

Dr. Bloom, Diplomate, American Board of Urology in North Miami Beach, shares his research on the prayers and customs of *Rosh Hashanah*.

## THE *ROSH HASHANAH* PRAYERS—HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The order of prayers for *Rosh Hashanah* as practiced today is the product of a developmental process spanning more than two millennia. In the prayers one may perceive echoes of ancient controversies, coalescence of conflicting traditions, and modification of pre-existing customs dictated by historical imperatives.

Such details of the service as when the shofar is to be blown, the respective compositions of the four *Amidot*, modification of standard blessings to reflect the themes inherent in the *Yamim Noraim*, and the nature of the *Amidah* of the *Shaliah Tsibur* represent aspects of these historical phenomena and are the subjects of the ensuing discussion.

### PART I

#### THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE FOUR *AMIDOT*

The custom of blowing the shofar during the *Musaf Amidah* has its origin in a halakhah quoted in a mishnah of the last chapter of Tractate *Rosh Hashanah*:

“Of those who pass before the ark on the Holiday of *Rosh Hashanah*, the second is ‘*matkiah*’ . . .”<sup>1</sup>

As it would appear to have been preferable to have sounded the shofar earlier in the day (i.e., during *Shaharit*), in the spirit of the Talmudic dictum *Zerizim Makdimim LeMitsvot*,<sup>2</sup> the following has been cited as one possible justification of its postponement:

“. . . because of an event that occurred: Once the shofar was blown during *Shaharit*, causing the enemies to suspect that the

Jews were about to attack; whereupon they themselves attacked the Jews and slaughtered them. [Shofar blowing was therefore postponed till *Musaf*] allowing the enemies now to reason that having seen the Jews reading *Kriat Shema*, reciting the *Shaharit Amidah*, reading the Torah, reciting the *Musaf Amidah* and only then blowing the shofar—they were most likely involved in their own religious rites” [and therefore not planning to attack].<sup>3</sup>

The Talmud does not provide any other details of this event which would enable it to be dated accurately. Lieberman<sup>4</sup> is of the opinion that in the era of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai (circa middle first century C.E.) the shofar was still being sounded during *Shaharit*. Levi<sup>5</sup> dates the event more precisely to the period of Roman persecution of the Bar Kokhba era (circa early second century C.E.).

In order better to understand the order of the *Rosh Hashanah* prayers prior to the above *takkanah*, i.e., in the era when the shofar was blown during *Shaharit*, one must first recognize the interdependence of the sounding of the shofar with the extension of the standard festival *Amidah* to include the blessings of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*. This connection is so intimate that some Rishonim<sup>6</sup> consider these originally to be the only blessings of the shofar blasts; conversely the main shofar blasts are deemed to be those that are sounded during *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*<sup>7</sup> — therefore the collective name for this group of prayers — *Tekiatah Devei Rav*.<sup>8</sup>

This relationship is perhaps best summarized by a statement of the fourth century Babylonian amora, Rabba: “The Holy One, Blessed Be He declared: ‘recite before me on *Rosh Hashanah Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot* . . . with the shofar’.”<sup>9</sup> It would therefore follow as a natural corollary to the sounding of shofar during *Shaharit*, that its *Amidah* must have been extended to include nine blessings.<sup>10</sup>

The Ritva (as does the Ramban<sup>11</sup>) accentuates this conclusion by offering a modified interpretation of the original Mishna and its peculiar wording:

“. . .the tanna did not choose the word *tokeah* (i.e., blow) but rather *matkiah* as the latter does not signify the blowing of

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

the shofar but rather the recitation of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*; he chose this wording . . . to teach us that these blessings and the blasts of the shofar are mutually dependent; one recites them only when the shofar is sounded, as in *Musaf* during our time, and, when there is no persecution, during *Yotser* (i.e., *Shaharit*) . . .<sup>12</sup>

Of further interest to this interpretation of the Mishna is the opinion of the second century tanna, R. Yehuda ben Ilai, that *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* are specifically to be recited in time of war.<sup>13</sup> It would therefore seem, at least according to this view, that not only the shofar blasts, but even recitation of their introductory blessings, may have been misconstrued as a provocative act.

Though there is unanimity of opinion as to the composition of the *Shaharit Amidah* of this early period, there is disagreement amongst Rishonim as to the nature of the remaining *Amidot*. As may be noted in the opinion of the Ritva,<sup>14</sup> only one *Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah* included *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*, i.e., that *Amidah* during which the shofar was sounded. This is the predominant view of most other Rishonim.<sup>15</sup>

In opposition to this view, stands the opinion of the Baal HaMaor, that, at its origin, the *Rosh Hashanah* order of prayers was radically different from that found in later years (and to this day) — that in fact *all Amidot* of *Rosh Hashanah* originally were composed of nine blessings but it is only

“. . . a *minhag* that is with us from our fathers and forefathers that one does not recite nine blessings except in *Musaf* and in the other prayers seven . . .”<sup>16</sup>

The Baal HaMaor does not specify during which period this transition took place though it would appear from the opinion of the late third century Eretz Israel amora, R. Eleazar ben Pedat, that only during the third blessings of the *Musaf Amidah* may one conclude with the phrase *Adir HaMelukhah*,<sup>17</sup> that, at the latest by this time, *Malkhuyot* (and therefore presumably *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot* as well) was being recited only during the *Musaf Amidah*.

The nephew of the Baal HaMaor, the Ribav,<sup>18</sup> though in great part agreeing with his uncle and mentor, nevertheless

maintains that since, in principle, *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* are the blessings of the shofar blasts, they should properly be recited only when the shofar is blown. Furthermore, again taking note, as did the Ritva, of the peculiar language of the Mishnah, since the tannah chose the word *matkiah*, the Ribav concludes that:

"... the blessings [of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*] are not recited *and the shofar is not sounded except in the Musaf prayer*.<sup>19</sup>

In this, the Ribav is apparently alluding to an opinion (recently expressed by Levi<sup>20</sup>) that would appear to be a natural corollary to the views of his teacher, the Baal HaMaor, i.e., that during the period preceding the *takkanah*, the shofar was in fact sounded during *Shaharit*, *Musaf* and *Minhah* along with recitation of the *Amidah* of nine blessings. Though the *Maariv Amidah* likewise included *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*, the shofar was not blown with it as it is properly sounded only during the daylight hours.

