

Lech Lecho - Shabbat UK 5777 - Yigdal and Adon Olam - Henry Ehreich

י"א חשוון תשע"ז - 11th November 2016 - שבת פי לך לך

In the past, I have started writing Sedra Sheets with the words "Nothing ever is really what it seems to be" and this Sedra Sheet is no different. Three years ago Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Chief Rabbi of South Africa, started, what he had named "The Shabbat Project" and it has now gone worldwide whereby one Shabbos after Simchas Torah is devoted to strengthening Shemiras Shabbos. Here in the UK the idea has become known as "Shabbat UK". Part of the celebrations in North Hendon is that we have a Carebach style Friday evening Service led by our Ba'al Tefillah Tolly Rose. This year we have a bonus. Phillip Maurice will be singing YIGDAL with a solo by his son Avi. Why have we chosen to mark the occasion in this way? What is so special with YIGDAL and why should we have asked Phillip, who is a Chazan in the Spanish and Portuguese Shul, to sing Yigdal?

YIGDAL is a prayer based on the thirteen Articles of Faith formulated by the Ramban and encapsulated in the thirteen Ani Ma'amins. Regarding its authorship there is some debate, some ascribe it to an unknown author, others to Daniel ben Yehudah Dayan who, it is said, spent eight years improving the text, which he finished in 1404. Still others attribute it to the famous poet Immanuel of Rome (1261-1328). Based on the Rambam, in our Siddurim YIGDAL has thirteen lines, sang alternatively by the Chazan and the congregation, with the last line, dealing with Techiyas Hameisim (resurrection of the dead) being repeated by both Chazan and congregation. It was therefore quite a surprise to find that the Spanish and Portuguese tradition has YIGDAL with fourteen lines, and is sung by the whole congregation together, and the Eidut Hamizrach nusach has fifteen lines!

The Spanish and Portuguese text follows the Ashkenazi text until line 13 which is the following:

מתים יחיה קל ברב חסדו, ברוך עדי עד שם תהלתו

and then an additional line is added as follows:

אלה שלש עשרה לעקרם, הנם דת קל ותורתו

(These are the thirteen Principles of our faith, they are the foundation of G-d and his Law) after which the thirteen line is repeated.

The Eidut Hamizrach version follows the Ashkenazi text and then adds two further lines, the first of which is similar to, but not exactly the same as, the Spanish and Portuguese text.

מתים יחיה קל ברב חסדו, ברוך עדי עד שם תהלתו: אלה שלש עשרה לעקרם, הן הם דת קל ותורתו

And then the following line is added in place of "מתים יחיה קל ברב חסדו"

תורת משה אמת ונבואתו, ברוך עדי עד שם תהלתו

And since Shabbat UK is synonymous with the spirit is togetherness, we have introduced the S&P version to this week's Tefillah.

Having dealt with YIGDAL, I can now hear you asking whether ADON OLAM also has variations in nussach. And you won't be surprised to learn that it has! The authorship and origin of ADON OLAM are uncertain. It is often attributed to Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021-1058), who is known for his Hebrew poetry, but there is no solid evidence apart from the quality of this hymn and the language appears to be older. It has also been attributed to Rav Hai Gaon (939-1038) and even to the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai.

The ADON OLAM in the Ashkenazi Siddurim has ten lines, the S&P version has twelve lines and the Eidut Hamizrach version has sixteen lines! So, where are the differences?

The S&P version inserts additional two lines after *וְלוֹ הֵעֵז וְהִמְשִׁיחַהּ* בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תַכְלִית. וְלוֹ הֵעֵז וְהִמְשִׁיחַהּ as follows:

בְּלִי עֶרְךָ בְּלִי דְמִיוֹן. בְּלִי שְׁנוֹי וְתַמּוּרָה: בְּלִי חֲבוּר בְּלִי פְרוּד. גְּדוּל כַּח וְגִבּוּרָה

and then it carries on as follows: *וְהוּא קְלִי וְחִי גּוֹאֲלִי. וְצוּר חֲבָלִי בְּיוֹם צָרָה* etc.

In the Eidut Hamizrach version we have six additional lines inserted at random giving the following:

בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תַכְלִית. וְלוֹ הֵעֵז וְהִמְשִׁיחַהּ: בְּלִי עֶרְךָ בְּלִי דְמִיוֹן. בְּלִי שְׁנוֹי וְתַמּוּרָה:

בְּלִי חֲבוּר בְּלִי פְרוּד. גְּדוּל כַּח וְגִבּוּרָה: וְהוּא קְלִי וְחִי גּוֹאֲלִי. וְצוּר חֲבָלִי בְּיוֹם צָרָה:

וְהוּא נְסִי וְמִנוּסִי. מִנְת כּוּסִי בְּיוֹם אֶקְרָא: וְהוּא רּוּפֵא וְהוּא מְרַפֵּא. וְהוּא צוּפֵה וְהוּא עֶזְרָה:

בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רּוּחִי. בְּעֵת אֵינְשָׁן וְאֶעֱיָרָה: וְעַם רּוּחִי גּוֹיֵתִי. ה' לִי וְלֹא אֵיֶרָא:

בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ תִגַּל נַפְשִׁי. מְשִׁיחֵנוּ: וְשִׁלַּח מְהֵרָה: וְאַז נִשְׁיֵר בְּבֵית קְדֹשֵׁי. אָמֵן אָמֵן שֵׁם הַנוֹרָא: