaic account in Mishnah Yoma 4:3, where the coals are simply coals, after Lev. 16:12. Here the Paytan delivers a visual image of fiery bolts and sparks that rise from the blazing coals, after Deut. 32:24; Hab. 3:5; Psalm 78:48; Job 5:7.

³⁵⁶⁹ The Paytan is specific about the site. Mishnah Yoma 4:3 does not specify the side of the Altar from which the glowing coals were removed.

³⁵⁷⁰ The Brazier.

³⁵⁷¹ Mishnah Yoma 4:3 specifies that this was the fourth level of the Courtyard.

³⁵⁷² Mishnah Yoma 5:1 uses a general, unnamed group of people who assist the High Priest. The Paytan emphasizes the priestly role in the ritual.

³⁵⁷³ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 calls the vessel a Brazier.

³⁵⁷⁴ Mishnah Yoma 4:4 specifies that the incense for Yom Kippur was more finely ground than the incense used in daily services.

³⁵⁷⁵ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁷⁶ Exod. 30:35.

³⁵⁷⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| רָמַס כְּבֶשׂ | וְעֵלָה לְמִזְבֵּחַ | וּבִידוֹ מִחֲתַת | פֹּז הָאָדוּם. |
| רִשְׁפִים מְלֵאָה | מִפְּנֵי מַעֲרֵב | יָרַד וְשָׁמָּה | בְּרוּכֵי הַמְרִצָּפֶת |
| רִיעִיו יוֹצִיאוּ | לוֹ אֵת הַכֶּפֶף | וְכָלֵי בַיִת צְבִירַת | דְּקַת הַדָּק. |
| רוּחַ מְלֵא חֲפָנָיו | נָתַן לְתוֹךְ כֶּף | נְטֵלָה בְּשִׁמְאֵל | וּמִחֲתָהּ בְּיָמִין |

- 207 He crosses his arms
The right over the left³⁵⁷⁸
And he walks to the left in the Sanctuary³⁵⁷⁹
To the edge³⁵⁸⁰ of the Ornamental Curtain.³⁵⁸¹
- 208 He walks between them³⁵⁸²
From the south to the north
And when he arrives at the end he returns
And walks to the middle of the Sanctuary³⁵⁸³
- 209 The crowns of the Staves³⁵⁸⁴
Look like breasts³⁵⁸⁵
Pressing against the Ornamental Curtain
And blocking the passage.
- 210 The Mighty One³⁵⁸⁶ announces his presence
And he draws the Ornamental Curtain³⁵⁸⁷
And without taking a step³⁵⁸⁸ finds himself
Between the two Staves³⁵⁸⁹

³⁵⁷⁸ This action is not mentioned in the Mishnah. The Paytan provides a more visual account of the manner in which the High Priest carried the incense.

³⁵⁷⁹ Toward the Holy of Holies.

³⁵⁸⁰ Joshua 8:13.

³⁵⁸¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1 debates whether there was a single Ornamental Curtain or two, but concludes that there were two. The Paytan only mentions one.

³⁵⁸² Between the holy space of the Sanctuary and the holier space of the Holy of Holies, after Exod. 26:33 and Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁸³ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁸⁴ The Staves are the carrying poles that helped carry the Ark like a palanquin, after Exod. 27:6.

³⁵⁸⁵ The Paytan uses a vivid image of the sites at the Temple, after the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Braita, Folio 54:A. Mishnah Yomah does not.

³⁵⁸⁶ Referring to the High Priest, who had to be physically powerful, after Tosefta Kippurim 1:6.

³⁵⁸⁷ The Paytan provides a more detailed account than Mishnah Yoma 5:1, after Tosefta Kippurim 2:13. Mirsky claims that the Paytan bases his narrative on the Tosefta which pertains to the First Temple. See: אהרון מירסקי (1991). פיוטי יוסי בן יוסי. ירושלים: מוסד ביאליק, p. 167, footnote 229.

³⁵⁸⁷ Mishnah Yoma 4:2.

³⁵⁸⁸ Lest he step between the Staves and profane the sacred space between them. This pertains to the First Temple, whereas by the time of the Second Temple the Ark had already been lost. The ritual proceeded *as if* the Staves and the Ark were still present in the Holy of Holies. The Paytan does not make this distinction however.

³⁵⁸⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

רִיכַב כּוֹבֵד יָמִין עַל שְׁמַאל וְהַשְׁמַאִיל בְּהִיכַל בְּעֵקֶב הַפְּרוּכָת.

רִיגִיל בְּקִרְבָּם מִנְּגַב לְצַפּוֹן וּבְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁב עַד חֲצֵי הַבַּיִת

רְאֵשֵׁי הַבַּדִּים כְּמֵרְאָה שְׂדִים לוֹחֲצִים בְּפְרוּכָת וְאִין דְּרֹךְ לְעִבּוֹר.

רַב כַּח יוֹדִיעַ וַיִּדְחָה בְּפְרוּכָת וַיָּבֵא בְּלֹא פָסַע בֵּין שְׁנֵי הַבַּדִּים

- 211 The primal dust of the world³⁵⁹⁰
 The Foundation Stone³⁵⁹¹
 The resting place of the Holy Ark³⁵⁹²
 There he³⁵⁹³ puts the Brazier.³⁵⁹⁴
- 212 He pours incense in the Brazier
 And smoke rises³⁵⁹⁵
 And he turns his face³⁵⁹⁶
 And leaves the same way he had entered³⁵⁹⁷
- 213 He beseeches³⁵⁹⁸ for the People
 Briefly³⁵⁹⁹ in the Holy of Holies
 Lest any elder
 Assume dominion upon the common people.³⁶⁰⁰
- 214 The stirrer³⁶⁰¹ returns
 The blood to him³⁶⁰²
 And he³⁶⁰³ comes and stands
 In the place where he stood³⁶⁰⁴

³⁵⁹⁰ Prov. 8:26.

³⁵⁹¹ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:4.

³⁵⁹² Mishnah Yoma 5:2.

³⁵⁹³ The High Priest.

³⁵⁹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁹⁶ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:3.

³⁵⁹⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁵⁹⁸ There is a note of panic in the word "beseech" which denotes a prayer that is accompanied by begging, crying, and fear, after Psalm 30:3 : Lam. 3:8; Job 24:12.

³⁵⁹⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:1.

³⁶⁰⁰ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:3.

³⁶⁰¹ Referring to the assisting priest who had hitherto stirred the blood lest it coagulate, after Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

³⁶⁰² To the High Priest.

³⁶⁰³ The High Priest.

³⁶⁰⁴ Between the Staves, after Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

ראש עפרות תבל אבן השתיה מקום מכון ארון שם שם מחתה.

שפך בה קטרת ותימר עשן והצדיד פניו ויצא כדרךכו

שינע בעד עם בקוצר בהיכל אשר לא ישור רב על צעיר.

שובב לו דם הממס בו וכא ונתיצב במקום עמדו

215 He puts his practiced finger in the blood³⁶⁰⁵
 And he dips and he whips the blood
 Once upward
 And seven times downward.³⁶⁰⁶

And thus he would count: One, one plus one, one plus two, one plus three, one plus four, one plus five, one plus six, one plus seven, and he left and placed the basin on a golden stand³⁶⁰⁷ that was in the Holy of Holies.³⁶⁰⁸

216 He returns and places it on the Stand
 And he slaughters the he-goat of the People³⁶⁰⁹
 And receives its blood³⁶¹⁰ and returns
 And whips the blood as he did before

217 He places it³⁶¹¹ on its proper Stand³⁶¹²
 And takes the blood of the bullock
 And thus he sprays in the Tent³⁶¹³
 Before the Ark on the outer side.³⁶¹⁴

And thus he would count: One, one plus one, one plus two, one plus three, one plus four, one plus five, one plus six, one plus seven, and he left and placed the basin on the second stand that was in the Holy of Holies.³⁶¹⁵

³⁶⁰⁵ Lev. 16:14.

³⁶⁰⁶ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

³⁶⁰⁷ Mishnah Yoma 5:3 specifies *THE* golden stand.

³⁶⁰⁸ Mishnah Yoma 5:3.

³⁶⁰⁹ Lev. 16:15.

³⁶¹⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:4 specifies that the vessel he received the blood in was the מזרק which may be translated as the Basin, after Zech. 9:15. The Paytan does not refer to a specific vessel.

³⁶¹¹ The Basin.

³⁶¹² The Paytan recounts two separate stands for each of the basins. The Mishnah debates whether there were two or a single basin, but concludes that there was only one, Mishnah Yomah 5:4. See also Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Folio 56:B.

³⁶¹³ Lev. 16:16.

³⁶¹⁴ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

³⁶¹⁵ Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

שֶׁלַח אֶצְבַּע מִיּוֹמֶנֶת וְטָבַל וְהִצְלִיף אַחַת לְמַעְלָה וְשִׁבַּע לְמַטָּה.

וְכַד הָיָה מוֹנֶה אַחַת, אַחַת וְאַחַת אַחַת וְשִׁתִּים אַחַת וְשְׁלוֹשׁ אַחַת
וְאַרְבַּע אַחַת וְחֲמִשׁ אַחַת וְשֵׁשׁ אַחַת וְשִׁבַּע, יֵצֵא וְהִנִּיחוֹ עַל כֵּן זֶהב
שֶׁהָיָה בְּהִיכָל.

שָׁב וְשָׂמוּ בְּכֵן וְשַׁחַט שְׁעִיר עֵם וְקִיבַל דָּם וּבֵא וְהִצְלִיף כְּדָרְכוֹ

שִׁינְהוּ בְּכֵנוּ וְנָטַל דָּם פָּר וְכֵן יִזֶּה בְּאֵהָל מוֹל אֲרוֹן חוּצָה.

וְכַד הָיָה מוֹנֶה אַחַת, אַחַת וְאַחַת אַחַת וְשִׁתִּים אַחַת וְשְׁלֹשׁ אַחַת וְאַרְבַּע
אַחַת וְחֲמִשׁ אַחַת וְשֵׁשׁ אַחַת וְשִׁבַּע, יֵצֵא וְהִנִּיחוֹ עַל כֵּן הַשְּׁנִי שֶׁהָיָה בְּהִיכָל.

- 218 He returns and exchanges it³⁶¹⁶
 For the blood of the he-goat
 And he does with it
 As he had done with the blood of the bullock
- 219 When he completes the requisite
 Number of whippings of the blood inside
 He mixes them³⁶¹⁷ and exits³⁶¹⁸
 To cleanse the Altar of the incense.³⁶¹⁹
- 220 He begins at the corner³⁶²⁰
 In the northern end toward the eastern corner
 And where³⁶²¹ he finishes this task³⁶²²
 There he flicks the blood seven times
- 221 He pours the remainder³⁶²³ outside
 At the edge of the face of the Altar³⁶²⁴
 Because with the mixed bloods he atones
 For the holy Courtyard.³⁶²⁵

³⁶¹⁶ The bullock's blood, after Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

³⁶¹⁷ The blood of the he-goat and the blood of the bullock, after Mishnah Yoma 5:4.

³⁶¹⁸ Lev. 16:18.

³⁶¹⁹ Mishnah Yoma 5:5.

³⁶²⁰ Mishnah Yoma 5:5.

³⁶²¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:5 is specific about the direction of the rotation around the Altar.

³⁶²² Lev. 16:19.

³⁶²³ Of the blood, after Mishnah Yoma 5:6.

³⁶²⁴ Lev. 4:18; Mishnah Yoma 5:6 specifies that this was the western base of the Altar.

³⁶²⁵ Palestinian Talmud Tractate Yoma 5:7; Lev. 16:33.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| שָׁב וַיִּמְרְנוּ | בְּדָם הַשָּׁעִיר | וַיַּפְעֵל בּוֹ | כְּמִשְׁפֹּט דַם הַפָּר |
| שְׁלֹמוֹ כְּדָת | הַזֵּיוֹת פְּנִימָה | בְּלָלָם וַיֵּצֵא | לְחַטָּא מִזִּבְחַ הַקְּטוֹרֶת. |
| שִׁיתְחִיל מִקְרוֹן | צְפוּנָה מִזְרָחָה | וּבִמְקוֹם יִגְמֹר | שָׁם יִזֶּה שְׁבַע |
| שׁוֹפָד שְׁאָר בַּחוּץ | בִּיסוּד פְּנֵי פֶתַח | כִּי בָם יִכְפֹּר | עַל עֲזֵרַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ. |

And then³⁶²⁶ he approached the he-goat that was destined to be sent away to the desert and he put his two hands on it and he confessed for us all, placing his hands on it and confessing for us³⁶²⁷. And thus he would say: I beg of You, LORD, they have erred, been iniquitous and wilfully sinned before Your- Your People, the Family of Israel. I beg of You- with Your Name LORD please atone,³⁶²⁸ please forgive now the errors, iniquities and wilful sins³⁶²⁹ by which Your People, the Family of Israel have erred, been iniquitous and wilfully sinned before You³⁶³⁰. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant, from Your glorious expression: “For on this day he shall atone for you to cleanse you from all of your sins before the LORD.”³⁶³¹ And the Kohanim and the people standing in the Courtyard and those who serve at the Temple³⁶³²- upon hearing³⁶³³ the express, glorious³⁶³⁴ Name, the Ineffable one, emanating from the mouth of the Koehn Gadol in holiness and in purity,³⁶³⁵ they would kneel and prostrate themselves, and give thanks, and they would say: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever." And he too would intend³⁶³⁶ to complete the Name simultaneously with those reciting the blessing; then he would say to them: “You will be cleansed.”³⁶³⁷

- 222 An appointed man is prepared³⁶³⁸
 To cast it forth³⁶³⁹
 And he³⁶⁴⁰ ascends and makes a burnt offering
 Of the flesh of the bullock and the he-goat³⁶⁴¹
- 223 He takes them³⁶⁴² with rods
 To the outskirts of the encampment of the City³⁶⁴³
 And they are burnt entirely
 The hide and the flesh and the waste.

³⁶²⁶ The phrase “and then” does not appear in the Mishnah, in Yoma 5:6.

³⁶²⁷ The phrase “for us” does not appear in the Mishnah, in Yoma 5:6.

³⁶²⁸ The phrase **כפר נא** [please atone] does not appear in Mishnah Yoma 6:2.

³⁶²⁹ The Paytan recounts the narrative as: **לעונות, ולפשעים, ששטאו, וששענו** in the active voice, whereas the Mishnah in Yoma 6:2 recounts it in a different order and in the active voice: **ששענו, וששטאו**, after Lev. 16:30.

³⁶³⁰ The Paytan recounts the narrative as: **ששענו, ענו, שטאו**, whereas the Mishnah in Yoma 6:2 recounts it in a different order: **ששענו, שטאו, ענו**.

³⁶³¹ Mishnah Yoma 5:6.

³⁶³² The **משמשים בהיכל** are absent from Mishnah Yoma 6:2.

³⁶³³ The Paytan says **בזמן ששומעים** and the Mishnah in Yoma 6:2 says **כשהיו שומעים**. The Paytan’s version suggests a timeless ritual, in a continuous sense, and the Mishnah suggests a past event that has ended.

³⁶³⁴ The word **מפואר** is absent from Mishnah Yoma 6:2.

³⁶³⁵ The aspect of **בקדושה ובטהרה** “in purity and holiness” is absent from the Mishnaic account in Yoma 6:2.

³⁶³⁶ The phrase is missing from the Mishnaic account in Yoma 6:2.

³⁶³⁷ Lev. 16:30.

³⁶³⁸ Lev. 16:21; Mishnah Yoma 6:3.

³⁶³⁹ Referring to the he-goat that is to be cast away in the desert, after Lev. 16:21.

³⁶⁴⁰ The High Priest.

³⁶⁴¹ Mishnah Yoma 6:7.

³⁶⁴² The flesh, skin, and waste of the two sacrificed animals. The Paytan uses the root **תקפ** meaning strong, thus describing the High Priest attaching the flesh of the animals tightly to the v=carrying rods. See: Esther 9:29.

³⁶⁴³ Lev. 16:27.

ואַחַר כֵּן בָּא לוֹ אֶצֶל שְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח וְסוּמָה שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וְנִתְּוָה בְּעַדֵּינוּ סוּמָה
 שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וּמִתְּוָה בְּעַדֵּינוּ וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹ אֲנֵי הַשֵּׁם חָטְאוּ עוֹו פָּשְׁעוּ לְפָנֶיךָ
 עֲמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנֵי הַשֵּׁם כִּפֵּר נָא סִלַּח נָא לְחַטָּאִים לְעוֹנוֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים שְׁחַטְאוּ
 שְׁעוּ לְפָנֶיךָ עֲמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּכְתּוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדֶךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם
 לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנֵי הַשֵּׁם תִּטְהַרוּ. וְהִכְהַנִּים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֲזָרָה
 וְהַמְשַׁמְשִׁים בְּהִיכָל בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁשׁוּמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַמְפֹרָשׁ הַמְפֹאָר שִׁיּוּצָא מִפִּי כֹהֵן
 גָּדוֹל בְּקִדּוּשָׁה וּבִטְהָרָה הָיוּ כֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹ בְרוּךְ שֵׁם
 כְבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד אֵף הוּא מִתְכַּוֵּן לְגַמּוֹר אֶת הַשֵּׁם כְּנֶגֶד הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר
 לָהֶם: תִּטְהַרוּ.

תִּיכּוֹן אִישׁ מוֹעֵד לְשַׁלְּחוֹ וְעֵלָה וְהִקְטִיר חֲלָבֵי פָר וְשְׁעִיר

תִּקְפָם בְּמוֹטוֹת חוּץ לְמַחֲנֵה עִיר שְׂרָפוֹם כָּלִיל עוֹר וּבָשָׂר וּפְרָשׁ.

- 224 He marks³⁶⁴⁴ the he-goat
That is to be sent to the height of the desert³⁶⁴⁵
They³⁶⁴⁶ pull him³⁶⁴⁷ aside to review³⁶⁴⁸
The Laws of the Tenth Day³⁶⁴⁹
- 225 First he sanctifies
His hands and his feet
And he disrobes of the linen clothes
And dons his own clothes.³⁶⁵⁰
- 226 He completes his readings³⁶⁵¹
And he disrobes and bathes
And dons the Eight Vestments³⁶⁵²
And further sanctifies himself³⁶⁵³
- 227 A gift offering of sheep
And rams³⁶⁵⁴ he burns entirely³⁶⁵⁵ on the Altar
And he sanctifies his hands
And his feet and disrobes.³⁶⁵⁶

³⁶⁴⁴ The Paytan uses the word **תאר** which refers to the drawing of a border, a distinction between two things, after Joshua 15:9. Mishnah Yoma 4:2 mentions that the High Priest marked the he-goat with a crimson cord, and the Paytan may be referring to this.

³⁶⁴⁵ Mishnah Yoma 6:5 calls the place a “cliff.”

³⁶⁴⁶ The elders.

³⁶⁴⁷ The High Priest.

³⁶⁴⁸ In his account the High Priest “reviews” the Laws, but in the Mishnaic account he “reads” the Laws, possibly for the first time.

³⁶⁴⁹ The Paytan is more vague about the specific sections of the Torah which the High Priest must study. Mishnah Yoma 7:1 specifies in a legalistic tone the portions to be read Lev. 16 and Lev. 23:26-32 as well as Num. 29:7-11, and further recounts a complex choreography of the participating elders as they interact with the High Priest.

³⁶⁵⁰ Mishnah Yoma 7:1 ‘gives’ the High Priest the option of reading the Torah portions in his fine linen vestments on in his own white clothes. The Paytan here specifies that the High Priest wore his own clothes **כלי עושרו**, literally “the clothes of his wealth.”

³⁶⁵¹ The Paytan uses the word **הגיונו** from the root **הגה** which implies both a cogitation and a recitation of the words that are being read.

³⁶⁵² Mishnah Yoma 7:3 calls the vestments **בגדי זהב** but the Paytan refers to them by the number of items, eight.

³⁶⁵³ Mishnah Yoma 7:3.

³⁶⁵⁴ Mishnah Yoma 7:3.

³⁶⁵⁵ Lev. 16:3-5.

³⁶⁵⁶ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| תָּאֵר שְׁעִיר | לְרֹאשׁ הַמִּדְבָּר | מִשְׁכוּהוֹ לְשָׁנָן | בְּחֻקֵי עֲשׂוֹר |
| תַּחֲלָה יִקְדָּשׁ | יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו | וַיִּפְשׁוּט כְּלֵי כָד | וַיַּעַט כְּלֵי עֲשָׂרוֹ. |
| תָּם הֶגְיוֹנוֹ | פָּשַׁט וְטָבַל | וַעֲטָה שְׂמוֹנָה | וַשָּׁב וַנִּתְקַדָּשׁ |
| תְּשׁוּרַת כְּבָשִׂים | וְאֱלִים הַכְּלִיל | קִידֵשׁ יָדָיו | וְרַגְלָיו וּפְשָׁט. |

- 228 He marches as is his wont
To the Ward of Ablutions
And he bathes and dries himself
And dons white linen clothes³⁶⁵⁷
- 229 He performs his duty as he was taught
To the letter,³⁶⁵⁸ and he sanctifies himself
And he takes out from inside³⁶⁵⁹
The golden Ladle and the Brazier.³⁶⁶⁰
- 230 Once the daily Avodah is done
He no longer requires the linen clothes
And he sanctifies himself and disrobes
And puts them aside forever³⁶⁶¹
- 231 Immediately after the abluion
He wears golden vestments
And further sanctifies
His hands and his feet.³⁶⁶²
- 232 The daily dusk-offering
He prepares in order
And he lights incense³⁶⁶³
Between the meat portions and the libation³⁶⁶⁴

³⁶⁵⁷ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁵⁸ Isa. 5:17.

³⁶⁵⁹ From the Holy of Holies.

³⁶⁶⁰ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶¹ Lev. 16:23; Sifre אחריו מות 6:7 recounts that the fine linen vestments used by the High Priest on Yom Kippur were cached eternally and could not be subsequently reused. This account is absent from Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶² Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶³ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶⁴ Mishnah Yoma 3:5.

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| תִּירְגֵּל פְּעָמָיו | לְבַיִת הַטְּבִילָה | טָבַל וְסִיפָג | וְעָטָה כְּלֵי בַד |
| תִּלְמוּדוֹ יַעַשׂ | כְּדַבְּרוֹ, וְקִידָשׁ | וְיוֹצֵיאַ מִפְּנִימָה | כַּף וּמַחְתֶּת פָּז. |
| תּוֹכֵן עֲבוֹדוֹת | כְּלֵי בַד הַשְּׁלִים | קִידָשׁ וּפָשֵׁט | וְהַנִּיחָם נֶצַח |
| תִּכְרַח טְבִילָה | וְלָבַשׁ כְּלֵי פָז | וְשָׁב וְקִידָשׁ | יְדִיו וְרַגְלָיו. |
| תְּמִיד הָעֲרֻבִים | יַעֲשֶׂה כִסְדָר | וְהִקְטִיר קְטוֹרֶת | בֵּין נְתָחִים לְנִסְךְ |

- 233 His duties done
 He lights the oil lamps³⁶⁶⁵
 And spreads open his arms³⁶⁶⁶
 And he sanctifies himself and disrobes.
- 234 The clothing of his body
 Are quickly brought to him by his apprentices³⁶⁶⁷
 And he wears them with dignity
 And he leaves with gladness³⁶⁶⁸
- 235 His countenance aglow³⁶⁶⁹
 Like the sun rising in its full glory³⁶⁷⁰
 He brings tidings to his dispatchers
 Of clemency and healing.³⁶⁷¹
- 236 The congregation³⁶⁷² awaits hoping
 For the exit of the speedy man³⁶⁷³
 And for the glad tidings of salvation³⁶⁷⁴
 And for his message that they have been forgiven
- 237 He gives praise
 To the Name of God before the People
 With five ablutions
 And ten sanctifications.³⁶⁷⁵

³⁶⁶⁵ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶⁶ To bless the People, after Ben Sira's שבח אבות עולם 50:28-29; Sifre שמיני 9:21.

³⁶⁶⁷ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁶⁸ Mishnah Yoma 7:4 concludes with a single sentence: "And he would make a feast for his friends for having exited the Sanctuary in peace." The Paytan elaborates on the joy, poetically conveying the joy in a more detailed and visual, palpable way.

³⁶⁶⁹ Exod. 34:30.

³⁶⁷⁰ Judges 5:31.

³⁶⁷¹ Mal. 3:20.

³⁶⁷² Mishnah Yoma decouples the Congregation from the account of the Avodah, but the Paytan adds this element, in order to connect his audience personally to the inherent aims of the Avodah.

³⁶⁷³ A reference to the High priest, after Prov. 22:29; Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma 13:A.

³⁶⁷⁴ Psalm 96:2; Isa. 52:7.

³⁶⁷⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:3.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| תְּכַלִּית מַעֲשִׂים | נְרוֹת הַבְּעִיר | פִּירֵשׁ כַּפַּיִם | וְקִדֵּשׁ וּפְשָׁט. |
| תִּלְבוֹשֶׁת שְׂאֵרוֹ | חֲנִיכּוֹ יִרְצוּ | יִלְבָּשֶׁם בְּכָבוֹד | וַיֵּצֵא בְּמִשׁוֹשׁ |
| תִּאָּרוּ הוֹקֵרָן | כִּצְאֵת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ | מִשְׁלַח לְשׁוֹלְחָיו | צְדָקָה וּמִרְפָּא. |
| תִּקְוֹת קֹהֵל | לִצְאֵת אִישׁ מִהִיר | מִבֶּשֶׁר יְשׁוּעוֹת | וּמוֹדִיעַ סְלִיחוֹת |
| תִּהְלֶה נָתַן | לְשֵׁם אֵל פָּנֵי עַם | בְּחֶמֶשׁ טְבִילוֹת | וְעֹשֶׂר קְדוּשׁוֹת. |

- 238 First he tells them:
Go drink with glad hearts,³⁶⁷⁶
God forgives iniquity
And overlooks transgression.³⁶⁷⁷
- 239 Give us a sign³⁶⁷⁸
They call in his ears,
So we know how
The sins are forgiven.
- 240 He gives the sign of the he-goat that was sent to the desert
And thus brings tidings of salvation,
The cord turned snow white³⁶⁷⁹
From its prior crimson scarlet hue³⁶⁸⁰
- 241 They give thanks
Because of the good tidings he has brought them
By the trusted emissary³⁶⁸¹
That was sent forth to the desert.³⁶⁸²
- 242 Wholesome and righteous³⁶⁸³
They all escort him to his home
And they make great merriment
For he has exited the Holy of Holies unharmed.³⁶⁸⁴
- 243 *“Happy is the People
That is in such a case.
Yea, happy is the People
Whose God is the LORD.”*³⁶⁸⁵

³⁶⁷⁶ Eccles. 9:7.

³⁶⁷⁷ Micah 7:18.

³⁶⁷⁸ Exod. 7:9.

³⁶⁷⁹ Isa. 1:18.

³⁶⁸⁰ Mishnah Yoma 6:8; Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma Braita, Folio 39:A.

³⁶⁸¹ Prov. 13:17.

³⁶⁸² With the he-goat that was cast away.

³⁶⁸³ Appellations of the people of Israel.

³⁶⁸⁴ Mishnah Yoma 7:4.

³⁶⁸⁵ Psalm 144:15.

תְּחַלֵּה הַשְּׁמִיעַם: לְכוּ שְׁתוּ בְּלֵב טוֹב, אֵל נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן וְעוֹבֵר עַל פֶּשַׁע.

תֵּן לָנוּ מוֹפֵת בְּאָזְנוֹי יֹאמְרוּ, וְנִדַּע בְּמָה יְכוּפֵר עוֹן.

תַּתּוּ צִיר שְׁעִיר וְהוּא מִבֶּשֶׂר יְשׁוּעוֹת, הַלְבִּין כְּשֶׁלֶג אוֹדֵם הַשָּׁנִי

תוֹדָה נִתְּנוּ כִּי טוֹב הַשְּׁמִיעַם עַל צִיר אֲמוֹנִים הַמְשׁוֹלַח לְמִדְבָּר.

תְּמִימִים יִשְׂרָיִם לְנֹוֹהוּ יְלוֹוֵהוּ וְשִׂמְחָה יַעֲשׂוּ בְּצִאתוֹ בְּלֹא פְגַע.

אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שְׁכָכָה לוֹ אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שֵׁי אֱלֹהֵיו.

אזכיר גבורות אלוה

I AM REMINDED OF THE GREAT DEEDS OF GOD

SOURCES CITED: SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Genesis | 126 |
| Exodus | 56 |
| Leviticus | 52 |
| Numbers | 28 |
| Deuteronomy | 18 |
| Joshua | 4 |
| Judges | 2 |
| I Kings | 4 |
| II kings | 2 |
| I Samuel | 5 |
| II Samuel | 3 |
| Isaiah | 65 |
| Jeremiah | 17 |
| Ezekiel | 21 |
| Hosea | 4 |
| Joel | |
| Amos | 5 |
| Obadiah | |
| Jonah | 1 |
| Micah | 1 |
| Nahum | |
| Habakkuk | 3 |
| Zephaniah | |
| Haggai | |
| Zechariah | 2 |
| Malachi | 5 |
| Psalms | 77 |
| Proverbs | 27 |
| Job | 30 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Song of Songs | 2 |
| Ruth | |
| Lamentations | 2 |
| Ecclesiastes | 4 |
| Esther | 3 |
| Daniel | 6 |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | 1 |
| I Chronicles | 6 |
| II Chronicles | 2 |
| Genesis Rabba | 33 |
| Mishnah | 118 |
| PT | 16 |
| BT | 22 |
| Ecclesiastes Rabba | 1 |
| Ben Sira | 11 |
| DSS 1QS | 2 |
| Sifre | 4 |
| Leviticus Rabba | 4 |
| Esther Rabba | 1 |
| Heichalot | 1 |
| Exodus Rabba | 2 |
| Midrash Tanchuma | 1 |
| Tosefta | 10 |
| Josephus | 10 |

Tabular and Graphic Summary of All the Sources Cited

The following pages offer the reader a variety of tables and graphs which are descriptive in nature and point only to the phenomenology of citations in Yosse ben Yosse's work. The data does not have any statistical predictive characteristics.

