

## נוסח אשכנז THE ORIGIN OF

In our review of תפלה we have noted instances when the נוסח התפלה has differed among the various נוסחאות. However, we have never asked the question: how did these differences develop? The variations in the wording of קדושה for שבת שחרית and שבת וגבורות וכתר יתנו לך וכו' ואומר קדושת השם וקדושת היום. ישמח משה ואומר כל התפלה, ואומר קדיש מלא.

רב עמרם גאון provides the following concerning תפלת שחרית on שבת:

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) שחרית של שבת-ויורד שליח צבור לפני התיבה ואומר אבות וגבורות וכתר יתנו לך וכו' ואומר קדושת השם וקדושת היום. ישמח משה ואומר כל התפלה, ואומר קדיש מלא.

*Translation: The prayer leader steps forward to be in front of the ark and says: Avos, Gevuros and Keser Itnu Lecha etc. and says Kedushas Ha'Shem and Kedushas Ha'Yom. Yismach Moshe and the balance of Shemona Esrei and says the full Kaddish.*

He provides the following for תפלת מוסף

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) שחרית של שבת-ושליח צבור יורד לפני התיבה ואומר. מגן. ומחיה. כתר יתנו, ומוסיף פעמים אומרים שמע ישראל ה' א-להינו ה' אחד. ויש אומרים להיות לכם לא-להים. אני ה' א-להיכם אמת. לדור ודור ומסיים התפלה. ומקדש, והולכין לבתיהם.

*Translation: The prayer leader steps forward to be in front of the ark and says: Magen; Michayah; Keser Yitnu and adds Pa'Amim Omrim Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad. Some add: L'Hiyos Lachem L'Eilokim, Ani Hashem Elokeichem Emes, L'Dor Va'Dor and he concludes Shemona Esrei. He recites Kaddish and the congregation goes home.*

רב עמרם גאון provides that קדושה for all the תפילות on שבת begins with כתר יתנו as he provides for the weekday תפילות גאון. Concerning קדושה during the week, he provides as following:

סידור רב עמרם גאון-ואחרי מחיה מתים הוא מוסיף בתפלה את התחלת הקדושה ואומר: נקדישך ונעריצך ונשלש לך קדושה משולשת ככתוב על יד נביאך וקרא זה אל זה ואמר . . .

*Translation: After the Bracha of Michayah Ha'Maisim the prayer leader adds to Shemona Esrei: Nakdeishoch V'Na'Aritzach Oo'Nishalesh Lecha Kedusba Mishuleshes Kakasuv Al Yad Nivei'Echa V'Kara Zeh El Zeh V'Amar.*

Concerning קדושה on שבת, רב עמרם גאון provides that the קדושה is the same but he

add the lines of **פעמים באהבה** to each recitation of **קדושה**. Why did these two **גאונים** disagree on the wording of **קדושה** for both weekdays and **שבת**? Their disagreement represents one more difference in practice between **מנהג ארץ ישראל** and **מנהג בבל**. **רב סעדיה גאון** provides the wording as it is found in **מסכת סופרים** which is viewed as reflecting **מנהג ארץ ישראל**:

מסכת סופרים – פר' מז' – הלכה יב' – וקטן שאינו פורס שמע אין יכול לומר קדוש ביוצר ביחיד אבל בצבור עונה עמהן וגדול פורס את שמע יכול לומר קדוש לפי שהוא בסודר אבל קדוש של עמידה כיון שצריך לומר נעריצך ונקדישך אינו הדין לאומרו פחות מי' ואין קטן עולה מן המנין ברכו קריאת התורה וקדיש עד שיהא בן שלש עשרה ואין נדבקין באלו.

