

סידור עבודת הלב



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אקדמות

ברכה *On the* *Shema*, *after the* *Shema* *is called up to the* *Torah* *and before he makes the* *bracha*, *the following is said responsively by the* *shochan* *and the* *shochan*.

ש"ץ: אַקְדָּמוֹת מְלִין, וְשָׂרִיִּית שׁוֹתָא
 אִוְלָא שְׁקֻלְנָא, הַרְמֵן וְרִשׁוֹתָא.
 קהל: בְּבָבִי תָרִי וְתִלְת, דְּאִפְתַּח בְּנִקְשׁוֹתָא
 בְּבָרִי דְּבָרִי וְטָרִי, עָדִי לְקִשְׁיִשׁוֹתָא.
 ש"ץ: גְּבוּרוֹן עֲלֵמִין לֵה, וְלָא סִפְק פְּרִישׁוֹתָא
 גְּוִיל אֵלוֹ רְקִיעִי, קִנִּי כָּל חֲרָשׁתָא.
 קהל: דִּין אֵלוֹ יָמִי, וְכָל מִי כְּנִישׁוֹתָא
 דִּירִי אֲרַעָא סְפָרִי, וְרִשְׁמִי רִשׁוֹתָא.
 ש"ץ: הַדֵּר מְרִי שְׁמִיא, וְשִׁלִּיט בִּיבְשָׁתָא
 הַקִּים עֲלֵמָא יְחִידָאִי, וְכַבְּשָׁה בְּכַבְּשׁוֹתָא.
 קהל: וּבְלָא לָאוֹ שְׁכַלְלָהּ, וּבְלָא תִשְׁשׁוֹתָא
 וּבְאִתָּא קִלְיָלָא, דְּלִית בֵּהּ מְשִׁשׁוֹתָא.
 ש"ץ: זְמַן כָּל עֲבִידְתָּהּ, בְּהַר יוֹמֵי שְׁתָּא
 זְהוּר יְקָרָה עֲלֵי, עֲלֵי כְּרִסְיָהּ דְּאִשְׁתָּא.

אקדמות / AKDAMUT

As explained by Rambam and the *Shulhan Arukh* it became customary during the Second Temple period to read an Aramaic translation (or *Targum*) of the Torah and Haftara readings of the day, as many people no longer understood the Hebrew original. This practice continued throughout the Talmudic period. In the early Middle Ages it became customary to preface those translations with an Aramaic *piyut* (technically referred to as a *reshut*, or "congregational consent"). Of those *piyutim*, the two that continued to be widely used in Ashkenazic congregations, long after the

custom to publicly read the *Targum* had ceased, are those read on Shavuot, i.e., *Akdamut* (on the first day) and *Yetziv Pitgam* (on the second) (R. Michael Taubes).

Akdamut (the very name implies that it is intended as an introduction to the Torah reading) was composed in Worms in the late eleventh century by R. Meir ben Yitzhak *Shaliah Tzibbur* (or *Sha'tz*), who died shortly before the First Crusade struck Worms in 1096, but whose son and daughter-in-law were martyred in that event. He was a prolific and highly respected author of many Hebrew and Aramaic *piyutim*, being well regarded by Rashi and Tosafot

AKDAMUT

On Shavuot, after the Kohen is called up to the Torah and before he makes the blessing, the following is said responsively by the Leader and the congregation.

Leader: א * אֶקְדַּמֹּת * BEFORE the words of God Supreme, to us are read, for this my theme Approbation will I seek

Cong.: ב These my sentences to speak, Just two or three,
ב while tremblingly On Him I meditate,

Leader: ג The Pure Who doth bear, the world for e'er; His power who can relate?
ג Were the sky of parchment made, a quill each reed, each twig and blade,

Cong.: ד Could we with ink fill sea and brook,
ד were every man to write a book,

Leader: ה The marvelous story, of God's great glory, would still remain untold.
ה For He, Most High, the earth and sky, created alone of old,

Cong.: ו Without fatigue or weary hand, He spoke the word, He breathed command.
ו The world and that that therein dwell, field and meadow, fen and fell, mount and sea,

Leader: ז In six days He with life did then inspire.
ז The work when ended, His glory ascended upon His throne of fire.