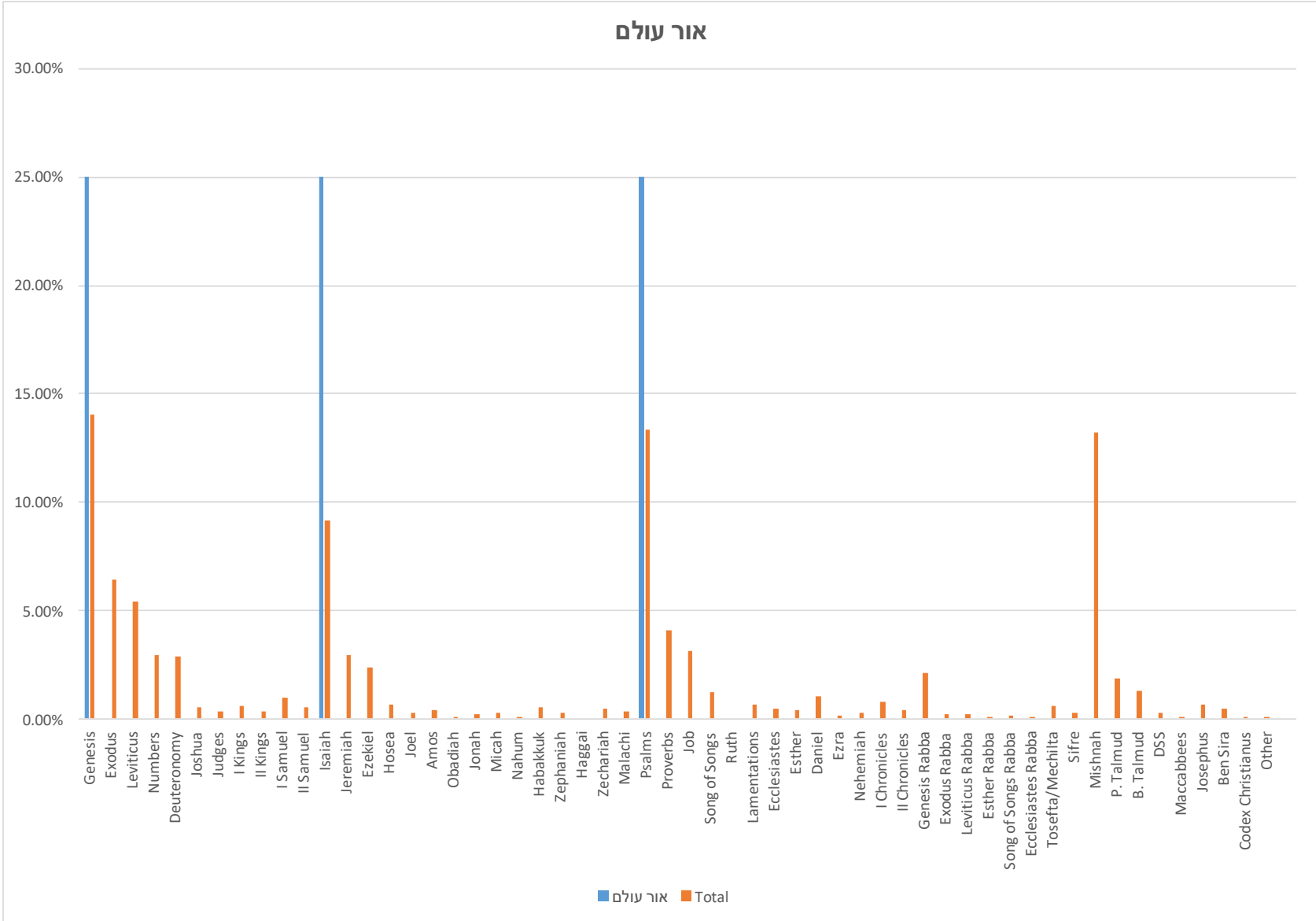
A Phenomenological, Descriptive Table Of Sources Cited In Each Piyut

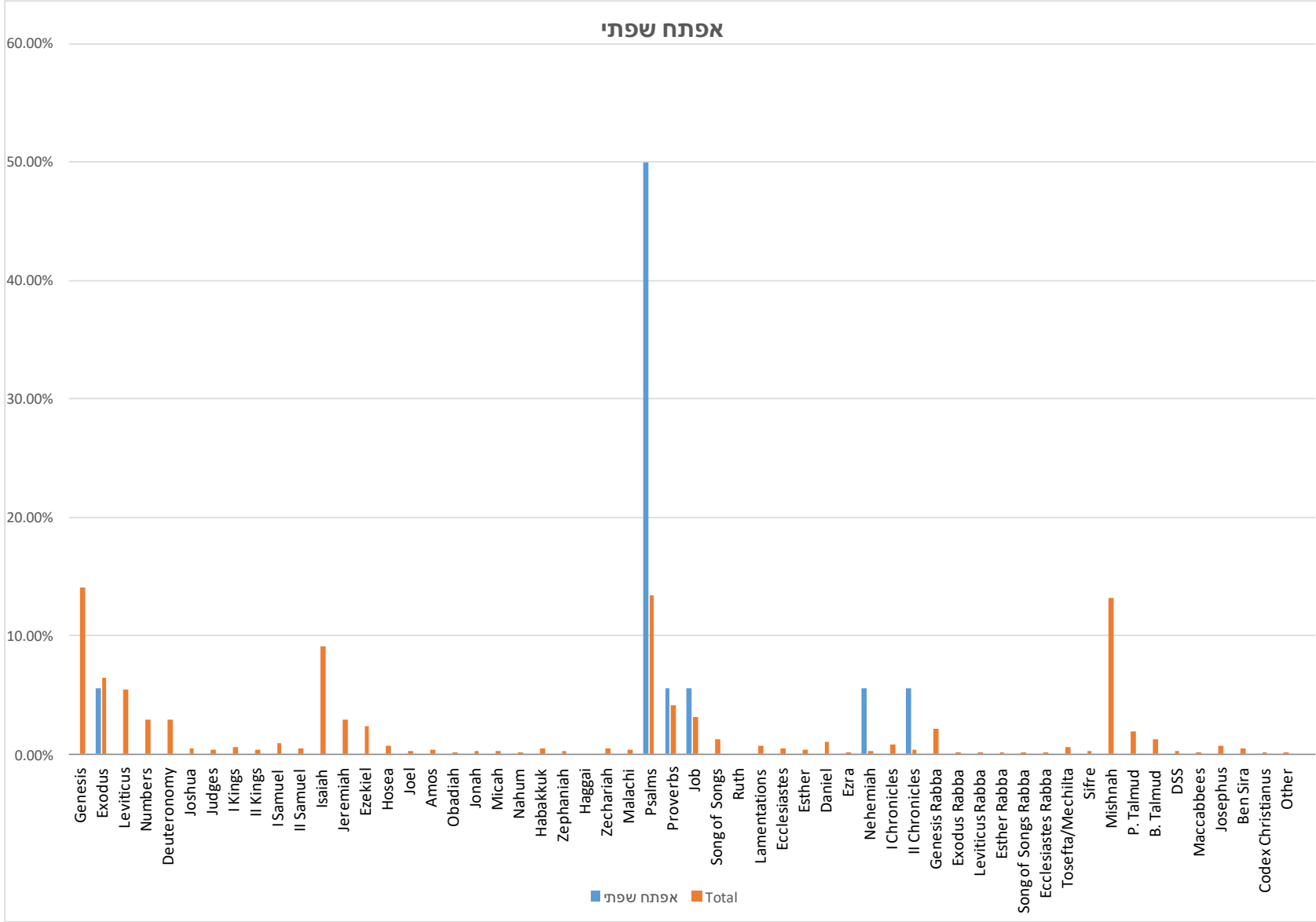
| | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | P 6 | P 7 | P 8 | P 9 | P 10 | P 11 | P 12 | P 13 | P 14 | P 15 | |
|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----|
| | אור עולם | אפתח שפתי | אפתח פה ברקן | אז לראש תתנו | אכרעה ואברכה | אין לם כן גדול | אתן תהילה | אהללה אלוהי | אנסה לעזרה | אפחד במעשי | אמנם אשמנו | אספר גדולות | אז בדעת חקר | אתה סוננת עולם | אזכיר גמחות | |
| STANZAS | 1 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 23 | 44 | 44 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 138 | 176 | 243 | |
| Genesis | 1 | | | | 3 | | 5 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 30 | 119 | 81 | 126 | 390 |
| Exodus | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 9 | 3 | 20 | 6 | 12 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 46 | 56 | 179 |
| Leviticus | | | | 1 | | 13 | | | | 1 | 4 | 14 | 27 | 39 | 52 | 151 |
| Numbers | | | | 1 | | 5 | 2 | 9 | | 5 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 22 | 28 | 81 |
| Deuteronomy | | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 8 | | 16 | 13 | 18 | 79 |
| Joshua | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 14 |
| Judges | | | | | | | | 5 | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| I Kings | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 16 |
| II Kings | | | | 2 | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| I Samuel | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 5 | 3 | 5 | 26 |
| II Samuel | | | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | 3 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 14 |
| Isaiah | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 26 | 30 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 6 | 30 | 36 | 65 | 254 |
| Jeremiah | | | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 81 |
| Ezekiel | | | | | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 10 | 21 | 65 |
| Hosea | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | | 7 | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 18 |
| Joel | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 2 | | 7 |
| Amos | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | 2 | 5 | 11 |
| Obadiah | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Jonah | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Micah | | | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 8 |
| Nahum | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Habakkuk | | | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | 14 |
| Zephaniah | | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 8 |
| Haggai | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Zechariah | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 4 | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| Malachi | | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | 2 | | | | 5 | 10 |

| | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | P 6 | P 7 | P 8 | P 9 | P 10 | P 11 | P 12 | P 13 | P 14 | P 15 | |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------|
| | אר שולם | אפתח שפתי | אפתח פה ברקן | אז לראש תתנו | אכרעה ואברכה | אין לן כהן גדול | אתן תהילה | אהללה אלוהי | אמסה לעזרה | אפחד במעשי | אמנם אשמעם | אספר גדולות | אז בדעת חקר | אתה סגנת עולמ | אזכיר גבורות | |
| STANZAS | 1 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 23 | 44 | 44 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 138 | 176 | 243 | |
| Psalms | 1 | 9 | 20 | 9 | 19 | 10 | 42 | 30 | 25 | 15 | 15 | 9 | 47 | 44 | 77 | 372 |
| Proverbs | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | | 10 | 4 | 20 | 17 | 27 | 114 |
| Job | | 1 | | 4 | 5 | | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 12 | 30 | 87 |
| Song of Songs | | | 1 | | | 10 | | 2 | 11 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 2 | 34 |
| Ruth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Lamentations | | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| Ecclesiastes | | | | | 1 | | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 4 | 12 |
| Esther | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| Daniel | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 5 | 7 | | 1 | | 4 | 4 | 6 | 29 |
| Ezra | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 4 |
| Nehemiah | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | 3 | | 1 | 8 |
| I Chronicles | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 22 |
| II Chronicles | | 1 | | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| Genesis Rabba | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 33 | 59 |
| Exodus Rabba | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Leviticus Rabba | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 4 | 5 |
| Esther Rabba | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Song of Songs Rabba | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 3 |
| Ecclesiastes Rabba | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Tosefta/Mechilta | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 3 | 10 | 16 |
| Sifre | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | | 4 | 8 |
| Mishnah | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | 2 | 46 | 95 | 103 | 118 | 367 |
| P. Talmud | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 26 | 16 | 52 |
| B. Talmud | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 4 | 8 | 22 | 35 |
| DSS | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Maccabbees | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Josephus | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 6 | 10 | 18 |
| Ben Sira | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 11 | 12 |
| Codex Christianus | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | 5 | 22 | 60 | 69 | 108 | 174 | 207 | 247 | 208 | 171 | 205 | 230 | 750 | 881 | 1306 | 2783 |

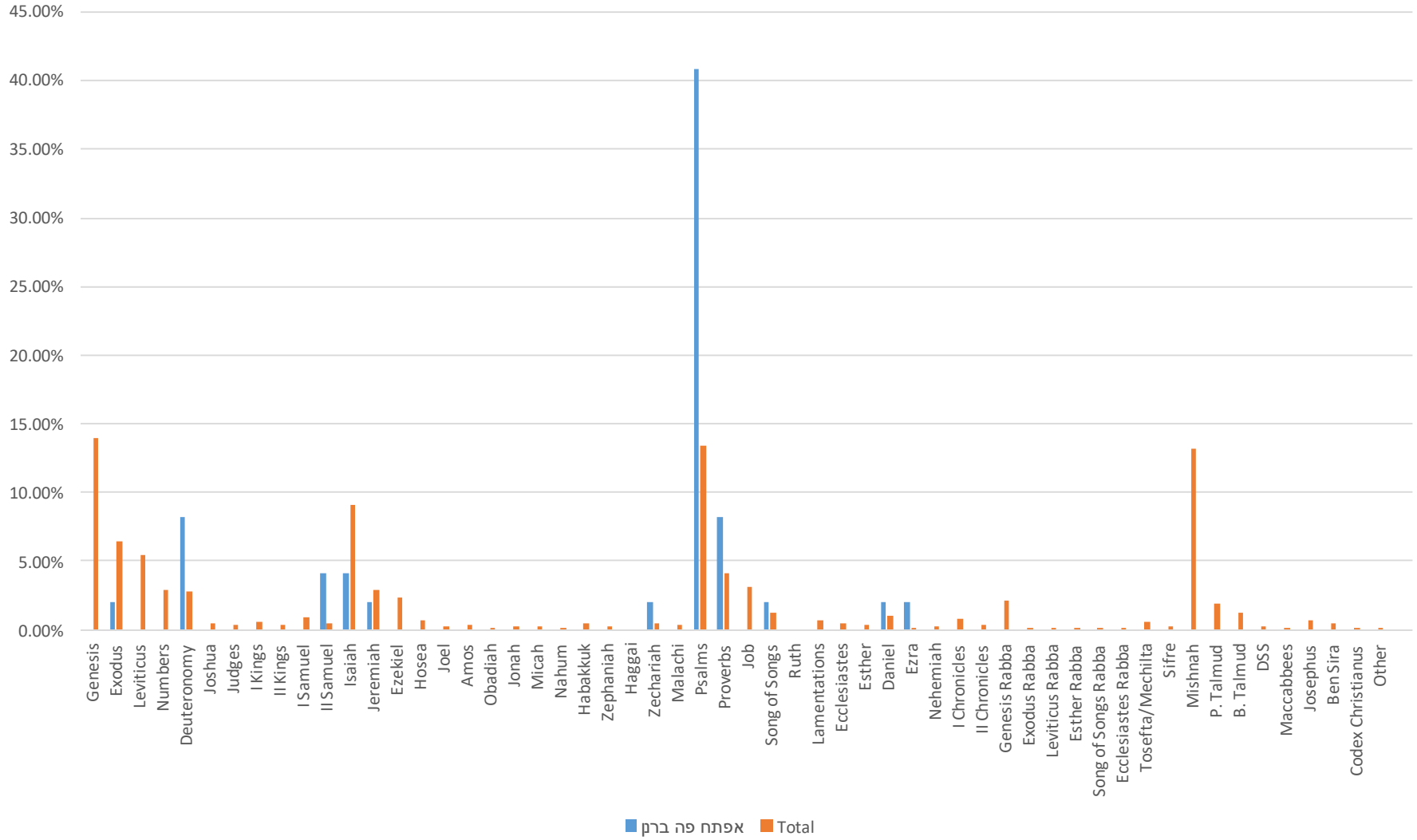
For each Piyyut, I took the number of times Yosse ben Yosse cited a given source, and I divided that number by the total number of citations in that Piyyut. The result is a number which indicates the **proportion of a given source in the specific Piyyut**. The following table summarizes this information. Note that the green number on the right-hand column indicates the overall proportion of the given source in all of Yosse ben Yosse's known piyyutim. Each bar graph that follows depicts the proportion of book citations for a Piyyut relative to the overall proportion of Yosse ben Yosse's collective works.

| | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | P 6 | P 7 | P 8 | P 9 | P 10 | P 11 | P 12 | P 13 | P 14 | P 15 | |
|---------------|----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------|
| | אור עולם | אפתח שפתי | אפתח פה ברקן | אז לראש תתנו | אכרעה ואברכה | אין לנו כהן גדול | אתן תהילה | אהללה אלוהי | אנוסה לעזרה | אפחד במעשי | אמנמ אשמים | אספר גדולת | אז בדעת חקר | אתה סגנת עולם | אזכיר גבורות | |
| STANZAS | 1 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 23 | 44 | 44 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 138 | 176 | 243 | |
| | TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Genesis | 25.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 3.53% | 0.00% | 3.07% | 3.98% | 3.09% | 3.20% | 5.03% | 16.30% | 19.44% | 11.49% | 11.85% | 14.01% |
| Exodus | 0.00% | 5.56% | 2.04% | 3.77% | 0.00% | 6.92% | 1.84% | 9.95% | 3.70% | 9.60% | 2.52% | 3.80% | 1.96% | 6.52% | 5.27% | 6.43% |
| Leviticus | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.89% | 0.00% | 10.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.80% | 2.52% | 7.61% | 4.41% | 5.53% | 4.89% | 5.43% |
| Numbers | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.89% | 0.00% | 3.85% | 1.23% | 4.48% | 0.00% | 4.00% | 1.26% | 0.54% | 0.98% | 3.12% | 2.63% | 2.91% |
| Deuteronomy | 0.00% | 0.00% | 8.16% | 5.66% | 1.18% | 1.54% | 2.45% | 1.99% | 2.47% | 1.60% | 5.03% | 0.00% | 2.61% | 1.84% | 1.69% | 2.84% |
| Joshua | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.50% | 0.00% | 0.80% | 0.63% | 0.54% | 0.65% | 0.28% | 0.38% | 0.50% |
| Judges | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.49% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.16% | 0.28% | 0.19% | 0.36% |
| I Kings | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.18% | 0.77% | 0.61% | 0.50% | 0.00% | 2.40% | 0.00% | 0.54% | 0.16% | 0.43% | 0.38% | 0.57% |
| II Kings | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 3.77% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.16% | 0.14% | 0.19% | 0.32% |
| I Samuel | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 3.77% | 2.35% | 1.54% | 0.61% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 2.40% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.82% | 0.43% | 0.47% | 0.93% |
| II Samuel | 0.00% | 0.00% | 4.08% | 0.00% | 1.18% | 0.00% | 0.61% | 0.00% | 1.85% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.54% | 0.33% | 0.14% | 0.28% | 0.50% |
| Isaiah | 25.00% | 0.00% | 4.08% | 3.77% | 9.41% | 6.15% | 15.95% | 14.93% | 9.26% | 8.00% | 9.43% | 3.26% | 4.90% | 5.11% | 6.11% | 9.13% |
| Jeremiah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.04% | 9.43% | 2.35% | 2.31% | 2.45% | 1.99% | 4.32% | 6.40% | 5.03% | 0.54% | 1.63% | 1.56% | 1.60% | 2.91% |
| Ezekiel | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.18% | 3.85% | 2.45% | 1.49% | 3.09% | 1.60% | 1.89% | 0.54% | 1.63% | 1.42% | 1.98% | 2.34% |
| Hosea | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.89% | 1.18% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 0.00% | 4.40% | 0.00% | 0.33% | 0.14% | 0.38% | 0.65% |
| Joel | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 0.50% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.33% | 0.28% | 0.00% | 0.25% |
| Amos | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.50% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.49% | 0.28% | 0.47% | 0.40% |
| Obadiah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.07% |
| Jonah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.50% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.43% | 0.09% | 0.22% |
| Micah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.89% | 0.00% | 0.77% | 1.84% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.16% | 0.00% | 0.09% | 0.29% |
| Nahum | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.54% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.04% |
| Habakkuk | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.35% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 0.50% | 1.85% | 0.00% | 1.26% | 0.00% | 0.16% | 0.00% | 0.28% | 0.50% |
| Zephaniah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.61% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 0.00% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.49% | 0.14% | 0.00% | 0.29% |
| Haggai | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Zechariah | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.04% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.50% | 2.47% | 0.00% | 1.26% | 0.00% | 0.16% | 0.14% | 0.19% | 0.43% |
| Malachi | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.23% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.80% | 1.26% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.47% | 0.36% |
| Psalms | 25.00% | 50.00% | 40.82% | 16.98% | 22.35% | 7.69% | 25.77% | 14.93% | 15.43% | 12.00% | 9.43% | 4.89% | 7.68% | 6.24% | 7.24% | 13.37% |
| Proverbs | 0.00% | 5.56% | 8.16% | 1.89% | 11.76% | 1.54% | 4.29% | 2.99% | 3.09% | 0.00% | 6.29% | 2.17% | 3.27% | 2.41% | 2.54% | 4.10% |
| Job | 0.00% | 5.56% | 0.00% | 7.55% | 5.88% | 0.00% | 3.07% | 2.49% | 1.23% | 1.60% | 4.40% | 2.17% | 1.63% | 1.70% | 2.82% | 3.13% |
| Song of Songs | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.04% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 7.69% | 0.00% | 1.00% | 6.79% | 1.60% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.33% | 0.43% | 0.19% | 1.22% |
| Ruth | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Lamentations | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.89% | 1.18% | 4.62% | 0.00% | 1.49% | 0.62% | 0.00% | 0.63% | 0.00% | 0.33% | 0.14% | 0.19% | 0.65% |
| Ecclesiastes | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.18% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.60% | 1.26% | 0.54% | 0.00% | 0.28% | 0.38% | 0.43% |

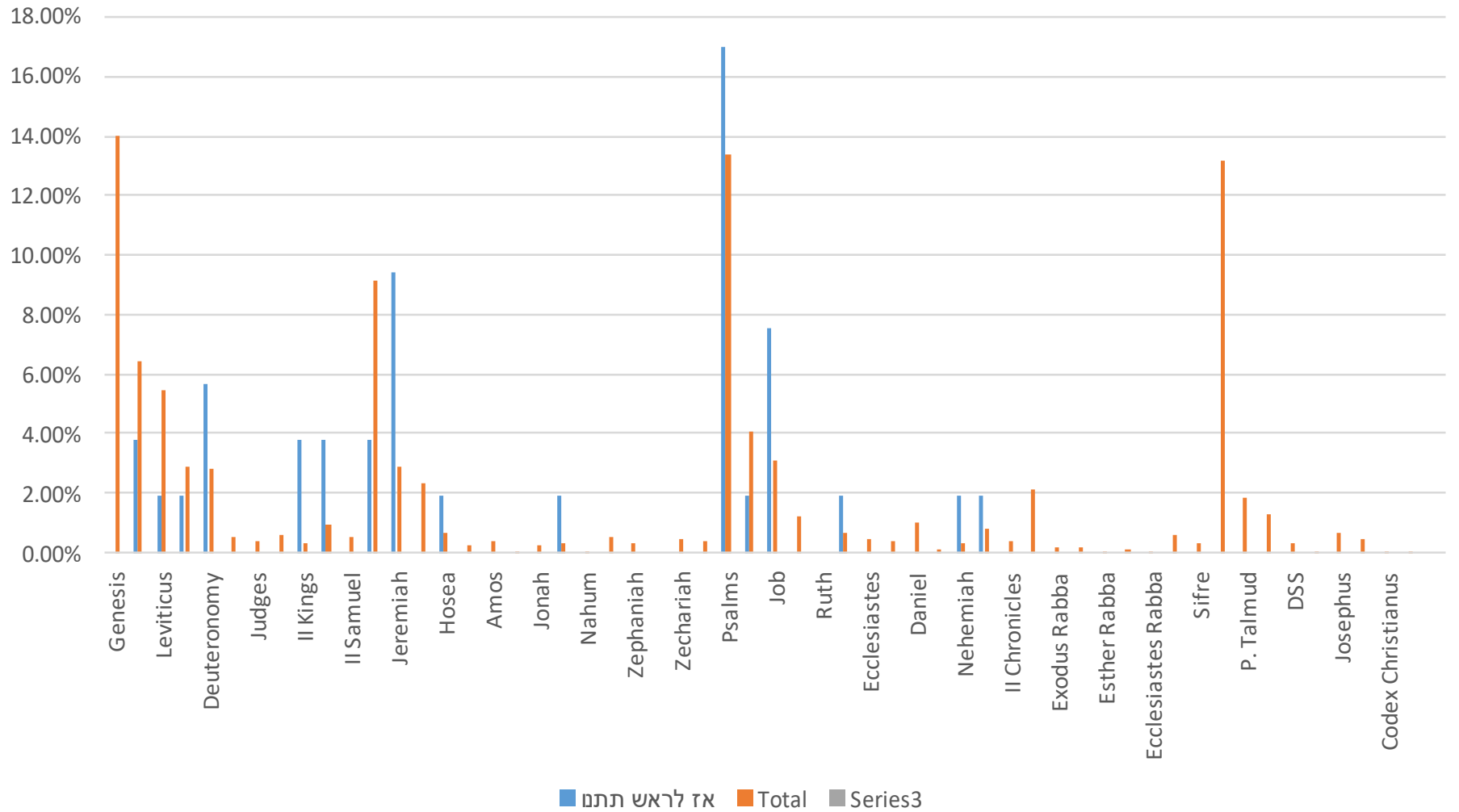


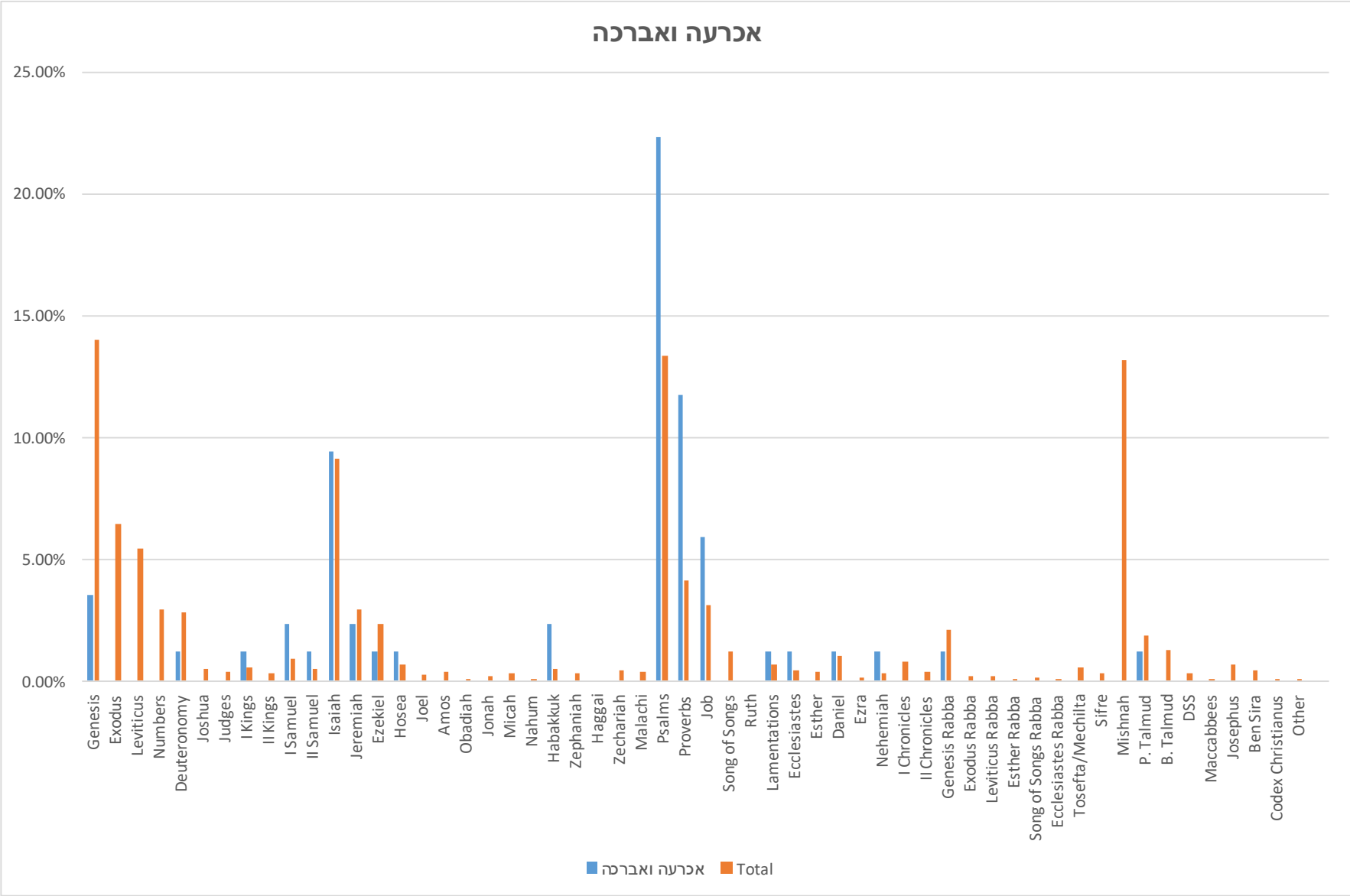


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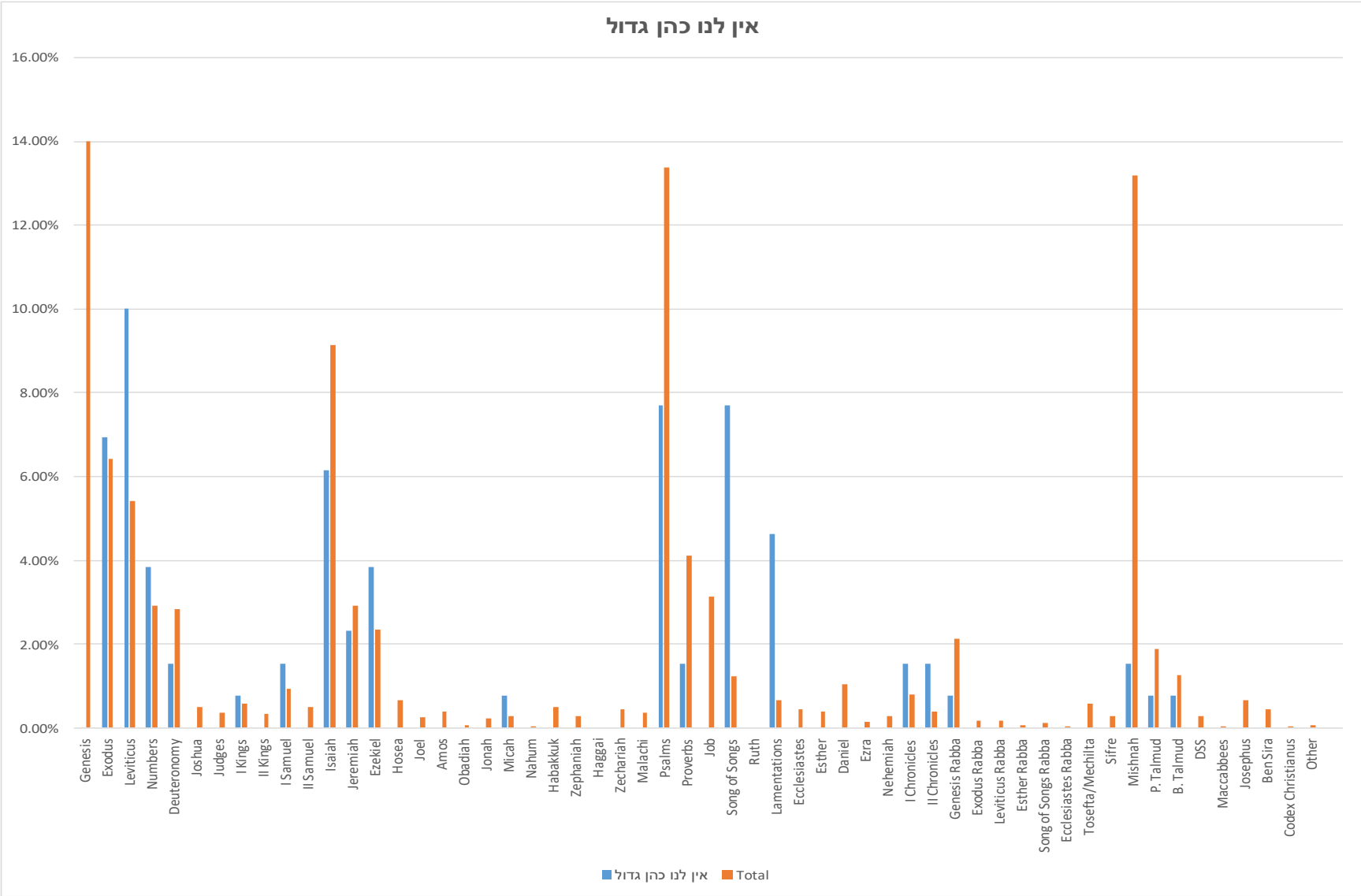


