

Synopsis of the
**Elul and Tishrei
Selichos Piyyutim**

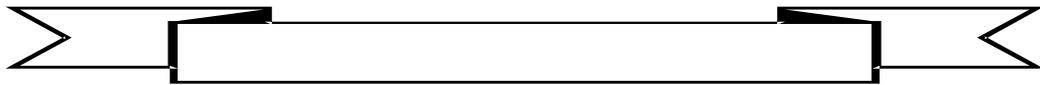
ECLECTIC TORAH COMPILATIONS

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— TALMUDIC BOOKS —

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו. מחל לנו מלכנו כי פשענו:
כי אתה ה' טוב וסלח ורב חסד לכל קוראך:



SYNOPSIS
OF THE
ELUL AND TISHREI
SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

Those Recited in Accordance with “Nusach Polin”

Including extensive footnotes, a condensed analysis of the Selichos as understood by Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, explanation of the various forms of Selichos and a list of the authors

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4th EDITION

DEDICATED TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY DEAR MOTHER
WHO GREETED EVERYONE WITH A SMILE

לעילוי נשמת אמי מורתי
רצה בת מנשה הכהן ע"ה
ט"ו סיון ה'תשנ"ט
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Introduction

Selichos were designed to awaken our hearts and souls so that we may come to fervently pray that G-d have mercy upon us despite our unworthiness as sinners.

Sadly, this goal is lost on the average worshipper.

The medieval poetic style of the Selichos Piyyutim (liturgical poems) confounds the modern reader. Wrapped in exotic language, unusual syntax and strange grammatical forms, the most sublime messages of the Piyut remain mysterious and bewildering to most. Unfamiliar passages and references in the Tanach and Midrash are often obscured because the cryptic language of the Paytanim is no longer employed in commonly spoken or written Hebrew.

To compound matters, the recitation of Selichos in most congregations has become, for the contemporary worshipper, an arduous exercise in the rapid-fire rattling of fragments of phrases in a furious and futile attempt to compete with ever-faster Shlichei Tzibur.

It is unlikely that most people are truly moved by babble.

Objective of This Synopsis. The daily Selichos service comprises common introductory and concluding passages centered around the concept of the “Thirteen Attributes” of G-d, the Viduy confession, and particular Piyyutim which are said on specific days, as defined by local custom. This work focuses on the less understood daily Piyyutim.

Given that each Piyyut embodies a multitude of profound ideas and lofty concepts, often without a clear, central theme, no effort was exerted herein to accurately condense or summarize them. Neither is this a strict translation. First and second persons have been freely altered in order to make for easier reading. Ideas stated in the beginning of the Piyyut have been connected with those at the middle or end to achieve some sort of minimal comprehensibility.

In fact, this monograph is merely a modest attempt to accent some of the key motifs addressed in the Selichos, concisely paraphrased to enable a very quick review of its ideas before its public reading in synagogue.

By so doing, it is hoped that the worshipper, using this monograph as a companion to his Selichos book, will gain new appreciation and improved understanding for these emotion-provoking, but enigmatic prayers, thereby intensifying his spiritual intentions and arouse within him a real desire to do repentance.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

Selichos as Understood by Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik. In a shiur¹ given sometime in the 1950's, Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik ztz"l of Boston made some very important points regarding Selichos:

- Selichos were written to motivate people to repent.
- Even though the custom of Selichos is undocumented in the Gemara, their recitation surely originated with the Talmudic sages and is a well-accepted and ancient tradition.
- Although repentance is a Mitzvah with no set time for its performance, there are times when repentance is most appropriate (e.g. Ten days of Repentance, Public Fast Days).
- The idea of man approaching G-d through prayer is incomprehensible and irrational. We have no good answer as to why, in fact, G-d should listen to our prayers. Yet, we are required to pray, as did our Patriarchs.
- Therefore, our Sages very carefully chose the words with which we can approach G-d. We rely on the praises of David, verses in Tanach, and the prayers arranged by the men of the Great Assembly among whom numbered several prophets. We must be careful not to change the text of the prayers that our Sages composed since every word was carefully measured. A minor change may render a prayer unacceptable. We cannot compose our own prayers because we lack the vocabulary to do so.
- An exception to this rule is the Selichos Piyyutim.
- The Selichos service is modeled after the order of our daily prayers which is why we begin with Ashrei and end with Tachanun. The main Selichos are, therefore, comparable with the Shmone Esrei. This is why we say Kaddish Tiskabeil at the end, and why the Shaliach Tzibur has to wrap himself in a Tallis.
- The central motif of the Selichos is the thirteen Attributes which G-d revealed to Moses as the means with which we may attain forgiveness.
- Selichos are divided into three parts:
 1. Verses from Tanach asking for forgiveness and contrasting the greatness of G-d with the insignificance of man.
 2. Viduy - confession.
 3. Ancient, concluding prayers from the time of the second Temple in Hebrew and Aramaic.
- One should particularly exert his energies on the recitation of the sections relating to Selichoh (forgiveness) and the special prayers from the time of the second Temple rather than the latter-day Piyyutim.

¹ These points were gleaned from a summary of said Shiur © Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, NJ listpro@shamash.org and brought to my attention by Mr. Ivor Brown of Raanana.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

Forms of Selichos. Scholars have divided the Selichos Piyyutim into several groupings which reflect either their poetic form or their content:

1. *Pesichoh* (prologue) - opening prayers.
2. *Selichoh* (forgiveness) – this is the most common form, a general request for mercy and exoneration.
3. *Sheniyoh* - poem featuring two-lined strophes or stiches.
4. *Shelishiyoh* - featuring three-lined strophes.
5. *Shalmonis* - featuring four-lined strophes, so called either since most were composed by R' Shlomo Habavli or because four lines makes them “complete”.
6. *Pizmon* (hymn with refrain) - considered to be the chief poem of that day’s Selichos.
7. *Akedoh* (sacrifice of Isaac) - extremely stirring poems which recount Abraham and Isaac’s unhesitating willingness to fulfill the Will of G-d regardless of the sacrifice involved. These also represent those Jews who were martyred over the centuries simply because they were G-d’s people.
8. *Techinoh* (supplication).

Notes:

1. Several Selichos are controversial, albeit now universally accepted, in that they appeal to intermediaries (the angels, [q. and 7.]; the Torah [51.]; the Holy Throne [67.]; the Patriarchs [26.]; and even each of G-d’s thirteen attributes [36.]) to petition G-d on our behalf; a questionable and debatable theological supposition from a Jewish point of view. These have been marked with an *.
2. Piyyutim 28 and 29 are repeated as 85 and 86 for Erev Yom Kippur.

Acknowledgments. Material in this monograph is based primarily on Dr. Daniel Goldschmidt’s scholarly and well-researched commentary in his Seder HaSelichos, Mosad Harav Kook, Jerusalem 5725 (particularly my footnotes), Rabbi A. Rosenfeld’s excellent and classic English translation in his Authorised Selichot, the ArtScroll Selichos, and other sources. The serious student is encouraged to look at these and other works, in English and Hebrew, for many further insights and understandings.

Special thanks to Mr. A. David Greenspon of Neve Aliza who was kind enough to review the manuscript and contributed several valuable comments, and Dr. Jeffrey Tillman of Raanana for the second half of footnote 16 on page 10.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

Authors. Our Selichos (keyed below by letter/number) were composed by known, unknown and obscure authors primarily from late Gaonic times through to the period of the Rishonim. Most flourished in various European countries: Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Provence, and elsewhere. They wrote in the style of the Paytanim with whose works we are equally familiar from the Tisha B'Av Kinos and the sundry Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur Yotzros inserts. Only those authors whose Piyyutim have been abridged in this monograph are herein listed.