The Ribav, therefore, seems to imply that the result of the *takkanah* was twofold: (1) The blowing of the shofar, which hitherto had only commenced during *Shaharit* and had been repeated during *Musaf* and *Minhah* respectively, would now be heard exclusively during *Musaf*. (2) The *Amidot*, which till then had contained nine blessings for all the prayers of *Rosh Hashanah*, would now include *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot* only during *Musaf*.

Further analysis of the order of prayers<sup>21</sup> in the immediate post-*takkanah* period reveals that the shofar was presumably first sounded in conjunction with recitation of the *Musaf Amidah* by the *Shaliah Tsibur*. At least, in this *gemara*, no other series of shofar blasts is alluded to.

From a question, however, posed by the mid-second century tannah R. Yitshak,<sup>22</sup> we first are apprised of two separate series of shofar blasts, once when the congregation is seated (*Tekiot Demeyushav*) and again when it is standing (*Tekiot Demeumad*), with the purpose of the repetition being to confuse the Satan and assure a more beneficial judgment.

It is unknown how far back sounding the shofar other than

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

during the *Amidah* dates. It would seem to appear from the above mentioned order of prayers,<sup>23</sup> that in the immediate post-*takkanah* period (and, presumably in the pre-*takkanah* period as well), the shofar was not being sounded prior to the *Amidah*; at least one Rishon<sup>24</sup> maintains that even when the shofar was sounded during the *Shaharit Amidah*, it was preceded by an earlier series of shofar blasts, the *Tekiot Demeyushav*. Where in the *Shaharit* prayer this occurred is not specified. It is tempting, however, to speculate that in the pre-*takkanah* period the shofar was first sounded early in the morning in a manner similar to the blessing of the Lulav on *Sukkot*, i.e., prior to the *Shaharit* prayers. This, however, has not been documented.<sup>25</sup>

That the shofar blasts referred to as *Meyushav* are those preceding the *Amidah* and *Meumad*, those heard during the *Amidah* itself, is the opinion of most Rishonim,<sup>26</sup> though there exist differences amongst them as to exactly which of the two series is specifically intended to confuse the Satan.

Since these *Tekiot Demeyushav* were being sounded prior to the *Amidah*, and thus prior to the blessings of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*, the main shofar blessings, it was found necessary to precede these earlier shofar blasts with the abbreviated blessing (*matbeah katsar*) *Lishmoa Kol Shofar*. The Ramban<sup>27</sup> maintains that even when the shofar was sounded only during the *Amidah* (i.e., when *Tekiot Demeyushav* did not as yet exist) this abbreviated blessing was nevertheless recited—probably in the middle of the *Amidah*—presumably following the concluding blessing of *Malkhuyot* and preceding its shofar blasts.

Again alone, in opposition to this view, stand the Baal HaMaor<sup>28</sup> and the Ribav.<sup>29</sup> These Rishonim are of the opinion that at least during the Talmudic era, *Tekiot Demeyushav* referred to those blasts sounded during the *Amidah* of the *Shlichah Tsibur* (at which time the congregants were seated) while *Tekiot Demumad* were those blown after the *Amidah* (when the congregants were standing to leave the synagogue).

The Baal HaMaor, quoting R. Hai Gaon, does display a degree of doubt as to the authenticity of this custom of blowing

the shofar after the *Amidah*:

"... we do not practice thus (i.e., sound the shofar after the *Musaf Amidah*) under the authority of an established *minhag*, neither did we hear of our ancestors practicing it but only that individuals are involved in this practice according to their respective desires . . ."<sup>30</sup>

He nevertheless holds firm in his definition of *Tekiot Demeumad* and dates its origin at least to the era in which the Sanhedrin convened in Yavneh (late first-early second century C.E.) as may be documented by the statement of the late third century Babylonian amora, R. Yitshak bar Yosef that:

"... when the *Shaliah Tsibur* completed the *Tekiatah* in Yavneh, those present were deafened by the sounds of the shofar, individually blown by the congregants."<sup>31</sup>

The post-Talmudic period, according to the Baal HaMaor<sup>32</sup> saw the introduction of another series of shofar blasts—prior to the *Musaf Amidah*. The purpose of this new series was originally not to confuse the Satan but rather for a very human, practical problem facing the leaders of that generation:

"... because of the infirm and the oppressed that left the synagogue early without waiting for the *Musaf* prayers . . . and even for the remainder of the congregants, as it became the custom to lengthen the prayers significantly with the addition of many *piyutim* . . . a series of shofar blasts, now called *Meyushav*, was introduced early in the services . . ."<sup>33</sup>

For this new series of shofar blasts, the abbreviated blessing *Lishmoa Kol Shofar* was utilized as an introduction. Again disagreeing with the Ramban, the Baal HaMaor maintains that this blessing was only rarely recited in the Talmudic era but was rather introduced into the standard prayers later, probably in the Geonic period, as the necessity for it arose.<sup>34</sup>

As there now were already two separate series of shofar blasts, one before and the other during the *Amidah*, these were considered sufficient to confuse the Satan, and the third series, following the *Amidah*, now became superfluous and was therefore abolished.<sup>35</sup>

It would seem, however, that in this statement regarding the fate of these final shofar blasts, the Baal HaMaor was only re-

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

flecting the practices in Spain and Southern France, of which he was personally knowledgeable. In the Italian Jewish community, Nathan ben Yehiel (d 1106),<sup>36</sup> who preceded the Baal HaMaor by about a half century, described the then probably new custom of completing 100 shofar blasts on *Rosh Hashanah* by sounding the shofar after the *Amidah*, thus formalizing what had heretofore been only an individual practice by endowing it with a new purpose. This custom, having first probably taken root in the Italian peninsula, ultimately became accepted by most Jewish communities and is widely practiced today.<sup>37</sup>

The various times in our modern order of prayer during which the shofar is sounded, would, therefore, appear to satisfy the originally conflicting opinions of both groups of Rishonim. While the definitions of *Tekiot Demeyushav* and *Tekiot Demeumad* classically accepted today are those set forth by the first group (Ramban et al), the shofar is nevertheless blown after the *Amidah* as well, in accordance with the opinion of the second group (Baal HaMaor and Ribav).

## PART II

### INCLUSION OF *MALKHUYOT* INTO THE *AMIDAH*

The order of the nine blessings of the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah* is the subject of a difference of opinion between two second century tannaim quoted in the last chapter of Tractate *Rosh Hashanah*.<sup>38</sup> The exact point of disagreement between the two sages, R. Yohanan ben Nuri and R. Akiva, concerns the proper blessing in the *Amidah* into which *Malkhuyot* should be introduced. R. Yohanan ben Nuri is of the opinion that it should be recited in the third blessing (*Kedushat HaShem*) while R. Akiva argues that *Malkhuyot* should be included in the fourth blessing (*Kedushat HaYom*). Both are in agreement, however, that the shofar should be blown only during the fourth, fifth, and sixth blessings, i.e., according to R. Yohanan ben Nuri the shofar is not sounded in conjunction with the recitation of *Malkhuyot*.

In their commentaries on this difference of opinion, the Rishonim<sup>39</sup> are unanimous in declaring the Halakhah according

to R. Akiva, that *Malkhuyot* should be included into the fourth blessing, *Kedushat HaYom*. This seemingly is what the modern order of the *Amidah* would appear to represent; nevertheless several recent scholars<sup>40</sup> have postulated that in actuality, the influence of the opinion of R. Yohanan ben Nuri may still be found even today in our *Rosh Hashanah Amidah*.

Thus, of the six blessings common to the *Amidot* of the entire year (i.e., the first and the last three respectively), only one, the third blessing, *Kedushat HaShem*, is significantly altered on *Rosh Hashanah* by the prayer *Uvekhen Ten Pakhdekha*. As one may surmise from its reading, its theme (as well as of the *piyut*, *Veye'etayu Kol*, added to it during the *Musaf Amidah* of the *Shaliah Tsibur*) deals mainly with the concept of the sovereignty of God, i.e., *Malkhuyot*.

It has therefore been proposed that, in fact, *Uvekhen* represents vestiges of *Malkhuyot* according to R. Yohanan ben Nuri, once recited to introduce the various verses alluding to the sovereignty of God into the third blessing, but that since *Malkhuyot* is now properly recited only in the fourth blessing, the biblical verses, once part of the original prayer, have been deleted.

The fact that the standard concluding phrase of the third blessing, *Hae'l HaKadosh*, likewise has been altered on *Rosh Hashanah* to *HaMelekh HaKadosh* also tends to support this view. This modification is based on the opinion of the third century Babylonian amarah, Rav, that "all year one concludes with *Hae-l HaKadosh* . . . except for the ten days between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom HaKippurim* when he concludes with *Ha-Melekh HaKadosh*."<sup>41</sup>

In this, Rav appears to differ with a contemporary Eretz Israel amarah, R. Eleazar ben Pedat, who maintains that during these same ten days, one has also discharged his obligation by concluding with *Hae'l HaKadosh*. The exact intention of R. Eleazar ben Pedat is in itself a topic of disagreement amongst Rishonim,<sup>42</sup> some of whom<sup>43</sup> are of the opinion that R. Eleazar ben Pedat is only arguing *Bediavad* and in actuality agrees with Rav that it is preferable to conclude with the phrase *HaMelekh HaKadosh* during this period.

Though, in the ensuing *gemara*, no reason is given for the



## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

change in the wording of the blessing, the classically accepted explanation is that given by Rashi: "for one these days He shows His Kingship in judging the world"<sup>44</sup>; nevertheless, one, may in fact postulate that this opinion in some way represents the evolution, one hundred years later, of the opinion of R. Yohanan ben Nuri.

Support for this may be found in another opinion of R. Eleazar ben Pedat, previously cited, that whereas at all other times, if one concludes the third blessing of the *Amidah* with the phrase *Adir HaMelukhah*<sup>45</sup> he has not fulfilled his obligation, if he does so to conclude the third blessing of the *Musaf Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah*, he has discharged his obligation. (As this opinion of R. Eleazar ben Pedat appears once again to be dealing with a *Bediavad* situation, it may not conflict but rather supplement his first opinion.)

The *gemara*<sup>46</sup> explains this other opinion of R. Eleazar ben Pedat by stating that it is in accordance with that of R. Yohanan ben Nuri. Since R. Eleazar ben Pedat was himself a student of Rav,<sup>47</sup> it is possible that both he and his teacher—the former in preferring, the latter in insisting that the third blessing during the period in question be altered to *HaMelekh HaKadosh*—were influenced by the teachings of R. Yohanan ben Nuri. It is perhaps for this reason that at least one Rishon, while commenting on the original difference of opinion between R. Yohanan ben Nuri and R. Akiva, explains the phraseology of the blessing according to the former, that when combining *Malkhuyot* with *Kedushat HaShem* one should conclude *HaMelekh HaKadosh*.<sup>48</sup>

What actually therefore has been proposed is that, in fact, in the classically accepted *Rosh Hashanah Musaf Amidah*, two separate orders of *Malkhuyot* are to be found—one in the fourth blessing—properly labelled *Malkhuyot*—according to the opinion of R. Akiva—and the other in the third blessing—according to the opinion of R. Yohanan ben Nuri—which, though not officially considered *Malkhuyot*, nevertheless has it as its major theme, along with the appropriate modified phraseology of its concluding blessing.

Coalescence of two opposing opinions into the text of one prayer is not an uncommon phenomenon and probably reflects the

spirit of a Talmudic dictum expressed frequently by the fourth century Babylonian amorah R. Pappa "Therefore let us recite both [*Hilkhoh Nimrinhu LeTarvayu (LeKhulhu)*]"<sup>49</sup> — that when faced with a difference of opinion in the matter of wording of a prayer, one may resolve the difference by combining the two opinions (e.g., the blessing after the reading of the *Megillah* is in actuality a combination of two separately proposed blessings<sup>50</sup>). Though the *gemara* never specifically applies this dictum to the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah*, an interesting incident recounted in the *gemara*<sup>51</sup> suggests the historical setting in which this coalescence may actually have taken place.

