

## שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים OF THE פְּיוּטִים

The recital of פְּיוּטִים on the שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים is an example of an aspect of Jewish Prayer that has undergone major changes only recently. In the 20th Century, particularly in the United States, Hebrew book publishers began removing the majority of the פְּיוּטִים that had customarily been recited during the תְּפִילּוֹת of the שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים. The change may have been prompted by economic reasons and for convenience; the drive to publish one prayer book that provides all the prayers that need to be recited on both שַׁבָּת and יוֹם טוֹב including the תּוֹרָה reading for יוֹם טוֹב. To avoid the prayer book being too cumbersome, the editors removed the majority of the פְּיוּטִים for each of the שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים. The Rabbinical Council Of America De Sola Poole edition of the סִידוּר is one example of that type of prayer book. Artscroll then followed in those steps. Should the removal of the פְּיוּטִים for the שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים be viewed as a positive or a negative development in the history of Jewish Prayer? It is not likely that anyone shed a tear when the פְּיוּטִים were removed. Since most of the פְּיוּטִים were recited only once a year, they were not well studied. It is therefore probable that a majority of the congregation did not understand the plain meaning of their wording. The fact that few took the time to understand the פְּיוּטִים should not diminish the important function that the פְּיוּטִים served; i.e. to enhance the prayers of each holiday by referring to the individual aspects of each holiday. Today, the prayers of each of the יָמִים טוֹבִים are hardly distinguishable. Only the line that names and briefly describes the holiday differentiates the versions of עֲשֵׂרָה שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה that are recited on each holiday.

Two פְּיוּטִים within the prayer service survived the publishers' axe; i.e. the י-ה-א-לי וגאולי: פְּיוּט which is recited before אֲשֶׁרִי after קְרִיאַת הַתּוֹרָה on days of יוֹם טוֹב when יִזְכוּר is not recited (נוֹסַח אֲשַׁכְּנֹו) and the פְּיוּט of בְּרַח דּוּדֵי פְּיוּט, גְּאוּלָּה, a פְּיוּט of רִדְיוֹת, redemption, that some recite on the first two days of פֶּסַח, שַׁבָּת חוּל הַמוֹעֵד פֶּסַח, and the seventh day of פֶּסַח, just before the בְּרַכָּה of גְּאוּלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל.

י-ה-א-לי וגאולי'

In נוֹסַח אֲשַׁכְּנֹו, the י-ה-א-לי וגאולי: פְּיוּט is recited before אֲשֶׁרִי after קְרִיאַת הַתּוֹרָה on days of יוֹם טוֹב on which יִזְכוּר is not recited. Who is the author of the פְּיוּט and when was it incorporated into the תְּפִילּוֹת of the שֵׁלֶשׁ רִגְלִים? Professor Daniel Goldschmidt, ז"ל, on page 'מד' of his introduction to his edition of the מַחְזוֹר for סוֹכוֹת, footnote 80, provides the following information concerning the פְּיוּט:

מַחְזוֹר סוֹכוֹת-וּכְאֵן יֵשׁ לְהַעִיר עַל הָעוֹבְדָה הַמְשׁוֹנָה שֶׁבַתְקוּפָה מְאוּחָרֶת מְאֹד נוֹלְדָה הַמְנַהֵג לֹמֵר בְּרִגְלִים (בִּימֵים טוֹבִים שְׁאִין מְזַכְּרִים בָּהֶם נִשְׁמָוֹת) אֵת הַפְּיוּט י-ה-א-לי וגאולי (דוידון י 758) לַפְּנֵי 'אֲשֶׁרִי' שֶׁלַּפְּנֵי מוֹסֶף. פְּיוּט זֶה אֵינוֹ נִמְצָא בְּכִי"י וְהוּא מוֹפִיעַ כְּנִרְאָה לְרֵאשׁוֹנָה בְּסִידוּר 'שַׁעַר שְׁמַיִם'