- A1 Amitai M'Oriah, S. Italy, end of 9th, beginning of 10th century
- A2 Amram Gaon, 821-875 (arranged many of the Daily Selichos)
- B Binyomin bar Zerach, Ashkenaz, 1021-1056
- E1 Elazar bar Yehuda (Harokeach), Worms, d. 1238
- E2 Eliezer bar Shmuel
- E3 Eliyoh bar Shemayoh, Italy, 11th or 12th century
- E4 Ephraim bar Isaac, Regensburg, d. 1175
- G Gershom bar Yehuda (Ma'or Hagolah), Mainz (Mayence), 960-1028
- M1 Meir bar Isaac Shatz, Worms, 11th century
- M2 Mordechai Haoroch, Italy or Greece, 13th century
- M3 Moses bar Shmuel bar Avshalom, 12th century
- S1 Saadiah (bar Yosef) Gaon, b. 882 Egypt or 892-942 Syria (Daily Selichos)
- S2 Sherira Gaon, 920-1000
- S3 Sheftayoh ben Amitai, Afulia, Italy, 9th century
- S4 Shemayoh ben Eliyohu, 12th century
- S5 Shimon bar Isaac, Mainz (Mayence), 950 or 980 to 1020 or 1040
- S6 Shlomo (bar Avon), "Na'ar Mitzorfaz", 12th century
- S7 Shlomo bar Menachem, East Europe ?, 12th, 13th or 14th century
- S8 Shlomo bar Shmuel bar Eliyoh, 12-13th century
- S9 Shlomo (bar Yehuda Habavli), aka Shlomo Hakoton, Italy, 10th century
- S10 Shlomo (bar Yehuda) ibn Gvirol, Spain, 11th century
- S11 Shlomo bar Isaac (Rashi), Worms, 1040-1105
- S12 Shmuel bar Abraham (Halevi) Bonfant, c. 1240
- S13 Shmuel Hakohen
- U Unknown authors
- Y1 Isaac bar Avigdor ? bar Levi ? <1300
- Y2 Isaac bar Meir, Ashkenaz, 12th century
- Y3 Isaac bar Reuven Barceloni, 1043
- Y4 Isaac bar Saadia, Jerusalem, <13th century
- Y5 Isaac bar Shmuel, France, 12th century
- Y6 Isaac (bar Yakkar) 12th century?
- Y7 Isaac bar Yehuda ibn Gayyat, 1038-1089
- Y8 Isaac Hakohen Hachaver, 12th or 13th century
- Y9 Yoel bar Isaac Halevi, Bona/Colonia, 12th or 13th century
- Y10 Yosef bar Isaac, Orleans, contemporary of Rabbeinu Tam, 12th century
- Z Zevadyoh, South Italy, 9th century

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Daily Selichos. These ancient prayers, many dating from the times of the Tanaim and Gaonim, are common to the Selichos service for each day. Many are collections of various theme-related verses from throughout Tanach.

a. **לך ה' הצדקה\שומע תפילה**

Before Thee, our King, do not return us empty, for Thou listen to prayer. Forgive us.

b. **א-ל ארך אפים\כי על רחמין**

Have mercy upon us as would a father have upon his children. Harken and forgive us.

c. **י"ג מידות**

With Thy thirteen attributes of mercy, exonerate us, for we have transgressed.

d. **א-ל מלך יושב**

Almighty King, act kindly and pardon. Remember Thy thirteen attributes.

e. **זכור רחמין ה'**

Remember Thy mercy and kindness, O G-d, for they have been forever.

f. **זכור לנו ברית\שמע קולינו**

Remember the Covenant of our ancestors. Have mercy, destroy us not. Hear our voice, spare us, have compassion upon us, for it is Thou for whom we wait.

g. **(אשמנו..) תבוא לפניך תפילתנו**

We confess. We have sinned in innumerable ways and turned from Thee. We have acted wickedly.

h. **אשמנו מכל עם**

We are guiltier than any other nation, more ashamed than any other generation.

i. **הרשענו ופשענו**

We have been corrupt and transgressed. Help us abandon our evil ways.

j. **משיח צדק**

As David has said before Thee: Who can discern all his sins? Clear me of my faults!

k. **א-ל רחום שמך**

Have mercy upon us for the sake of Thy name, Thy covenant, Thy majesty...