The background for relating the incident is the observation by the *gemara* that in Judea, the practice was according to R. Akiva, whereas, in the Galilee, it was according to R. Yohanan ben Nuri. Furthermore each tradition was considered equally valid in the entire country.

To illustrate this point, the *gemara* recounts the story of two separate *Rosh Hashanah* days celebrated in Usha under the leadership of the then Nasi, R. Simon ben Gamaliel. On the first day, when R. Yohanan ben Beroka was the *Shaliah Tsibur*, he recited the *Amidah* according to R. Yohanan ben Nuri. R. Simon ben Gamaliel commented that this was not what had been practiced in Yavneh.

On the following *Rosh Hashanah* day (the following year), R. Haninah the son of R. Yosi was the *Shaliah Tsibur*, and he recited the *Amidah* according to R. Akiva, whereupon R. Simon ben Gamaliel observed that this was what had been practiced in Yavneh.

The placing of this story in Usha, in which the Sanhedrin reconvened in the middle of the second century C.E., following the Bar Kokhba revolt and its catastrophic aftermath, would put it in a period during which Jewish settlement in Judea had effectively been terminated, and the surviving Jews of that area had migrated to the Galilee, bringing with them traditions different from those current in their new surroundings.

It is likely that, at least in part for this reason, the *gemara* considered each custom equally valid throughout the land, and uses the above narrative to illustrate that point. What is most

striking about this account (especially to the modern worshipper accustomed as he is to predetermined orders of prayer—at least in the same congregation) is that in one congregation in Usha, two different and opposing traditions were being followed, depending upon whether the *Shaliah Tsibur* was a disciple of R. Yohanan ben Nuri (as apparently was R. Yohanan ben Beroka<sup>52</sup>) or of R. Akiva (as presumably was R. Haninah the son of R. Yosi), and that though R. Simon ben Gamaliel, an emigre from Judea and a product of the academy in Yavneh and obviously preferring the tradition of R. Akiva, had no recourse but to allow both traditions to exist side by side.

It is not too difficult, therefore, to envision these two traditions gradually fusing, with certain necessary modifications, into one unified liturgy, so that about 100 years later, Rav and R. Eleazar ben Pedat, who themselves studied in the academies in the Galilee (the former prior to returning to Babylonia) insisting upon or at least favoring the modification of the ending phraseology of the third blessing to reflect the fusion of the traditions.

In order to explain the inclusion of *Uvekhen Ten Pakhdekha* and *HaMelekh HaKadosh* into the other *Amidot* of *Rosh Hashanah*, when *Malkhuyot* is not officially recited, proponents of this theory<sup>53</sup> cite the opinion of the Baal HaMaor previously noted, that in the early Talmudic period all *Amidot* of *Rosh Hashanah* originally included *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot*. When they were deleted from all but the *Musaf Amidah*, the origin of the extended third blessing, as being a reflection of *Malkhuyot* according to R. Yohanan ben Nuri, had already been forgotten; therefore it was allowed to remain in the other *Amidot* (as well as being introduced in part or in toto into the remaining days of the *Yamim Noraim*) with the justification that it was accentuating the theme of sovereignty during this period.

Not only did this influence of the opinion of R. Yohanan ben Nuri extend throughout all the *Yamim Noraim* but it has even been further theorized that the concluding verse of *Kedushah*, "*Yimlokh . . .*", widely recognized as not a part of the original prayer, but rather a later addition, was in fact introduced into that prayer from the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah*, likewise under the influence of this opinion.<sup>54</sup>

One must, however, approach the entire theory formulated above with a certain degree of skepticism. Thus no evidence has as yet ever been cited definitely to identify the prayer *Uvekhen Ten Pakdekha* as the *Malkhuyot* of R. Yohanan ben Nuri.

It should be further understood that there appears to be an inherent connection in prayer between the concepts of sanctity (*Kedushah*) and sovereignty (*Malkhut*). Thus for example, the *Kedushah* text according to the Rambam for the entire year begins with the words "Let us sanctify and acclaim as King" (*Nakdishakh VeNamlikhakh*).<sup>55</sup>

It may be further cited that in the ancient Eretz Israel Rite, the custom of extolling the sovereignty of God was not unique to *Rosh Hashanah* but was common to *all* other holiday *Amidot* as well. Thus, the prayer *Melokh Al Kol Ha-Olom*, found today in the Ashkenazic Rite only in (the fourth blessing of) the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah* (and in the modern Sephardic Rite in the *Yom Kippur Amidah* as well) was once recited in the ancient Eretz Israel Rite in all the *Amidot of Shalosh Regalim*.<sup>56</sup>

One must, therefore, agree with the conclusion of Goldschmitt<sup>57</sup> that the theory, in part developed above, must still be considered conjecture, which though appearing quite plausible, remains, as yet, unproven.

### PART III

#### THE *AMIDOT* OF THE *SHALIAH TSIBUR* AND THE CONGREGATION

The obligation of an individual who is praying in a congregation to recite the *Amidah* himself, is the subject of a difference of opinion between the first century tannah R. Gamaliel and the *Hakhamim* of that era quoted in the final mishnah of *Rosh Hashanah*.<sup>58</sup>

The first opinion given, and later amplified in the ensuing *gemara*,<sup>59</sup> that of the *Hakhamim*, is that just as the *Shaliah Tsibur* is required to recite the *Amidah*, so is each and every individual required to do so. The only reason, according to this view, for the repetition of the *Amidah* aloud by the *Shaliah Tsibur*, is for

him to act as a surrogate in discharging the obligation of any individual in the congregation who lacks the proficiency to recite the *Amidah* of his own.

R. Gamaliel, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the *Shaliah Tsibur*, by reciting the *Amidah* aloud, discharges the obligation of all the congregants, i.e., even those who do possess the ability to recite the *Amidah* of their own. The only reason, according to R. Gamaliel, for the optional silent recitation of the *Amidah* by the congregation is to serve as an "intermission," providing the *Shaliah Tsibur* with sufficient time to recall the wording of the *Amidah* to mind by reciting it silently to himself.<sup>60</sup>

To understand this need, one must bear in mind that in the period of time being discussed, prayers (as distinct from verses or even complete segments from the *Tanakh*) were recited almost completely from memory. In fact, as with the oral law, so too was there a specific prohibition against committing prayer to writing ("Writers of *Berakhot* are as those who burn the Torah,"<sup>61</sup> and not until the fourth century C.E., at the earliest,<sup>62</sup> was this prohibition lifted).

There were thus at the time of R. Gamaliel and his colleagues (circa late first century C.E.) no authorized texts to which the *Shaliah Tsibur* or the congregants were able to refer. As described elsewhere in the Talmud<sup>63</sup> the *Shliah Tsibur* was permitted a remarkable degree of latitude in the wording or even in the order of the *Amidah*; nevertheless, minimum standards had to be maintained — thus, according to R. Gamaliel, the "intermission" provided for the *Shaliah Tsibur*, allowing time to prepare himself for the recitation of the *Amidah* aloud.<sup>64</sup>

This problem, of being forced to commit entire prayers to memory would, of course, become far more pronounced during *Rosh Hashanah* (and *Yom Kippur* of the Jubilee Year) when the *Amidah*, with the addition of two more blessings and modification of a third (even though according to at least one opinion<sup>65</sup> the ten biblical verses of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* did not themselves have to be recited) would become especially lengthy.

This difficulty, coupled with the fact of its recitation only one

day a year( the conclusion of the *gemara*<sup>66</sup> is that at that time, *Rosh Hashanah*, at least in Eretz Israel, was still celebrated just one day) made its yearly recitation from memory truly a formidable task, far above the average ability of most congregants. It is therefore not surprising to find<sup>67</sup> that R. Yohanan decided the Halakhah according to R. Gamaliel only in the blessings of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* of the Jubilee Year, and only if the congregant is present during the *entire* recitation of the *Amidah* by the *Shaliah Tsibur*.

The exact intention of R. Yohanan by this decision, in itself remained a source of controversy for approximately 1,000 years, well into the period of the Rishonim. The source of this controversy, which was responsible for the development of different traditions in the practical application of the Halakhah was the problem specific to *Rosh Hashanah* as noted above.

Thus, the Halakhah had not been decided according to R. Gamaliel for all the other *Amidot* of the year, including those of the festivals, wherein seven blessings were recited. Obviously it was felt that one could expect the majority of congregants to recite these *Amidot*, even if only from memory. The only significant difference between these and the *Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah* was the addition of two separate blessings (*Zikhronot* and *Shofarot*), and the inclusion of another (*Malkhuyot*) into the standard fourth blessing of the festival *Amidah*.

It is not surprising therefore that in the Geonic and early Rishonim periods,<sup>68</sup> the custom existed on *Rosh Hashanah* that the congregants were *obligated* to recite the silent *Amidah* — but only of seven blessings, whereas the *Shaliah Tsibur* recited the full *Amidah* of nine blessings. *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* were altogether omitted as was most of *Malkhuyot* including its ten verses. Other portions of the latter, however, (e.g., the prayer *Melakh Al Kol Ha-Olam*) had become so inextricably linked with the blessing of *Kedushat Hayom* that they were left intact, even though, theoretically, *Malkhuyot* too was being deleted.

One further qualification of this custom was that, though the *Shaliah Tsibur* was discharging the obligation of the congregants only in *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot*, nevertheless, the congregants, who had already recited seven blessings in their

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

own silent *Amidah*, were required to hear them all over again recited by the *Shaliah Tsibur* along with *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot*, and not just be present when the *Shliah Tsibur* was reciting the latter.<sup>69</sup>

The Talmudic source for this once prevalent custom may be found in the description of an account of two third century amoraim, R. Hisda and R. Zeiri celebrating *Rosh Hashanah* in their native Babylonia.<sup>70</sup> A discussion ensues between these two sages concerning the reason that R. Hisda had repeated the *Amidah*. The exact specifics of the account have been the subject of various interpretations,<sup>71</sup> some of which,<sup>72</sup> were used to justify the development of this custom.

The custom was by no means universal; it was apparently more prevalent in Babylonian-Sephardic circles, while amongst central European Jewry of the post-geonic period, congregants, depending on their proficiency, either recited all nine blessings or none at all.<sup>73</sup> The Ramban<sup>74</sup> cites many of his predecessors, who as can be documented from their responsa, always recited nine blessings. The Ritva, though agreeing that the custom had been halakhically acceptable, nevertheless cautioned against it:

“... for according to what we have seen, not every one is alert enough to hear the entire prayer from the *Shaliah Tsibur* and their minds wander from it — it is far better that he who is proficient recite all nine blessings for himself and not rely on the *Shaliah Tsibur* . . .”<sup>75</sup>

Amongst the first to move towards abolition of the custom was the 11th century Rishon R. Yitshak Giat, a student of R. Samuel Hanagid, who is quoted as having taught:

“... and we received our tradition from great scholars and teachers and men of deeds . . . such as R. Samuel Halevi<sup>76</sup> who in turn received it from R. Hanokh<sup>77</sup> and the elders of that generation, that in practice, one doesn't recite seven but rather nine blessings, and this the way they teach and practice . . .”<sup>78</sup>

The objections of R. Yitshak Giat<sup>79</sup> are based on certain aspects of the dialogue between R. Gamaliel and the *Hakhamim* concerning their difference of opinion. The Ramban, as quoted by R. Asher, considered these objections to be of great merit but nevertheless remained a proponent of the custom as it had

been based on strong historic tradition:

"... the geonim testify that from time immemorial, the custom in the Yeshiva was that the congregants recited seven and the *Shaliah Tsibur* nine [blessings] ... therefore we must accept their testimony, as they received [this tradition] from the Rabbanan Saborai and the Rabbanan Saborai from the Rabbanan Amoraï and they occupied the chair of R. Ashi and prayed in his synagogue ... and this custom was widespread throughout Israel ..."<sup>80</sup>

By the twelfth century, however, even in those Sephardic communities where the custom had once prevailed, it was falling into disuse. The Baal HaMaor who spent his youth in Gerona, Spain, and later settled in the southern French town of Lunel where, in the 1180s, he completed his epic commentary on the Talmud, recalls:

"... in my childhood, I saw the entire congregation reciting seven [blessings] and only the *Shaliah Tsibur* himself would recite nine blessings relying on the custom of the yeshivot of the geonim ... and now everyone has reverted to reciting nine ..."<sup>81</sup>