1. Artscroll Siddur page 672.

עם פירוש השל"ה (אמסטרדם תע"ז, ח"ב, דף רלו ע"ב). שם הוא מודפס לאחר כל היוצרות (כולל חתונה וברית מילה) עם הכותרת 'בשלוש רגלים קודם אשרי אומרים זה'. משם עבר (עם קצת שינויים) למחזור מנהג פולין וכו', וזלצבך תקי"ח. גם שם הוא עוד לא שולב במחזור עצמו אלא הודפס לגמרי בסוף (לאחר יוצר לברית מילה). היידנהיים אינו מביאו במחזוריו ולכן לא נאמר אלא בקהילות מזרח אירופה וגם שם לא בכלול. תוכן הפיוט הוא קבלי (הא-ל הוא דק על דק' וברא את עולמו בל"ב נתיבות החכמה) והנחנו את פירושו לחוקרי תורת הסוד. הפיוט פגום בלשונו ובצורתו וכנראה כך הוא מיום חיבורו (במאה הי"ז?).

*Translation: Here is the point at which to note an unusual development in the History of Jewish prayer; in a late era, the custom to recite on holidays (on days in which Yizkor is not said) the Piyutt, Kah AiLi V'Go'Ali (Davidson 10, 758) before Ashrei in advance of Tefilas Mussaf. This Piyutt is not found in handwritten copies of old Siddurim. The Piyutt appears for the first time in the Siddur Shaar Ha'Shamayim, containing the commentary of the Shlah (Amsterdam 1717, Second Part, page 237, side 2). There the Piyutt appears after a collection of morning Piyuttim (including those to be recited on days on which a wedding or a Bris Milah took place) with the note: to be recited on the holidays before Ashrei in advance of Tefilas Mussaf. From there it was transplanted, with some minor changes, into the Machzor for those who followed the Polish customs, Zulfach edition, 1758. Even in that Machzor, the Piyutt is not placed among the prayers but is located at the very end of the Machzor (after the morning Piyutt to be recited on days in which a Bris Milah takes place). Heidenheim does not include the Piyutt in his Machzorim. That explains why the Piyutt was only recited in communities in Eastern Europe and even there, not in all of them. The content of the Piyutt is Kabbalistic (G-d is beyond the understanding of mankind and created His world using 32 paths of wisdom). I will leave the interpretation of this Piyutt to the Kabbalists. The Piyutt consists of poorly chosen words and its structure is weak. It appears that the Piyutt has been in that form since it was first composed.*

Apparently, others shared Professor's Goldshmidt's opinion that the פיוט is difficult to understand. The following represents one attempt to explain the first paragraph of the פיוט. It was authored by Rabbi Shaul Horowitz, ז"ל, of Tarnopol, Ukraine, in an article entitled: הערות שומר ציון בסדר תפילתינו, found on page פב' of a collection of articles published as שומר ציון 1846-1850, edited by Rabbi Jacob Ettlinger, ז"ל, and published by E. Grossman's Publishing House, תשכ"ג:

ג) בתפלת י-ה א-לי שמשוררים במקהלות ישראל ברגלים קודם תפלת מוסף נשתבש הנוסחא. עד כי אין הבין בכל שירה הזאת. כלה כספר החתום ואין יודע מוצאה ומובנה. והשליח ציבור אך כסוס ועגור יצפצף באין כוונה, דבר-ובל ידע מה! יזמר ובל יבין לזמרתו. והנראה כי נפלו בה טעותים אשר יראו לעינים, והנוסחא כן צריכה להיות י-ה א-לי וגואלי אתיזבה לקראתך. היה ויהיה, היה והוה, וכל גוי אדמתך (והו' חסרה) לתודה, ולעולה וכו' ושעור המאמר לפי זה י-ה א-לי וגואלי אשר היה והוה וגם יהיה אתיזבה לפניך אני וכל הגוים והיצורים אשר בראת על פני האדמה עמדי למען הקריב עצמינו כאחד הקרבנות. ותודה צריך לומר לתודה כנראה בכל השמות הבאם אחריו שהם עם היחס שאליו. ואל יקשה בעיניך אדוני! כי היה וכו' הוא מפריד את המשפט; כי נוכח י-ה א-לי העמיד התוארים האלה ובעבור המליצה היא זאת.