* This translation is by R. Joseph Marcus, and uses a free-form poetic rhyming scheme rather than a literal translation.

as a reliable authority for numerous prayer practices. The striking power and beauty of *Akdamut* in the context of the major themes of Shavuot, particularly the Revelation of the Torah, its refined dramatic form, and stirring contents, certainly account for its persistence and popularity (Prof. Ezra Fleischer).

The *piyut* is carefully structured. The first letters of the initial forty-four lines constitute a double alphabetic acrostic, while the first

letters of the remaining lines spell out the author's name, followed by a three word prayer to grow in Torah and good deeds. All of the lines end with אַתָּה, i.e., the last and the first letters of the alphabet. The overall thrust of this form conveys the notion that the alphabet and human language are entirely incapable of properly praising or comprehending the grandeur of God and the Torah that He has given His chosen people.

קהל: חֵיל אֶלֶף אֶלְפִין, וְרִבּוֹא לְשִׁמְשׁוּתָא
חֲדָתִין נְבוֹט לְצַפְרִין, סְגִיָּאָה טְרִשׁוּתָא.

ש"ץ: טְפִי יְקִידִין שְׂרָפִין, כְּלוּל גְּפִי שְׁתָּא
טְעֵם עַד יִתְיַהֵב לְהוּן, שְׁתִּיקִין בְּאֲדִישְׁתָּא.

קהל: יְקַבְּלוּן דִּין מִן דִּין, שְׁוִי דְלָא בְּשִׁשְׁתָּא
יְקַר מְלִי כָּל אַרְעָא, לְתַלּוּתֵי קֶדְשְׁתָּא.

ש"ץ: כְּקַל מִן קֶדֶם שְׂדֵי, כְּקַל מִי נְפִישׁוּתָא
כְּרֻבִין קֶבֶל גְּלַגְלִין, מְרוּמְמִין בְּאוּשְׁתָּא.

קהל: לְמַחְזִי בְּאַנְפָּא עֵין, כְּוֹת גִּירֵי קֶשְׁתָּא
לְכָל אַתְר דְּמִשְׁתַּלְּחִין, זְרִיזִין בְּאַשְׁוּתָּא.

ש"ץ: מְבַרְכִין בְּרִירָה יְקָרָה, בְּכָל לִשׁוֹן לְחִישׁוּתָא
מֵאַתְר בֵּית שְׁכִינְתָּהּ, דְּלָא צְרִירָה בְּחִישׁוּתָא.

קהל: נְהֵם כָּל חֵיל מְרוּמָא, מְקַלְסִין בְּחִשְׁשִׁתָּא
נְהִירָא מְלַכּוּתָהּ, לְדָר וְדָר לְאַפְרִשְׁתָּא.

ש"ץ: סְדִירָא בְּהוּן קֶדְשְׁתָּא, וְכַד חֲלָפָא שְׁעָתָא
סִיּוּמָא דְלַעֲלֵם, וְאוּף לָא לְשִׁבּוּעָתָא.

קהל: עַדְב יְקַר אַחְסִנְתָּהּ, חֲבִיבִין, דְּבִקְבַעְתָּא
עֲבִידִין לֵה חֲטִיבָא, בְּדִנְח וּשְׁקַעְתָּא.

ש"ץ: פְּרִישׁוֹן לְמִנְתָּהּ, לְמַעַבְד לֵה רְעוּתָא
פְּרִישְׁתִּי שְׁבַחָהּ, יְחוּוֹן בְּשַׁעוּתָא.

קהל: צְבִי וְחִמּוּד וְרַגְג, דִּילָאוּן בְּלַעוּתָא
צְלוּתְהוּן בְּכוּן מְקַבֵּל, וְהִנְיָא בְּעוּתָא.

ש"ץ: קְטִירָא לְחֵי עֲלָמָא, בְּתַנָּא בְּשִׁבּוּעָתָא
קֶבֶל יְקַר טוֹטְפָתָא, יְתִיבָא בְּקִבְעָתָא.

קהל: רְשִׁימָא הִיא גּוּפָא, בְּחַכְמָתָא וּבְדַעְתָּא
רְבוּתְהוּן דִּישְׂרָאֵל, קְרָאִי בְּשִׁמְעָתָא.

