

ראש השנה ON תפלת ערבית THE ADDITIONS TO

The **פיוט** **אחות קטנה** is the first addition to **תפלת ערבית** on **ראש השנה** that one encounters. Sephardim recite that **פיוט** in advance of reciting **תפלת ערבית** on **ראש השנה**. Although many Ashkenazic **מהזורים** for **ראש השנה** include the **פיוט**, not many Ashkenazic congregations follow the practice of reciting it.

The **פיוט** was authored by **רב אברהם חזן**. His initials appear as the first letters of the opening lines of the **פיוט**. When he lived is open to question. Rabbi Shemtob Gaguine in his treatise **כתר שם טוב**, volume 6, page 66, suggests that **רב אברהם חזן** was an early Sephardic Rabbinic personality. However, because the **אחות קטנה: פיוט** does not appear in **מהזורים** for **ראש השנה** until the last few centuries, it is difficult to support Rabbi Gaguine's dating.

The **פיוט** is classified as a **סליחה**. In that role, it is very unique because we do not generally recite **סליחות** in advance of a prayer service except in the case of **תפלת שחרית** on the days before **ראש השנה** and between **ראש השנה** and **יום כיפור**. The text of the **פיוט** is worth studying because it is an example of the thematic change that entered into the text of **סליחות** due to the persecutions that Jews experienced. **רב אברהם חזן**, the author of the **פיוט**, challenges G-d to stop the persecutions of the Jewish People. In addition, the author does not lay the blame for the persecutions upon sin nor upon any other conduct by the Jewish People. The absence of any references to sin may explain why the author of the book: **חמדת ימים** (see below) felt compelled to suggest that those reciting the **פיוט** have in mind that it may have been their sins that caused the calamities to take place. Here is the text of the **פיוט**:

	אחות קטנה תפלותיה,
<i>Little sister (the Jewish People), her prayers before You,</i>	עורכה ועונה תהלותיה,
<i>She arranges; then she sings her praises to You;</i>	א-ל נא רפא נא למחלותיה,
<i>Please G-d, please heal her maladies,</i>	תכלה שנה וקללותיה.
<i>May the year and its curses come to an end.</i>	בנועם מלים לך תקראה,

With the most pleasant of words she calls unto You,

ושיר והלולים כי לך נאה,

With songs and phrases befitting You,

עד מתי תעלים עינך, ותראה,

Until when will You keep Your eyes closed; notice

זרים אכלים נחלתיה,

How strangers are devouring her heritage.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה

May the year and its curses come to an end.

רעה את צאנך, אריות זרו,

Tend to Your sheep which lions have dispersed,

ושפוך הרונך באומרים ערו,

Pour out Your anger against those who say: Let us destroy them;

וכנת ימינך פרצו וארו,

The sapling that Your right hand planted has been destroyed and uprooted

לא השאירו עוללותיה.

Not even its newest branches were spared.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה.

May the year and its curses come to an end.

מתי תעלה בתך מבור,

When will You lift up Your daughter from the depths of her affliction,

ומבית כלא עלה תשבור,

And release her from the bonds of her imprisonment;

ותפליא פלא בצאתך כגבור,

Perform wondrous miracles as would a brave warrior

להתם וכלא מכלותיה,

Who annihilates those who would do her harm.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה.

Let the year and its curses end.

חילה קבעו הגוי כלו,

The nations of the world work in unison to rob her of her strength,

וטובה שבעו ובזו איש לו,

They feed on her goodness which each of them plunders for himself,

ולבה קרעו, ובכל־זאת, לא

They tear her heart into pieces and yet, she does not

להבין את התפלה

ממך נעו מעגלתיה,

Wander away from You nor fail to serve You.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה.

Let the year and its curses end.

זמירה שבת, וחשקה תגביר,

Her Temple songs are no longer heard and yet her intense yearning grows,

לחפץ קרבת דודה, ותעביר

She pines to be near her beloved, setting aside

מלב דאבת, נפשה ותסיר,

The pain of her heart and ignores the sorrow of her soul

לבקש אהבת כלולותיה.

Seeking out the love of her betrothed.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה

Let the year and its curses end.

נחה בנחת לנוה רבצה,

Lead her with gentleness back to her home, to Eretz Yisroel,

רב נזנחת, מרוד חפצה,

For too long she has been rejected by You, her favorite love;

והיא כפרחת, עלתה נצה,

She is like a flowering plant, continually producing new blossoms,

לא הבשילו אשכולותיה.

Yet she is never given the opportunity for her clusters to ripen.

תכלה שנה וקללותיה

Let the year and its curses end.