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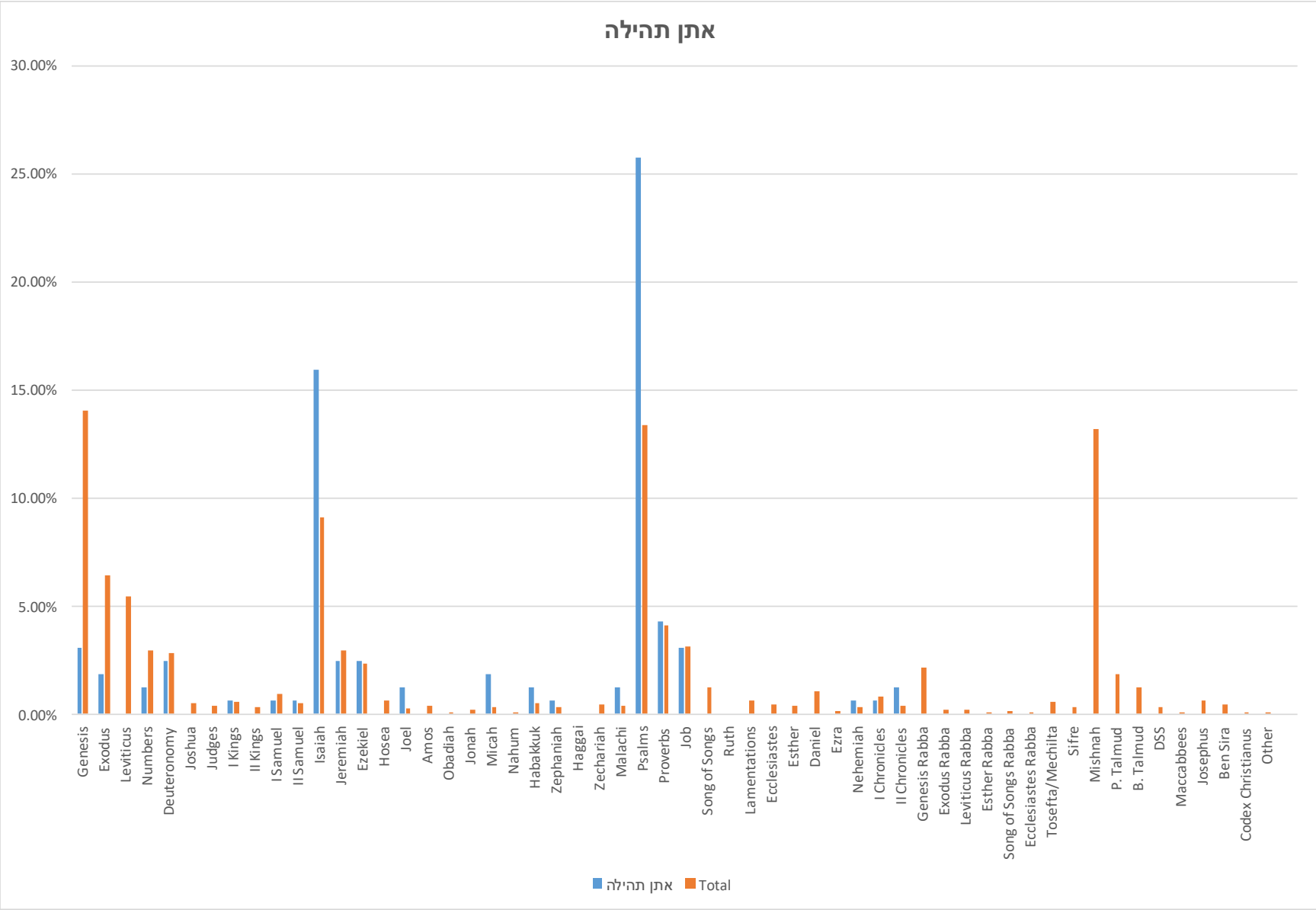




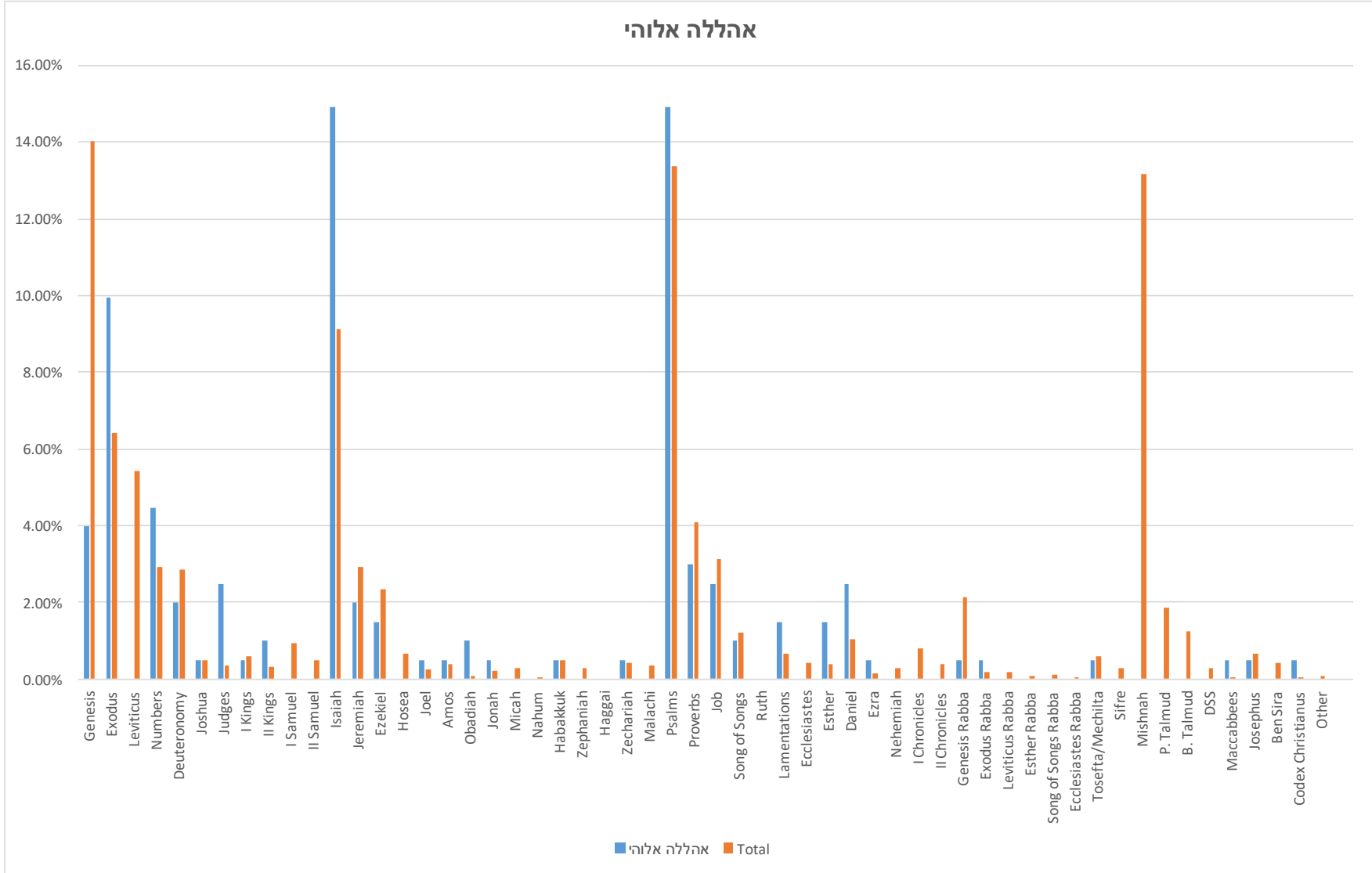
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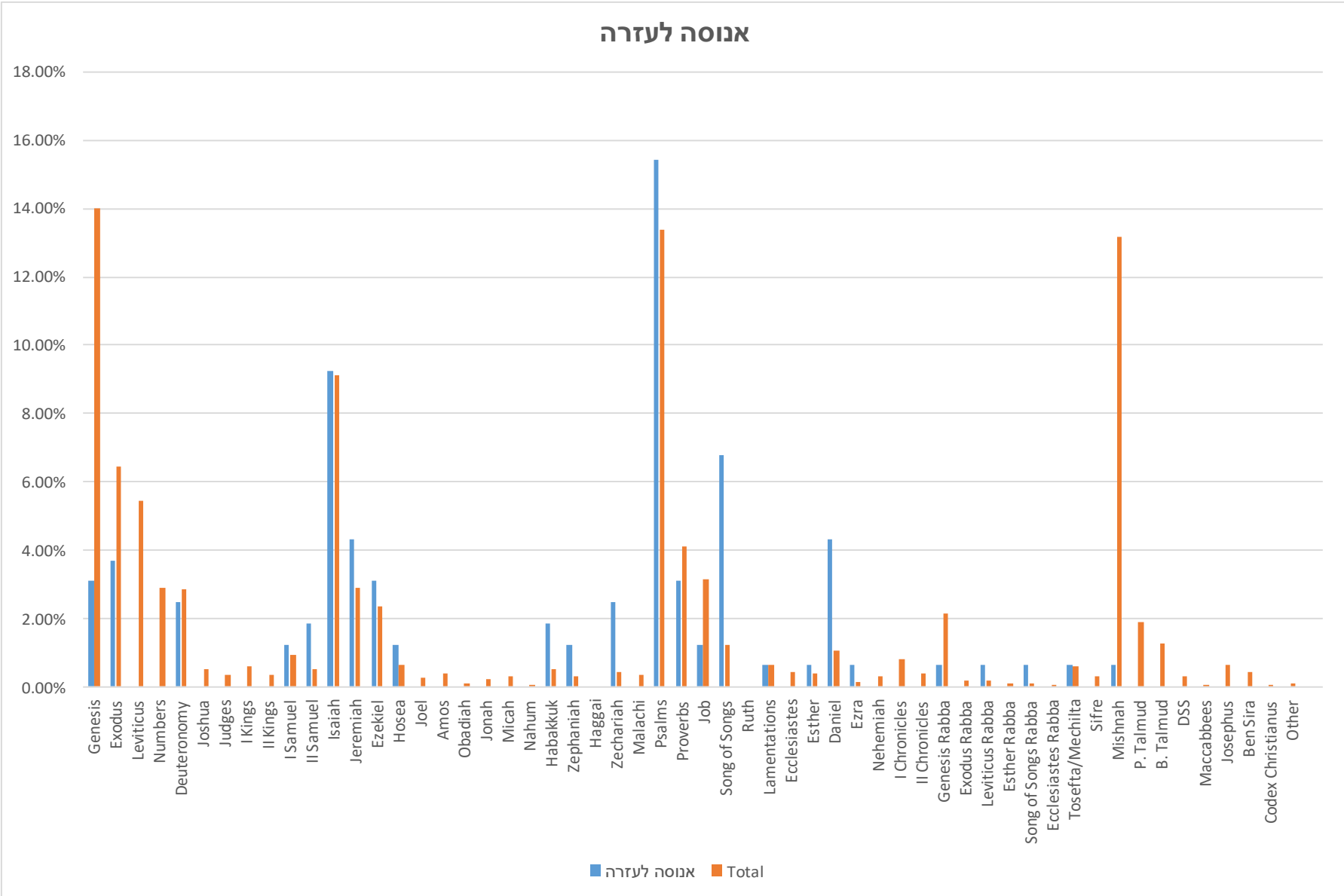
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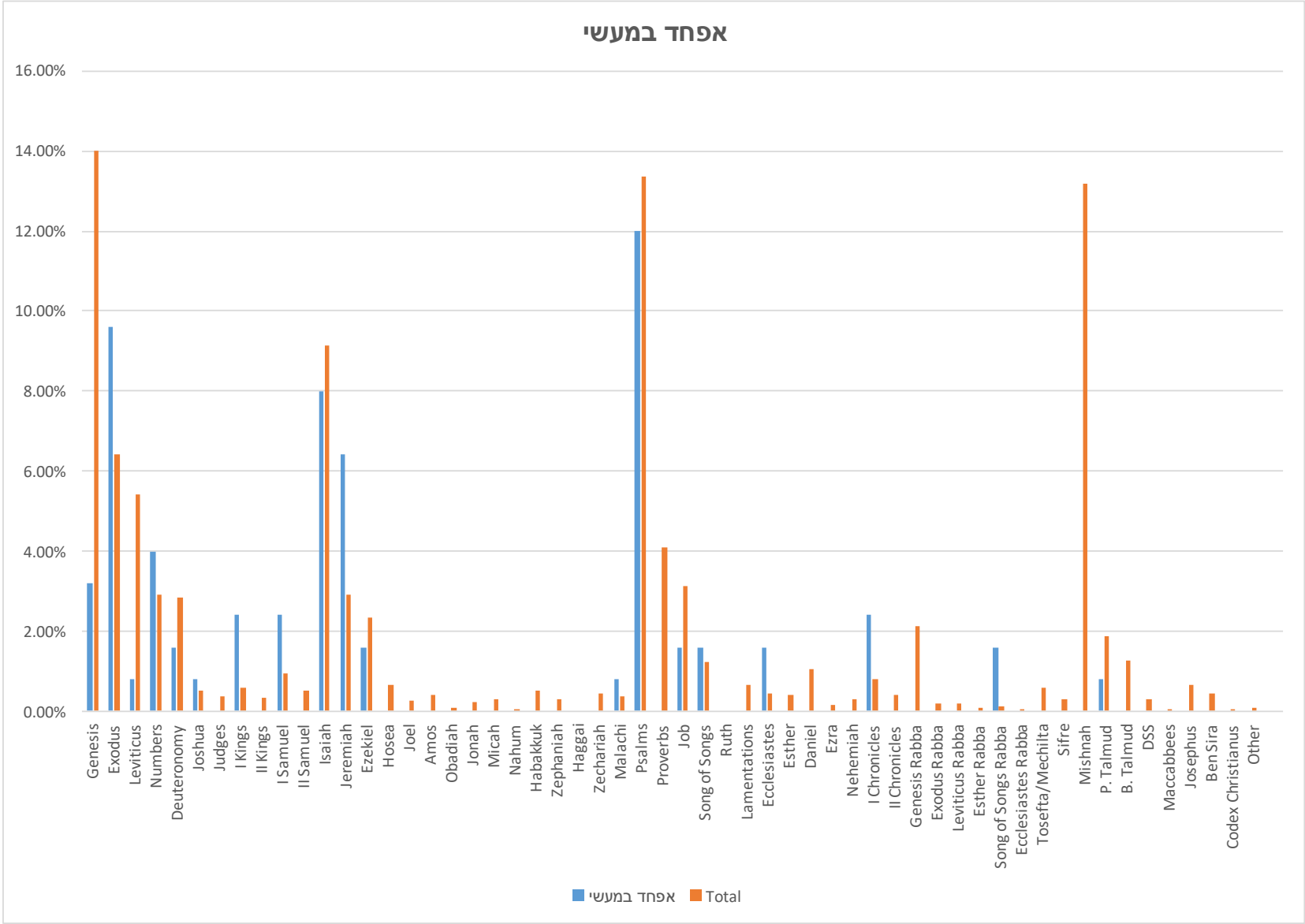


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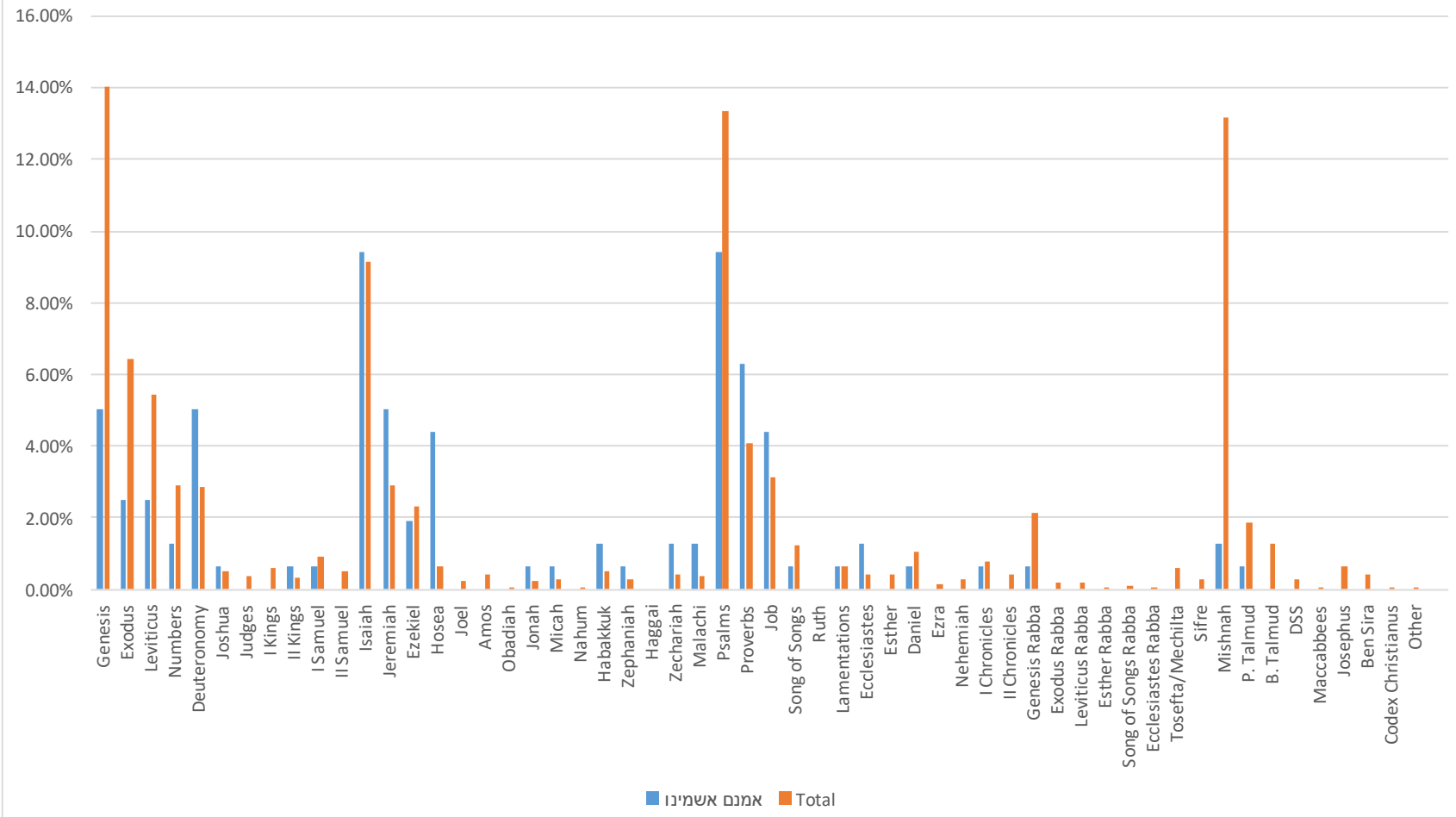


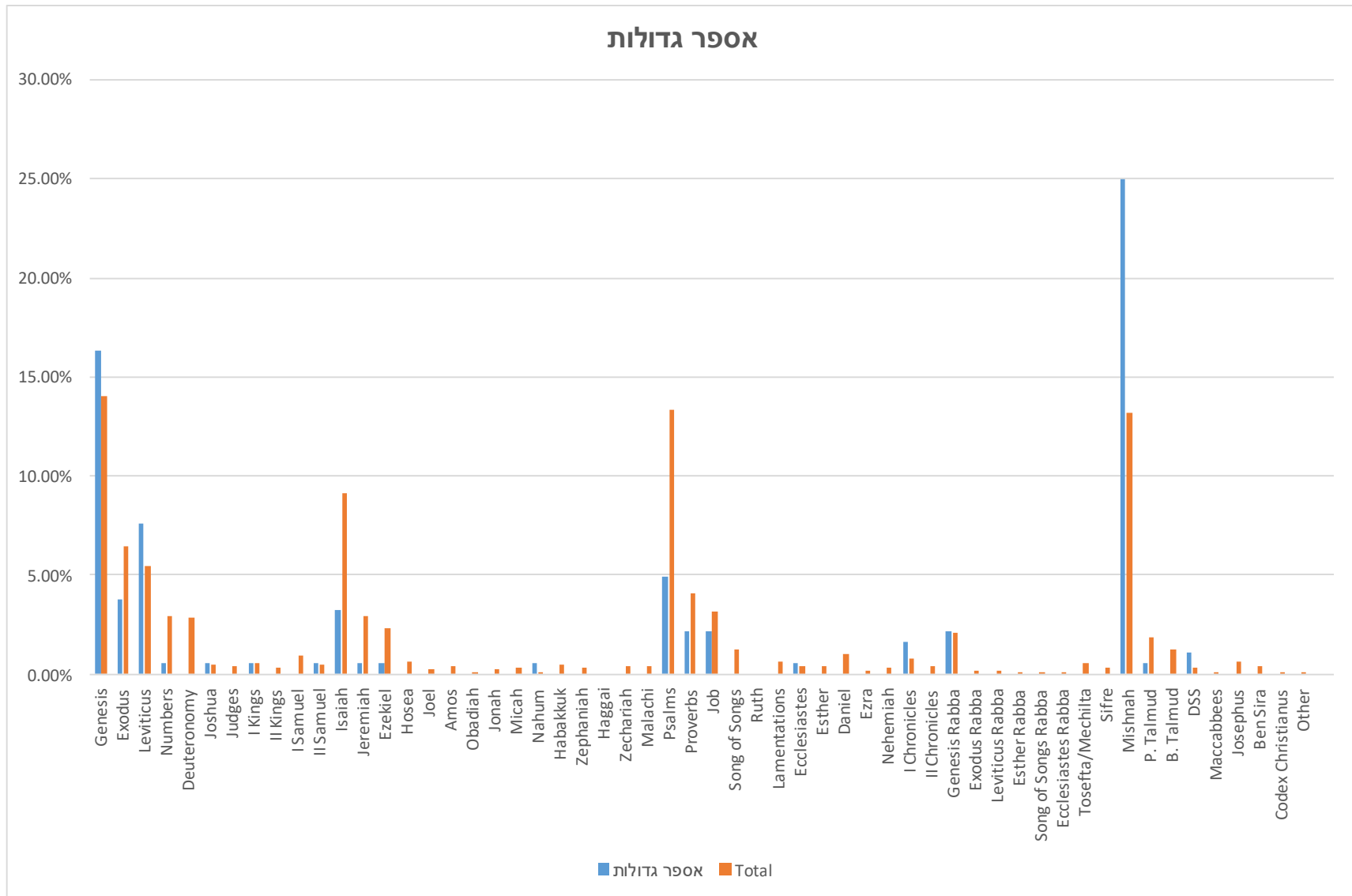
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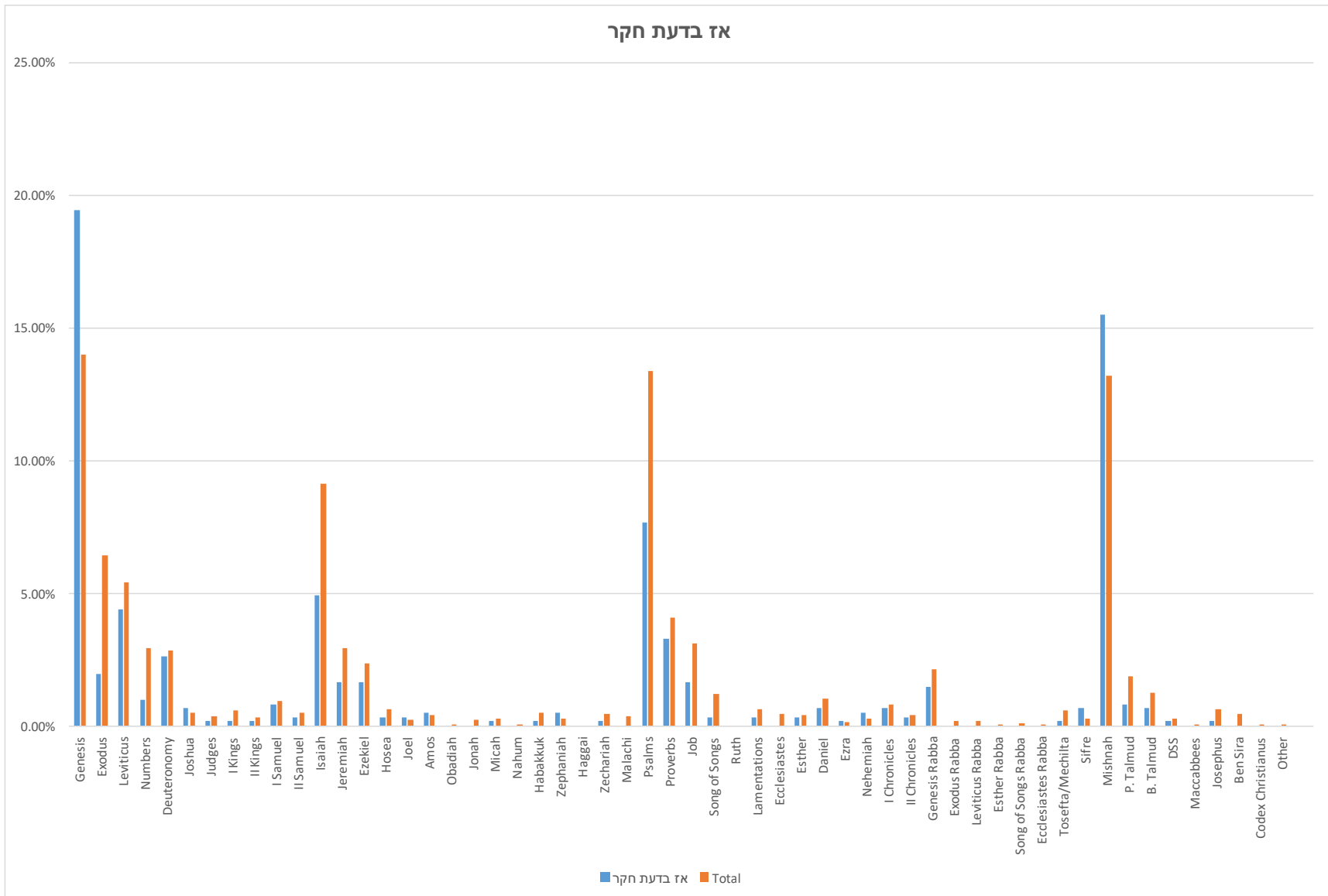


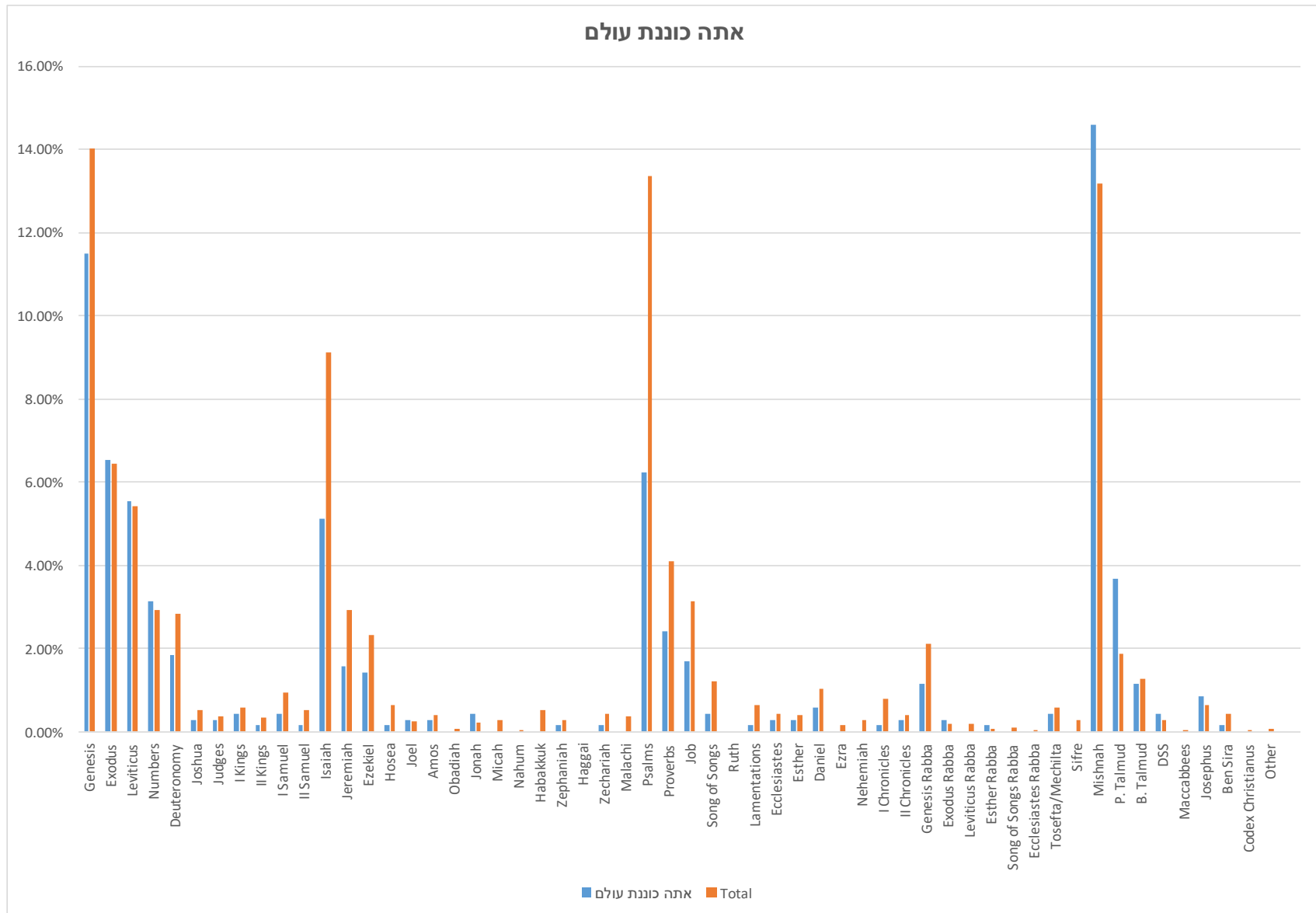
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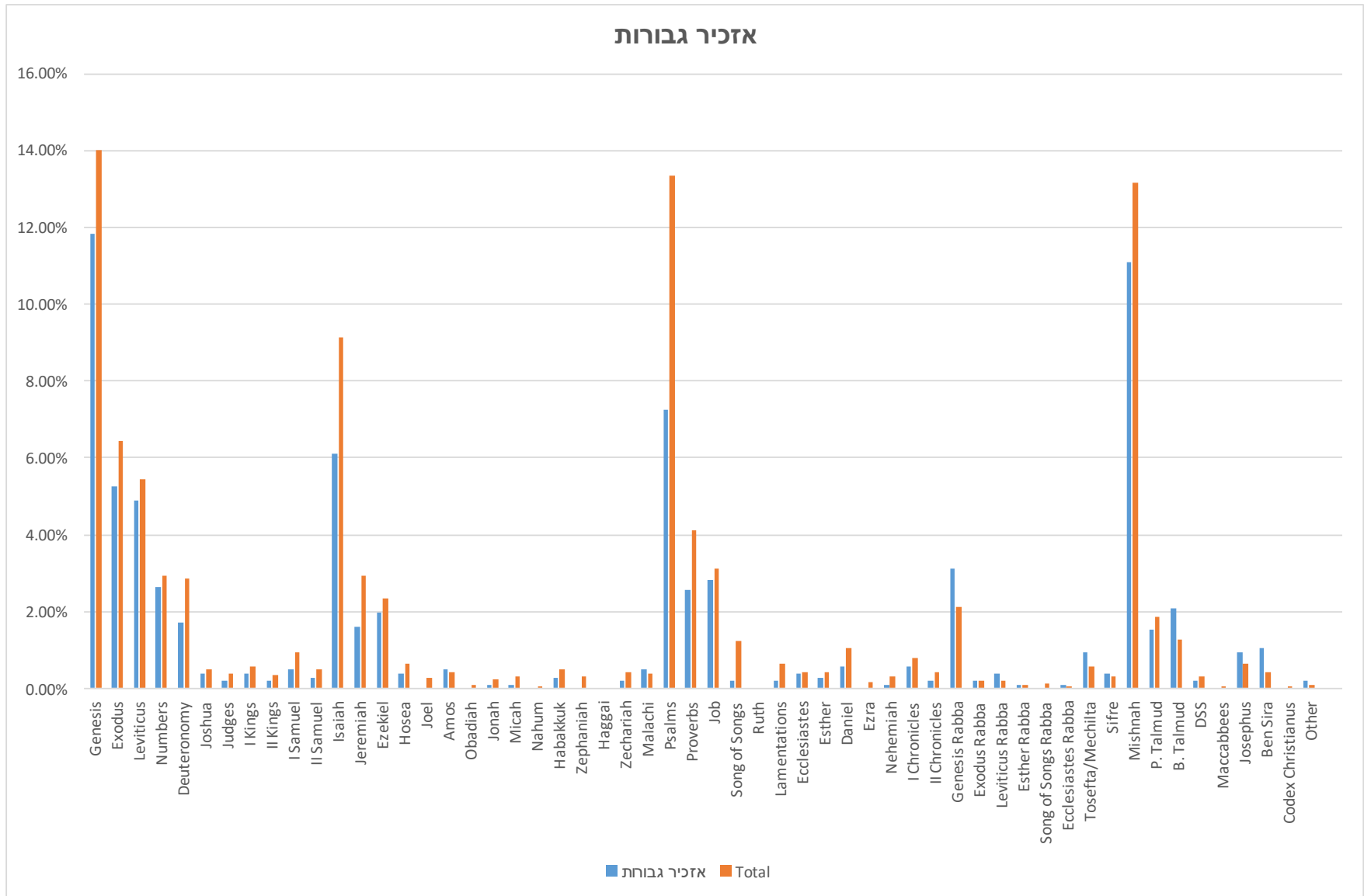




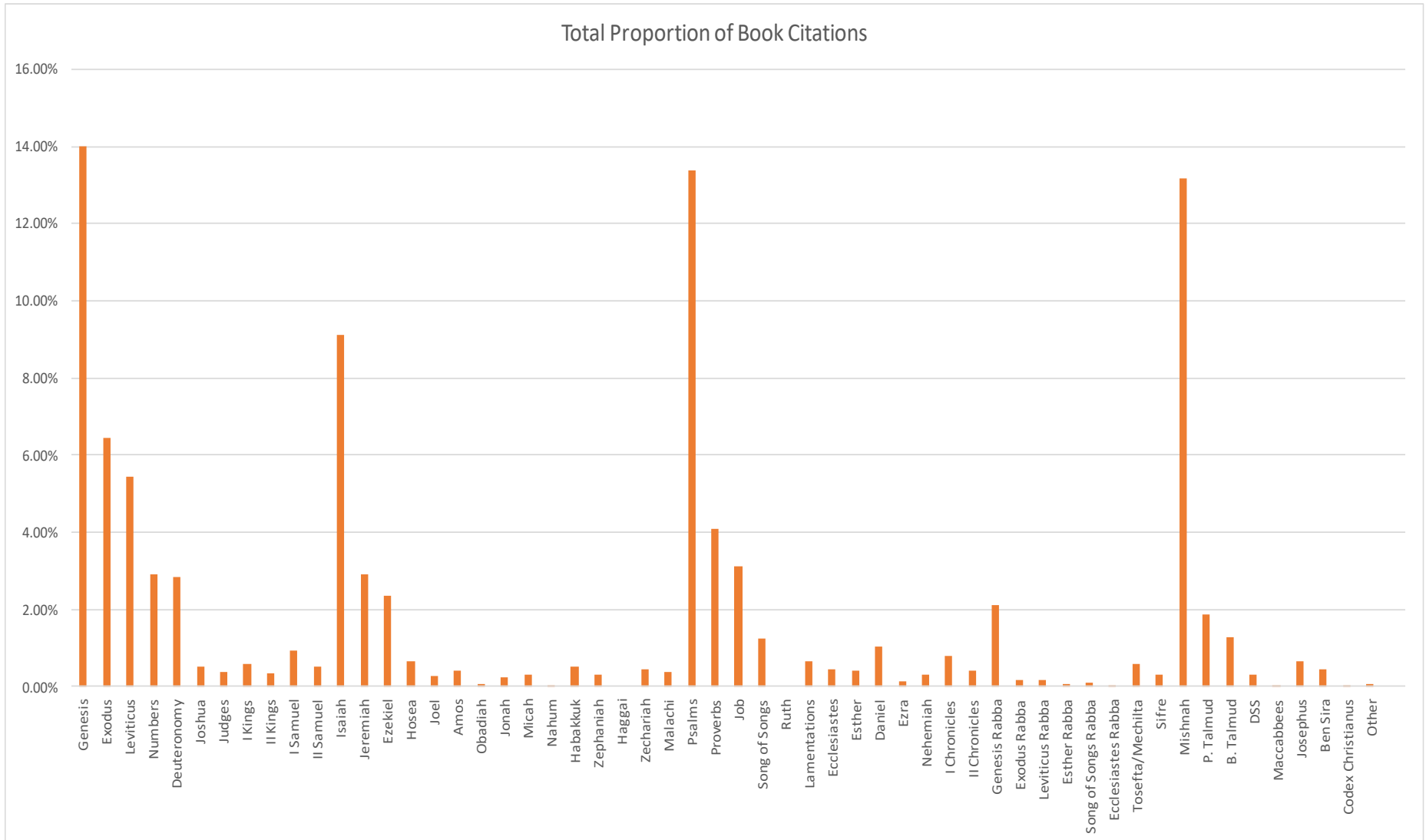
Each bar graph depicts the proportion of book citations for a Piyyut, relative to the overall proportion of Yosse ben Yosse's collective works.







Each bar graph depicts the proportion of book citations for a Piyut relative to the overall proportion of Yosse ben Yosse's collective works.



Appendix B: The Avodah: Mishnah Yoma & Yosse ben Yosse

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Mishnah Yoma 1

Yoma 1:1

| YOMA 1:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>Seven days before Yom Kippur the High Priest is removed from his home to the Palhedrin chamber, which the Talmud explains is a chamber reserved for the leaders of the people. The Mishnah does not specify who removes the High Priest, but implies that the sages, the proto-rabbis, oversee this transfer, in order to preserve the sanctity of the High Priest. They appoint a deputy High Priest, to serve as a standby should the High Priest be defiled by impurity. R. Judah's opinion is that they also "prepare" a replacement wife for the High Priest, and the Talmud elaborates on the nuances of this arrangement.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the Paytan says that Moses taught the High Priests all the relevant purification traditions;³⁶⁸⁶ they knew all they needed to know without requiring rabbinic instruction. The משפחות ברורים³⁶⁸⁷ the families of the chosen ones, the priests who are the select, the elect of the people, appoint a deputy High Priest, not the rabbis.</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות : they are called כבירי שבט³⁶⁸⁸ the greats of the tribe (of Levi), not the greats of the nation as a whole.</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : they are referred to as קדושים³⁶⁸⁹ the holy ones, a synonym for priests based on Exodus 19:6.</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : they are called טהורי שבט, the pure members of the tribe (of Levi).³⁶⁹⁰</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah asserts rabbinic control over the proceedings of the Yom Kippur ritual. Indeed, elsewhere in Tractate Tamid 5:4 the Mishnah takes a well-aimed swipe at the priestly caste saying that on a day when no priest was found to have any fault b the rabbis, the Sanhedrin threw a sumptuous party. The Mishnah implies that there were always faults found with the priests, that without rabbinic supervision no temple ritual

³⁶⁸⁶ Line 124.

³⁶⁸⁷ Line 127.

³⁶⁸⁸ Line 21.

³⁶⁸⁹ Line 75.

³⁶⁹⁰ Line 72.

will have been correctly performed, to the detriment of the people. The Mishnah thus argues for rabbinic authority and against priestly self-governance, at the very least.

- The paytan disputes the rabbinic insertion of supervising authorities other than the priestly specialists. He maintains priestly dominion over the ritual and effectively removes the sages from the temple scene.
- He also does not mention the name of the chamber in which the High Priest is to be sequestered, but in **אזכיר גבורות** he places him in the **מקום עצרת סגנים**,³⁶⁹¹ or the place where assistant priests assemble. Once again, the non-priestly presence is removed from the scene. In **אז בדעת חקר** the paytan says that an apartment was prepared specifically for the High Priest on the temple grounds, called **טירת גירות מעונו**,³⁶⁹² the special princely abode. This is additional information which is not present in the other piyyutim, nor in the Mishnah.
- The paytan sidesteps the question of a second wife as well and does not engage with rabbinic discourse on this question at all.

³⁶⁹¹ Line 129.

³⁶⁹² Line 73.

Yoma 1:2

| YOMA 1:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| Throughout the week the High Priest may perform the daily sacrifices, and is first to receive his share of the offerings even if he chooses not to perform the sacrifices, the spraying of blood, the preparation of the Menorah candles, or the sacrifice of incense. | In אזכיר גבורות : The paytan agrees with the Mishnah. The High Priest sacrifices, prepares the incense and sets the candles. He is also first to receive the priestly share. ³⁶⁹³ |
| | In אספר גדולות : The paytan is also in agreement here. ³⁶⁹⁴ |
| | In אתה כוננת : the Paytan says the High Priest is first to sacrifice the important parts of the animal [the head and the leg] and specifies that he is first to receive his share. ³⁶⁹⁵ |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : the Paytan adds new information, saying that the High Priest is purified with מי טוהר , the water mixed with the Red Heifer ashes. ³⁶⁹⁶ This information appears in the Palestinian Talmud. ³⁶⁹⁷ The paytan has the temple priests throwing the purifying solution on the High Priest. |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah is expanded by the Palestinian Talmud, whereas the amoraim drew on another possibly oral tradition. The paytan is a trained scholar, who is aware of the Talmud, especially the Palestinian Talmud. Here he does not distance himself from rabbinic tradition, but incorporates the narrative, with additions, into his own. Indeed, we must regard the Paytan as part of the complex social fabric of Byzantine Palestine. He is rabbinically trained, but at the same time he is not afraid to

³⁶⁹³ Lines 130-131.

³⁶⁹⁴ Line 24.

³⁶⁹⁵ Line 78.

³⁶⁹⁶ Line 75.

³⁶⁹⁷ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 1,A Chapter 1 Halakha 1.

contradict the rabbis and promulgate an alternative political-religious agenda of his own.

- The purification by priests once again places the priestly caste front and centre in the temple ritual of Yom Kippur. The paytan's narrative takes care to insert mention of the priestly oversight of the procedures in his piyyutim. This is a subtle but definite disagreement with the Mishnaic aim of portraying the rabbis, or their predecessors, at the centre of the ritual as overseers and supervisors of the priests. There are hints at a power struggle here, between those who favour rabbinic leadership and those who call for priestly leadership, not only in retrospect, with reference to the now defunct temple services, but in terms of contemporary and future leadership of the community as a whole.

Yoma 1:3

| YOMA 1:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The Elders of the temple Court are the ones who instruct the High Priest and review with him the details of the Avodah. The concern is that the High Priest may have forgotten the halakha, or that he did not even know it at all.</p> <p>On the eve of Yom Kippur the elders instruct the High Priest to stand at the Eastern Gate of the temple courtyard, and they show him the animals he will sacrifice so he will better know the animals and the order of the Avodah.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the instructors are the מהכימי פתי ³⁶⁹⁸ the learned ones. There is no mention of the rabbinic court [Sanhedrin] at all.</p> <p>The animals to be sacrificed are brought to the High Priest by unnamed individuals, who compliment the High Priest and encourage him: כמה יפה עבודתך, חזק ואמץ ³⁶⁹⁹</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות : the High Priest studies the Avodah on his own. He needs no outside instruction at all.³⁷⁰⁰ Moreover, he confesses at the eve of the fast.</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest receives instruction from קציני מזימה,³⁷⁰¹ those who instruct are גם יהודי ³⁷⁰².</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the elders instruct the High priest, they stay with him, and review and recite the details of דיני עשור, the laws of the Tenth Day.³⁷⁰³ The animals to be sacrificed are presented to the High Priest at the Central Gate.</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The paytan uses a very interesting word in **אזכיר גבורות**. The word **פתי** appears in the bible (as in Psalms 19:8) but is never used at all in the Mishnah. Interestingly, the word appears five times in the Dead Sea Scrolls³⁷⁰⁴. Later on, in reference to the events described in Yoma 1:6, he again uses the word. This may hint at a tantalizing possibility of contact

³⁶⁹⁸ Line 132.

³⁶⁹⁹ Line 134.

³⁷⁰⁰ Line 24.

³⁷⁰¹ Line 77.

³⁷⁰² Line 77, drawing from Psalms 133:1.

³⁷⁰³ Line 78.

³⁷⁰⁴ CD XIII, 6; CD XV, 15; 1QSa I, 19 I; 4Q177, 9,7 V; 4Q266 8:7 XVIII See: Abegg, Bowley and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, V.ol. 1: The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*.

between Yosse ben Yosse and the Qumran literature, a subject which merits further research, and which I shall revisit at a later point in my own work. There are indeed several such words in Yosse ben Yosse's works, as the reader will note.

- This apparent intentional use of non-Mishnaic words may point to one or two of the following possibilities: (i) a literary choice, that aims to innovate and thus beautify the poetic piece, (ii) a preference for biblical words that pull the reader away from the Mishnah and toward a more "authentic" reading, from the biblical source which is the primary and most respected source by all, or (iii) an ideological affinity with the Zaddokite members of the Qumran community. Interestingly, in the Damascus Document³⁷⁰⁵ it is said: "The Priests and Levites and the sons of Zaddok who maintained the service of my temple etc." (Ezekiel 44:15)... The sons of Zaddok are the chosen of Israel, men of renown who stand to serve at the end of days." In the Hebrew, the reference is clearer, as the priests are *בְּחִירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, קְרוּאֵי הַשֵּׁם ... לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּפִּירוֹשׁ הַתּוֹרָה*. They are the right and true interpreters of the Torah. In 4Q266, Frg. 5 it is said: *בְּנֵי צְדוּק בְּחִירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, קְרוּאֵי הַשֵּׁם ... לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּפִּירוֹשׁ הַתּוֹרָה*. It is the priests who are the last interpreters of the Torah, the only ones who are empowered to teach the Torah to the people entire, sans rabbinic input. In 4Q267 frag. 2 the community writes: God remembered the covenant with the forefathers and raised from Aaron men of knowledge. The segment explains that the priestly wise men are the "diggers of the well of Torah," those who are able to draw from Torah the waters of wisdom and sagacity, which in turn allows them to instruct the people. Is The paytan in agreement with the Yahad's interpretive ideology?

³⁷⁰⁵ CD-A, Col. IV.

- The attitude of the instructors in the first Piyyut is collegial, non-confrontational, even friendly. It assumes a certain social equality, rather than the Mishnaic tendency to portray the High Priest as a subject of the rabbis, as lesser learning and therefore in stature. He is in Yosse ben Yosse a *primus inter pares*, not a student of a wiser group or a subjugated individual before their greater power.³⁷⁰⁶
- In the second Piyyut the Paytan goes even further and removes all external instruction. Now the High Priest is sage enough, learned and able to review the Avodah without help. He is empowered and validated as the leader. The High Priest's confession on the eve of the Day does not appear in rabbinic sources.
- The קציני מזימה are a definite group, but it is not a clearly designated group. Mirsky describes them as "those who are great in wisdom"³⁷⁰⁷, given his rabbinic reading of the text, and assumes that the instructors are rabbinic, in line with the Mishnah narrative. But the Paytan adds a verse implying the brotherliness of the instruction. He uses a particularly Qumranic term יחד which hints at a communal equality amongst members of the "Community of God."³⁷⁰⁸ Is The paytan alluding to a socio-ideological affinity here as well?
- In the fourth Piyyut the paytan calls the instructors "elders." It is not clear whether this may be read rabbinically as a reference to the Sanhedrin, or it may be read as a reference to a priestly group. The specific reading of the word זקנים is definitely influenced by the

³⁷⁰⁶ See the technical terms for leaders in the Qumran community, as derived from the Scrolls, in: Schiffman and VanderKam, *Encyclopaedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 134-135.

³⁷⁰⁷ Aharon Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems*, 188.

³⁷⁰⁸ Schiffman and VanderKam, *Encyclopaedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 133-134.

eyes of the beholder, by the hermeneutic lens one chooses to employ, depending on one's ideological position.

- The last Piyyut appears to further distance itself from the Mishnaic narrative, whereas he positions the High Priest not at the Eastern Gate, but at the Central Gate of the temple;³⁷⁰⁹ but in fact the Central Gate was called Nikanor Gate, and was both central architecturally, and eastern geographically. It stands at odds with the other texts.

³⁷⁰⁹ See Midot Tractate 1:3-5.

Yoma 1:4

| YOMA 1:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| For seven days prior to Yom Kippur the High Priest eats as he wishes; but on the eve of Yom Kippur itself he is not permitted to eat a lot, because eating induces sleep. | In אזכיר גבורות : the High priest abstains from heavy meals lest he falls asleep and experiences a defiling nocturnal emission. ³⁷¹⁰ |
| | In אספר גדולות : the High Priest is made to be hungry, lest he fall asleep and be defiled by nocturnal emissions. ³⁷¹¹ |
| | In אתה כוננת : the High Priest avoids much sleep as well as much food, lest he fall into the habit of nocturnal emissions. ³⁷¹² |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : the food intake of the High Priest is reduced, lest he fall asleep and experience nocturnal emissions which would disqualify him from temple service. |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah uses language that hints at an iterative, continuous past. The anonymous “they,” implying the rabbis, instruct the High Priest to reduce consumption lest he fall asleep. The Talmud adds the types of foods denied the High Priest and expands the Mishnaic prohibition by adducing the reason behind it, the concern that the sleeping priest may experience nocturnal emissions which would defile his purity and disqualify him from service.³⁷¹³ The Talmud develops Mishnaic halakha and supplements it with haggadic materials and biblical expositions and comprises a single literary continuum with the Mishnah. It adds colour, texture, and information not found in the tightly edited

³⁷¹⁰ Line 135.

³⁷¹¹ Line 25.

³⁷¹² Line 80.

³⁷¹³ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 7, A Chapter 1, Halakha 4.

and condensed Mishnah, drawing from a shared original tradition which has not survived but may be gleaned from the two texts.³⁷¹⁴

- All four piyyutim agree with the Talmudic narrative and add the same reason behind the Mishnaic prohibition. The paytan is relying on the Palestinian Talmud, as a contemporary scholar who is aware of the prevalent oral traditions. This is not a site for disagreement with the rabbinic discourse.

³⁷¹⁴ Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," 97.

Yoma 1:5

| YOMA 1:5 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>The elders of the Sanhedrin pass the High Priest on to the elder priests, who in turn bring him to the Abtinan Chamber, which Tractate Shekalim 5:1 indicates is the place where the incense was prepared.</p> <p>The elders of the Sanhedrin abjure the High Priest and take their leave from him, reminding him that he is their emissary, and that he must not deviate from any of the instructions they gave him.</p> <p>The High Priest departs from them, in tears, and they take their leave from him crying as well.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High priest is moved to the House of Incense.</p> <p>He is abjured by the elder priests.</p> <p>He cries because he was assumed to be a “convicted” פתי, a simpleton.³⁷¹⁵</p> <p>In אספר גדולות : the High Priest is abjured by the elders of his tribe.³⁷¹⁶</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the priestly elders abjure the High Priest and accompany him to the House of Incense.</p> <p>The High Priest retires from his elders in tears, because he was suspected of being a פתי, and they take leave from him in tears, because they were forced to thus consider him.³⁷¹⁷</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the High Priest’s comrades abjure him to follow the details of the ritual as instructed.</p> <p>He cries upon taking his leave, because he was considered a פתי. And they cry for fear of having convicted a man innocent of all sin.³⁷¹⁸</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah narrates the tearful goodbyes between the High Priest and the Sanhedrin sages, but does not explain why so lachrymose the moment. The Talmud fills the gap by

³⁷¹⁵ Line 136.

³⁷¹⁶ Line 25.

³⁷¹⁷ Lines 81-82.

³⁷¹⁸ Lines 82-84.

telling the tale of an errant Boethusite priest³⁷¹⁹, alleged to have disobeyed rabbinic instruction as to how to correctly mix the incense, as a cautionary tale which interjects the proceedings and is purposefully inserted into the narrative. Here, the elders of the Sanhedrin adjure the High Priest to follow their instruction and not fall into the Boethusite error; and they cry because they may have suspected an innocent man of being a Sadducee, a Zaddokite heretic, while the High Priest cries for having been thus been the object of calumny. The Talmud³⁷²⁰ continues the Mishnaic objective of retrojecting rabbinic control over the proceedings, even in the absence of the rabbis (who transferred the High Priest to the elder priests, as the rabbis cannot be present in the Priestly Court for the performance of the ritual). The High Priest is mandated to follow the Sanhedrin's instruction, and he is not a priestly agent but a rabbinic agent in this discourse.

- The paytan takes a different approach. Here, the High Priest is not abjured by the Sanhedrin, but by his priestly cohorts. Even as the Paytan seems to accept the presence of elder rabbis in the preliminary stages of the rituals, he excoriates their responsibility vis-à-vis the appropriate priestly conduct. The real responsibility rests with elder priests.
- The tearful goodbyes in the narratives are the site for divergence of the two discourses. In the second Piyyut he omits entirely the lachrymose references. In the three others he uses a Qumranic term (see above)- the word פְּתִי, paralleling but not identifying with the Talmudic expansion that the suspicion was that the High Priest was a Zaddokite heretic. Here the paytan disagrees somewhat and casts the elders' suspicion not in sectarian terms

³⁷¹⁹ Boethus was one of the High Priests who was beloved by the people, but whose interpretation of Jewish tradition contradicted rabbinic views. He came to be regarded as the epitome of error by the rabbis. See: Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5:13.1.

³⁷²⁰ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 7A, Chapter 1, Halakha 5.

but in intellectual terms. A פתי is an un-informed person, a person who is in error because of his, well, stupidity. 4Q177 9,7 equates אויל ופתי, the word fool and the word פתי. The Paytan does not think that being a Zaddokite is an error but being a fool can jeopardise the efficacy of the ritual and that, he thinks, is worth crying about. Is he drawing reference from the Qumranic texts?

Yoma 1:6

| YOMA 1:6 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>If the High Priest is wise and learned, he studies the laws of Yom Kippur. If he is not learned, the rabbinic elders read the laws to him.</p> <p>If he is able to read the holy books he reads on his own, and if he is unable to read, the holy books are read to him.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the elders speak to the High Priest and discuss Midrash and scripture with him, to busy him.</p> <p>If he is unschooled בער³⁷²¹ they read the tales of early kings, meaning the books of Chronicles.</p> |
| <p>What did they read? Job and Ezra and Chronicles. R. Zechariah son of Kevtutal says: On many occasions I read the book of Daniel to the High Priest.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות : ---</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the elders speak to the High Priest and discuss Midrash and scripture with him, to busy him.</p> <p>If he is unschooled בער³⁷²² they read the tales of early kings, meaning the books of Chronicles.</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest learns and reads on his own, but maintains a humble position vis-à-vis his elders. If he is wise, the elders discuss scripture with him orally. If unschooled, they read to him from the books of Chronicles.³⁷²³</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The rabbinic elders are back in the picture in this Mishnah. Here they are the ones who read to the High Priest and who discuss scripture with him, not the elder priests (even as they had withdrawn in the previous Mishnah).
- The Mishnah is specific about the books of scripture being read to the High priest. The detail lends an air of verisimilitude to the narrative, and the rabbinic interjection of an

³⁷²¹ Lines 137-138.

³⁷²² Line 83.

³⁷²³ Lines 85-87.

additional book, Daniel, gives the impression that the narrative deals with an iterative past in which the ritual was performed similarly but not identically. It was “real,” the narrative claims, “I was there,” says R. Zechariah, “I read Daniel to him.” Was he indeed there? It is historically doubtful. But it sounds real, and this is what the Mishnah wants to achieve, a “real” historic text of “real” events which the rabbis fashioned and told. Why did he add Daniel? Because the book of Daniel is in Aramaic, and the unschooled High Priest in this “historic case” spoke Aramaic as all lay people did at the time but could not really understand the Hebrew of the other scripture texts.

- Curiously, the Talmud does not add any information here and cites the Mishnah almost verbatim. This underscores my suspicion that the rabbi’s tale about Daniel is not grounded in a real case but is a literary device designed to claim rabbinic presence at the temple through history and thereby argue for rabbinic authority in the present as well.³⁷²⁴ Had it been a real event, the Talmud would have had more details- the name of the unschooled priest, the setting of the event, the time, some other textural information; but the Talmud is silent here. Reading from silence is at all times problematic, but in this case, I think the Talmudic silence indicates a fundamental lack of information about this story, because it did not actually happen.
- The paytan is also specific. The High Priest can learn on his own for the most part, but if need be, the books of Chronicles are read to him by his elders, the priestly elders. There is no mention of Job, Ezra or Daniel.

³⁷²⁴ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 34, 46.