*Translation: A minor may not Poraiz Shema; he may not say Kedushah D'Yotzer when he prays in the absence of a group of ten men but when he is with ten other men, he may answer with them. An adult may Poraiz Shema; an adult may say the Kedushah D'Sidra even when praying without ten other men but concerning reciting the Kedushah found in Shemona Esrei, since it is necessary to say: Na'Aritzcha V'Nakdishcha, it is inappropriate to say it without being in a group of ten men. A minor may not be counted towards the ten nor may he say the Barchu of Kriyas Ha'Torah and not Kaddish until he is thirteen and we accept his word and do not check that he has the signs of adulthood.*

In Newsletter 3, Vol. 27, we established that according to **מנהג ארץ ישראל**, **קדושה** was to be recited only on **שבת** during the repetition of **שמונה עשרה** of **שחרית** because they believed that the angels did not recite **שירה** on **שבת** and so it was the obligation of the Jewish People to recite **קדושה** in their place. That is why the wording chosen includes a **הזמנה**, an invitation; i.e. **נקדישך ונעריצך**. According to **מנהג בבל**, **קדושה** was to be recited each day because the angels wait for us to recite **שירה** before they recite **שירה**. Therefore the wording of **כתר יתנו**, which does not include a **הזמנה**, was chosen.

Concerning this issue Ashkenazim follow the wording provided by **רב סעדיה גאון**. The Sephardim follow the wording provided by **רב עמרם גאון**. Why this divide? To answer that question, we need to explore both Jewish history and Jewish geography. Let us begin by asking a different question: what prompted **רב עמרם גאון** to compile his **סידור**?

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) ברכות השחר – עמרם בר ששנא ריש מתיבתא דמתא מחסיא, לרבינו יצחק בריה דמרנא ורבנא שמעון, הביב ויקיר ונכבד עלינו ועל ישיבה כלה. שלום רב מרחמנות השמים יהי עליך ועל זרעך, ועל כל החכמים והתלמידים ואחינו ישראל השרוים שם. שאו שלום ממנו ומן רב צמח אב בית דין ישראל, ומן אלופים וחכמי ישיבה ובני ישיבה שלנו ושל עיר מחסיא, שכלם בשלום, חכמים תלמידים ואחינו ישראל השרוים כאן, שתמיד אנו שואלים בשלומכם וזוכרים אתכם בזכרון טוב, ומתפללים בעדכם ומבקשים רחמים עליכם, שירחם הב"ה ברחמיו הרבים, ויגן עליכם ויציל אתכם מכל צרה ונזק ומכל חולי ומכאוב ומשלטון רע, ומכל מיני משחית ומכל מיני פורעניות המתרגשות

# להבין את התפלה

בעולם, וימלא ברחמי הרבים כל משאלות לבכם. שגר לפנינו רבינו יעקב בן רבנא יצחק עשרה זהובים ששגרת לשיבה, ה' שלנו וה' לקופה של ישיבה, וצוינו וברכנו אותך ברכות שיתקיימו בך ובזרעך וזרע זרעך. וסדר תפלות וברכות של שנה כלה ששאלת, שהראנו מן השמים, ראינו לסדר ולהשיב כמסורת שבידנו, כתיקון תנאים ואמוראים.

*Translation: Amrom son of Sheshna head of the Yeshiva in Masa Machsiya in response to Rabbi Yitzchok, son of Marna, and Rabbi Shimon, both of whom are dear, cherished and honored to us and to the Yeshiva. Great peace and compassion from heaven be shown to you and your children, and to all the sages, their students and our Jewish brothers who reside there. Accept greetings from me and from Rav Tzemach head of the Jewish court and from his underlings, from the other sages at our Yeshiva and at the Yeshiva in the city Machsiya. Know that all is well for the Sages, their students and all the Jews who live here. We always ask about your welfare and maintain pleasant memories of you. We pray for you and ask G-d to show compassion towards you, protect you and rescue you from any danger that should arise, from sickness, pain and from an oppressive government and from all evil and other calamities that can occur. May G-d fulfill all your needs with compassion. Rav Yakov son of Rav Yitzchok bestowed upon us 10 gold coins that you directed be given for the welfare of the Yeshiva, five for the Sages and five for the general fund of the Yeshiva. He further asked us to bestow a blessing upon you and upon your children. Concerning the order of the prayers and Brachos that should be said each day of the year that you asked us that were revealed to us by heaven, we found it appropriate to organize them and to respond to you with what has been passed on to us from generation to generation as it was established by the personalities in the era of the Mishna and the era of the Gemara.*

**סדר רב עמרם גאון** represents a **תשובה**, a response, to a question that was posed to **רב עמרם גאון** by a Rabbi who is identified as a Rabbi who lived in Spain. Sephardim originated as inhabitants of Spain, **ספרד**. Rav Amram ben Sheshna, as he was known, was head of the yeshiva in Sura, Babylonia, in the ninth century, for about 15 years and died approximately in 875 CE. At that time, both Babylonia and Spain were under the control of the Islamic Empire. Because both areas shared a common government, communication between the two areas was not difficult. This is the primary reason that the Siddur of the Sephardim shares a much closer resemblance to **סדר רב עמרם גאון** than does the Siddur of the Ashkenazim.