ש"ץ: שְׁבַח רְבוּן עֲלָמָא, אַמִּירָא דְכּוּתָא
שְׁפַר עֲלֵי לְחוּוִיָּהּ, בְּאַפִּי מְלַכּוּתָא.

- Cong.:* n Before Him myriad angels flash, to do His will they run and dash;
 n Each day new hosts gleam forth to praise, the Mighty One, Ancient
 of Days.
- Leader:* v Six-winged hosts, stand at their posts – the brilliant Seraphim
 v In hushed awe, together draw, to chant their morning hymn.
- Cong.:* ʻ The angels, together, without delay, call to one another in
 rapturous lay:
 ʻ Thrice holy He, Whose majesty “Fills earth from end to end.”
- Leader:* z The Cherubim soar, like the ocean’s roar,
 z On celestial spheres they ascend, to gaze upon the light on high,
- Cong.:* ʘ Which, like the bow in cloudy sky,
 ʘ Is iris-colored, silver-lined; while hastening on their task assigned,
- Leader:* n In every tongue, they utter song, and bless and praise the Lord,
 n Whose secret and source, Whose light and force, can ne’er be
 fully explored.
- Cong.:* z The heavenly hosts in awe reply:
 z “His Kingdom be blessed for e’er and aye.”
- Leader:* v Their song being hushed, they vanished away;
 v They may ne’er again offer rapturous lay.
- Cong.:* ʘ But Israel, His dear gazelle, in faith and troth well tried,
 ʘ His glory share, Him One declare, at morn and eventide.
- Leader:* z His portion they, His will obey, His power declare by night and
 day;
 z A precious Law, dearer than gold,
- Cong.:* z He bade them study, their life to enfold,
 z That He may be near, their prayer to hear,
- Leader:* ʘ For always wear will He As diadem fair,
 ʘ His people’s prayer in His phylactery,
- Cong.:* ʘ Wherein is told of Israel’s fame,
 ʘ Who oft God’s unity proclaim.
- Leader:* v ‘Tis also meet God’s praise to sing,
 v in presence of both prince and king.

קהל: תֵּאִין וּמִתְכַנְּשִׁין, כְּחִזּוֹ אֲדוֹתָא
תְּמַהִין וְשִׁלְיִין לֵהּ, בְּעֶסֶק אֲתוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: מִנֵּן וּמֵאן הוּא רְחִימָךְ, שְׁפִירָא בְּרוֹתָא
אָרוּם בְּגִינָה סְפִית, מְדוֹר אַרְיוֹתָא.

קהל: יִקְרָא וַיֵּאֶה אֶתְּ, אִין תְּעַרְבִי לְמַרוֹתָא
רְעוּתְךָ נַעֲבַד לִיךְ, בְּכָל אֲתַרוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: בְּחֻכְמָתָא מְתִיבְתָא לְהוּן, קִצַּת לְהוֹדְעוֹתָא
יִדְעָתוֹן חֻכְמִין לֵהּ, בְּאִשְׁתַּמּוֹדְעוֹתָא.

קהל: רְבוּתְכוֹן מָה חֲשִׁיבָא, קָבֵל הֵיא שְׁבַחְתָּא
רְבוּתָא דִּיעֲבַד לִי, כַּד מְטִיא יְשׁוּעָתָא.

ש"ץ: בְּמִיתִי לִי נְהוּרָא, וְתַחֲפִי לְכוֹן בְּהֵתָא
יִקְרָה כַּד אֲתַגְּלִי, בְּתַקְפָּא וּבְגִיּוֹתָא.

קהל: יְשִׁלֵּם גְּמֻלְיָא, לְשִׁנְאֵי וּנְגוּתָא
צְדֻקְתָּא לְעַם חֲבִיבִי, וְסָגִי זְכוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: חֲדוּ שְׁלַמָּא בְּמִיתִי, וּמֵנָּא דְכוֹתָא
קְרִיתָא דִּירוּשָׁלַם, כַּד יִכְנַשׁ גְּלוֹתָא.

קהל: יִקְרָה מְטַל עֲלֵהּ, בְּיוֹמֵי וְלִילוֹתָא
גְּנוּיָה לְמַעֲבַד בֵּהּ, בְּתַשְׁבְּחוֹן כְּלִילְתָּא.