- The Paytan is also specific about the reason for the reading: it is intended to prevent the High Priest from dozing off. The Mishnah is silent about the reason for reading even as it insists that rabbinic sages were involved.
- The second Piyyut sidesteps the scene altogether. All four piyyutim do not put great emphasis on this part of the choreography. It is there, as it is in the Mishnah, but it merits no great detail or space within the poetic work.

Yoma 1:7

| YOMA 1:7 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>If the High Priest begins to doze off, acolyte priests, young priests, snap their fingers to rustle him up from his kip. They tell him to stand barefoot on the cold floor and occupy him until it is time to perform the sacrificial slaughter.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : if the High Priest dozes off, he is awakened gently ³⁷²⁵ בנועם by the snapping of fingers.</p> |
| | <p>He is kept awake by speech and song, not by musical instruments.</p> |
| | <p>The noise of the city is allowed to permeate the priestly chamber, to chase away sleep, until the appointed time, עדי נשף.³⁷²⁶</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest is kept awake with snapping of fingers and with songs until midnight.³⁷²⁷</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : the young priests sing songs to the High Priest and snap their fingers.</p> <p>The city dwellers make noise outside, to add to the din and prevent the High priest from dozing off.³⁷²⁸</p> |
| <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest is kept awake with songs and snapping fingers.</p> <p>The city noises are allowed in, to prevent him from sleeping.</p> <p>He remains thus occupied until midnight.³⁷²⁹</p> | |

³⁷²⁵ Line 140.

³⁷²⁶ Line 141.

³⁷²⁷ Line 26.

³⁷²⁸ Lines 85-86.

³⁷²⁹ Line 88.

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah paints a realistic picture, complete with dialogue and finger snapping, lending the narrative an air of verisimilitude.³⁷³⁰ The reader is presented with a realistic looking narrative that underscores the presumed factuality and implicitly militates on behalf of rabbinic authority. The added “texture” seems to suggest that the events took place year after year and are described as a synthetic composite narrative of how the ritual used to be performed. The iterative past supports the claim of invariability buttressed by a multiplicity of nuanced discrete events over time. It thus confirms rabbinic memory of the past, and through sensory description, implies rabbinic witnessing and arbitration of the rituals.³⁷³¹ The basic tannaitic claim is that this is what really happened, that the rabbis tell it like it was, as it did for centuries untold, and they also controlled the events for they are the true authorities over traditional practice and the arbiters of all the traditional ritual system.
- The Talmud accepts the Mishnah narrative and adds more detail, by asserting that the young priests did not use musical instruments to keep the High Priest awake but sang and spoke to him with their mouth alone.³⁷³²
- In his piyyutim Yosse ben Yosse appears to agree with the Mishnah narrative. There is a snapping of fingers, but it is “gentle.” There is singing, and he agrees with the Talmud that no musical instruments were used. But the paytan adds an open window to allow the city’s din to enter the priestly chambers. This is absent from the rabbinic story both in the Talmud and in the Mishnah. Now Jerusalem enters the space of the temple, inviting the

³⁷³⁰ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 58-59.

³⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-71.

³⁷³² Yerushalmi, *Yoma*, Folio 7B, Chapter 1 Halakha 7.

people of Jerusalem into the holy space, if only audibly. The service, says the Paytan, is being performed for the people and the people take part in it by extending their body's influence into the temple domain. No rabbinic account allows this to happen in the hallowed grounds which are under the strict purview of the rabbis. In other places the noise made in the temple is "allowed" to permeate the city, but the directionality in rabbinic accounts is always one sided- from the temple outward.³⁷³³ Yosse ben Yosse is unique in that he "allows" the sound to travel into the temple, to mix in with the temple sounds, to be part of the service and the redemptive ritual.

- The word the Paytan employs to indicate the time of midnight in the first Piyyut is distinctive. In the second Piyyut he says that the young acolyte priests keep the High Priest occupied till midnight. But in the first Piyyut he calls the time נשף³⁷³⁴ which a Modern Hebrew reader may erroneously read as "ball" or "sumptuous party." Interestingly, the Qumran scrolls³⁷³⁵ also use this distinctive word, in the same manner and meaning as does Yosse Ben Yosse. In 4Q88 X,6 the text reads: יהד יהללו נא כל כוכבי נשף referring to the doxological song of the midnight stars. In this reading therefore the paytan disagrees with the Mishnah regarding the time reference. The Mishnah claims that the High Priest was kept awake [with snapping fingers and the acolytes' voices] until the early dawn [when the Tamid sacrifice is to be offered],³⁷³⁶ but the paytan says till midnight. The Qumranic word, coupled with a different understanding of the time

³⁷³³ Tractate Tamid 3:8.

³⁷³⁴ Line 141.

³⁷³⁵ 4Q88 x,6; 4Q184, 1,5; 4Q162 II,2.

³⁷³⁶ Tractate Tamid 3:2.

bracket, is indicative of an alternate discourse. It is not the rabbinic discourse, it is something else. The same but quite different.

Yoma 1:8

| YOMA 1:8 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| The altar is daily cleansed ritually (by the removal of ashes and their placement on the eastern edge of the ramp to the altar [Tamid 1:4]) at the early hours of the dawn, as the rooster called. | In אזכיר גבורות : the keepers of the laws and the raiders of mitzvot hurry to cleanse the altar before the midnight hour. ³⁷³⁷ |
| But on Yom Kippur this is done at midnight, and on the pilgrimage festivals at the first watch [Brachot 1:1]. | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| The rooster crowed to mark the dawn and set the ritual in motion. But it called only once the Israelite Courtyard of the temple was full of people coming to offer their sacrifices. | In אתה כוננת : the altar is cleansed ritually at midnight. ³⁷³⁸ |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah imagines the temple scene in detail. The daily sacrifice could only be offered at dawn, every day as well as on Yom Kippur. Miraculously, the rooster's call always cleaved night from day only after the people assembled at the temple courtyard. The hand of God appears to be at play in the day's early song of dawn.
- Rabbinic authority is asserted in the Mishnah for the rabbis determine the timing of every element in the temple rituals, on regular days as well as on festival days, and even on Yom Kippur, the Day most solemn. The Tosefta³⁷³⁹ adds that the reason for the earlier ritual cleansing of the altar [not specified in the Mishnah] is that the High Priest, weak for

³⁷³⁷ Line 142.

³⁷³⁸ Line 87.

³⁷³⁹ Tosefta Yoma 20:2, 21:1.

fasting and lack of sleep, should not wait for the altar to be cleansed at dawn, but should have everything prepared for him ahead of time.

- The paytan appears to agree with the rabbinic narrative more or less. Midnight, before or right after, is the right time for cleansing the altar. The priests, hungry for mitzvoth, eager to “score points” for performing God’s commandments, compete with one another for those honours.³⁷⁴⁰ The Paytan is not as worried as the rabbis are about the High Priest’s weakness.

³⁷⁴⁰ אז בדעת חקר line 90.

Mishnah Yoma 2

Yoma 2:1-2

| YOMA 2:1-2 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>The priests attending to the altar competed with one another for the honour of cleansing the ashes of the altar.</p> <p>Once it happened that priests rushed up the ramp, shoving and pushing one another as they ran together, and one fell over and broke his foot. To avert such disasters in future, the Sanhedrin instituted a lottery for the honour of cleansing the altar.</p> <p>This was the first of four lots drawn on Yom Kippur.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the minor priests ran up the ramp to the altar, but lots were cast in order to suppress infighting and disputes.³⁷⁴¹</p> <p>The first lot is cast to determine who cleanses the altar of the ashes.</p> <p>The priests first immerse themselves in a ritual bath, to purify themselves, and they don a headdress called an עטרה.³⁷⁴²</p> <p>In אספר גדולות : ---</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : lots are prepared for the priests so they will not shove one another as they run up the ramp to the altar.³⁷⁴³</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר : leaders and wise men saw the event in which a priest's leg was broken in the tumult, and in response they instituted the casting of lots to appoint priests to the task.³⁷⁴⁴</p> |

COMMENTS:

- Once again, the Mishnah creates an imagined narrative, better to simulate a reality in which they controlled and supervised the choreographed proceedings of the temple ritual, given the priests' innate inability to regulate their own conduct. The Talmud adds a few

³⁷⁴¹ Line 143.

³⁷⁴² Line 144.

³⁷⁴³ Line 88.

³⁷⁴⁴ Line 91.

more details regarding the ritual responsibilities of the priests who won the first lot, and the debates among named rabbis about these details.³⁷⁴⁵

- The paytan accepts the rabbinic account. He does not add to it, nor does he detract from it. He leaves anonymous the identity of the institution which cast the lots, but one assumes here that he does not dispute the Mishnah, although this cannot be fully ascertained from the poems alone.
- The paytan adds new information about the first lot cast on Yom Kippur. According to his narrative the priests, now tamed by the system of lots, must ritually cleanse themselves before the lots are even cast, and wear a headdress. This particular purifying ablution is absent from the rabbinic narratives. Accepting the hypothesis of Yosse Ben Yosse's priestly lineage, one must assume that he inserted this purifying ablution, adding to the Mishnah text something which he considered fundamentally important. Ritual immersion in ritual baths is not the same as bathing for the purpose of hygiene; here the immersion is spiritually cleansing and is therefore subject to intense law-making exegeses based on biblical law.³⁷⁴⁶ Strict observance of purity laws was a prerequisite for the daily performance of priestly duties, required of all priests at the temple, not just of the High Priest.³⁷⁴⁷ Priestly settlements in Palestine boasted a proliferation of ritual baths,³⁷⁴⁸ whereas rabbinic settlements of Israelite Jews usually supported two or three

³⁷⁴⁵ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 8 A&B Chapter 2 halakha 1.

³⁷⁴⁶ Byron McCane, "Miqva'ot," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John Collins and Daniel Harlow, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

³⁷⁴⁷ Schiffman and VanderKam, *Encyclopaedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 560-563.

³⁷⁴⁸ In Susya, for example, archaeologists have unearthed over 35 ritual baths, and Yuval Baruch claims there may be as many as 70 or more. See: Baruch, *Horvat Susya and Rujum el-Hamiri as a Case Study for the Development of the Village and the Rural Settlement in the Southern Hebron Hills from the Early Roman to Early Muslim Periods*, 281-283.

ritual baths per the average-sized settlement.³⁷⁴⁹ The paytan's concern with ritual purity and ritual ablutions is evocative of the Zaddokite penchant for immersive purification rites, which was very common in Qumran for example. As a rule, the Mishnah and Tosefta have relatively little to say about the structure of ritual baths, compared with the obsessive preoccupation with these structures at Qumran. This may have framed the Paytan's discourse in ways that we still do not fully appreciate.

³⁷⁴⁹ Leibner, *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee: An Archaeological Survey of the Eastern Galilee*, 367, footnote 67; See a detailed survey of all the ritual baths in Israel dating from the Late Roman and Byzantine periods in: Baruch, *Horvat Susya And Rujum El-Hamiri As A Case Study for The Development of The Village and The Rural Settlement in The Southern Hebron Hills From the Early Roman to Early Muslim Periods*, 288-296.

Yoma 2:3

| YOMA 2:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The order of the second lot [of a total of four lots] is outlined in detail:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the priest who will slaughter the daily offering 2. the priest who will pitch the blood 3. the priest who will cleanse the ashes of the inner altar 4. the priest who will cleanse the candles of the Menorah 5. the priest who will bring the sacrificed animals' limbs to the ramp of the altar 6. the priest who will bring the forelegs 7. the priest who will bring the fat tail of the animals, and the left hind leg 8. the priest who will bring the breast fat and the neck, as well as the ribs, heart and lungs 9. the priest who will bring the two flanks 10. the priest who will bring the innards 11. the priest who will bring the fine flour for the daily offering 12. the priest who will bring the baked cakes 13. the priest who will bring the wine for the liquid offering | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the second lot decides the apportioning of duties pertaining to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the daily offering of the ram (sheep) 2. the cleansing of ashes from the inner altar 3. the cleansing of the candelabra.³⁷⁵⁰ <p>In אספר גדולות : a lot is cast to determine:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who will cleanse the altar 2. who will set the organs of the sacrificed animal 3. who will prepare the incense.³⁷⁵¹ <p>In אתה כוננת : the first lot determined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who will prepare the daily offering 2. who will cleanse the inner altar 3. who will cleanse and prepare the candelabra.³⁷⁵² <p>The second lot determined which novice priests will prepare the incense.³⁷⁵³</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the lots determine:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. who will cleanse the outer large altar 2. who will cleanse the inner altar 3. who will cleanse and prepare the candelabra 4. who will sacrifice (offer) the incense and thus win God's blessing.³⁷⁵⁴ |

³⁷⁵⁰ Line 145.³⁷⁵¹ Line 27.³⁷⁵² Line 89.³⁷⁵³ Line 90.³⁷⁵⁴ Line 91.

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah is a legalistic composition and as such it is most particular about the correct application of law and the correct performance of rituals. Claiming such stringency helps assert rabbinic control and authority over all aspects of traditional life, extrapolating from temple specificity to all religious acts in general, of priests as well as of lay people.³⁷⁵⁵ This text is especially detailed as it expands the biblical text to the smallest imagined detail, better to simulate the accuracy of the description, thereby confirming rabbinic memory as accurate and binding.
- The paytan is somewhat less legalistic in his approach to the subject. He does narrate the casting of lots, but in each telling he changes the order and substance of the duties to be apportioned to the various priests. He appears to be “messier” in the allocation of duties to the priests. He sacrifices detail and accuracy for the sake of achieving literary flow in his poetry and subjugates the detail to the demands of poetic form.
- The paytan connects, in the fourth Piyyut, the apportioned duties to blessings earned by conscientious priests. This is a less legalistic depiction, one which connects the reader to the inner thoughts of those pushy priests. His is a more humane and generous image of priestly contests, than the Mishnah’s somewhat derisive description of priests running amok with unbridled zeal for want of rabbinic supervision. Under the paytan’s pen, the contest is not about a rudderless proverbial “who’s on first,” but about a burgeoning desire to merit God’s beneficence. This represents new information which is lacking in the other texts.

³⁷⁵⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 17.

Yoma 2:4-6

| YOMA 2:4-6 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|-----------------------|
| <p>The third and fourth lots are draw.</p> <p>The third: for novice priests who have never had the honour of offering incense.</p> <p>The fourth: for all priests, young and old, to determine who will bring the slaughtered animals' limbs from half way up the altar ramp, all the way to the top where the pyre stands at the ready.</p> <p>The daily offering is offered by 9-12 priests, "no less, no more," depending on the calendar (weekdays, Sabbath, festivals).</p> <p>An offering of a ram, and an offering of an ox, are both made by a varying number of priests.</p> | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah adopts a very legalistic and prescriptive tone here, specifying the precise number of priests implicated in the sacrificial cult. The Talmud adds even more precise information, as well as anecdotal material. Both texts endeavour to make the rabbinic hold on the temple ritual seem complete and essential. Without rabbinic oversight, the biblically mandated rituals cannot be accurately interpreted from word to deed. Without rabbinic control, the efficacy of the rituals would therefore be nullified and the relationship between God and His people would suffer irreparable injury. The rabbis thus underscore their claim to veracity, accuracy of both prescriptive behaviour and of their memory of the temple rites and assert ownership over all Jewish ritual life. It is as much

an argument for rabbinic leadership, as it is a crafted memory of rite which no rabbi could have witnessed unless they were priests,³⁷⁵⁶ and unless they had lived in the days when the temple still stood. The historical implausibility of these possibilities lends credence to the argument that crafted memories were a means to assert rabbinic political and religious leadership of the people. And once this is ascertained, the narrative militates against competing claims for authority as well.³⁷⁵⁷

- The paytan is silent about all these matters of law. He is focused strictly on the Yom Kippur ritual and does not countenance any diversion therefrom. His is a poetic text, intended for a community. It is a text which educates but also makes partners of the poet and his audience, as his intent is to recreate a specific moment in time [albeit with a wide diachronic horizon].³⁷⁵⁸ He is not a jurist, nor does he claim to be one; he is instead a poet whose task is to make vivid a past no longer accessible to his community. The poetry was written in response to a distressing political reality in the post-destruction period, when sovereignty was denied the Jews, when their lives were regulated by foreign peoples and subject to oft repressive measures. The poet responded to popular anguish and offered a liturgical image of a reality which was once glorious and divinely regulated, and could, and would soon be re-established for the faithful.³⁷⁵⁹ The liturgy expressed the longing plea for God's salvation, for the purging of evil, and for the restoration of Jerusalem, its temple, its people, and peace. The Yom Kippur ritual served as an important anchor, a rite which once ensured the welfare of the world entire and was performed at the very

³⁷⁵⁶ Lev. 16:17.

³⁷⁵⁷ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 26-28.

³⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁷⁵⁹ Weinfeld, *Early Jewish liturgy: From Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature*, 101-124.

heart of the universe, in Jerusalem. Reliving the redemptive ritual in word instead of deed, the congregation, led by the poet, could somehow recreate the mystery and have an active role in the deliverance of Israel. For such a ritual, therefore, the question of the precise number of priests and the issue of who holds which part of a slaughtered animal, are both overshadowed by the majesty of the Day of Awe which the paytan seeks to evoke.

Mishnah Yoma 3

Yoma 3:1-2

| YOMA 3:1-2 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>The ממונה, the man in charge as supervisor of the temple rituals, instructs the priests to ascertain if the correct time for the daily offering had arrived.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the priest who is in charge of temple rituals, called שר פקיד sends reliable emissaries to the east to see if the dawn had risen.³⁷⁶⁰</p> |
| <p>The priest who first notices the dawn declares ברקאי and the day's offerings may proceed.</p> | <p>They tell the priest that ברק נוגה and thus set the day's rituals in motion.³⁷⁶¹</p> |
| <p>The Mishnah debates the precise image of the dawn's light. Only once the supervisor determines that the dawn has indeed dawned sufficiently, do the rituals of the day commence.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות: they declare ברק נוגה and the day's order begins.³⁷⁶²</p> |
| <p>A story is told of a time now past in which the incorrect time was declared, as the moon's light was ruled in error to have been the dawn's, with insalubrious effect on priestly purity and on the efficacy of the temple ritual which had to be scrapped and repeated.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת :trusted priests who are אמוני עיתים³⁷⁶³ and know well how to determine the correct times for ritual performances to begin are sent [three times] to see if indeed ברק נוגה.³⁷⁶⁴</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the פקיד sends an emissary to the east to see if indeed ברק נוגה.³⁷⁶⁵</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah asserts control over the timing of the ritual. Only when the man in charge, a Sanhedrin sage, determines that the “hurdle” of dawn has been overcome, can the priests perform their choreographed rituals.

³⁷⁶⁰ Line 147,

³⁷⁶¹ Line 148,

³⁷⁶² Line 28,

³⁷⁶³ Line 91, citing Isa. 33:6,

³⁷⁶⁴ Line 91 repeats the root ש"ח three times: ישולח, ישלח, ישולחו speaking both in the singular and plural third person.

³⁷⁶⁵ Line 94,

- The Talmud most excitedly augments the Mishnah narrative with “case study” tales of years past when the requisite amount of dawn-light was ill perceived, with detrimental consequence.³⁷⁶⁶ Nothing works, nothing functions correctly, without rabbinic oversight, not even time. The imagined narrative of confusing the moon’s glow for the dawn’s, lends verisimilitude to the narrative and militates for rabbinic control. In the absence of precise parameters, the priests could not be relied upon to tell time; it therefore seems fitting that rabbinic control be extended over the priests, negate all competing claims to authority, and be established as the undeniably singular authentic and authoritative voice.
- The paytan does not divert his gaze from the day’s events. He does not seek to reify temporal control, but to evoke a synthetic past and to implicate his audience in its recreation through liturgy on the Day of Awe.
- The Mishnah employs the term ממונה as the technical term for the sage who is in charge of the proper proceedings. The word means “an appointed one,” one who is given the authority by a greater authority than himself, in this case, the Sanhedrin, the Temple Court. By inserting the Sanhedrin as the most essential vector in the Yom Kippur ritual, the Mishnah is claiming rabbinic authority over the priesthood, over the temple itself. But, as David Goodblatt explains, “the existence of a supreme governing body in Jerusalem called the Sanhedrin cannot be proven by the sources, and if it existed, it cannot be described.”³⁷⁶⁷ The idealized image of an institution like that, glosses over any

³⁷⁶⁶ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 13 B, Chapter 3 Halakha 1-2, and Folio 14 A, Chapter 3 Halakha 2.

³⁷⁶⁷ David Goodblatt, “Sanhedrin,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Lindsey Jones, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8104.

sectarian past, any dissention, any variation in the traditional life and militates for rabbinic control over all aspects of the traditional life in the present.³⁷⁶⁸

- The word ברקאי is unique. It is “unpacked” in the Talmud through a story and a “recorded” conversation, which illustrate the essential importance of noting the first rays of sun as they pierce the night sky. The word ברקאי derives from the word ברק, lightning, which evokes a dagger-like image of a light that vanquishes the darkness. It is at once a poetic word and a legal word, as it is used in the Mishnah.
- The paytan employs a different technical term for the supervisor of the rites. He calls him שר פקיד. Interestingly, the Qumran community’s technical term for the role of overseer, (who was the second most important officer who was at the head of the community and oversaw the reception of new members to the Yaḥad) was פקיד.³⁷⁶⁹ The Paytan’s lexical choice once again raises the possibility that he may have had contact with Qumran texts, specifically with the Rule of the Community and the Damascus Document. This observation, I think, certainly merits further investigation.
- In all four piyyutim the term the paytan uses to “replace” ברקאי is a compound word: ברק נוגה. The first word ברק mirrors the Mishnaic terminology and also evokes a lightning-like first ray of sun; the Qumranic texts also use the word,³⁷⁷⁰ for it is a common one in scripture (appearing 18 times in the Hebrew Bible) as well as in the quotidian speech. The word נוגה however, which appears only 4 times in the bible (all describing the righteous individual, not the physiognomy of sunlight), and thrice in the Qumran

³⁷⁶⁸ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 44.

³⁷⁶⁹ Charlesworth, “Community Organization,” 135.

³⁷⁷⁰ 4Q169, 3-4ii4; 4Q392, 1,9.

scrolls,³⁷⁷¹ is an almost painterly lexical choice. It speaks of a glow, a brightness more diffuse than lightning-like ray of sun, it evokes a softer dawn and captures the chilly air of morning when the sky blushes with anticipation of the day. Given the biblical tendency to employ the term in describing God's glory and the righteous person's glow and given the Qumranic tendency to use the word נגה to evoke a person's love for God, I think the paytan's choice speaks about the same point of order as does the Mishnah, but the "twist" here is less casuistic, less legal, and more organic. I interpret the difference to mean a nuanced challenge to the rabbinic asserted prerogative of leadership and incisive authority, especially in view of the paytan's description of the overseer as a נגיד מלאכת הקודש³⁷⁷² who is not cast as an outsider to the priestly cohort, but as the priest who is one of the other priests, the leader of the priests who arose from within their ranks.

- In the third Piyyut The paytan repeats the root של"ה three times: ישולה, ישלה, ישולחו speaking both in the singular and plural third person. The narrative becomes more dynamic, more urgent, more evocative for the listener. In the fourth Piyyut, it is the פקיד who sends an emissary; in the other piyyutim, there are many emissaries, there is an overall sense of rushed nervousness, a sense that the Day of Awe must soon begin, and that God's unseen hand is setting the cosmic scene in readiness for the crucial moment of compassionate clemency for the world entire. The audience is breathless with anticipation. Did the day dawn? Can we begin?

³⁷⁷¹ 4Q468b1; 11Q22,1,2; 1QHa, xiv, 18.

³⁷⁷² אזכיר דבורות אלוה line 147.

Yoma 3:3

| YOMA 3:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| A person cannot enter the temple courtyard, even in a purified state, without first performing ritual purification rites. | In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest immerses himself at the Parvah Chamber. ³⁷⁷³ |
| The High Priest on Yom Kippur must immerse himself five times, and sanctify his hands and his feet ten times. | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| All the ritual ablutions are performed inside the temple walls, in sanctity, in the Parvah Chamber (south-eastern corner of the Priestly Courtyard) except this first purification rite. | In אתה כוננת : the minor priests accompany the High Priest for the first immersion at the outside ritual pool in the Parvah Chamber. ³⁷⁷⁴ |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah adopts a legalistic tone, specifying the ritual purity requirements for the priestly service, and asserting expert authority over the same. The rabbis insert themselves into the priestly realm, both physically and ritually/spiritually, making themselves central to the temple ritual. They authorize their own version of the past through such interjections as the Mishnah's specification that the first ablution took place somewhere else and continue to argue for their own importance in the present.³⁷⁷⁵ The very sanctity of the temple is created by ritual action,³⁷⁷⁶ as the ritual defines what is sacred and draws the spatial boundaries between the sacred and profane. By orienting the priests' movements within the sacred space thus created, the rabbis make meaningful the

³⁷⁷³ Line 149.

³⁷⁷⁴ Line 92.

³⁷⁷⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 73.

³⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

very structure of the temple and legitimate the socio-religious and political relations and hierarchy they proclaim as real and true.³⁷⁷⁷

- “If the space of the temple symbolizes the Judaeen polity, which includes a variety of Judaeans, what defines their Judaeanness and what unifies the people as a whole is correct ritual performance as determined by the rabbis.”³⁷⁷⁸
- The temple boundaries divide the rabbis from opposing claimants of authority, principally the priestly caste with its inherited tradition of temple service. The rabbis reconfigure temple space to displace the priests, to disqualify them, even though it is historically doubtful that the rabbis or their predecessors could have actually breached the traditional virtual wall of prohibitions for any but the priests’ presence on the holy grounds.³⁷⁷⁹
- The Mishnah account of the number of immersions greatly expands the biblical account in Leviticus 16, wherein the High Priest is only mandated to immerse himself three times and to sanctify his hands and feet six times. This is a common midrashic practice which regards scripture as cryptic and therefore requiring expansion and elucidation. Rabbinic midrash regards all scripture as relevant and divinely inspired, no detail can be unimportant, no discrepancy can be left un-harmonized. Every detail is regarded as a vehicle for imparting meaning.³⁷⁸⁰ The rabbis sought to understand God and His relationship with Israel and derive didactic, prescriptive information from every nuance

³⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., 87.

³⁷⁸⁰ James L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 18-22.

of scripture, even if they had to add their own narrative to complement the Holy Book where gaps were noted.

- There is a Baraita³⁷⁸¹ which asserts that the first ritual immersion took place in the Water Gate, situated in the mid-section of the southern wall of the Priestly Courtyard, next door to the High Priest's sequestered residence on Yom Kippur.³⁷⁸²
- Two of the Yosse Ben Yosse piyyutim mention the first ritual immersion, but both disagree with the Mishnah and state that, like all other immersions on Yom Kippur, this too was performed at the Parvah Chamber. The other two piyyutim do not speak of it at all. The poet is eager to begin the Avodah. The audience is made to understand, in non-legalistic, poetic language, that the "real deal" will now commence.

³⁷⁸¹ Baraita Yoma 31:2.

³⁷⁸² Tractate Midot 1:4.

Yoma 3:4

| YOMA 3:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>A linen sheet (בוץ) is spread between the High Priest and the people.</p> <p>The High Priest undresses, immerses himself, and dons his golden vestments. He then sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>They bring him the daily offering which he quickly slaughters. Another priest completes the ritual slaughter while the High Priest receives the animal's blood and casts it on the altar.</p> <p>The High Priest enters the היכל, the Sanctuary of the temple (within whose walls there lies ensconced the Holy of Holies). He offers the morning incense offering and cleanses the candelabra.</p> <p>He returns to the main altar to offer the daily burnt offering, the head and limbs of the sacrificed animal, the baked cakes and the wine offering.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : a linen cloth (שש) is drawn between the High Priest and the people in attendance, to honour him and to shield his nakedness from view.³⁷⁸³</p> <p>The High Priest disrobes, immerses himself, and is dressed by an attending deputy priest in his linen clothes and on top of them the golden vestments.³⁷⁸⁴</p> <p>The High Priest's vestments are described in detail.³⁷⁸⁵</p> <p>All the people in the temple courtyard must perform ritual ablutions to purify themselves, at pain of death.³⁷⁸⁶</p> <p>The High Priest, the people's emissary, sanctifies his hands and feet.³⁷⁸⁷</p> <p>The High Priest slaughters the daily offering, casts the blood upon the altar, enters the Sanctuary to offer incense and cleanse the candelabra, returns to complete the daily offering of the animal's head and flesh, as well as the caked cakes and the liquid offering of wine.³⁷⁸⁸</p> |

³⁷⁸³ Line 150.

³⁷⁸⁴ Line 151.

³⁷⁸⁵ Lines 152-185.

³⁷⁸⁶ Line 187.

³⁷⁸⁷ Line 188.

³⁷⁸⁸ Line 189.

| YOMA 3:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest disrobes, dresses in the eight articles of ceremonial golden vestments, sanctifies his hands and feet, and offers the daily offering.³⁷⁸⁹</p> <p>The High Priest takes the blood and casts it on the altar, offers the incense, cleanses the candelabra, and makes the sacrifice of flesh, baked cakes and liquid offering.³⁷⁹⁰</p> <p>In אתה כוננת: a linen sheet (שש) is spread between the High Priest and the people, to preserve his dignity and demonstrate his high rank.³⁷⁹¹</p> <p>The High Priest disrobes, rushes to perform the purifying immersion and dons the golden vestments.³⁷⁹²</p> <p>The ceremonial priestly vestments are described in great detail.³⁷⁹³</p> <p>The High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet.³⁷⁹⁴</p> <p>Minor priests present the daily morning offering to the High Priest. He slaughters the animal, receives its blood in a מיזרק.³⁷⁹⁵</p> <p>The High Priest divides the incense into two portions. He then offers the morning incense, cleanses the candelabra, then makes sacrifice of the head and flesh of the daily offering, as well as the baked cakes and the liquid offering.³⁷⁹⁶</p> |

³⁷⁸⁹ Line 28.

³⁷⁹⁰ Line 29.

³⁷⁹¹ Line 93.