Where did the **נוסח אשכנז** originate and what was the political situation there? The following excerpts provide some answers:

In the Year 1096: The First Crusade and the Jews by Robert Chazan;  
Jewish Publication Society, 1996.

page 4-5-In order to comprehend properly the tragedy of 1096<sup>1</sup>, we must gain some sense of the broad developments that brought Jews northward, of the contours of early Jewish life in the area, of the tensions created between these Jews and their Christian

1. This is the date of the First Crusade which resulted in the destruction of several Ashkenazic Jewish communities.

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burgher neighbors, and of the sudden emergence of the crusading movement in all its turbulence and complexity.

Northern Europe long lay beyond the bounds of serious Jewish settlement. Jews, with their historic base in the eastern Mediterranean, rarely made an appearance in northern Europe prior to the vitalization of the late tenth century. Jewish communities did emerge in such places as Cologne and Paris from the fourth through the seventh century, but these were temporary settlements which did not survive the disastrous decline following the Carolingian Renaissance. Europe's northern areas were simply too backward and unappealing to attract any considerable number of Jews prior to the late tenth century. While Jews have traditionally been a mobile people, their movement has ordinarily been dictated by perceptions of opportunity. So long as northern Europe remained mired in its backwardness, it held little attraction to Jews in other regions. As Jews became aware of new opportunities associated with the rapid development of northern European society, disinterest in the area was quickly replaced by a desire -- at least on the part of some Jews -- to enjoy the benefits that became increasingly obvious to the ambitious.

The first permanent settlements of northern European or Ashkenazic Jews were probably formed during the last decades of the tenth century. Little evidence remains as to the point of origin of the Jews who made their way into the northern areas of France and Germany. In all likelihood, they moved northward from earlier homes in Spain, southern France, and Italy. That we know little about the origins of these Jewish immigrants is interesting in itself. Our ignorance stems in part from the general paucity of tenth and eleventh century source materials. At the same time, the lack of evidence also suggests the rapid amalgamation of the Jewish settlers into their new environment. Particularly telling is the loss of the languages with which these Jews came northward. When Jewish sources begin to emerge in the late eleventh century, they contain no hint of the languages the immigrants brought with them. The well-known eleventh century commentaries of Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (Rashi), for example, utilize northern French for explaining difficult terms in the Bible and the Talmud. Clearly, Rashi and his fellow Jews had by this time abandoned their earlier tongues in favor of the languages spoken on the streets of Troyes and similar northern French towns. The vibrant civilization of northern Europe not only attracted new Jewish settlers, it quickly absorbed them as well.

The migration of southern Jews northward was self-generated. More was involved, however, than simply Jewish awareness of opportunity. Key rulers in northern Europe perceived the Jews as potentially useful settlers and made efforts to attract Jewish immigrants. Evidence of governmental overtures to Jews, some detailed and some cursory, has survived. Later Jewish reports mention, for example, a German emperor who purportedly transferred important Jewish subjects from Italy to the developing

town of Mainz. More reliably, a brief Hebrew narrative records an invitation to Jews to settle in Flanders, and English historians tell us that the first Norman king of England brought French Jewish subjects to his newly conquered domain.

Our fullest information on the process of Jewish settlement comes from the establishment of a Jewish community in the city of Speyer in 1084. For this development we possess a later Jewish report and the document of invitation itself. Let us look first at the former.

*At the outset, when we came to establish our residence in Speyer -- may its foundations never falter! -- it was as a result of the fire that broke out in the city of Mainz. The city of Mainz was our city of origin and the residence of our ancestors, the ancient and revered community, praised above all communities in the empire. All the Jews' quarter and their street were burned, and we stood in great fear of the burghers. At the same time, Meir Cohen came from Worms, bearing a copy of Torat Cobanim. The burghers thought it was silver or gold and slew him.... We then decided to set forth from there and to settle wherever we might find a fortified city. Perhaps the compassionate Lord might show compassion and the merciful One might exhibit mercy and the All-Helpful might sustain us, as in fact he does this very day. The bishop of Speyer greeted us warmly, sending his ministers and soldiers after us. He gave us a place in the city and expressed his intention to build about us a strong wall to protect us from our enemies, to afford us fortification. He pitied us as a man pities his son.*

We might well be inclined to see this late twelfth century report as highly exaggerated, were it not for the existence of the document which Bishop Rudiger of Speyer actually extended to the emigrating Mainz Jews. Let us note, for the moment, only the opening paragraph of this charter. "In the name of the holy and undivided Trinity. When I wished to make a city out of the village of Speyer, I Rudiger, surnamed Huozmann, bishop of Speyer, thought that the glory of our town would be augmented a thousandfold if I were to bring Jews." Bishop Rudiger spells out succinctly his technique for attracting Jews to his town later in the charter, after indicating a number of the specific arrangements made for the new Jewish settlers in Speyer." In short, in order to achieve the height of kindness, I have granted them a legal status more generous than any which the Jewish people have in any city of the German kingdom." Some of the rulers of northern Europe actively pursued Jewish settlers and were prepared to go to considerable lengths in order to attract them.

As these immigrant Jews made their way into northern Europe, little was available to guide them and the authorities in ordering Jewish existence. The only directives for shaping Jewish life came from the Roman Catholic Church and its legacy, on the one hand, and from talmudic Judaism and its traditions on the other.

Stefan Reif in his book, *Judaism And Hebrew Prayer*, provides some specific information as to the means by which **נוסח אשכנז** developed:

page 170-171-Having established that the mediaeval French rite had an existence of its own

that was of significance until the thirteenth century and did not disappear until a century after that, it is now necessary to complete the Jewish liturgical picture in western Europe by providing some comments on the nascent Ashkenazi rite and its subsequent development. In view of its earliest documented history, there can be little doubt that the Ashkenazi community brought with it into the Rhineland vestiges of those Palestinian traditions that were already built into the liturgical customs of Italian Jewry. This would account for the similarities that are to be found between the three rites<sup>2</sup> as they are known from manuscript sources. It cannot, however, be stressed enough that the occurrence of such vestiges is limited to rare occasions, special circumstances, and the field of piyutt rather than throughout the statutory prayers. Already by the latter part of the eleventh century the wider cultural influences on the few families of Jewish leaders that dominated such centres as Worms, Mainz, Regensburg and Speyer were owed as much, if not more, to the guidance emanating from talmudic centres permeated with the philosophy of the Babylonian geonim, a state of affairs that also seems to have applied in Italy by that time. The halakhic and talmudic methods that were destined to become dominant in and characteristic of the developing Ashkenazi communities were taking hold and inevitably had their effect on overall attitudes to the structure and content of prayer. Nevertheless, in matters of custom, midrash and linguistic tradition, the older inheritance held its ground so that liturgy, which, as always, represented an amalgam of Jewish cultural elements, was drawing its inspiration from both Italian and Spanish sources by the time that the massacres perpetrated by the rampaging mobs that history has graced with the title of Crusaders put paid to the literary creativity of Ashkenazi Jewry in the older definition of the name. Although the centre of western European Jewry then moved to the French rather than the German settlements, the process of the fusion of liturgical traditions continued.

נוסח אשכנז differs from the נוסחאות of the Sephardim in that it contains vestiges of מנהג ארץ ישראל. The form of קדושה that begins with the line of נקדישך ונעריצך is one more reminder of the roots of נוסח אשכנז.

### *How Large Was The Jewish Population In Troyes When Rashi Lived There?*

An Excerpt From: *The Jews of Medieval France: The Community of Champagne*  
by Emily Taitz; Greenwood Press, 1994

p. 62-When Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) was born in 1040, the Jews of Troyes numbered somewhere between thirty and forty families, or one hundred to two hundred individuals. This represented approximately 1 or 2 percent of the total population of that growing town.

2. Dr. Reif is referring to a French rite, the Palestinian rite and the Babylonian rite.

# The Islamic Empire (circa 750)



# Ashkenaz: Jews of Medieval Christian Europe