The Ramban, who lived in the 13th century, in the generation following the Baal HaMaor, commenting on the disappearance of the custom, explains it thus:

"... and in the early days, the majority were not proficient [in the prayers] and therefore were of the custom to recite seven [blessings], in order to allow the *Shaliah Tsibur* to recall the *Amidah* to mind, but now the custom is to recite nine and he who is not proficient reads it in prayer books in which the order [of the prayers] of the day is written ..."<sup>82</sup>

By the next generation of Rishonim, though the custom was only of historical interest, a contemporary of that period, R. Asher,<sup>83</sup> voiced strong halakhic objections to it. It was his opinion that the nine blessings of the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah* represent one indivisible unit, similar to the seven blessings of other *Amidot* of the year. Deletion of any one of the blessings renders all the others invalid (*berakhah levatalah*). R. Asher therefore concludes that the congregant should either recite all nine blessings, or, if incapable of doing so, none at all.<sup>84</sup>

Though this custom disappeared from general use almost 900



## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

years ago, it, as well as the arguments used to justify it, still influence today's *Rosh Hashanah* customs and liturgy:

(1) Though during the rest of the year, congregants must recite their *Amidah* silently, on *Rosh Hashanah* it may be recited in a clearly audible voice.<sup>85</sup> This is based on the assumption that most congregants are unfamiliar with the *Rosh Hashanah Amidah* and thus are using Mahzorim. The fear, therefore, that reciting the *Amidah* audibly would disrupt one's neighbor (who might be reciting it from memory) does not apply.

(2) Since the recitation of the *Amidah* by the congregants was not considered obligatory and, even when said, the blessings of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* were often deleted, it is still the predominant custom, at least among those following the Ashkenazic and Yemenite ("Baladi") Rites, that the shofar is sounded only during the [obligatory] *Amidah* of the *Shliach Tsibur*.

(3) We may now better understand the significance of a prayer, *Ohilah La-el*, recited in the middle of the *Amidah* of the *Shliach Tsibur* that at first reading appears misplaced. In this prayer, the *Shliach Tsibur*, after having already completed a good portion of his *Amidah*, now prays that he be granted, amongst other requests, the gift of speech. Included in the prayer is the verse "O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may declare Thy praise,"<sup>86</sup> a verse classically associated with the introduction to the entire *Amidah* (and indeed in the modern Sephardic Rite (as opposed to the old usage<sup>87</sup>) *Ohilah La-el* is found prior to the entire *Rosh Hashanah Musaf Amidah*).

The significance of this prayer at this point in the *Amidah* may now be appreciated in a different light. It serves as an introduction to *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* and it is here, in the distant past, that the *Shliach Tsibur* was about to embark on his task of discharging the obligation of his congregants in the recitation of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* and for this reason:

"... it was ordained that the *Shaliah Tsibur* should recite in his *Amidah Ohilah La-el*, which the individual does not say, and it was placed in the beginning of *Malkhuyot*, for it is only for the blessings of *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* that he dis-

charges the obligation of even those who are proficient . . .”<sup>88</sup>

*Ohilah La-el* (as well as its immediately preceding prayer, *Heyeh Im Pipiyot*) is amongst the category of prayers classified as *Reshuyot* (permissions), i.e., a form of prayer, one of whose purposes, is to allow the *Shaliah Tsibur* liturgically to seek permission to digress from the standard course of the *Amidah*, as already recited by the congregants, and intercede in behalf of them with special prayers appropriate for the day — in this case *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot*.<sup>89</sup> In the *Yom Kippur Musaf*, it is similarly found prior to the *Avodah* and thus serves as a *Reshut* to recite it.

The ritual of prayer as originally practiced was intended to reflect the impromptu expressions of an individual in his relationship to God.<sup>90</sup> The early prohibition of committing prayers to writing should theoretically have allowed this spontaneity readily to be achieved. As it would only later become apparent, this expectation would prove illusory and, though representing the ideal, would ultimately become impractical.<sup>91</sup> A prescribed order of prayers, therefore, inevitably developed,<sup>92</sup> and received official sanction within the framework of halakhic guidelines finalized mainly in the Talmudic area.

The privilege reserved to an individual, however, to continue to contribute of his own into the prayer, was never revoked; indeed it was encouraged<sup>93</sup> and its logical corollary, the growth of diverse traditions,<sup>94</sup> was allowed to flourish. The rather significant role that *minhag* plays in the halakhic determination of the form (as opposed to the substance) of prayer, bears adequate testimony to this, as does the remarkable diversity of the many prayer rites.

The *Rosh Hashanah* order of prayers is but another expression of this phenomenon. It was not conceived by one generation or era, nor was it formulated by one community; rather it is the outgrowth of a developmental process spanning many years into which the traditions of many communities have found their rightful place.

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

### NOTES

Rabbi Zev Leff assisted in the preparation of this paper.