ש"ץ: דִּזְהוּר עֲנַנְיָא, לְמִשְׁפַּר כִּילְתָּא
לְפָמָה דְּעַבִּידְתָּא, עֲבִידוֹן מְטַלְלְתָּא.

תֵּאִין וּמִתְכַנְּשִׁין – *With tempestuous glee.* This and the following lines portray the dramatic confrontation between the Jewish people, faithful to God under every circumstance to the point of martyrdom, and their non-Jewish neighbors who seek to seduce them into apostasy by accepting Gentile beliefs and thereby to be accorded honor, prosperity, security, and peace. Yet time and again, echoing the words of the Shunamite in the second

and fifth chapters of the Song of Songs, the Jewish people refuse every such offer. As the *Mekhilta deR. Yishmael* on those verses states, "Said R. Akiva: 'I shall speak of the prophecies and the praises of Him by Whose word the world came into being, before all the nations of the world who ask Israel "why is your beloved more than another that you so refuse us (Song 5:9), that you are ready to die for Him and let yourselves be killed for Him... you

- Cong.:* n With tempestuous glee, like a storming sea
 n They surge and ask: “Who, then,
- Leader:* n Is the friend of thy heart
 x For whom thou art cast in the lion’s den?
- Cong.:* y How fairer wilt thou be to sight, if thou with us in faith unite;
 y Thy favor we shall always seek.”
- Leader:* z But Israel’s sons with wisdom speak:
 y “Oh ye, who are wise, in your own eyes,
- Cong.:* y How can your trumpery at all compare,
 y with our great share, when God proclaims us free,
- Leader:* z And shined on us in glorious light,
 y While you are wrapped in gloom of night?
- Cong.:* y His glory then will shine and gleam – Almighty God o’er all
 supreme!”
 His enemies, on isles and seas, will suffering endure,
 z But He’ll increase, abundant peace
- Leader:* n To upright men and pure. Then perfect joy will bring our Lord,
 the sacred things will be restored;
 p The exiles, He will gather them, into rebuilt Jerusalem; p
- Cong.:* y Day and night, shall be His light, a canopy of splendor;
 z A crown of praise, His people shall raise
- Leader:* y To crown their Lord and defender. With brilliant clouds He’ll
 ornament
 y Each deserving festive tent.

are handsome and mighty, come intermingle with us.” To which the Israelites respond saying “Do you know Him? Let us tell you some of his praises... you shall have no share in Him, for my Beloved is mine and I am His (Song 2:16).” R. Akiva’s subsequent death at the hands of his Roman persecutors is eloquent testimony to the accuracy of his understanding of these verses, and his own unwavering belief in the faithfulness of the Jew, come what may.

“In subsequent generations of persecution, whenever and wherever a sharp sword hung over the neck of Jews, and Jew-haters prepared bonfires to burn them alive on account of their persistence in remaining loyal to their faith in the living God, Jews throughout the lands of Central Europe drew strength and courage from the words of *Akdamut* ringing in their ears, to not submit to their enemies” (R. Elyahu Kitov).

קהל: **בְּתַכְתְּקֵי דְהַב פָּזָא, וְשִׁבַע מַעֲלָתָא**
תְּחִימִין צְדִיקֵי, קָדָם רַב פְּעֻלָּתָא.

ש"ץ: **וְרוֹיְהוֹן דְּמִי, לְשִׁבְעָא חֲדוּתָא**
רְקִיעָא בְּזַהוּרָה, נְכוּכְבֵי זִיוָתָא.

קהל: **הַדְרָא דְלָא אֶפְשָׁר, לְמַפְרֵט שְׁפוּתָא**
וְלֹא אֲשַׁתְּמַע וְחַמִּי, נְבִיאַן חֲזוּתָא.

ש"ץ: **בְּלֹא שְׁלֻטָא בַּה עֵין, בְּגוּ עֵדוֹן גְּנֻתָא**
מִטְיָלִי בַּה חֲנֻגָא, לְבַהֲדֵי דְשְׁכִינְתָא.

קהל: **עֲלֵה רְמִזֵי דֵין הוּא, בְּרַם בְּאִימְתַּנּוּתָא**
שְׁבַרְנָא לַה בְּשִׁכְנוֹ, תְּקוּף הַמְּנוּתָא.