חזקו וגילו, כי שוד גמר,

Be strong, be joyful, for the persecution will come to an end;

לצור הוחילו, בריתו שמר

Look with hope to the Rock (G-d) for He has always kept His covenant with you,

לכם, ותעלו לציון ואמר,

Go forward to Zion, concerning which the Torah says:

סלו סלו מסלותיה,

Pave, pave the roads leading to Zion.

תחל שנה וברכותיה.

Let the New Year and its blessings begin.

In addition to reciting the פיוט of אחות קטנה in advance of reciting תפלת ערבית on ראש השנה, Sephardim add a special chapter of תהלים to mark the commencement of the holiday. The book: חמדת ימים provides the reason why the פיוט of אחות קטנה should be recited before the special chapter of תהלים:

חמדת ימים חלק ג', פרק ו', כז'-לומר פיוט אחות קטנה קודם המזמור של קדושת היום- ושוב יתחיל להפיל תחינתו על השנה: תכלה שנה וקללותיה, תחל שנה וברכותיה, ויכלול בכוננתו גם על החטאים ועל העונות אשר עומד עליהם בארור. ואחר כך יקבל עליו קדושת היום במזמור היום, ולא כנדפס בספרים המזמור תחילה, דתחילה יש לנו להתפלל על אחרית השנה שעברה בטרם נקבל קדושת היום שהיא תחילת השנה באמירת המזמור של קדושת היום.

Translation: The Practice Of Reciting the Piyyut Achos Ketana Before Reciting The Chapter Of Tehillim Which Marks The Commencement Of The Sanctity Of The Holiday-Again let a person put forth his request to G-d that the past year and its difficulties come to an end. As he recites those words, he should keep in mind the sins that he committed-they may have contributed to his suffering during the past year. He should then accept upon himself the sanctity of the holiday by reciting a special chapter of Tehillim. That is the proper order in which the two prayers should be recited, not in the order provided by some books that the special chapter of Tehillim is to be recited before the Piyyut of Achos Ketana. A person must first ask that the events of the past year not flow into the new year before accepting the sanctity of the holiday which marks the beginning of the new year when the special chapter of Tehillim is recited.

The same book then relates why this chapter of תהלים was chosen to introduce תפלת ערבית for ראש השנה:

חמדת ימים חלק ג', פרק ו', כח'-טעם שאומרינן בכניסת היום מזמור פ"א למנצח על הגיתית-וטעם המזמור הזה הוא להודיע לבני אדם כי זה היום הוא יום הדין הוא, כי המשפט לא-להים הוא, יען כי בתורה לא נזכר רמז דין כלל, עד שבא דוד ופירשה במזמור זה- תקעו בחדש שופר, בכסה ליום חגנו כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לא-להי יעקב. וגם מפסוק זה למדו גם על הפרנסה שנקצב בהיום הזה, סמיך ליה עדות ביהוסף שמו כי בראש השנה יצא יוסף מבית האסורים, וידוע שיציאתו היתה סיבת הפרנסה בשני הרעבון, ולכך נסמך כי חק לישראל הוא, לאומר ועדות ביהוסף שמו, רוצה לומר שהרי עדות יש שהוכן יום זה למזון כל חי מעניינו של יוסף.

Translation: The Reason That We Recite Chapter 81 Of Tehillim To Mark The Commencement of Rosh Hashonah-We recite this chapter of Tehillim to remind those assembled that the Day of Judgment is about to commence-that is the meaning of the following words found in this chapter: a day of judgment for the G-d of Yaakov. The Torah is silent as to the fact that Rosh Hashonah represents the Day of Judgment. That fact was not confirmed until King David came along and clearly identified the day as serving that purpose when he declared: "Blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashonah-the day designated for our feast. For it is a principle in Jewish tradition that Rosh Hashonah is a day of judgment for the G-d of Yaakov." It is also from this verse that our Sages derived the concept of Rosh Hashonah being the day on which a person's

financial status for the coming year is determined. After the above verse, King David wrote: our forefather Yosef epitomized that concept. Those words refer to the fact that Yosef was freed from prison on Rosh Hashonah. It was his release from prison that contributed to the land of Egypt having food during the years of famine. The two verses are linked in order to substantiate that since the time of our forefather Yosef, Rosh Hashonah has represented the day on which a person's financial status for the coming year has been determined.

The same rationale advanced by the **חמדת ימים** for reciting **מזמור פ"א** to introduce **תפלת ערבית** for **ראש השנה** is used to explain why Ashkenazim add **מזמור כ"ד** to the end of **תפלת ערבית** for **ראש השנה**. The following instruction introduces the **מזמור** in many **מהזורים**:

בראש השנה בלילה קודם קדיש בתרא בבית הכנסת או בהיותו בביתו קודם קריאת הגבר יאמר מזמור כ"ד לה' הארץ ומלואה ויכון בשם ה' ונקרא שם הפרנסה יכוין בזה היטיב ולא יחסרו מזונותיו של כל השנה בעזרת ה' יתברך.