³⁷⁹² Line 94.

³⁷⁹³ Lines 95-118.

³⁷⁹⁴ Line 119.

³⁷⁹⁵ Line 120.

³⁷⁹⁶ Line 121.

| YOMA 3:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: a sheet is drawn between the High Priest and the people, in order to demonstrate his elevated priestly status גדול מאחיו.³⁷⁹⁷</p> <p>The High Priest immerses himself outside.³⁷⁹⁸</p> <p>He wears the eight articles of ceremonial golden vestments and sanctifies his hands and his feet.³⁷⁹⁹</p> <p>He offers the daily morning offering, another priest mixes the blood (so it will not coagulate) and the High Priest receives the blood. He sprinkles the blood, he cleanses the candelabra, and then makes the meat and baked cakes and liquid offerings.³⁸⁰⁰</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The paytan generally accepts the Mishnah narrative of the early proceedings. He mirrors the Mishnah's account of the High Priest's movements in the temple space, and for the most part echoes the choreographed ritual in all its aspects. His artistry becomes apparent when he evokes in word and metred rhyme the visual splendour of the High Priest's attire worn in a temple long reduced to ashes. Similarly, he is specific about the vessel in which the High Priest receives the blood of the sacrificed animal, the מיזרק, even as the Mishnah is silent about it. Whereas the Mishnah assumes familiarity with priestly garb (based on study, as well as on scripture,³⁸⁰¹ Josephus,³⁸⁰² and other sources, the paytan does not take

³⁷⁹⁷ Line 95.

³⁷⁹⁸ Line 95.

³⁷⁹⁹ Line 96.

³⁸⁰⁰ Lines 97-98.

³⁸⁰¹ Exod. 28:4, 36 for example.

³⁸⁰² Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 3:7, 6.

for granted his congregation's edification. The Paytan describes the vestments in all their imagined glory, better to evoke the splendour of the day and portray as real the ritual itself.

- I find most interesting the paytan's lexical choice of words describing the linen fabric of the sheet that shielded the High Priest's nakedness and thus enhanced his stature in the eyes of all beholders, at the temple itself and, in their imagination, the congregants hearing the Avodah in liturgical form. Whereas the Mishnah uses the word בּוּץ to name the linen cloth in question, the paytan prefers (consistently in all his 14 piyyutim) the word שש. Both words can be translated as "fine linen." Both words appear in the Hebrew Bible describing sumptuous fabrics and clothes.³⁸⁰³ The question intrigued me. Hebrew was no longer the language of every day, it was a language reserved for religious purposes of prayer and study, and therefore the Piyyut poetry, which lionized Hebrew (as opposed to the lingua franca of the day- Aramaic, influenced by Hellenic linguistic imports), appears stilted to the modern-ear, but at the time it must have had some popular appeal else it would not have been written or preserved.³⁸⁰⁴ The form of Piyyut poetry is not an arbitrary affectation, but a reflection of a style which audiences favoured in the 5th century, and an emotionally charged form of liturgy.³⁸⁰⁵ Why then did the paytan choose שש over the Mishnah and the Talmud's בּוּץ? What difference did the words make to him and to his audience?

³⁸⁰³ בּוּץ: In the Bible it is mentioned 4 times, in the Mishnah it is mentioned 4 times, in the BT 20 times, in the PT five.

שש: In the Bible it is mentioned 6 times, and as בגדי שש only once. It is not mentioned in the Mishnah as בגדי שש even once, nor in the BT, the PT or the Tosefta.

³⁸⁰⁴ Yahalom, *Poetic Language in the Early Piyyut*, 32.

³⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

- Professor Lawrence Schiffman helped me resolve the problem when he pointed out to me the Greek etymology of בִּרְיָ, namely Βύσσοϛ [Býssos]. Rabbinic literature freely weaves Hebrew, as well as foreign “invading” words and sentences in Aramaic and Greek words in its narrative.³⁸⁰⁶ Could it be that the paytan argued for a return to national purity and was an advocate of Hebrew, at a time when the vast majority of Jews living in Byzantine Palestine spoke only Aramaic and were not conversant in Hebrew?³⁸⁰⁷

³⁸⁰⁶ Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 179.

³⁸⁰⁷ Archaeological evidence points to the survival of Hebrew as a spoken language in the Southern Judean settlements, such as Susya, where priestly communities preserved and old language and resisted its adulteration and dilution with foreign words. This may argue for a plausible assumption that the paytan lived in one such community and served as a Paytan for an audience that did understand Hebrew and valued its purity. Elsewhere in my work I intend to investigate the possibility that Yosse Ben Yosse resided in Susya, the largest and wealthiest, most organized priestly town in the region, a town which reached the pinnacle of its development precisely during his lifetime and continued to be an important urban centre for centuries thereafter.

I have reason to speculate that Yosse Ben Yosse did not live and work in the Galilee among Jewish communities whose Rabbinic inclinations he appears to have disagreed with or, at the very least, diverged from. I have developed a working hypothesis that he actually lived in south Judea, among a community such as the one at Susya. Material culture, archaeology, textual evidence, and some extrapolation there from, would suggest the Susya hypothesis may be a plausible answer to the question of Yosse Ben Yosse’s geographic and community location in Palaestina. Briefly, the hypothesis claims that conventional wisdom is erroneous in having, for the most part, adopted this image of Palaestina Prima as being virtually *Judenrein*. Archaeological evidence (Gutman, Yelvin, and Netzer, “Excavations in the Synagogue at Horvat Susya,” 123-128) indicates that the destruction in South Judea was not as devastating as it was in Northern Judea and that the Jewish community there, hailing back to the first century BCE, was revived and in every way continued to flourish. Galilean Jews, were for the most part led by Rabbinic authorities whose Patriarchate, established in 140 CE as the Yavneh Sanhedrin, had moved because of the vicissitudes of life under Byzantine rule to Usha, Shefar’am, Beit She’arim, Sepphoris, and finally to Tiberias (Herr, ed., “The Roman-Byzantine Period: The Mishnah, the Talmud, and Byzantine rule 70-640 CE,” 80).

Settlements on the Golan, although in close proximity to the Galilee, developed a slightly independent way of Jewish practice about which we know very little indeed (Maoz, “The Art and Architecture of the Synagogues of the Golan,” 98-115). In Southern Judea, a few Jewish settlements maintained a form of Jewish life, which is also largely dismissed by Rabbinic sources as irrelevant, but for which archaeology (Zertal, *Sisera’s Secret*), as previously discussed, is an eloquent witness nonetheless. The Jewish residents of the town of Susya, direct descendants of Second Temple Jews, enjoyed economic and cultural peaked in the fifth century, coincidentally parallel to the paytan’s written works, and continued to exist well into the eighth century (Levine, *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, 116-132).

Susya’s 3000 inhabitants, who supported an enormous synagogue, richly adorned with mosaic floors and exquisite inscriptions, also built some 30 ritual baths attesting to their intense preoccupation with Jewish ritual ablutions and Jewish Law (Baruch, *Horvat Susya and Rujum el-Hamiri as a Case Study for the Development of the Village and the Rural Settlement in the Southern Hebron Hills from the Early Roman to Early Muslim Periods*). They also appear to have observed pre-Destruction burial rites unlike the Galilean Jews, and sources claim that Hebrew remained for them a spoken language. Susya was a considerable settlement, and yet it is barely ever mentioned in Rabbinic sources. The gap of silence can only be filled through archaeology and illustrates the problem of exclusive engagement with textual sources as a gauge for “what really happened” in history. The paytan “fits” a community such as Susya, in his Priestly leanings³⁸⁰⁷, in his insistence on the purity of Hebrew, in his apparently intimate knowledge of the Avodah, and in his non-Rabbinic understanding of history, of God’s role in it, and of the theological understanding of Time, History, and the dialogue between Heaven and Earth as ongoing and meaningful. The way his manuscripts ended up in the Genizah is also quite commensurate with the access Susya enjoyed to Egypt and its historic Genizah. Susya, standing in geographic proximity to the Dead Sea, may also have had contact with the Qumran community, further cementing the association between the paytan and the esoteric materials we now call the Dead Sea Scrolls. It remains to be more rigorously defended, but I sense a plausible resolution of the question of the paytan’s location in Palestine through my Susya hypothesis, whereas Mirsky and other scholars have chosen to not address the question at all. I suspect that Mirsky et al did not study the

- At the same time, one must remember that the Piyyutic ecstatic emotional expression, as well as its cadence and vocabulary, were intended to astonish, to surprise, and to delight audiences. The language created by paytanim predates the codification and systemization of Hebrew grammar, as well as the rules of spelling and punctuation.³⁸⁰⁸ It also precedes the systemization of verb inflections and syntax, and is a significant bridge between the lively use of Hebrew in the everyday of antiquity, the remembered Scriptural Hebrew framed by daily use of Aramaic and Greek in 5th century Palestine, and the nascent written Hebrew of literary and cultural expressions. It is also possible, therefore, that the Paytan was not an advocate for a return to pure Hebrew, but a poet who was good at his craft, who chose “fun and interesting” words, better to delight his audience. Or maybe the two words referred to different fabrics altogether.³⁸⁰⁹ All this to say that there is much yet to learn from and about Yosse Ben Yosse.

problem because it may have clashed with their understanding of Yosse Ben Yosse as a Rabbinic sage. A combination of textual analysis and archaeological study would, I maintain, offer an alternative route.

³⁸⁰⁸ Zulai, *The Land of Israel and its Piyutim*, 35-44.

³⁸⁰⁹ Yehudah Gur maintains that יב referred to locally produced fine linen, the one made by Aramaic speaking folk; and יב describes the finer linen woven of six strands of the finest linen fit for the high-status priests and royalty in Egypt. See: Yehudah Gur, *Hebrew Dictionary* [Hebrew], (Tel-Aviv, Israel: Dvir, 1952).

Yoma 3:5

| YOMA 3:5 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|-----------------------|
| The morning's incense offering was made between the sprinkling of blood and the sacrifice of limbs. | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| The afternoon's incense offering was made between the sacrifice of limbs and the offering of liquid libations. | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| If the High Priest was old or weak or infirm or delicate, hot water is prepared for him to be mixed with the cold water (in the ritual bath) to temper the water. | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah specifies the correct times for offering the daily incense, as part of the general effort to outline with precision the legally correct order of each element of the Avodah. Speaking legalistically, the Mishnah asserts its memory of the past as accurate, its ruling as exclusively correct, and therefore its right to authority and leadership.
- The vignette about the “delicate” High Priest who is fastidious and needs some hot water in his ritual bath lest he be cold serves two literary purposes. First, it establishes a certain verisimilitude, for it is claimed, not all past High Priests were young and hardy, some were old, others infirm, they were human, they were real people and halakha had to be elastic enough to accommodate them all. The sensory experience lends credibility to the claim that the narrative describes true events and real people. Furthermore, the iterative past, with its small variations, never deviated from the invariable nature of the ritual, which the rabbis controlled and mediated. Thus, the second purpose of the narrative is

achieved, namely to underscore the rabbis' concern with correct procedure, transmitted and determined by themselves, and therefore assert rabbinic authority in the present. The rabbis are at the centre of the temple narrative in the Mishnah and Talmud discourse. In other words, which priests are dispensable, replaceable, sometimes weak, infirm, or pampered, rabbinic oversight is indispensable, materially crucial to the efficacy of the Yom Kippur rituals and therefore of all rituals and aspects of traditional life.³⁸¹⁰

- The Talmud adds its own narrative to underscore the effort for verisimilitude. It asks how and when the water was warmed, accepting the Mishnah narrative as factual (thereby strengthening its claim to veracity), and answers with some technical information on water warming techniques and legal discussion on the correct time and procedure that ought to have been followed in the past, thereby affirming the rabbinic memory as accurate and rabbinic law-making as collectively binding, then and now.³⁸¹¹ The claim is: it really happened “thus,” it ought to have happened “thus,” and “thus” is what the rabbis say was “thus,” therefore all rabbinic “thus”es are the only “thus” in town for all time and for all Jews.
- The paytan is once again not at all concerned with the rabbinic breaks in narrative. All four piyyutim sidestep the rabbinic vignette as well as its legal discussion. He achieves verisimilitude with images of priestly garb, with changes in poetic cadence which denote the hurried air alleged to have animated the proceedings, and with a literary recreation of the emotional tenor of the day. He brooks no alternative versions of the past. His past is idealized, synthesized, made to sound factual with sensory information. Like the rabbis

³⁸¹⁰ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 58-67.

³⁸¹¹ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 16 A, Chapter 3 halakha 5.

he blurs the line between the actual events and the telling,³⁸¹² but he is not in the business of militating for rabbinic authority. His concern is with the congregation who will “consume” the narrative, and his other concern is to militate for priestly, not rabbinic, control of the action at the temple.

³⁸¹² Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 69-70.

Yoma 3:6-7

| YOMA 3:6-7 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>The High Priest is led to the Parvah Chamber, which was on sacral grounds.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest walks to the Parvah chamber.</p> |
| <p>A sheet of fine linen בויק is drawn between himself and the people.</p> | <p>A sheet of שש is drawn between him and the people.</p> |
| <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet. He then disrobes.</p> | <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses, dons his Linen vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet again.³⁸¹³</p> |
| <p>R. Meir says: he first disrobed and then sanctified his hands and feet.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות : the High Priest turns and goes to the Parvah Chamber.</p> |
| <p>He then immerses in the ritual bath, and dresses in his white linen clothes, and sanctifies his hands and his feet.</p> | <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses, dons his linen vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet again.³⁸¹⁴</p> |
| <p>In the morning the High Priest wears Egyptian linen vestments, from a famous town in Egypt.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest rushes to the Parvah Chamber.</p> |
| <p>In the afternoon he wears Indian linen.</p> | <p>He disrobes of his golden vestments.</p> |
| <p>His clothes are publically funded, but he can definitely contribute of his own purse to enhance the beauty, value and quality of the vestments, all worn not for his glorification but for the glory of the office he holds.</p> | <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses, dons his linen vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet again.³⁸¹⁵</p> |
| <p>He is now ready to begin the holy day's holy service.</p> | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : -the High Priest is led to the Parvah Chamber.</p> |
| | <p>A sheet is drawn between him and the people.</p> |
| | <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses, dons his linen vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet again.³⁸¹⁶</p> |

³⁸¹³ Lines 191-192.

³⁸¹⁴ Line 30.

³⁸¹⁵ Lines 122-123.

³⁸¹⁶ Lines 99-100.

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah interjects the narrative with alternate rabbinic opinions. The narrative is interrupted, it sounds real and authentic, and it militates for rabbinic authority. The Talmud adds more particular information and offers more rabbinic discussions as well, based on the foundational Mishnah text, affirming it, continuing it, and asserting rabbinic authority both in the past and in the present.
- The paytan generally accepts the choreography of the Avodah here. In the first three piyyutim, he implies that the High Priest needs no guiding hand, he is not “led” to the ritual bath chamber but goes there on his own. He has dominion over the Avodah. There are no rabbinic overseers in his narrative. Only in the fourth Piyyut the Paytan allows for the involvement of others, but he does not mention non-priestly participants, so one assumes the High Priest is led by his kin. The paytan asserts that the priests knew well what to do, how to act, when to act and where to go, and therefore, in nuance and through silence, he militates for priestly leadership both past and future.
- In the first Piyyut the paytan again chooses שש over בוך in speaking of the sheet that is drawn to guard the High Priest’s modesty and dignity. In the fourth Piyyut the sheet is just a sheet, and in the other two piyyutim there is no sheet at all. These are small details. The Avodah will soon take a turn for the dramatic and the poet is eager for his audience to leave the small details of ablution and focus on the “real deal.” The rabbis are maintaining a casuistic and legalistic tone, but as a poet the paytan has a different agenda. That is why he is not concerned at all with the provenance of linen, with the price of the priestly vestments. Those are “accounting matters,” best left for historians and jurists. A poet notes the beauty of the vestments, not their price.

Yoma 3:8

| YOMA 3:8 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>The High Priest approaches his bullock. The animal stood between the Sanctuary and the altar, its head to the south but its face turned westward.</p> <p>The High Priest stood on the east, his face turned westward, and there, he placed his hands on the bullock's head. The High Priest confesses for his iniquities, transgressions and then for his sins and those of his own household, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 <i>"For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD."</i> They respond with: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."</i></p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest turns to his bullock intended for a sin offering, standing between the Sanctuary and the altar.</p> <p>He places his hands upon the bullock's head and confesses: for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."</i> And the High Priest declared: You have been cleansed. ³⁸¹⁷</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest is like a groom, like the sun rising to the glory of God. He turns to his bullock, places his hands upon the bullock's head, and confesses: for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."</i>³⁸¹⁸</p> |

³⁸¹⁷ Lines 193-203.

³⁸¹⁸ Lines 31-38.

| YOMA 3:8 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אתה כוונת : the ritually pure High Priest turns to his bullock, standing between the Sanctuary and the altar, he places his hands on the bullock's head with heavy hands and with a heavy heart and confesses for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."</i>³⁸¹⁹</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת הקר: the High Priest turns to his bullock, which if of his own wealth and possessions (מידהונו).³⁸²⁰</p> <p>He stands between the Sanctuary and the altar, he places his hands on the bullock's head with heavy hands and a heavy heart and confesses: for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions.³⁸²¹</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The High Priest needs to confess and find atonement for his sins and those of his own household, before he can proceed, cleansed, to the next stage of the Avodah. To atone he must sacrifice a bullock, his own³⁸²². The Mishnah is quite specific about the choreography, the "face" of the bullock, the directionality in space of all the actors in the ritual drama. Those are all imagined data, all details intended to lend credibility to rabbinic memory and militate for rabbinic authority.

³⁸¹⁹ Lines 124-134.

³⁸²⁰ Line 101.

³⁸²¹ Lines 101-104.

³⁸²² Lev. 16:3.

- The Talmud³⁸²³ adds even more detailed information, pertaining to the décor of the temple. It names the benevolent donors who contributed to the beautification of the temple, and it describes the golden handles and the sumptuous setting, relying on oral tradition or other sources. The Talmud thus confirms the continuous nature of rabbinic literature and further militates for rabbinic authority, as we have seen throughout the narrative.
- Citing Leviticus in his prayer, the High Priest confirms the link between the Mishnah and Leviticus. The Mishnah becomes an extension of scripture, part of it, continuous and harmonious with it; and the rabbis become direct and legitimate heirs to Moses and to the Word of God. This is in line with the statement in Tractate Avot 1:1 which claims a rabbinic connection to the hoary past of Israel: “Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly.” The direct line of transmission from God through to Moses and to the Sanhedrin speaks to the legitimate claim for rabbinic authority and presents the Mishnah as continuous with the Pentateuch, with the entire Hebrew Bible itself.
- There is a Baraita³⁸²⁴ which suggests that the prayer spoken by the High Priest differed from the text which appears in this Yoma 3:8 The Mishnah here states that the High Priest confessed first of his iniquities (intentional offenses), then of his transgressions (offenses of a rebellious nature), and last of his sins (errors); the Baraita suggests that the order of these offenses was different: first the High Priest confessed for his sin, then the iniquities and last for his transgressions, moving from the “light” to the “heavy” offenses. The Baraita further

³⁸²³ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 18 B, Chapter 3 halakha 8.

³⁸²⁴ Yoma, Folio 36 B.

rules that the halakha, the way things ought to be, is according to the sages of the Baraita, not according to the tradition of R. Meir as it appears in Yoma 3:8. By changing the text and the order of confessions, the rabbis manipulate the memory of the past and bend it to their needs, harmonizing the past with a later tradition. They thus cast themselves as central to the ritual, central to prayer in general, and central in the law-making endeavour which governs the traditional life.

- In the paytan's narrative the choreography is basically the same as it is in the rabbinic narrative, although he is less concerned with the minutia of spatiality, with the direction of the High Priest's visage and with such imaginative elements of the drama. To him, the High Priest is glorious, he glows like a groom, like the sun, his office is the incarnate glory of God in action. The Paytan wishes to convey the sensory and emotive quality of the mystery, in order to make his audience feel the awesome drama, rather than understand it intellectually. The paytan does not dispute the rabbinic account, but he embellishes it poetically, as is his wont.
- The order of offenses for which the High Priest confesses is different from the Mishnah Yoma 3:8, but in line with the Baraita order. Here the paytan seems to be aware of the halakhic dispute and he decides to toe the rabbinic line.
- The addition of the section on the priests and the people in attendance, who kneel and bow before God as His name is called out, appears in Mishnah Yoma 6:2, only after the third confession made by the High Priest. The paytan maintains throughout the position that this participation by the priests and the people in the Courtyard in effect took place even after the first (and second) confession. There may be a different tradition at play here, or a redactive error, or a silence that speaks to yet other possible reasons. I have not found a

corresponding narrative in the Mishnah or in the Palestinian Talmud. This is problematic, in view of the great detail and importance of the rabbinic discourse on the Avodah, and I have yet to find a solution to this problem.

- In the fourth Piyyut the paytan employs the word הון [in a now “wrong” orthography, adding the letter Yod after the Mem, which before the standardization of Hebrew spelling sometime in the 7th century, was still considered acceptable] reference to the High Priest’s bullock.³⁸²⁵ This is yet another example of a “curious” lexical choice. The word הון appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible, denoting wealth and property. It never appears in the Mishnah and in other rabbinic texts it only appears in quotes from the bible.³⁸²⁶ In the Qumran literature this word appears no less than 110 times.³⁸²⁷ So why did the paytan choose this word? Why did he not simply say “his bullock,” like the Mishnah says? He could be choosing chose “fun and interesting” words, better to delight his audience; he too can be quoting scripture; he could be using a word oft spoken in his time and place; or he could be making a nuanced reference to Qumranic literature and to the ideology which animated it, namely the primacy of the priestly caste over rabbinic leadership. All these possibilities share a measure of plausibility, and yet they render the fourth piyyut different.

³⁸²⁵ Line 101.

³⁸²⁶ Tosefta, BT, PT, Mekhilta, Gen. Rabba, Exod. Rabba, Lev. Rabba, Num. Rabba, Song of Solomon Rabba, Esther Rabba, and in Aggadic Midrashim.

³⁸²⁷ Abegg, Bowley and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance, Vol. 1, The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*.

Yoma 3:9-11

| YOMA 3:9 [and YOMA 3:10-11] | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The High Priest walks over to the eastern wing of the Courtyard, and positions himself north of the altar, opposite the gateway. He is flanked by his deputy on the right, and the head of his Clan³⁸²⁸ on his left.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest walks eastward to the Itton Gate, flanked by deputy priests.</p> <p>Two he-goats await him and there is a vessel containing two golden lots.³⁸³¹</p> |
| <p>Two he-goats awaited the High Priest, and where they stood there was also a box containing two gold-coated boxwood lots, the gold covering of which was donated by [Yehoshua] Ben Gamla who is herein praised.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות : the High Priest walks eastward to the Yessod Gate, where two he-goats await him.³⁸³²</p> |
| <p>People who contributed to the sumptuous vessels and décor of the temple are remembered as praiseworthy.³⁸²⁹</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest, flanked by his deputy and the head of his Clan, position themselves at the Tihon Gate. Two he-goats await there and a box containing two golden lots.³⁸³³</p> |
| <p>People who are remembered with scorn are those who refused to share their learning and ritual specialization.³⁸³⁰</p> | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the High Priest walks to the Itton Gate, and positions himself north of the altar. He is flanked by his deputy and by the head of his Clan. There are two he-goats waiting for him, as well as a box containing two golden lots.³⁸³⁴</p> |

³⁸²⁸ The term Order refers to the priestly משמרות, the administrative division of Temple priests. The priestly workforce was divided into 24 Families, each responsible for the Temple rituals for the duration of one week, during which they were entitled to the meat of offerings. Every Order was divided into six family groups, or Clans, each accorded service on a different weekday. The watch switched on the Sabbath, as the outgoing Order and incoming Order shared the day's sacrifices. See: Ben-Dov, "Mishmarot," 958-960.

³⁸²⁹ Ben Kattin, King Munbaz, Heleni the King's mother, and Nikanor.

³⁸³⁰ Beit Garmu, the bakers of sacrificial baked cakes; Beit Abtinat, the incense specialists who refused to share their secret know-how; Hugrass ben Levi who did not want to teach his musical compositions; Ben Kamtzar who was a scribe and calligrapher.

³⁸³¹ Lines 204-205.

³⁸³² Line 39.

³⁸³³ Lines 135-136.

³⁸³⁴ Lines 105-106.

COMMENTS:

- The Avodah takes a more dramatic turn, following the Leviticus script. The Mishnah carefully inserts “real life” information about the appearance and provenance of the lots, continuing the effort toward literary verisimilitude intended to legitimate rabbinic authority.
- The Mishnah “positions” the High Priest spatially, at a specific point within the sacred space. Orienting people within the temple space makes the site meaningful and legitimates the social hierarchy constructed by the rabbis.³⁸³⁵ The idealized constructed space of the temple in effect makes a claim on what contemporary social reality ought to be like. The rabbis assert their memory and telling of the sacred space as a contestation of power vis-à-vis other groups vying for authenticity and authority.³⁸³⁶ Ritual action sanctifies the imagined space, and in turn draws the intellectual and religiously binding boundaries of the people. The interjection of an alternative rabbinic opinion lends the narrative an air of truth, the flavour of variability over time, and overall militates for rabbinic authority.
- The Talmud³⁸³⁷ finds no less than seven names for the eastern gate which divides the priestly Courtyard [wherein only the priests and Levites could assemble] from the women’s Courtyard [wherein lay people could congregate]. The names are: Itton, Yessod [foundational], Tiḥon/Tavekh [central], Sur, Ḥarissit, Ḥadash [new], Elyon [upper]. The paytan selects three of these names, one for each of the first three piyyutim. In other words, he draws information from a rabbinic source, or from a common oral or other tradition,³⁸³⁸

³⁸³⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, p. 74.

³⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³⁸³⁷ Yerushalmi, *Eiruvim*, Chapter 5 halakha 1.

³⁸³⁸ Tropper, “The state of Mishnah studies,” 97.

and as a literary craftsman, he embellishes his work with the various names, to create literary variety and impress his audience with his perspicacity and savvy.

- The paytan accepts the rabbinic narrative and does not contest any of the details therein. He does not, however, concern himself with stories of men who were “remembered” as praiseworthy or as scornful, as does the Mishnah in Yoma 3:10-11. The Talmud and Mishnah further embellish the stories of the good, the bad and the ugly in Mishnah Tractate Shekalim 5:1, in Baraita Yoma 38:2, and retroject fantastic tales of miracle and wonder associated with each of the men and women here mentioned. The implication of course is that rabbinic memory is authentic, that rabbinic presence at the temple over many years was both central and ubiquitous, and that rabbinic conceptions of rituals are correct and binding.

Mishnah Yoma 4

Yoma 4:1

| YOMA 4:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The High Priest draws lots, one “For God” and one “To Azazel.”</p> <p>He is flanked by his deputy on his right and the head of his Clan on his left. They instruct him to raise his hand once he draws the lots.</p> <p>The High Priest assigns the lots to the he-goats declaring their fate accordingly. R. Yishma’el disputes the declaration. The attending priests retort with: : <i>”Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.”</i></p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest draws lots, one “For God” and one for a he-goat who will die at the desert cliff.</p> <p>He is flanked by his deputy on his right and the head of his Clan on his left.</p> <p>He places the lots on the he-goats and cries in a very loud voice, declaring their fate.³⁸³⁹</p> <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest draws lots for the two he-goats, “For God” and to damnation.³⁸⁴⁰</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest draws the two lots, one “For God” and the other “To Azazel.”</p> <p>He is flanked by his deputy on his right and the head of his Clan on his left.</p> <p>He calls out in a loud voice, declaring the fate of the he-goats.³⁸⁴¹</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest draws lots for the two he-goats, “For God” and to damnation. He so declares, speaking.</p> <p>He is flanked by his deputy on his right and the head of his Clan on his left.³⁸⁴²</p> |

³⁸³⁹ Lines 207-209.

³⁸⁴⁰ Line 39.

³⁸⁴¹ Lines 137-140.

³⁸⁴² Lines 107-111.

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah builds variability into the design of the narrative. Some years, it claims, the lot raised with the High Priest's right hand was "For God," at different time he raised the "To Azazel" lot in his right hand. This implies that the ritual was repeated over many years, precisely as described in the Mishnah, despite the inevitable variability and contingencies. The iterative narration draws the diachronic limits of each individual event that has a beginning, middle and end, all synthetically described as abstract events [the High Priest drew lots: he stood at the northern edge of the altar, he drew lots, he declared them raising his hands]. By saying that sometimes he raised X in his right and sometimes he raised Y in his hand, the rabbis claim to have orchestrated all the collective "sometimes" of the past. The narrative also draws the diachronic limits of the entire series of events, it claims that the events began to be thus practiced in the desert, in the time of Moses and Aaron, and it claims that the rituals ceased only with the destruction of the temple. The allusion to the biblical past and to the central most seminal events and personalities spoken of in scripture, rabbinic literature asserts a seamless continuity, constant presence, continued authority, and the accuracy of rabbinic memory.³⁸⁴³ Rabbinic discourse follows a pattern of laying claim to specific power relations and of a claim to be at the top of the socio-political and religious hierarchy of Jewish society in Byzantine Palestine, and beyond it, both in terms of time and space. Rabbinic literature aims to standardize Jewish traditional life, and to stand at the helm as its primary authority.
- Here the paytan follows the Mishnaic narrative, accepting it and only adding some auditory embellishments, whereas he describes the declaration of the results of the drawn lots as a

³⁸⁴³ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 63-64.

yelling, a screaming, a loud voice. He is not concerned with diachronic limits of one kind or another, but focuses on the details of the ritual, describing it to his audience with as many literary and poetic sensory devices as he can. He makes the memory “come to life” as real, as factual, inviting the congregation to feel as though they are witnessing true events.