ש"ץ: **יְדַבֵּר לֹן עֲלֻמִּין, עֲלֻמִּין מְדֻמוּתָא**
מְנַת דִּילֹן דְּמִלְקָדְמִין, פֶּרֶשׁ בְּאַרְמוּתָא.

קהל: **טְלוּלָא דְלִוְיָתוֹן, וְתוֹר טוֹר רְמוּתָא**
וְחַד בְּחַד כִּי סַבְרָ, נְעֵבַד קְרִבּוּתָא.

ש"ץ: **בְּקַרְנֹהֵי מְנַגַח בְּהַמוּת, בְּרִבּוּתָא**
יְקַרְטַע נוֹן לְקַבְלָה, בְּצִיצוּי בְּגִבוּרְתָא.

קהל: **מְקַרְב לַה בְּרִיָּה, בְּחַרְבָּה בְּרִבְרִבּוּתָא**
אַרְסָטוֹן לְצַדִּיקֵי יִתְקוֹ, וְשְׁרוּתָא.

ש"ץ: **מְסַחְרִין עֲלֵי תַכִּי, דְּכַדְכַד וְגוּמְרְתָא**
נְגִידִין קַמִּיהוֹן, אֶפְרָסְמוֹן נְהַרְתָּא.

קהל: **וּמַתְּפַנְקִין וְרוֹן, בְּכַסֵּי רוּיָתָא**
חֲמַר מְרַת דְּמַבְרָא שִׁית, נְטִיר בֵּי נַעֲוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: **זְכָאִין, כַּד שְׁמַעְתוֹן, שְׁבַח דָּא שִׁירְתָּא**
קַבִּיעֵין כּוֹן תְּהוּוֹן, בְּהַנְהוּ חֲבוּרְתָּא.

קהל: **וְתַזְכוּן דֵי תִיתְבוּן, בְּעֵלָא דְרְתָא**
אַרִי תַצִּיתוֹן לְמַלוּי, דְּנַפְקִין בְּהַדְרְתָּא.

ש"ץ: **מְרוּמַם הוּא אֱלֹהִין, בְּקַדְמָתָא וּבַתְרִיָּתָא**
צְבִי וְאַתְרַעֵי בּוֹ, וּמְסַר לֹן אוּרִיָּתָא.

- Cong.:* ⌌ The pure, on stools with gold inlaid;
 ⌎ Before the Lord shall be arrayed;
- Leader:* ⌌ Their countenance bright, with sevenfold light,
 ⌎ Will dim the heavenly sheen.
- Cong.:* ⌎ Such beauty rare, none can declare,
 ⌌ No prophet's eye has seen.
- Leader:* ⌌ The glories of the Paradise, have not been seen by human eyes,
 ⌎ Where the pure rejoice and dance in the light of
 His countenance,
- Cong.:* ⌥ And point: "Tis He
 ⌥ We patiently hoped and waited for
- Leader:* ⌌ To set us free, from captivity
 ⌎ And guide us as of yore."
- Cong.:* ⌥ Behold the fish in ocean deep, and the ox in its mountain keep
 ⌌ One day to meet face-to-face, to wage war and fight apace
- Leader:* ⌌ The ox will gore, more and more
 ⌌ And the fish will leap without fail propelled on high, as if to fly
- Cong.:* ⌎ Till the sword of God prevail
 ⌘ Then God will prepare, for the righteous sweet fare
- Leader:* ⌎ To enjoy at His will, precious gems lacking nil
 ⌌ Before them will flow, rivers of balsam below
- Cong.:* ⌌ As they drink from goblets galore overflowing with wine, so
 delightful and fine
 ⌎ Being aged since Creation of yore.
- Leader:* ⌌ You upright who heard the voice of my song,
 ⌥ May you merit to join this glorious throng;
- Cong.:* ⌌ In heavenly halls you shall meet them in time,
 ⌘ If you hearken His words, melodious, sublime.
- Leader:* ⌎ Exalted on high, for e'er and aye, Our Lord in glory and awe!
 ⌘ We are His choice, then let us rejoice that He blessed us and gave
 us the Law.