Translation: On Rosh Hashonah at night before the final Kaddish recited by the prayer leader in synagogue or if a person is praying at home, then early in the morning before the call of the rooster, chapter 24 of Tehillim should be recited which opens with the words: To G-d belongs the land and all that is on it. He should keep in mind while saying G-d's name that this name represents financial success. He should clearly have this concept in mind and he will not suffer financially in the oncoming year, with the help of G-d.

Why recite **מזמור כד'** on the first night of **ראש השנה**? Consider the explanation provided by Miriyam Glatzer on page 17 of her book: *Psalms Of The Jewish Liturgy*, Aviv Press, 2009, for the practice of reciting **מזמור כד'** as the **שיר של יום ראשון**, Psalm for Sundays:

Just as the Rabbis taught that the sequence of these Psalms recapitulates the creation of the world every week, so we can regard every beginning of a week not solely as a continuation of what we have already been, already done, already thought, and already felt, but rather as a whole new beginning in our ever-unfolding lives.

The practice of reciting **מזמור כד'** at the end of **ערבית** on **ראש השנה** was not universally accepted. Rabbi Wolf Heidenheim (1757-1832), editor of the **מהזור** that is now commonly known as the "Rodelheim" and which represents the German custom, did not include the practice in his **מהזור לראש השנה**. Dr. Philip Birnbaum in editing his **מהזור** followed in Rabbi Heidenheim's footsteps. At first glance, the change instituted by Rabbi Heidenheim appears to have been very minor. But upon further study, it becomes evident that the change was part of a wholesale review of the **סידור** undertaken by Rabbi Heidenheim at that time. In doing so, Rabbi Heidenheim may have made a substantial contribution to the development of the modern **סידור**. Ismar Elbogen in pages 297-299 of his book: *Jewish Liturgy*, Jewish Publication Society, 1993, provides the historical background that led to the changes that Rabbi Heidenheim incorporated into the **סידור**:

Third Chapter, The Modern Period,
§ 45 The First Reforms in the Synagogue Service

(1) The modern period opens with Moses Mendelssohn, the "reformer of German Jewry." His appearance marks the start of the aspirations that have dominated the internal history of the Jewish people for more than a century¹. This is not the place for an exhaustive treatment of the Reform movement; only its attempts to improve the liturgy are our theme. The Jews awoke from a dream of centuries; the longing for the messianic redemption retreated in the face of the desire to live in comfort in this world. The Jews sought to find their way once again among men, abandoning their separateness and seeking to be like everyone else. They demanded civil rights and sought to improve their status within the political system; the improvement of their civil status and the attainment of full equality became the slogans that guided their thinking and activities for several generations. With the improvement of their educational system, their sensitivity to order and discipline increased and their appreciation for beauty of form and sound became more refined. They took pains to acquire general education and were swept away by the current intellectual trends. The critical thinking that had taken hold of all Europe came to dominate their religion as well. Pious exercises were no longer their sole or even their main concern; the hegemony of dogmatism over the Jewish religion, which had lasted throughout the Middle Ages, was overcome. In the approach to all problems there arose a new and fresh spirit.

The liturgy could not go completely untouched by this mighty upheaval in the lives and thinking of the Jews. Its forms no longer suited the demands of the new age. They repelled both eye and ear, and could neither satisfy the mind nor warm the heart. Many educated people, unable to find the precious core within the unattractive husk, were lost to the synagogue, even if they did not give up the faith. Against them stood the overwhelming majority, who saw every intentional change as treason against Judaism. A tiny group of intelligent people sought reforms that would not harm the essence of the liturgy, such as the simplification of the prayers, the elimination of the bad customs that had infected the liturgy, and the introduction of aesthetic forms and conduct appropriate to the house of God. But before these things came to be, a new age arose, bringing with it new political ideals and creating a new concept of humanity; doubts arose as to whether the wording and thoughts of the traditional prayers suited these concepts; demands were made to change that which no longer seemed to fit the spirit of the times. Finally, scientific thought brought about a critical examination of the entire tradition. The upshot was the demand for the complete revamping of the institution of the synagogue. The Reform movement aroused great agitation; it often seemed that no possibility existed of healing the rift between the adherents to the tradition and the supporters of

1. Ismar Elbogen wrote his book in the 1800's. This excerpt is being reproduced from an English translation that was published in 1993.

innovation. It led to intense struggles and splits in the communities. Not all Jews were equally affected by the new trends. The "Portuguese" communities were not touched at all, for the Kabbalah had choked their life away. They were never again able to return to vigorous spiritual activity. Their prayers and their prayer books were never freed from the appendages with which mysticism had burdened them. The masses of Jews in Eastern Europe labored under severe political and economic repression that kept them from taking part in the new progressive movement. Hundreds of thousands remained captives of Hasidism, and wide circles sank into total apathy. Only in western Europe, where the Jews registered undreamed-of successes in every area did the problem of prayer move people's spirits deeply. Germany was in the center of this struggle; from it Reform tendencies eventually spread to England and America, and finally returned to influence the land of their origin.