Yoma 4:2

| YOMA 4:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>The High Priest ties a red ribbon on the horns of the he-goat selected by lot to be cast "To Azazel." He positions the he-goat facing the eastern gate.</p> <p>The High Priest positions the second he-goat facing the abattoir.</p> <p>He returns once again to his own bullock, places his hands on the animal's head, and confesses his iniquities, transgressions and sins, as well as those of the priestly caste "the Sons of Aaron." Praying for God's mercy, he cites Leviticus 16:30 " <i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.</i> "</p> <p>They respond with: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i> "</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest ties a crimson string to the head of the he-goat that is to be cast off.</p> <p>He returns to his own bullock, places his hands on the head of the animal and confesses, for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions, and then for his fellow priests as well.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity</i> " And the High Priest declared: You have been cleansed.³⁸⁴⁴</p> <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest ties both he-goats with crimson threads and announces which one is to be cast off and which one is to be sacrificed at the temple.</p> <p>He returns to his own bullock, places his hands on the head of the animal and confesses, for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions, and then for his fellow priests as well.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i> " ³⁸⁴⁵</p> |

³⁸⁴⁴ Lines 209-220.

³⁸⁴⁵ Lines 40-42.

| YOMA 4:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אתה כוונת : the High Priest turns to his own bullock, places his hands on the head of the animal with a heaviness of heart and mind, and confesses, for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions, and then for his fellow priests as well.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity"</i>³⁸⁴⁶</p> <hr/> <p>In אז בדעת הקר: the High Priest marks the two he-goats with crimson, allocating one for sacrifice and one to the desert cliffs.</p> <p>He then returns to his own bullock, places his hands on the head of the animal and confesses, for his sins, his iniquities and then for his transgressions, and then for his fellow priests as well.</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: <i>"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity."</i>³⁸⁴⁷</p> |

COMMENTS:

- Like in Yoma 3:8, the Mishnah describes the order of offenses in the High Priest's confession, which the Baraita later disputes. Opinions also vary in the Talmud, asking if here the High Priest confesses twice, once for himself and once for his kin priests. The

³⁸⁴⁶ Lines 141-151.

³⁸⁴⁷ Lines 111-113.

debates are in effect not about how things were in the temple, but how they ought to have been, militating for rabbinic authority, past and present as we have seen throughout the narrative.

- Aside from employing some painterly images with poetic language, the paytan follows the Mishnah narrative with no deviation or disagreement. He does add, in all four piyyutim, the prayers and prostration of the priests and the people in attendance, a scene which is absent from the Mishnah narrative in the first two confessions. It represents new information, possibly gleaned from a different source.

Yoma 4:3

| YOMA 4:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The High Priest slaughters his bullock. He receives the animal's blood in a special vessel מזרק.</p> <p>He hands the blood to another priest who mixes it lest it coagulate. He places the vessel on the fourth level/stair of the Sanctuary, mixing the blood until the High Priest returns from offering the incense.</p> <p>The High Priest takes a brazier and ascends to the altar. He removes glowing embers from the inner pyre, descends and places the brazier on the fourth level/stair of the Sanctuary.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest slaughters his bullock, receives the blood and transfers it to be mixed lest it coagulate. He places the blood on the stairs leading to the Sanctuary.</p> <p>The High Priest ascends to the altar with a golden brazier, draws coals from the western corner, descends and places the brazier on the floor level of the Courtyard, at the bottom of the stairs leading to the Sanctuary.³⁸⁴⁸</p> <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest slaughters his bullock. A novice priest mixes the blood.</p> <p>The High Priest takes a golden brazier and draws glowing coals.³⁸⁴⁹</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest slaughters the bullock, receives its blood and orders that it be mixed lest it coagulate. He places the vessel containing the blood on the floor level of the Courtyard, at the foot of the stairs leading to the Sanctuary.</p> <p>He ascends the altar, circumambulates it and holds a golden brazier into which he draws embers, and descends.³⁸⁵⁰</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest slaughters his bullock, receives its blood into a vessel, another priest mixes the blood lest it coagulates. He places the vessel at the level of the Sanctuary.</p> <p>He ascends the altar, and from its western corner he draws burning glowing embers in a golden brazier.³⁸⁵¹</p> |

³⁸⁴⁸ Lines 221-223.

³⁸⁴⁹ Line 43.

³⁸⁵⁰ Lines 152-154.

³⁸⁵¹ Lines 114-115.

COMMENTS:

- Like in in Yoma 4:2, the paytan follows the Mishnaic script, changing nothing but the placement of the brazier, which the Paytan specifies was golden. According to Tractate Midot 3:6 there were 12 stairs leading from the priestly Courtyard to the Sanctuary. The paytan and the Mishnah seem to be in a dispute over the precise placement of the brazier on these stairs, whereas the Mishnah asserts it was placed on the fourth step, and the paytan, at least in first and third piyyutim, claims it was placed on the floor level of the Courtyard, at the foot of the stairs. It is not clear which sources the Paytan draws upon for this information.
- The apparent difference between the two narratives concerning the type of brazier used in the ritual [The paytan insists on a golden brazier whereas Yoma 4:3 remains silent about its description] is resolved in Yoma 4:4, where the Mishnah explains in detail the difference between daily ritual and the Yom Kippur ritual vessels.

Yoma 4:4

| YOMA 4:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The daily brazier: was made of silver, was heavy, contained 4 measures of volume and was then transferred to a smaller gold brazier made of “green” (lesser) gold with a short handle. The daily incense was divided into two portions, one for the morning service and one for the afternoon service. The daily incense was finely ground.</p> <p>The Yom Kippur brazier: was smaller in volume, there was no need to transfer its contents to another brazier as it was made of good quality “red” gold, it was light and had a long handle. The incense was particularly and exceptionally finely ground, and heaps were added by hand to the premeasured portion.</p> <p>Opinions of R. Yosse and R. Menaḥem are interjected regarding these details.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : minor priests bring a censer to the High Priest and a vessel containing exceptionally finely ground incense.³⁸⁵²</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות : ---</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : the incense was exceptionally finely ground.³⁸⁵³</p> |
| <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the incense was exceptionally finely ground.³⁸⁵⁴</p> | |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah speaks in great detail and with sensory additions, to lend its narrative verisimilitude and a legalistic tone which denotes not so much how the ritual was performed, but how it ought to have been performed. The details buttress the rabbinic claim that all temple ritual was controlled by their predecessors, that rabbinic memory is accurate, and that rabbinic authority therefore stems from the re-imagined narrative.

³⁸⁵² Line 224.

³⁸⁵³ Line 155.

³⁸⁵⁴ Line 117.

- The interjection of opinions further underscores the verisimilitude of the text and, with it, rabbinic claims to contemporary authority and exclusive political-social-religious leadership.
- The paytan is not concerned with the technical details that differentiate the daily temple vessels from the vessels used on Yom Kippur. He is focus only on the Yom Kippur ritual, better to inform his audience. He agrees with the Mishnah that the incense used in the ritual was particularly fine, in line with the evaluation of the Day of Awe as a solemn, special day whose rituals were exceptionally well appointed and attended to. This may be a tradition [shared by both the Mishnah and the Paytan] grounded in some reality, or a harmonized tradition that synthesizes contemporary values with past traditions and imagined or recreated memories of the temple.

Yoma 4:5-6

| YOMA 4:5-6 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|------------------------------|
| <p>In the daily service: priests ascended the altar on the east and descended on the west. On Yom Kippur the High priest ascended the altar and descended therefrom in the middle of the ramp.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : ---</p> |
| <p>In the daily service: the High priest sanctified his hands and feet in a laver at the Courtyard. On Yom Kippur a golden laver was used.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות : ---</p> |
| <p>In the daily service four sets of wood for the pyre were used. ON Yom Kippur a fifth set was used, for the incense burnt within the Sanctuary.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : ---</p> |
| <p>Several opinions of various rabbis are included in the narrative.</p> | <p>In אז בדעת תקר : ---</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The legalistic, casuistic tone of the Mishnah claims an accurate memory, control over all the ritual practices at the temple [year round and on Yom Kippur] throughout the years of the temple's existence [affirming the diachronic limits of the day's ritual from morning to eve, and the diachronic limits of the temple service as a whole, spanning centuries and centuries, deep into the hoary biblical past].³⁸⁵⁵ Interjected opinions lend an air of veracity to the narrative. The Talmud³⁸⁵⁶ goes into greater detail still, claiming a continuous tradition based on the Mishnah text.

³⁸⁵⁵ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 63.

³⁸⁵⁶ Yerushalmi Yoma, Folio 22 B, Chapter 4 halakha 4.

- The Paytan is not interested in these details and sidesteps the legalistic matters, of how the ritual ought to have been performed. He is only concerned with the synthetic abstraction of the Yom Kippur ritual, its theatre and splendour, to be evoked in rhyme and meter for his audience.

Mishnah Yoma 5

Yoma 5:1

| YOMA 5:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The High Priest places the brazier on the fourth stair leading to the Sanctuary.</p> <p>An empty golden censer is brought to him.</p> <p>A brazier-full of exceptionally finely ground incense is brought forth from the Abtinah Chamber. He takes a fistful of incense, places it in the censer, holding it in his left hand. He holds the brazier in his right hand, because it is heavy.</p> <p>He walks westward until he reaches the two curtains: one for the Sanctuary and one curtain for the Holy of Holies, between which curtains is a space of one cubit.</p> <p>R. Yosse claims there was only a single curtain [based on Exodus 26:33], but the Mishnah disagrees. It says there was one curtain, divided into two sections, one gathered to the south [left] and one to the north [right].</p> <p>The High Priest walks, holding the brazier in his right hand and the censer in his left. He enters the Holy of Holies, turns southward [left], he walks over to the Ark, his left hand on the side of the curtain.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest holds the censer in his left hand and the brazier in his right hand.</p> <p>He crosses his hands, placing the right hand over the left, turns left in the Sanctuary and walks over to the [single] curtain leading to the Holy of Holies.</p> <p>He walks between the walls of the Sanctuary, from south to north, until he reaches the Ark. The two staves of the Ark pressed upon the curtain, blocking the path, and forming the shape of womanly breasts.</p> <p>The High Priest, strong as he was, draws the curtain and stands motionless between the staves of the Ark. When the Ark no longer stood in the Holy of Holies, the High Priest stood in the place where the Ark once stood, for this is the cornerstone of creation, the centre of the earth itself. He put the brazier there, on the stone.</p> <p>He adds incense to the brazier and as the smoke rises, the High Priest turns around and leaves the Holy of Holies.</p> <p>He prays briefly for the people, in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁵⁷</p> |

³⁸⁵⁷ Lines 225-232.

| YOMA 5:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>He reaches the place of the Ark [Second Temple], places the brazier between the place of the two staves of the Ark [when it was still in the temple].</p> <p>He scoops incense from the censer with his two hands, places it on the glowing coals on the brazier, and the Sanctuary is filled with smoke.</p> <p>He exits backwards to the Sanctuary, and prays briefly, lest he the people to be apprehensive.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest, having placed a handful of incense in the censer and holds the censer in his left hand.</p> <p>He stands between the staves, places the incense on glowing coals, and fills the Sanctuary with smoke.</p> <p>He prays briefly in supplication, in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁵⁸</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest receives a golden censer and a Maguess containing finely ground incense. He takes a handful of incense and places it in the censer, holding the censer in his left hand and the brazier in his right hand.</p> <p>He walks within the walls of the Sanctuary and reaches the [single] curtain before the Ark. He places the brazier between the staves of the Ark, and once the Ark no longer stood in the temple, he placed it on the foundation stone.</p> <p>He piles incense onto the brazier, and once the Sanctuary is filled with smoke, he turns around and exits the Holy of Holies.</p> <p>He rushes to pray briefly, so as not to “tyrannize” the holy people.³⁸⁵⁹</p> |

³⁸⁵⁸ Lines 44-45.

³⁸⁵⁹ Lines 155-160.

| YOMA 5:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אז בדעת תקר: the High Priest receives a golden censer and a Maguess containing finely ground incense. He takes a handful of incense and places it in the censer, holding the censer in his left hand and the brazier in his right hand.</p> <p>He enters the Sanctuary, and walks between the two curtains, he stands at the northern end [right side], turns to the south [left] and walks until the middle of the Sanctuary. When the Ark still stood in the temple, the High Priest “met” the two staves there.</p> <p>He draws the curtain forcefully and stands before the foundation stone of the world. There, he places the brazier, places incense on its glowing embers, and as the Sanctuary is filled with smoke, he turns around and exits the Holy of Holies.</p> <p>He prays briefly in the Sanctuary, lest the people be frightened.³⁸⁶⁰</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah narrative here is at its most imaginative. Only the High Priest could have been present in the Holy of Holies, no witnesses could have reported, even second hand, the particular elements of the ritual.³⁸⁶¹ The High Priest was alone in the Holy of Holies. But the interpretive paradigm of the rabbis continues. They interject rabbinic oversight even where it was spatially impossible, extending their supervisory capacity and their presence into the sacred most domain, because the boundaries in the temple were not only physical but political as well. Mishnaic texts imagine compliance with “correct”

³⁸⁶⁰ Lines 116-123.

³⁸⁶¹ Lev. 16:17.

rabbinic law, they lay claim to the right and authority to construct the outline and content of authentic Jewishness, excluding all other forms thereof. Their asserted centrality in the temple is extrapolated from and extended to a claim for centrality in all aspects of traditional life. It is an innovation. Spatial centrality corresponds with the highest levels of sacrality, radically changing and reconfiguring the historic temple space, displacing the priests' dominion, and claiming ownership of the temple entire in the process. This in turn grants the rabbis the right to play a decisive role in society, to determine practice and to be the arbiters of correct conduct.³⁸⁶²

- Once again, the literary trope of interjecting the narrative with “debate” and differing opinions, lends the text an air of verisimilitude and factuality.
- In the last sentence of the Mishnah, the people of Israel are imagined as anxiously waiting on the outer Courtyard, for the High Priest to exit the Holy of Holies. They would be apprehensive if he stayed there too long. Did he make a mistake? Did he nullify the redemptive meaning of the ritual? It is not clear how the people in the outer Courtyard would have known, let alone seen, the High Priest had completed his service in the Holy of Holies. The Mishnah leaves the “line of sight” matter unclear, possibly because the narrative as a whole is imagined, abstract, synthetic, and didactic rather than factual.
- The paytan generally follows the Mishnaic script. The main details of the theatre are the same in both the Mishnah and the piyyutim. The Paytan's choreography differs slightly from the Mishnah's in this dramatic scene. The Mishnah describes the High Priest leaving the Holy of Holy walking backwards, as one would upon taking leave of a king.

³⁸⁶² Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 87-89.

The paytan describes the High Priest turning around and taking leave, his back to the place of the Ark. Two traditions appear to be at play here.

- In the first Piyyut the paytan “paints” the High Priest walking, his arms crossed [the Mishnah and the Talmud do not mention this]. It is not clear which source the paytan draws this gesture from. It may be a priestly tradition, an oral tradition, or an affectation of poetic license. The image of the staves pushing against the curtain like breasts is particularly evocative and would doubtless have impressed the audience, adding a titillating image and emotive layer to the sensory-rich narrative. People could easily imagine the shape and picture the scene, and the talk of breasts would surely have helped perk the ears of men in the audience. Hey, I can almost hear them whisper, this is not such a boring poem after all... Talk about figurative language!
- The Paytan both edifies and entertains. His High Priest is “strong” in the first and fourth poems. His elevated socio-religious status is expressed physically. A nice poetic trope.
- In all but the fourth Piyyut, the paytan agrees with the description of there being a single curtain dividing the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies³⁸⁶³. In the fourth he asserts two curtains and imagines the High Priest walking in the space between the two. The fourth piyyut is, in broad terms, closer than the others to the Mishnah in this segment.
- In the second, third and fourth piyyutim the paytan uses a different term for the brazier of incense. He calls it a **מגס** [Maguess]. The Mishnah in Yoma 6:7 employs this term with a slightly different spelling **מגיט** [Maguiss] describing a different ritual vessel, related to the sacrifice on the main altar of the limbs of the bullock and the he-goat. The Talmud³⁸⁶⁴

³⁸⁶³ See also: Tosefta Yoma 51:1.

³⁸⁶⁴ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 22 B Chapter 5 halakha 1.

debates whether a Maguiss was a vessel used on holy days or on profane days of the week. It is obvious the term was in common circulation, but I am not certain any of the rabbis and paytanim of the time knew precisely the nature and function of this and other temple-related technical terms.

Yoma 5:2

| YOMA 5:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|-----------------------|
| After the Ark was taken from the temple [after the destruction of the First temple]. The High Priest used to place the brazier with incense on the place where the Ark once stood. There was a stone there “since the days of the early prophets” which tradition held that it was the foundation stone of the world. The stone rose about three fingers from the floor of the Holy of Holies. | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The sages could not agree about the location of the pilfered Ark. Some thought it was taken to Babylon,³⁸⁶⁵ others thought it was hidden by King Josiah,³⁸⁶⁶ but in any event the Mishnah holds that by the time of the Second Temple there was no longer an Ark in the temple. The ritual proceeded as if there was one.
- The early prophets cited in the Mishnah are traditionally thought to be Samuel and David.³⁸⁶⁷ In terms of the general effort to establish the bona fides and long-term omnipresence and importance of the rabbis, going back to King David links scripture to the present and one of the most seminal figures to the rabbis, buttressing the rabbinic claim to legitimate continuous authority.
- The paytan incorporates these traditions into his piyyutim, as we have seen above. In this, he accepts the Mishnaic narrative.

³⁸⁶⁵ Based on 2 Chron. 36:10.

³⁸⁶⁶ BT Yoma 53B and 54A.

³⁸⁶⁷ PT Sotah, 48 B.

Yoma 5:3

| YOMA 5:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The High Priest takes the blood from the minor priest who has been continuously mixing it and returns and enters the Holy of Holies. He stands at the place of the Ark, between the two staves and flicks the blood with his finger, once upward and seven times downward, on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark, or the place of the cover of the Ark in the Ark's absence].³⁸⁶⁸ As he did so, he counted the sprinklings in a particular manner.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel מזרק containing the bullock's blood, on a golden stand in the Sanctuary.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : The High Priest takes the blood from the minor priest who has been continuously mixing it, and returns and enters the Holy of Holies. He stands at the place of the Ark, between the two staves and flicks the blood with his finger, once upward and seven times downward, on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark, or the place of the cover of the Ark in the Ark's absence]. As he did so, he counted the sprinklings in a particular manner.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel מזרק containing the bullock's blood, on a golden stand in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁶⁹</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: The High Priest rushes and takes the blood from the minor priest who has been continuously mixing it, and returns and enters the Holy of Holies. He stands at the place of the Ark, between the two staves and flicks the blood with his finger, once upward and seven times downward, on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark, or the place of the cover of the Ark in the Ark's absence]. As he did so, he counted the sprinklings in a particular manner.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel מזרק containing the bullock's blood, on a golden stand in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁷⁰</p> |

³⁸⁶⁸ Lev. 16:14.

³⁸⁶⁹ Lines 233-238.

³⁸⁷⁰ Lines 46-47.

| YOMA 5:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|---|
| | <p>In אתה כוונת : The High Priest says to the minor priest: “Give me the blood of the bullock.” He takes the blood from the minor priest who has been continuously mixing it, and returns and enters the Holy of Holies. He stands at the place of the Ark, between the two staves and flicks the blood with his finger, once upward and seven times downward, on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark, or the place of the cover of the Ark in the Ark’s absence]. As he did so, he counted the sprinklings in a particular manner.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel מזרק containing the bullock’s blood, on a golden stand in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁷¹</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר: The minor priest who has been continuously mixing the blood of the bullock, hands it to the High Priest. The High Priest returns and enters the Holy of Holies. He stands in front of the place of the Kapporet, between the two staves and flicks the blood with his finger, once upward and seven times downward, on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark, or the place of the cover of the Ark in the Ark’s absence]. As he did so, he counted the sprinklings in a particular manner.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel מזרק containing the bullock’s blood, on a golden stand in the Sanctuary.³⁸⁷²</p> |

³⁸⁷¹ Lines 161-163.

³⁸⁷² Lines 124-126.

COMMENTS:

- The two narratives are all but identical, save for the lexical embellishments of the Paytan. He also adds some theatrical dialogue between the High Priest and the minor priest in the third piyyut, better to animate the dynamic drama of the ritual for his listeners.

Yoma 5:4

| YOMA 5:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The High Priest exits to the priestly Courtyard.</p> <p>The he-goat chosen by lot “For God” is brought to him. The High Priest slaughters it and collects its blood in the זרק bowl.</p> <p>He enters the Holy of Holies, and stands on the place between the two staves. He flicks the blood with his finger on the Kapporet or on the place of the Kapporet, once upwards and seven times downward, counting out loud as he sprinkles the blood.</p> <p>He exits the Holy of Holies and places the vessel containing the blood of the he-goat on the second stand [R. Judah argues there was only one].</p> <p>He takes the blood of the bullock and flicks it with his finger on the curtain behind which stood the Ark, flicking the blood once upwards and seven time downward, counting out loud.</p> <p>He takes the blood of the he-goat and flicks it with his finger on the curtain behind which stood the Ark, flicking the blood once upwards and seven time downward, counting out loud.</p> <p>He mixes the blood of the bullock and the blood of the he-goat by twice emptying the vessels into one another.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the paytan restates the Mishnah narrative, almost verbatim.³⁸⁷³</p> <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest slaughters the he-goat and does with it as he did with the blood of the bullock, sprinkling each of the bloods on the Kapporet in the Holy of Holies.³⁸⁷⁴</p> <p>In אתה כוננת : the paytan restates the Mishnah narrative, almost verbatim.³⁸⁷⁵</p> <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the paytan restates the Mishnah narrative, almost verbatim.³⁸⁷⁶</p> |

³⁸⁷³ Lines 238-244.

³⁸⁷⁴ Line 48.

³⁸⁷⁵ Lines 161-168.

³⁸⁷⁶ Lines 125-128.

COMMENTS:

- The blood of the bullock and the blood of the he-goat have now become ritual detergents. They are purifying agents that sanctify specific areas and structures in the Holy of Holies and in the sanctuary of the temple.
- The Mishnah is again imaginative and specific, continuing the endeavour for verisimilitude and realism, even though the historic ritual was hidden from view of all but the High Priest. The Mishnah draws on scripture and expands the text, retrojecting rabbinic oversight and control of temple rituals, challenging priestly authority, and claiming hierarchic hegemony and socio-political-religious authority, past and present.
- In the second Piyyut the paytan states that the blood of the bullock and the blood of the he-goat were sprinkled on the Kapporet [the cover of the Ark], not on the curtain. Aharon Mirsky claims that this is an example of an error in transcription. For the spelling of the two words is similar and possibly confusing for some scribes. The Kapporet is: **כַּפֹּרֶת** and the curtain is: **פֶּרֶכֶת**. the words are similar enough to cause potential confusion.³⁸⁷⁷ This is a plausible explanation. Another possible explanation may be that another tradition informs this particular Piyyut. It is a less plausible explanation, given the Paytan's evident mastery of the Avodah. He consistently keeps the narrative similar, changing a few words between them to lend lexical variety and some poetic flare to impress his audience with his verbal pyrotechnics. He never contradicts himself so blatantly. In three of the four piyyutim he maintains that the curtain was ritually purifies, and only in one he deviates from the scenario significantly. I therefore tend to concur with Mirsky in this case.

³⁸⁷⁷ Mirsky, *The Paytan Poems*, 209.

- In the third Piyyut the paytan describes two stands for the vessels containing the blood of the two sacrificed animals. In the other piyyutim, he mentions only one.

Yoma 5:5

| YOMA 5:5 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The High Priest exits the Holy of Holies and walks over to the golden altar [the incense altar], and purifies it [with the mixture of bloods].</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest exits to purify the golden altar.</p> |
| <p>He begins in the north-eastern corner and walks around the altar counter-clockwise, sprinkling the blood upward and downward the four corners of the altar.</p> | <p>He begins in the north-eastern corner and walks around the altar counter-clockwise, sprinkling the blood upward and downward seven times on each of the four corners of the altar, counting out loud.³⁸⁷⁸</p> |
| <p>Rabbis debate the direction of circumambulation and the direction of the sprinkling.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest exits to purify the golden altar.</p> |
| | <p>He sprinkles the four corners of the altar with the mixed bloods, flicking upward and downward seven times, seven times on each of the four corners of the altar counting out loud.³⁸⁷⁹</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest exits to purify the golden altar. He sprinkles the four corners of the altar with the mixed bloods, flicking upward and downward seven times seven times on each of the four corners of the altar, counting out loud.³⁸⁸⁰</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest exits to purify the golden altar. He sprinkles the four corners of the altar with the mixed bloods, flicking upward and downward seven times seven times on each of the four corners of the altar, counting out loud.³⁸⁸¹</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The poetic narrative mirrors the Mishnah almost exactly.

³⁸⁷⁸ Lines 243-244.

³⁸⁷⁹ Lines 49-50.

³⁸⁸⁰ Lines 168-170.

³⁸⁸¹ Line 129.

Yoma 5:6

| YOMA 5:6 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| <p>The High Priest sprinkles blood on the surface of the golden altar.</p> <p>The remaining blood solution [from the golden altar's purification] is cast on the western foundation of the main altar [in the Priestly Courtyard], and the remaining blood solution [from the purification of the main altar] is cast on the southern foundation of the main altar.</p> <p>Both solutions mix in the duct [at the base of the altar] and they flow to the Kidron river where they are sold to farmers as fertilizer.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest casts the remaining blood at the [western] base of the altar, facing the door of the Sanctuary.³⁸⁸²</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות : ---</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : ---</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : ---</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The poetic narrative in the first piyyut mirrors the Mishnah almost exactly. The other piyyutim do not deal with the casting of the blood solution remaining. The paytan is not interested in the mercantile aspects of the effluent bloods, nor with the housework at the temple. To him the temple is more of an abstraction, and abstractions do not need cleaning. For the rabbis, eager to construct a sacred space and claim essential involvement therein, housework and cleaning serve to enhance the verisimilitude conveyed in the narrative.

³⁸⁸² Line 245.

Yoma 5:7

| YOMA 5:7 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|-----------------------|
| The High Priest must follow the prescribed ritual without error. If he makes a mistake, or changes any of its components, he must begin the entire Avodah from the beginning. | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The rabbis make one of the boldest claims in this Mishnah. Yoma 5:7 echoes Midot 5:4 where the rabbis say: “The rabbis [of the temple court] made a celebration when they found no fault with one of the Sons of Aaron the Priest. And thus, they exalted and prayed- Blessed be the Lord God that no fault has been found with one of the scions of Aaron and blessed be the Lord God that He chose Aaron and his sons to stand and serve before God in the Holy of Holies at the Temple.”
- The priestly caste is cast as servile and subject to rabbinic supervision. And the rabbis, whose stringent application o and interpretation of the Law is correct, binding and all but timeless, celebrate and make merry when their edicts are followed without error, a rare occurrence indeed. For without rabbinic law-making and oversight, the temple itself would be excoriated of meaning, its rituals would be null and void, and the people would stand bereft of a guided and authentic relationship with God. Indeed, the people’s relationship with God is preserved only thanks to the indefatigable explication of Torah by the rabbis.

- Even though historically speaking the rabbis were not the most powerful group within Jewish Roman society, and even though there is no evidence that the people sought their advice or heeded its directives, the rabbis hoped to be most powerful. In writing about the temple, in dismissing the priestly caste and its claims to authentic leadership, the rabbis crafted an imagined collective memory, arguing for authority and authenticity as meaning-makers and law-makers.³⁸⁸³ The enterprise was eventually successful, as we know, but the evidence of the effort invested in this rabbinic enterprise is indicative of the competition they faced, even though the echoes of this competition have faded over centuries of rabbinic control and active recention.³⁸⁸⁴ The discursive power play, as Foucault would have perceived it,³⁸⁸⁵ is at its most evident in this Mishnah. The dialogue with the priestly group, governed by a strategy of exclusion, is the site for a political contest for power, authority and leadership. Power here is defined in the process and substance of narrative production, whereas rabbinic leadership is framed and constituted by power relations in Byzantine Palestinian Jewish society.

³⁸⁸³ Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, 3-5.

³⁸⁸⁴ Tropper, "The state of Mishnah studies," 93.

³⁸⁸⁵ Mills, *Discourse*, 11-18 (citing Michael Foucault).

Mishnah Yoma 6

Yoma 6:1

| YOMA 6:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|-----------------------|
| The Mishnah discusses the two he-goats which have had their fate ascribed to them by lots. | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| They preferably have to be of equal size and appearance. It is best to keep the he-goats alive and well before the Yom Kippur ritual. Should one animal die, a replacement must be found, bearing the same fate as its forerunner. Unless the animal dies during the performance of the ritual, in which case the rabbis have different positions. | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah here not only engages in “idle” legalism. It echoes the discussion in the first Mishnah in Tractate Yoma, where the rabbinic court members of the Sanhedrin are said to have debated the High Priest’s purity, longevity, and the possibility of his demise, which would necessitate a lieutenant, possibly a new wife et cetera. There is a subtle, almost imperceptible mirroring of the he-goat and the High Priest in this current Mishnah. Both the he-goat and the High Priest are essential for the efficacious performance of the ritual, both are under strict rabbinic supervision, but both are entirely replaceable. The High Priest is reduced to a cog in a machine operated and overseen by the rabbis, much as the he-goat is perceived. The objectification and devaluation of the High Priest, levelling as it were his hierarchic and ritual status to that of a sacrificial he-goat, diminishes and dispenses with potential priestly claims to leadership. This Mishnah,

therefore, deals not really with the he-goats or other animal-husbandry matters, but in effect with the High Priest and fundamentally with rabbinic claims to authority and leadership of the people entire.

- The Paytan is quite silent about these issues. Is he ignoring the he-goat debate because he is not a jurist? Is he silent because discussion of casuistic matters would sidetrack his audience from the main event of the day? Is he subtly disagreeing with the rabbinic discourse, and is he then a proponent and supporter of priestly claims to religious leadership? It is always problematic to decipher the meaning of silence and always a tenuous scholarly practice to make assumptions and extrapolate conclusions from silence. I only raise the questions here to point at the polyvalent nature of silent narrative, and to the tantalizing riches that await the patient researcher who will pick up this particular glove.