*Translation: The prayer: Kah Ai-Li that choirs in synagogues sing on holidays before Tefilas Mussaf appears to have had its wording transposed to the point that its original meaning has been lost. The Piyutt has become like a*

closed book that no one can explain. The prayer leader sounds like a neighing horse who is reciting something he hardly understands. He speaks but knows not what he is saying! He sings without knowing what he is singing. It appears that errors entered the prayer that few noticed. This is how the words of the prayer should be read: G-d, my G-d and Savior. I will stand before You. G-d who has always been, always is and always will be and all the nations of the world (omit the word: and He); for the Korban Todah, the Korban Olah, etc. The proper explanation of the paragraph is as follows: G-d, my G-d and Savior who has always been, always is and always will be, I and all the nations and all the creatures that You created will stand before You in order to join in bringing the sacrifices. Instead of saying "and the Todah offering", it should read "for the purpose of bringing the Today offering" since it appears that the Todah offering is just one of the offerings that will be brought. Do not let what I write appear wrong in your eyes! The words: who has always been, always is, etc. were placed incorrectly and interfere with the meaning of the sentence. They were placed there as part of the description of G-d, my G-d and my Savior and was done for lyrical purposes only.

ברכה דודי<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Philip Birnbaum, ז"ל, on page 107 of his book: A Book Of Jewish Concepts, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1964, provides the following introduction to the ברכה דודי: פיוט:

Three prayer-poems, composed by three different *payyotanim* or liturgical poets, consist of three, five and six stanzas, respectively, each of which begins with the phrase ברכה דודי (make haste, my friend). They are recited in conjunction with the benediction, גאול ישראל, immediately before the *Amidah* prayer of the *Pesah* morning service, and are referred to as *Geullah* (גאולה) *piyyutim*.

The first of these, comprising three stanzas to be chanted on the first day of *Pesah*, was written by Rabbi Shelomoh ben Yehudah ha-Bavli, tenth-century liturgist and author of many *piyyutim*. It has been suggested that he was a native of Rome, which medieval Jewish writers included under the designation of Babylon; hence, his surname *ha-Bavli*. Various phrases from the Song of Songs are interwoven in the texture of this poem, pleading for deliverance and liberation of the people of Israel.

The second *Brah Dodi*, recited on the second day of *Pesah* and consisting of four stanzas, is like the preceding one in content, structure and form. It was composed by Rabbi Meshullam ben Kalonymus, a native of eleventh-century Italy. It is a plea for the restoration of Jerusalem and the liberation of Israel, "as at the first month of *Nisan* in days of old."

The third *Brah Dodi*, recited on the Sabbath of *Hol ha-Mo'ed Pesah*, is by Rabbi Simeon ben Isaac ben Abun of Mayence, one of the most prolific liturgists of the eleventh century. He is said to have used his prodigious political influence in preventing persecutions and unfavorable laws inflicted upon his people. Like the preceding two *piyyutim*, it is a prayer for prompt and complete redemption ("Thou who art our only strength, our comforter and liberator, we look to Thee to free our captive people").

Each of the three *Geullah* poems concludes with the passage בגלל אבות תושיע בנים, ותביא גאולה לבני בניהם (For the sake of the fathers Thou wilt save the children, and bring liberation to their children's children"). This is directly connected with the *Amidah*

2. Artsroll Siddur page 710.

prayer, the first benediction of which refers to the merits of our forefathers, for the sake of whom God will bring a redeemer.