(2) Although a new generation with better education and more refined taste had arisen, the liturgy continued along in its old way, and tradition, with all its ugly excrescences, continued to dominate it unchanged. As time went on, this situation became intolerable, and something had to be done to meet the new demands. The disciples of Mendelssohn, in whom sensitivity for the Hebrew language and its poetry had awakened, were the first to complain about the ugly and slovenly manner in which the prayers were recited in the synagogue. Schooled in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, their minds could not be satisfied with mystical ideas. Their first efforts were directed at disseminating carefully edited versions of the prayer book, purified of the errors it had suffered under Kabbalistic influence. Among those who performed particular service along these lines, it suffices to mention Wolf Heidenheim (1757-1832), who has been correctly called "the Mendelssohn of the prayer book." To him belongs the credit for opening a new age in the history of the prayer book. His editions of the *siddur* and the *mahzor* excel both in accuracy and appearance; the accompanying translation was the best possible for its time, and the commentary was a pioneering work in the study of liturgical poetry. Heidenheim dropped all the additions to the prayers that had been introduced in the wake of Lurianic mysticism, except for a very few vestiges. His texts, together with the translations by Michael Sachs, were accepted as authoritative even in circles not sympathetic to reform. This purging of kabbalistic accretions was a decisive step, a farewell to views and traditions that had dominated in the preceding period. It was one of those quiet revolutions that, without attracting much attention, actually have epoch-making significance. The prayer book edited by Seligmann Baer, following Heidenheim's method, represents, for all practical purposes, perfection as regards accuracy of text and correctness of vocalization. At the same time, it represents a retrograde step, since it took up again many of the old, distorting accretions. Thus, it subscribed to the romantic reaction that was ushered in with the nineteenth century.

In my opinion, the development of the Jewish prayer can be divided into five major periods of development: the era of the **משנה**, the era of the **גמרא**, the era of the **גאונים**, the era of the **ראשונים** and the era that followed the death of the **אר"י**, Rabbi Isaac Luria. The omission of **מזמור כד'** from the **מהזור לראש השנה** edited by Rabbi Heidenheim may be a clue that a sixth period in the development of the Jewish prayer book needs to be recognized. It would be the period that led to the establishment of the current Ashkenazic **סידור** and its special character would be described as the period in which many of the changes to the **סידור** that had been instituted by the followers of the **אר"י** began to be undone.

It should be noted that both the **תיקונים**, innovations, that were introduced by the followers of the **אר"י** and the movement to undo those innovations were spurred by historical circumstances. The followers of the **אר"י** introduced new liturgical practices based on their view that the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 represented the first steps in the coming of the **משיח**. In their opinion, the observance of the new practices would hasten the coming of the **משיח**. The movement to undo those practices was spurred by the emancipation of the Jews in many of the German states. It was that emancipation that led to the development of the Reform Movement. Rabbi Heidenheim astutely recognized that the new political reality called for a review of the Jewish prayer service even within the Orthodox community. His method of "reforming" the prayer service was to remove many of the Kabbalistic practices that had entered the service. The Ashkenazic **סידורים** and **מהזורים** that are in common use today still reflect the reforms instituted by Rabbi Heidenheim².

2. One quick way to notice the changes made by Rabbi Heidenheim to the **סידור** is to compare current Ashkenazic **סידורים** to current Sephardic **סידורים**. The depiction of the verses of **שיר למנצה בננינת מזמור שיר** (תהלים סז) in the shape of a **מנורה** found in many Sephardic **סידורים** on the page just before **ברוך שאמר** is an easily recognizable difference. Among Sephardim, Rabbi David De Sola Poole can be identified as one who removed many Kabbalistic practices when he edited a Sephardic **סידור** on behalf of the Union Of Sephardic Congregations in 1941. The editors of the Artscroll **סידור** may have been looking to re-insert some of the Kabbalistic practices into the standard Ashkenazic **סידור**. The decision by the editors to change the **ברכה** of **ברוך שאמר** from **עמו המהולל בפי עמו** to **עמו המהולל בפה עמו** is representative of that attitude. It should be noted that Rabbi Zeligman Baer expressed strong opposition to that change to the **ברכה** in his **סדר עבודת ישראל**.