Yoma 6:2

| YOMA 6:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>The High Priest approaches the he-goat that is to be cast off, places his hands on the he-goat and confesses.</p> <p>The High Priest confesses the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the people of Israel, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 " <i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.</i> "</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i> "</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : then, after that, the High Priest confessed for us, placing his hands on the he-goat, supplicating on our behalf.</p> <p>He confesses the transgressions, iniquities and sins of the people of Israel, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 " <i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.</i> "</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i> "</p> <p>And then he announced to the people-you have been cleansed.³⁸⁸⁶</p> |

³⁸⁸⁶ Lines 246-254.

| YOMA 6:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|---|
| | <p>In אספר גדולות : and then the High Priest approaches the he-goat that is to be cast off, places his hands on the he-goat and confesses.</p> <p>The High Priest confesses the sins, iniquities and transgressions of the people of Israel, praying for God’s mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 “<i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean efore the LORD.</i>”</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: “<i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i>”³⁸⁸⁷</p> <hr/> <p>In אתה כוננת : and then the High Priest approaches the he-goat that is to be cast off, places his hands on the he-goat and confesses.</p> <p>The High Priest confesses the sins, iniquities and transgressions of the people of Israel, praying for God’s mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 “<i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.</i>”</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: “<i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i>” And the High Priest adds: “God, in Your infinite mercy, forgive the community of Jesurun.”³⁸⁸⁸</p> |

³⁸⁸⁷ Lines 51-52.

³⁸⁸⁸ Lines 171-179.

| YOMA 6:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: The High Priest approaches the he-goat that is to be cast off, places his hands on the he-goat and confesses.</p> <p>The High Priest confesses the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the people of Israel, praying for God's mercy, and citing Leviticus 16:30 " <i>For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.</i> "</p> <p>And the priests and the people, who were standing at the Courtyard kneeled and bowed, prostrating themselves before God when they heard His name spoken by the High Priest, and they all said: " <i>Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.</i> "</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah here, for the first time, portrays the public prostration in response to the High Priest's confession and mention of the Tetragrammaton.
- I repeat my comment first made regarding Yoma 3:8 here: The addition of the section on the priests and the people in attendance, who kneel and bow before God as His name is called out, appears in Mishnah Yoma 6:2, only after the third confession made by the High Priest. The paytan maintains throughout his oeuvre the position that this participation by the priests and the people in the Courtyard in effect took place even after the first (and second, see Yoma 4:2) confession. There may be a different tradition at play here, or a redactive error, or a silence that speaks to yet other possible reasons. I have not found a corresponding narrative in the Mishnah or in the Palestinian Talmud. This is problematic, in view of the great detail and importance of the rabbinic discourse on the Avodah.

- In the first piyyut the paytan involves his audience directly, and announces the very purpose of the Avodah, and of the liturgical poem itself. It was done, he tells the congregation, for us. We have been cleansed. We are the beneficiaries of the ritual. The High Priest prayed for us, performed the sacrifices and prayers for us, we, who live centuries after the temple was destroyed, can still enjoy the beneficent rewards of the priestly service, just by reciting its course. The Mishnah is more didactic, more prescriptive in tenor, for it is concerned with law-making and with declaring how the synthetic past ought to have been like. The poet, on the other hand, is concerned with the here and now of his audience, and he wants them to be materially included in the Avodah, to feel cleansed and purified as a consequence. He wants his audience to feel a connection with the priestly service, a continuity with a glorious past during which the mediation of priests afforded the people a direct and efficacious relationship with God. In his narrative, the High Priest announces to the people- “You have been cleansed,” you have been forgiven by God for all your offenses. In this narrative, the priestly action is redemptive; in the Mishnah narrative the adherence to rabbinic edicts is redemptive. It is therefore not merely a question of choreography and style, but a political matter, a leadership matter, and a subtle challenge to rabbinic claims to prerogative, entitlement and exclusivity.
- The fourth poem is the only verbatim copy of Mishnah Yoma 6:2 according to Aharon Mirsky.³⁸⁸⁹
- Note the consistent difference between the Mishnah text and the Yosse ben Yosse texts, regarding the order of offenses for which the High Priest confesses. To remind my

³⁸⁸⁹ Mirsky, *The Paytan Poems*, 238.

reader: the Mishnah always speaks of iniquities, transgressions and then sin; the paytan consistently speaks of: sins, iniquities and transgressions. I discuss this phenomenological difference in my comments to Yoma 3:8.

Yoma 6:3

| YOMA 6:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|--|
| The High Priest hands over the he-goat that is to be cast off, to a person who used to walk to animal off to the desert. | In אזכיר גבורות : the he-goat is handed over to a man who was appointed in advance by the High Priest. ³⁸⁹⁰ |
| The High Priests used to make a point of appointing a priest to the task. But R. Yosse says that once there was an Israelite who walked the he-goat to the desert. | In אספר גדולות : a minor priest walks the he-goat to the desert cliff. ³⁸⁹¹ |
| | In אתה כוננת : the High Priest deposits the he-goat into the hands of an איש עיתי , a designated man, to take the he-goat to the desert. ³⁸⁹² |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : the he-goat is handed over to a minor priest who is a designated man, איש עיתי to take to the desert cliff. ³⁸⁹³ |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah takes another subtle jibe at the priests. First, the person who was appointed is said to be not important enough to merit a technical title, he was just the guy who walked the goat to the desert. Secondly, the High Priests wanted to have a designated priest, but as the story goes, when an Israelite once walked the animal to the desert things went just as smoothly, the ritual was just as efficacious, and nothing untoward really took place. In other words, the priests are dispensable. The ritual is legally sound and correct regardless of the clan association of the man pulling the rope of the condemned he-goat. This militates against priestly importance and for rabbinic importance, for after all, the important thing is

³⁸⁹⁰ Line 255.

³⁸⁹¹ Line 53.

³⁸⁹² Line 180 citing Lev. 16:21.

³⁸⁹³ Line 132.

to have the he-goat cast off in accordance with rabbinic edict, so the rabbis are central and essential, and not the politically presumptuous priestly caste.

- The paytan challenges the rabbinic implications, in all of the four piyyutim. In his narrative it is always a priestly agent, always a minor priest who is pre-appointed by the High Priest himself. The term אִישׁ עִיִּתִי is rare. It appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in Leviticus 16:21, it never appears in the Mishnah, never in Yerushalmi, never in Tosefta, and only once in the Bavli as a direct quote from Leviticus. It is also rare in the extant Qumranic literature, appearing once in 11QT col. xxvi. The paytan uses it twice in his work, but this is not, I think, a mere stylistic preference or affectation. By employing the rare term, the Paytan links his Piyyut to scripture, distancing it from the Mishnah, and asserting a more authentic understanding of historic events. He underscores priestly dominion over the Yom Kippur ritual, priestly centrality and importance, and entreat his audience to remember that the priestly connection to the ritual is based in Torah, not in fallible human claims to power.

Yoma 6:4-6

| YOMA 6:4-6 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|-----------------------|
| <p>There was a bridge upon which the he-goat walked, above the hoi polloi, lest it defile the people. The he-goat was accompanied by Jerusalem's gentry. There were ten huts between the city and the desert cliff, where food and water awaited the he-goat and its escort, as well as groups of people honoured to accompany them to the next station.</p> <p>The man who walked the he-goat to the desert ties the he-goat to a rock, and throws the animal off the promontory, to see its flesh fragment into pieces of flesh.</p> <p>The escort returns to the city, entering only after he washes his clothes and performs cleansing ablutions on his own body.</p> | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah is detailed, descriptive, theatrical and dramatic describing the fate of the condemned he-goat. One is privy to the last of the gory details of the ritual through this text. The he-goat takes centre stage in the ritual theatre. The city's elites come to see the spectacle. The excitement and outdoors performance are at least as exciting as the ritual performance taking place within the temple walls. Is the temple a side-show for a while?
- The paytan does not at all "go there." For him the priestly ritual in the temple is more important. It is about to reach its climax. The Paytan is silent about the hoi polloi, he is interested in the people of his congregation.

- The paytan is silent about the gentry and city's elites, either because they matter not to his telling, or because he disputes the rabbinic narrative wherein their predecessor social crème de la crème are central to the Avodah, preferring therefore to enhance the role of the High priest in the drama. Once again it is difficult to interpret the silence, but it is telling, I think, that the Paytan ignores three Mishnayot and does not, for the sake of the people in his audience at least, describe the gory fate of the he-goat of Azazel. The tale would make for good copy and would have doubtless enthralled the congregation. This particular silence is eloquent and dialogical, speaking volumes about the overall discursive goals of the two narratives, as they dialogue with one another.

Yoma 6:7

| YOMA 6:7 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The High Priest walks over to the abattoir where the carcasses of the bullock and the sacrificial he-goat are hung. He removes the fat and innards and collects them in a Maguiss, a bowl. He makes an offering of the fat and innards on the altar.</p> <p>The High Priest tresses the limbs of the animals and four minor priests carry them to a pyre outside the city walls to be burned. As they leave the temple courtyard, they cleanse themselves ritually.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High priest ascends the altar and makes an offering of the fat of the bullock and he-goat.</p> |
| | <p>He threads the flesh of the animals on wooden stakes and they are taken to a place beyond the city walls, to be burned whole, along with all the detritus and excretions.³⁸⁹⁴</p> |
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest sacrifices the animals' fat, while his acolytes burn the skin, flesh and excretions of the animals beyond the city's boundary.³⁸⁹⁵</p> |
| | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest turns to the bullock and to the sacrificial he-goat. He rips them and takes the fat out to be sacrificed at the altar.</p> <p>Novice priests shoulder the rest of the carcasses and burn the skin, flesh and excretions beyond the city's boundary.³⁸⁹⁶</p> |
| | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest sacrifices the fat of the bullock and the sacrificial he-goat.</p> <p>Other priests burn the skin, flesh and excretions of the animals outside the city.³⁸⁹⁷</p> |

³⁸⁹⁴ Lines 255-256.

³⁸⁹⁵ Line 53.

³⁸⁹⁶ Lines 181-182.

³⁸⁹⁷ Line 133.

COMMENTS:

- The two narratives are essentially the same. The only difference is the ritual ablutions of the priests who must purify themselves before re-entering the city after exiting the Courtyard.
- The Paytan turns the spot light back on the High Priest, while the Mishnah maintains a didactic tone and treats as equally important the High Priest and the minion priests, by way of diminishing the ritual status of the High Priest and asserting control over the proceedings both inside and outside the temple. Their supervisory role breaches the temple walls, it covers the space beyond, it therefore establishes rabbinic authority over holy and profane spaces, over the land and its people all, while subtly reducing to irrelevance priestly claims to authority. The narrative implies that while priestly dominion over elements in the ritual are indeed “factual,” priestly authority stops at the temple’s outer wall, while rabbinic authority spans both the inside and the outside of the sacred space.

Yoma 6:8

| YOMA 6:8 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>All this while the High Priest must await word that the he-goat has been cast successfully off to Azazel, so he can proceed with the day's rituals.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : as the High Priest awaits, he is taken aside to learn and review Torah law and Yom Kippur laws.³⁸⁹⁸</p> |
| <p>How is he informed? There are watchers in each of the ten stations along the way between the temple and the desert promontory of death. Once the ritual has been completed, they signal each other in turn, by waving their overcoats in the air, creating a chain of notifications that eventually reaches the High Priest.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest hurries to review the laws of the Avodah.³⁸⁹⁹</p> |
| <p>R. Yishma'el says that a scarlet ribbon hung at the door of the Sanctuary, and once the ritual had been performed, the ribbon miraculously blanched, citing Isaiah 1:18, indicating that Israel's offences had been pardoned.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : the he-goat is in the desert, its status communicated by wavers of headscarves.³⁹⁰⁰</p> |
| <p>R. Yishma'el says that a scarlet ribbon hung at the door of the Sanctuary, and once the ritual had been performed, the ribbon miraculously blanched, citing Isaiah 1:18, indicating that Israel's offences had been pardoned.</p> | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest sends the he-goat to the peak in the desert, and orally reviews the laws of the Avodah.³⁹⁰¹</p> |

COMMENTS:

- The High Priest in the Mishnah narrative is a passive actor, lacking agency. He must await confirmation that the condemned he-goat had been disposed of. He must rely on an overcoat “telephone,” or on supernatural indicators, submissive and inactive. He awaits rabbinic approval to proceed with the Avodah.
- The paytan's priest has more agency. He reviews Torah laws, and he goes over the laws of the Avodah, because he, and not the rabbis, is in control of the ritual. It is he

³⁸⁹⁸ Line 257.

³⁸⁹⁹ Line 54.

³⁹⁰⁰ Line 183.

³⁹⁰¹ Line 134.

who determines the course of the Avodah, familiar as he is with the nuances, details and laws. He does not require rabbinic oversight, he does not require non-priestly teachers and supervisors. The paytan subtly disputes the rabbinic discourse itself, he empowers “his” High Priest and the priestly caste and dispenses with rabbinic dominion and claims of authenticity. The power-play between rabbinic and priestly claims to leadership is as subtle as it is clear. The paytan is an advocate of priestly leadership, not a rabbinic partisan. Here the difference is not in choreographic details or sartorial choices for the members of the human “telephone” line, but an essential difference of power relations asserted through the narrative.

Mishnah Yoma 7

Yoma 7:1

| YOMA 7:1 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|---|
| <p>The High Priest moves to the Women's Courtyard. He wears either linen (ברץ) garments, or one of his own white overcoats.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and his feet, disrobes of the linen vestments, and dons his own clothes, and reads the Torah.³⁹⁰²</p> |
| <p>The temple beadle removes a Torah scroll from the temple synagogue, hands it to the head of the Sanhedrin, who hands it to the deputy High Priest, who finally hands it to the High Priest.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet and immerses in the ritual bath.³⁹⁰³</p> |
| <p>The High Priest reads the Torah scroll, standing. He reads Leviticus 16:1-34 and Leviticus 23:26-32 as the translator interprets the Hebrew for the people in assembly into the vernacular.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes of the linen vestments and wears his own clothes.</p> <p>He lectures before the congregations, informing the people of the laws of the Avodah and of the laws of Yom Kippur, and completes the requisite blessings.³⁹⁰⁴</p> |
| <p>The Torah scroll is rolled. The High Priest takes it under his arm and declares to the people: More than what I have just read to you is written in this scroll.</p> | <p>In אז בדעת חקר: the High Priest recites eight blessings.³⁹⁰⁵</p> |
| <p>The High Priest recites orally Numbers 29:7-11, and then makes eight blessings: for the Torah, the Avodah, the confessions, for God's pardon of iniquities, for the temple, for the people of Israel, for Jerusalem, for the priests, and finally for the rest of the prayers all.</p> | |

³⁹⁰² Lines 258-259.

³⁹⁰³ Line 54.

³⁹⁰⁴ Lines 185-187.

³⁹⁰⁵ Line 135.

COMMENTS:

- The High Priest must read out loud sections of scripture that deal with the Avodah and others that deal with the correct observance of Yom Kippur, including fasting and self-affliction, which together assure atonement. The ritual is important, for it now involves direct contact between the people and God, mediated by the High Priest's voice. But in the rabbinic narrative, the ritual is governed by the Sanhedrin. The head of the Sanhedrin is the facilitator, the real link between Torah and the people, he is the one who gives the scroll to the High Priest, and the High priest in turn becomes a disembodied voice, the loudspeaker, the mechanism of communication. The High Priest is almost objectified in this narrative, subject to rabbinic oversight and orchestration. This is further amplified by the order of the eight prayers. The priest is seventh in a list of eight, he comes in order of importance after the people of Israel, after the temple as the *axis mundi*, after the Avodah ritual, after God's pardon, and way after the Torah. And the Mishnah reminds the people, the Torah contains so much more than what the High Priest was empowered to recite, and it is the rabbis who know the rest, who can interpret the rest for you, who can teach you the rest. In fact, allowing the High priest to recite orally a carefully chosen [by rabbis] section of the Torah, assures the people that he was well taught by his rabbinic teachers, that he is not ignorant of the law, for his high priestly status does not guarantee sagacity or a connection with scripture. He, the High Priest is but a mouthpiece for the soundtrack of Yom Kippur, which the Sanhedrin understands the "more," the totality of Torah. In this narrative the High Priest is accorded no special place, he is counted among all the other priests, and blessed as a vehicle of communication with God, just as prayer is blessed as a communicative notion

between heaven and earth. This is a rabbinic coup d'état that overthrows priestly authority, and claims rabbinic exclusive religious, social, legal and political leadership.

- The paytan's High Priest is a free agent. He knows the order of the Avodah, and he follows the script unaided. The paytan does not accept the Mishnah narrative, does not include any mediators between the High Priest and the Torah, let alone between the High Priest and the people. He has an unambiguous and direct contact with the people, as their agent, their emissary before God. Here the High Priest wears his own clothes, a more ambiguous sartorial reference is made in the Mishnah, where the High Priest can choose to wear his own clothes if he decided not to wear the linen vestments for some reason. He stands before the congregation in the Women's Courtyard, alone and in direct contact with the people. He teaches them, he is not merely a mouthpiece for rabbinic sages. He is, in the paytan's narrative, empowered and independent, responsible for the people and to the people sans rabbinic mediation or instruction.
- The fourth and last Piyyut makes an oblique reference to the Mishnah narrative. It stands apart from the other Avodot.
- The apparent "extra" sanctification mentioned in three of the four piyyutim and absent from the Mishnah is actually added on to the Mishnah narrative in Yoma 7:3

Yoma 7:2

| YOMA 7:2 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|-----------------------|
| While the High Priest read the Torah out loud, the bullock and he-goat were being burned outside the city limit. Therefore, if one wanted to witness the burning, one missed the public Torah reading by the High Priest; and if one wished to witness the High Priest reading in the Torah, one had to forgo the burning of the animals. | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The High Priest is so secondary in this narrative that the rabbis, directing bodies through space, assert as equally important the burning of skins and excrements, and the Torah reading by the High Priest in the temple courtyard. You could not witness both, you had to choose one of the two, as both were quite entertaining. The High Priest in this scenario is mere entertainment, equal to a burning ox and a smoking goat. He is not a teacher, he is not a mediator, he is not a relevant element in the ritual, he is but a side show. One could not be in two places at once, so one had to choose. And if one missed the public reading of the Torah, well, that's just the way it goes, but it bears no significance on the efficacy of the Avodah and the Day's purpose before God.
- Reading from the Paytan's silence, problematic though it may be, I assume but cannot confirm that the paytan disagrees with rabbinic assessment of the High Priest's centrality to the Yom Kippur rituals.

Yoma 7:3

| YOMA 7:3 | THE PAYTAN |
|---|--|
| <p>If the High Priest wore his own clothes, he does not need to sanctify his hands and his feet again, because he already has when he disrobed of the linen vestments.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest finishes the Torah reading, disrobes of the white clothes, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments and sanctifies his hands and feet. He sacrifices the seven sheep and the two rams, his and the people's.³⁹⁰⁶</p> |
| <p>If he read the Torah in the linen vestments he must sanctify his hands and feet, disrobe of the linen vestments, immerse in the ritual bath, wear the golden vestments and sanctify his hands and his feet.</p> | <p>In אספר גדולות : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and his feet, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet. He makes the burnt offering.³⁹⁰⁷</p> |
| <p>He makes the burnt offering of his ram and the people's ram, and adds the Mussaf's seven sheep sacrifice.</p> | <p>In אתה כוננת : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and his feet, he disrobes of his own clothing, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet. He next (i) sacrifices the Mussaf ram, (ii) makes a burnt offering of his ram and the people's ram, as well as the innards of the bullock and he-goat.³⁹⁰⁸</p> |
| <p>Opinions differ as to the following step, as follows:</p> | <p>In אז בדעת חקר : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and his feet, disrobes, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet. He offers the Day's Mussaf sacrifices.³⁹⁰⁹</p> |
| <p>According to R. Eliezer: (i) the High Priest sacrifices his ram and the ram of the people, (ii) he makes a burnt offering of the innards of the bullock and the he-goat, (iii) he makes the burnt offering of the bullock and the he-goat, plus seven sheep, along with the afternoon Tamid offerings.</p> | |
| <p>According to R. Akiva: (i) the High Priest makes the burnt offering of the bullock and the seven sheep, along with the morning Tamid, or the Mussaf, (ii) he sacrifices the incense, (iii) he sacrifices the he-goat outside, (iv) he sacrifices his ram and the people's ram, along with the innards of the bullock and the he-goat, and (v) he makes the afternoon Tamid offering.</p> | |

³⁹⁰⁶ Lines 259-260.

³⁹⁰⁷ Lines 54-55.

³⁹⁰⁸ Lines 187-189.

³⁹⁰⁹ Line 135.

COMMENTS:

- Both the Mishnah and the Paytan agree on the order of ablutions and the change of costume sequences. But when it comes to the sacrificial rites, things get more interesting. This is the culmination of a day's work, the pinnacle and final chapter of the Avodah, and yet no one seems to know what to do next. The Mishnah narrative allows for two entirely different scenarios, different total numbers of animals to be sacrificed on Yom Kippur, and a different order of sacrifices. Did the rabbis not really know what came next? The dispute is materially different, in substance and timing alike. The Talmud³⁹¹⁰ adds to the confusion and does not resolve the matter at all. It seems as though oral tradition spoke in two voices, and the rabbis themselves could not decide in favour of one over the other. Both traditions were deemed valid. They just did not know. It is surprising that they did not "remember" this aspect of the Avodah, given their "perfect" unerring recollection hitherto. This merits further investigation
- The paytan is also in the dark, it would seem. His rendition of this phase of the Avodah presents a third tradition, entirely different from the two possibilities offered in the Mishnah. Perhaps the paytan, who obviously knew well the Mishnah, drew information from an entirely different source. Was it a priestly tradition passed down orally? Was there another written text which is now lost? This conundrum is fertile soil, I think, for an in-depth future study which is well beyond the purview of this dissertation.

³⁹¹⁰ Yerushalmi Yoma, Folio 37 A and B.

Yoma 7:4

| YOMA 7:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|--|---|
| <p>The High Priest sanctifies his hands and his feet.</p> <p>He disrobes, immerses in the ritual bath, he dresses in the white vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He enters the Sanctuary to remove the censer and the brazier.</p> <p>Once again he sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes, immerses in the ritual bath, dons the golden vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He enters the Sanctuary to make the afternoon incense offering and to cleanse the candelabra.</p> <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet and disrobes.</p> <p>His personal clothes are brought to him. He dresses, and goes home, accompanied by the multitudes.</p> <p>The High Priest celebrates with his kin the fact that he emerged alive from the Holy of Holies.</p> | <p>In אזכיר גבורות : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes of the golden vestments, immerses in the ritual bath, and wears linen vestments.</p> <p>He reviews the laws of the Avodah.</p> <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, takes the censer and brazier out of the Sanctuary, sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes of the linen vestments and puts them aside for safekeeping in perpetuity.</p> <p>He immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments, makes an offering of the afternoon Tamid, makes an offering of the afternoon incense and ablations, cleanses the candelabra, he blesses the people by raising his hands up, and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He dresses in his own clothes, rushed to him by his acolytes. He emerges in full glory, like the sun at dawn, and delivers his senders healing and justice. The people, hopeful for his speedy deliverance and eager to receive his good news of atonement, hear as he describes the day's events to them and tells them of the miraculous blanching of the crimson ribbon in the Holy of Holies, indicating expiation of all offenses.</p> <p>The High Priest and the people rejoice, proclaiming: <i>“Happy is the people that is in such a case. Yea, happy is the people whose God is the LORD”</i> [Psalms 144:15].³⁹¹¹</p> |

³⁹¹¹ Lines 260-276.

| YOMA 7:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|--|
| | <p>In אספר גדולות: the High priest, having sanctified his hands and feet, returns the utensils of the incense, he sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>The High Priest makes the afternoon Tamid sacrifice, as well as the offering of incense and ablations. When he finishes this, he cleanses the candelabra, and for the tenth time sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He dons his own clothes (כלי הוֹן) and the elated congregation accompanies him as he goes home, happy to have emerged unharmed from the Holy of Holies.³⁹¹²</p> |

³⁹¹² Lines 56-59.

| YOMA 7:4 | THE PAYTAN |
|----------|---|
| | <p>In אתה כוונת : the High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes, immerses in the ritual bath, wears the whites and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He removes the golden brazier and the censer from the Holy of Holies, where he had left them in the place between the staves of the Ark.</p> <p>The High Priest immerses in the ritual bath, dons the golden vestments and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He sacrifices the afternoon Tamid, along with the incense and ablations.</p> <p>He leaves the candle lighting for late in the day, because the law in reference to the candles is that they be lit in the evening.</p> <p>The High priest raises his arms to bless the people.</p> <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, wears his own clothes, and walks home accompanied by the elders of the people.</p> <p>The joyful congregation asks for a sign that the ritual “worked” and that the people have been forgiven for their offenses. The High Priest tells them that the crimson ribbon blanched and that the he-goat cast off in the desert had atoned for all their sins. And they all rejoiced.³⁹¹³</p> |

³⁹¹³ Lines 190-197.

| YOMA 7:4 | THE PAYTAN |
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| | <p>In אז בדעת תקר: the High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet, immerses in the ritual bath, wears his linen vestments, and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He removes the incense utensils from the Sanctuary.</p> <p>He sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes and places the linen vestments for eternal safe keeping.</p> <p>He immerses in the ritual bath, wears the golden vestments and sanctifies his hands and feet.</p> <p>He makes the afternoon Tamid offering and the second half of the day's incense, and sacrifices those along with the ablations.</p> <p>Now that all the elements of the Avodah have been completed, he lights the candles in the candelabra, sanctifies his hands and feet, disrobes of the golden vestments, and dresses in his own clothes (בגדי הונו) brought to him by young priests.</p> <p>The “dear ones” accompany him to his abode. The people ask the High Priest for a miracle, a supernatural demonstration of God's forgiveness. The loyal emissary tells them that the crimson ribbon had turned white. And they all rejoiced.³⁹¹⁴</p> |

³⁹¹⁴ Lines 136-149.

COMMENTS:

- The Mishnah and the paytan agree about the order of ablutions and costume changes. The paytan adds some sacrifices here, apparently out of order, but in keeping with the inherent and pervasive confusion as to the sacrificial rites at the end of Yom Kippur.
- The paytan's High Priest, in the first piyyut, reviews for the last time the laws of the Avodah. He is imbued with spiritual and legal agency to the very last. No one needs to instruct him, he knows well what to do and how to bring closure to the Day of Awe. No rabbi is in sight.
- To the Mishnah's matter of fact, didactic rendition of the final steps in the Yom Kippur drama, the paytan adds the human touch. The people, anxiously awaiting news of the success of the ritual they could not witness, become the subject of the poem. It is for them, for their sake, that the ritual was undertaken. The High Priest is the only one who saw it all unfold, the only one who was present in the Holy of Holies, the only one who really knows if "it worked" or not. He emerges to let the people, who had sent him as their emissary, that all is well and made right again. The Mishnah is less concerned with the public perception. What matters is the adherence to rabbinic instruction. The ritual was efficacious because the rabbis so decided, and the High Priest, while an important actor, was but an instrument of the rite. It is the Law which is central, not the performance itself, and once the High Priest has exited the stage, it's curtains for him and the legal discourse can proceed. Not so for the Paytan. The homecoming is emotional, for the High Priest and for the people, it signals that the world is in order again. The audience, listening to the Piyyut, can make a sigh of relief, for the long telling is over, the Avodah in virtual space had worked, and they too can go home

cleansed and edified. At the end of the first Piyyut the people are given a voice. It is a voice they claim, that is absent from the Mishnah. The people come to have agency as well, with no apparent rabbinic guidance. They don't really need a rabbi to tell them they are blessed for the Psalmist already did.

- In the second and fourth piyyutim, the paytan again employs the word גָּוַל. Please refer to my comments on Yoma 3:8 above.
- The paytan adds an interesting element to the narrative. In three of the four piyyutim, he describes the High Priest disrobing of the linen vestments one last time and placing them for eternal safekeeping in the temple. This Mishnah does not speak of this, but the Yerushalmi does not speak of it,³⁹¹⁵ as does Mishnah Midot 1:4, speaking of the priestly vestments stored at the Phineas the Dresser's Chambers. The paytan is a learned scholar, as we have seen, and he takes great care to harmonize all the sources he is familiar with in order to animate to the extent possible all the actions of the High Priest, the focal point of his liturgy and the prime actor in the Yom Kippur drama. Describing the High Priest's blessing of the people, arms raised in the traditional form, underscores the importance of the High Priest to the people, to the closure of all Yom Kippur penitent rituals, to the final glorious step of the Avodah. It is an unmediated communication of blessings to the people, an interactive and direct statement of atonement and peace. No intervening claimants to authenticity or authority appear here. It is just the High Priest and the people, and all is now well in the world, sans rabbis.

³⁹¹⁵ Yerushalmi, Yoma, Folio 24 halakha 1.

- The Mishnah makes no reference to the candelabra or the candle lighting at this point in the ritual. The Paytan appears to be drawing on other traditions, especially for the third Piyyut here.

Yoma 7:5

| YOMA 7:5 | THE PAYTAN |
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| The High Priest wears eight sets of clothing, a minor one wears four: a tunic, pants, hat and belt. To these, the High Priest adds the breastplate, the ephod, the robe and the tzitz (the plate on his forehead). | In אזכיר גבורות : --- |
| They were only allowed to inquire of God through the urim ve'thumim while the High Priest Gadol was wearing these eight garments. | In אספר גדולות : --- |
| The urim ve'thumim were only consulted for the king, the courts, or for someone needed as a leader by the community. | In אתה כוננת : --- |
| | In אז בדעת חקר : --- |

COMMENTS:

- The last Mishnah in Yoma 7:5 can be read as an introduction to the prescriptive Yoma 8. The paytan does not adopt a casuistic tone, in fact he ends his narrative with the return of the High Priest to his abode. This literary choice reflects the paytan's focus on the High Priest, and the rabbinic focus on legalities. The Mishanic tone seeks to emphasise the role of the rabbis in directing the High Priest, whereas the paytan maintains the High Priest's agency and independence.