1. *Rosh Hashanah*, 32b; for clarification of the term *matkiah* see below.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 8. Of historical interest is that during World War I, shofar blowing was banned on the Franco-German front in the Alsace region, in the fear that it would be mistaken for a military signal. (I. M. Elbogen: *HaTefillah BeYisrael BeHitpathutah HaHistorit* (original in German), Tel Aviv, 1972, pg. 421).
4. S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Feshuta*, New York, 1956, Volume 1, pg. 41.
5. Levi, *Yesodot HaTefillah*, Tel Aviv, 1963, pg. 252 ff.
6. Baal HaMaor, *HaMaor HaKatan*, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *Umah SheNohagu*; *Shitat Ribav*, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *Kotav HaRav Dodi*.
7. R. Nissim, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter I, commentary on 16a, s.v. *Lama Tokim*.
8. *Yerushalmi Avodah Zorah*, Chapter I, Halakhah 2; for explanation of the term "Devei Rav" see *Mahzor LaYamim HaNoraim*, ed. Goldschmitt, Jerusalem, 1970, introduction, pg. 28, footnote 5.
9. *Rosh Hashanah*, 34b.
10. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Umah SheNohagu*; *Shitat Ribav*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Kotav HaRav Dodi*; Ramban, *Milhamot HaShem*, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*; *Hidushei HaRitva*, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, commentary on 32b, s.v. *HaSheini Matkiah*.
11. Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*.
12. *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *HaSheini Matkiah*.
13. *Ta'anit*, 16b ff; *Ta'anit* 17a, Rashi, s.v. *Uvishe'at Milhamah*.
14. *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *HaSheini Matkiah*.
15. Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*; *Meiri Bet HaBehirah*, *Rosh Hashanah*, commentary on 32a, s.v. *Zehu Bei'ur*.
16. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Va'ani Omer*. To the modern reader, accustomed as he is to the standard order of the *Rosh Hashanah* prayers, this view of the Baal HaMaor would at first appear quite novel. It should be noted, however, that for all other days of the year respectively, the various *Amidot*, except for minor modifications are identical. The only exception is the *Musaf Amidah*; in early liturgical history, however, this too was merely a repetition of the *Shaharit Amidah* to which was added a verse recalling the *Musaf sacrifices* (*Yerushalmi Berakhot*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6). This was apparently even true for *Rosh Hodesh* and *Hol Hamoed* of weekdays, when the *Shaharit Amidah* of nineteen blessings was repeated in *Musaf*, again only slightly modified (*Mahazit HaShekel*, on *Magen Avraham* 268 — No .5). In this light, the view of the Baal HaMaor that for *Rosh Hashanah* as well, the various *Amidot* should be virtually identical, may be better appreciated.
17. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6; vide *infra*.
18. *Shitat Ribav*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Kotav HaRav Dodi*.
19. *Ibid.*

## TRADITION: A Journal of Orthodox Thought

20. E. Levi, *op. cit.*, pg. 252.
21. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 8.
22. *Rosh Hashanah*, 16a.
23. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 8.
24. *Shibolei HaLeket*, 301.
25. In the modern Yemenite ("Baladi") Rite, the shofar is first sounded prior to *Barukh She'Amar* or preferably at daybreak itself (*Hemdat Yamim*: section on *Yamim Noraim*); these blasts, however, which are not preceded by any blessing, do not represent vestiges of *Tekiot Demeyushav* of the pre-takkanah period but rather reflect a far more recent minhag—probably of Kabbalistic origin (*ibid.*). The Yemenite mahzor does not refer to this first series of shofar blasts as *Tekiot Demeyushav*; the latter, as in all other rites, are sounded (with the blessings) just prior to the *Musaf Amidah*.
26. *Shibolei HaLeket*, 301; Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *HaBorkhah*; Meiri, *op. cit.*, commentary on 16a; *Tur, Orah Haim* 585; R. Nissim, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Lamah Tokim*; *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, commentary on 16b, s.v. *Kedei LeArbev*.
27. Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *HaBorkhah*.
28. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Umah SheNohagu*.
29. *Shitat Ribav*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Kotav HaRav Dodi*.
30. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Umah SheNohagu*.
31. *Rosh Hashanah*, 29a.
32. *Shibolei HaLeket*, 302.
33. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Umah SheNohagu*.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Shibolei HaLeket*, 302.
36. *Arukh*: Heading *Erev*.
37. The Yemenite ("Baladi") Rite still adheres to the tradition of R. Saadiah Gaon (who, through his influence on the Siddur of the Rambam, played a major role in determining Yemenite liturgy), that only one shofar blast, described as a *Teruah Gedolah*, is sounded after the *Amidah* (Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Va'ani Omer*). Since 70 blasts had been sounded till this point (30 prior to *Barukh She'Amar*; 30 prior to the *Musaf Amidah*, and 10 during the *Amidah*) only 71 blasts in total are sounded in this rite.
38. *Rosh Hashanah*, 32a.
39. Alfasi, *Rosh Hashanah*, commentary on 32a; Meiri, *op. cit.*, commentary on 32a, s.v. *HaMishnah HaRevi'it*; *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, commentary on 32a, s.v. *VeOd Nohagu*.
40. Z. Ya'avetz, *Siddur Avodat HaLevavot*, Jerusalem, 1956, pg. 28 ff; I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 107; *Mahzor LaYamim HaNoraim*, *op. cit.*, introduction, pg. 20.
41. *Berakhot*, 12b.
42. R. Yonah, *Berakhot*, commentary on 12b, s.v. *Va'asikna*; Baal HaMaor, *HaMaor HaKatan, Berakhot*, Chapter 1, s.v. *Mai Havi*; *Shitat Ribav, Berakhot*, Chapter 1, s.v. *Shailinan*; Ramban, *Milhamot HaShem, Berakhot*, Chapter 1, s.v. *VeOd*.
43. Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *VeOd*; Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mai Havi*; *Shitat*

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

*Ribav, op. cit., s.v. Shailinan.*

44. *Berakhot*, 12b.

45. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6; Goldschmitt (*op. cit.*, introduction pg. 20, footnote 14) and I. Elbogen (*op. cit.*, pg. 107) emend this to read "*Adir HaMelukhah (Ve)Hakel HaKodosh.*"

46. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6.

47. *Megillah*, 29a; *Hulin*, 111b.

48. *Shitat Ribav, Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *VeKholel*; Meiri (*op. cit.*, commentary on 32a, s.v. *HaMishna HaRevi'it*), likewise states that "*HaMelekh HaKodosh*" is an appropriate ending for *Malkhuyot*.

49. *Megillah*, 21b; *Sotah*, 40a; *Berakhot*, 11b, 59b.

50. *Megillah*, 21b.

51. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6; *Rosh Hashanah*, 32a.

52. *Tosefta Terumot*, 7-14.

53. I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 107.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Rambam, *Sefer Ahavah, Seder Tefillot Kol HaShanah*.

56. I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 109.

57. *Mahzor LaYamim HaNoraim, op. cit.*; introduction, pg. 20.

58. *Rosh Hashanah*, 33b.

59. *Rosh Hashanah*, 34b ff.

60. *Bet Yosef*, 591.

61. *Tosefta Shabbat*, 14-4.

62. I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 2.

63. *Rosh Hashanah*, 32b; *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6.

64. An interesting modification of this custom was documented in the 15th century Sephardic community of Aragon by R. Yosef Karo ((*Bet Yosef* 591). By this time, authorized texts of the prayers had long been in general use, but in Aragon, whose inhabitants were described as mostly *Amei Haaretz*, unable to recite the *Amidah* even from the text, the *Shlich Tsibur* proceeded directly to recite the *Amidah* aloud, without any time being allotted for it to be said silently.