For the seventh day of *Pesah*, the famous *Geullah* **יום ליבשה** by Rabbi Judah Halevi (1086-1140) of Spain, whose liturgical poems number more than three hundred, is chanted ("The redeemed sang a new song when the sea was turned to dry land"). The name of the author, **יהודה הלוי**, is signed in the form of an acrostic at the beginning of the nine stanzas.

The inclusion of **פיוטים** on the **שלוש רגלים** caused some changes to be made to the standard text of the **תפילות**. The following are two examples: the third **ברכה** of **שמע** in **קריאת שמע** would change from **מלך צור ישראל וגואלו** to **מלך צור ישראל וגואלו** and the paragraph of **אמת ויציב** and that follow **שמע** in **קריאת שמע** would be shortened to the following:

סדר עבודת ישראל-216-אמת ויציב ונכון וקים וישר ונאמן וטוב ויפה הדבר הזה על אבותינו ועלינו על בננו ועל דורותינו ועל כל דורות זרע ישראל עבדיך. על הראשנים ועל האחרונים לעולם ועד חוק ולא יעבור. אמת שאתה הוא י-י א-להינו וא-להי אבותינו לעולם ועד. אתה הוא מלכנו מלך אבותינו אתה. למען שמך מהר לגאלינו כאשר גאלת את אבותינו. אמת מעולם שמך הגדול עלינו נקרא באהבה אין א-להים זולתך:

Rabbi Zeligman Baer, ז"ל, in his **סדר עבודת ישראל**, explains the change as follows:

סדר עבודת ישראל-216-אמת ויציב, המנהג באשכנז כשאומרים פיוט קודם עזרת אבותינו המכונה בשם זולת אז אמת ויציב וכו' עד אין א-להים זולתך בנוסחה מקוצרה, ובפולין אין מקצרים הנוסחה רק מן על הראשנים ואילך. אמנם בני ספרד יש להם לכל השנה הנוסחה הנהוגה ואין להם נוסחה קצרה כלל. והנה מנהג זה של אמת ויציב מקוצר נזכר בס' חסידים ס' רנ"ח (והעתיקו תלמידו הרוקה בסימן ר' גם מהר"ל בהלכות ר"ה והלבוש לא"ח ס' תקפ"ד) ששם אמר כי בר"ה וי"ב אין אומרים זולת לפי שצריכים לומר אמת ויציב כהלכתו כדי להזכיר ו' פעמים אמת, ואילו היינו אומרים זולת היו מחסרים פעמים אמת; הרי מבואר שבזמן ר' יהודה החסיד היה כבר המנהג פשוט לומר אמת ויציב קצרה באמירת זולת, אבל הטעם למה זה משנים הנוסחה לא מצאתי.

*Translation: It is the practice in Minhag Ashkenaz that when a Piyut is recited before the paragraph of Ezras Avoseinu, known as a Zulas, the paragraph of Emes V'Yatziv until the words: Al Ha'Rishonim is abbreviated. In Poland, they do not shorten the paragraph of Emes V'Yatziv but they do abbreviate the paragraph of Al Ha'Rishonim. Among Sephardim, they always recite the same wording and never have occasion to shorten either paragraph. The practice of reciting an abbreviated form of the paragraph of Emes V'Yatziv is mentioned in the Sefer Ha'Chasidim, Siman 358 (his student, the Rokeach, copied the rule into Siman 300 of his book. The Maharil in Hilchos Rosh Hashbonah refers to the practice as does the Levush in Orach Chayim Siman 584). In the Sefer Ha'Chasidim, he writes that on Rosh Hashbonah and on Yom Kippur, it was his practice not to recite a Zulas because on those days it is critical to recite the full version of Emes V'Yatziv in order that a person mentions the word Emes (truth) six times. If we say a Zulas on those days, we would then omit two references to the word: Emes. This is evidence that during the era of Rabbi Yehudah Ha'Chasid (1200's) it was already the practice to recite an abbreviated version of Emes V'Yatziv on days in which a Zulas was recited. The reason to say an abbreviated version of Emes V'Yatziv on days in which a Zulas is recited still eludes me.*