65. *Tosafot, Rosh Hashanah*, 35a, s.v. *Ileima*.

66. *Rosh Hashanah*, 32b.

67. *Rosh Hashanah*, 35a; *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6.

68. *Hidushei HaRitvah, op. cit.*, commentary on 35a, s.v. *Amar Rava*; R. Asher, *Rosh Hashanah*, commentary on 35a; Baal HaMaor, *HaMaor HaKatan, Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *VeNishtanu*; Ramban, *Milhamot HaShem, Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*; *Siddur R. Amran Gaon*, Edited by D. Goldschmitt, Jerusalem, 1971, pg. 141.

69. This prayer remained part of the congregant's *Amidah*, perhaps under the influence of the ancient Eretz Israel Rite where, as noted above, it was recited in all festival *Amidot* and not just as part of *Malkhuyot* on *Rosh Hashanah*. In the Yemenite ("Baladi") Rite this prayer is still recited on all Sabbaths and Festivals as the opening prayer upon entering the synagogue in the morning.

70. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 10; *Yerushalmi Berakhot*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 6.

## TRADITION: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*

71. R. Nissim, *Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, commentary on 35a, s.v. *Lefikkah*; Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*; *Bet Yosef*, 591; commentaries on *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah*, Chapter 4, Halakhah 10: *Korban HaEidah*; *Penei Moshe*; *Shirei Korban*; *Marei Panim*.

72. R. Nissim, *op. cit.*; *Korban HaEidah*, *op. cit.*; *Marei Panim*, *op. cit.*; Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*.

73. I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 109.

74. Ramban, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Mah Na'avid*.

75. *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, commentary on 35a, s.v. *Amar Rava*.

76. ben Al Dastur (d 1194), one of the post geonic leaders, who headed the Baghdad Academy for almost thirty years.

77. ben Moshe (d 1014) — Spanish Talmudist and teacher of R. Samuel Ha-Nagid.

78. R. Asher, *op. cit.*, commentary on 35a.

79. *Ibid.*; *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Amar Rava*.

80. R. Asher, *op. cit.*, commentary on 35a.

81. Baal HaMaor, *op. cit.*, s.v. *VeAl Titmah*.

82. Ramban, *op. cit.*, *Mah Na'avid*.

83. Ramban, *op. cit.*, *Mah Na'avid*.

83. R. Asher, *op. cit.*, commentary on 35a.

84. The custom today that the *Amidah* is always repeated (in *Shaharit* and *Minhah*) even if all the congregants are well versed in it, is based on a *Takkanat Hahamim* (*Shulkhan Arukh*, *Orah Haim*, 124, paragraph 3). This serves to make all the prayers respectively uniform and obviates the need of verifying, during each prayer, if congregants incapable of reciting the *Amidah* are indeed present and therefore whether the *Amidah* should be repeated (*Mishnah Berurah* 124, note 12). Theoretically, therefore, the *Amidah* of the *Shliach Tsibur* may at times be superfluous—except for allowing for recitation of the *Kedushah*. It is for this reason that a congregation pressed for time may dispense with the repetition of the *Amidah* except for reciting its first three blessings and the ensuing *Kedushah*.

The *Amidah* is not repeated in *Maariv* as here it is a non-obligatory prayer; frequently, when recited, it was done so at home (in fear of going to the synagogue at night (E. Levi, *op. cit.*, pg. 183)) and thus no *Shliach Tsibur* was present. The Eretz Israel communities of the Amoraic Period, who followed the opinion of R. Gamaliel that *Maariv* was obligatory, did repeat the *Amidah* and recite the *Kedushah* during *Maariv* as well (*Haikhalot Rabbati*, Chapter 9).

The recitation of *Magen Avot* is a reflection of this erstwhile custom. That in the Eretz Israel Rite it was the norm always to repeat the *Amidah* in *Maariv*, finds expression till this day in the introductory paragraph for *Magen Avot*, which, unlike all other *Amidot* of the week, concludes with the words *Koneh Shamaim VaAretz*—the latter forms part of the standard phraseology of the ancient Eretz Israel *Amidah* (I. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pg. 392).

85. *Orah Haim* 582, paragraph 9.

86. Deuteronomy, 32:3.

87. *Mahzor LaYamim HaNoraim*; *op. cit.*, introduction, pg. 44, footnote 49.

88. *Hidushei HaRitvah*, *op. cit.*, commentary on 34b, s.v. *Mi SheBerakh*.

## *The Rosh Hashanah Prayers — Historical Perspectives*

89. This is not the only instance in the liturgy of a *Reshut* continuing to be recited, though the original purpose for it had been eliminated. Another notable example is the prayer *Akdamut*, a *Reshut* (thus the last word of the first verse *ureshuta*) written in Aramaic to introduce the Aramaic translation to the Torah reading of the first day of Shavuoth. Translation into Aramaic was once the feature of all Torah readings but as knowledge of Aramaic diminished, recitation of the translation gradually disappeared except, in the early Ashkenazic and Northern French Rites, for the first day of *Shavuot* (and the seventh day of Passover); since public reading of the translation was now a digression from the norm, the *Reshut Akdamut* was recited as its introduction. When the Aramaic translation was deleted from the first day of *Shavuot* as well, *Akdamut* still continued to be recited as the original purpose for it had probably been forgotten.

90. Rambam, *Hilkhhot Tefillah*, Chapter 1, Halakhah 3.

91. Rambam, *op. cit.*, Halakhah 4.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Rosh Hashanah*, 28b: "R. Eliezer says: 'If a man makes his prayers a fixed task, it is not a [genuine] supplication.'"; Rambam, *op. cit.*, Halakhah 9.

94. This is not the only explanation for the existence of multiple rites (J. Heinemann, *HaTefillah BiTekufat HaTannaim VeHaAmoraim*, Jerusalem 1964, Chapter 2) but it certainly is a contributing factor. Composition of piyutim is a prime example of the enrichment of prayer through the medium of self expression. Their subsequent introduction into the liturgy of some communities (i.e., into those in which the payetanim lived) and not into others, till this day serves, in part, to distinguish between the various rites.