l. **עננו ה' עננו**

Answer us, O Lord, answer us, our G-d, answer us, our Father...

m. **מי שענה לאברהם**

He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, may He answer us...

n. **רחמנא דעני לעניי**

May the all-merciful One who answers the poor, answer us...

o. **רחום וחנון**

Thou who are merciful and gracious, I have sinned before Thee. Have mercy on me.

p. **מחי ומסי**

He who inflicts wounds and heals, in Thy abundant mercy, alleviate our awesome pain.

q. *** מכניסי רחמים**

Angels of mercy, usher in our prayers before the G-d of mercy. Answer us, O G-d.

r. **מרון דבשמיא**

G-d in heaven, to Thee we implore, compassionately grant our petitions.

s. **שומר ישראל**

Guardian of Israel, do not allow the remnant of Israel to perish. G-d is one.

t. **ואנחנו לא נדע**

We know not what to do. Help us, O G-d, deliver us, grant us atonement for Thy name's sake.

The Daily Piyyutim

The Synopsis below is not, in any way, meant to be a substitute for the recitation of the actual Selichos and Piyyutim which were written by some of our greatest Torah scholars and most religiously sensitive poets. Assuredly, the efficacy of their works cannot be duplicated or paralleled by declaiming a surrogate.

----- DAY 1 -----

1. איך נפתח לפניך (Pesichoh) B

How can we open our mouths before Thee? Given our many sins and insolence, who are we to beseech Thee for forgiveness? We pursued vain and deceitful prophecies. Behold the shame of Thy people! Redeem us forever, for upon Thy abundant mercy do we trust.

2. אין מי יקרא בצדק (Selichoh) S9

There is no one who can call to Thee in righteousness¹. And though no one who prays is free of sin, we ask, “Conceal Thy wrath and answer our prayers”. We plead in whispered prayer, “Do not deny us”. G-d of life! Look down and answer us. Give light to our eyes.

3. תבוא לפניך שועת חינוך (Selichoh) S9

Let our cry for mercy come before Thee. We are confounded and ashamed of our sinfulness; we are distraught and anguished. With our sins, we have ruined our good name. G-d, have pity on us, avert Thy wrath and comfort us. Have compassion upon us. Turn back Thy anger and console us.

4. במוצאי מנוחה (Pizmon) U

As the Day of Rest departs², look at our suffering and not our numerous misdeeds and sins. Implore Thy grace to hearken to our cries. Seek those who seek Thee. Release us from our troubles and sufferings. Vindicate us with the locked treasure³. Listen to our song and prayers.

1 The Shaliach Tzibur opens by apologizing for being so bold as to pray on behalf of the Congregation.

2 Our custom is that Selichos begin on Motzoei Shabbos prior to dawn or at midnight.

3 Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Sisoh 27 says that G-d showed Moses the various treasures and rewards set aside for the righteous. Moses notices a large box and asks who will receive that one? G-d responds, “Although I reward in accordance with what each person deserves, even if someone deserves nothing, still I give him (from this one) for free.”

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----- DAY 2 -----

5. **אם עווינו רבו להגדיל** (Selichoh) **S9**

Our iniquities increase, our guilt is immense. Do not allow the paths of Thy mercy to cease. Deal with us kindly. Have sympathy with us, the remnant whom Thou called “first-born”. Reverse Thy inclination from bad to good.⁴ Thy great power is unceasing. Grant us life and mercy.

6. **אין כמידת בשר** (Selichoh) **S9**

We are like orphans, exiled from the Father’s table; burdened, lame and halting. We are divorced without a writ of divorce. We stray and wander restlessly while the Land of Israel is trampled by the Nations. Have mercy upon us, dear G-d, return us home, so that the Heathens will say, “G-d has done great things for them.”^{5,6}

7. **מלאכי רחמים * (Pizmon)** **S13**

Angels of mercy, please beg before G-d with our prayer: We are degraded and disgraced. Have clemency. We are tortured and we suffer in silence. Have pity. We are distressed and anguished. Have compassion. We are devoured by lions. Hear our outcry and hasten our redemption. Have mercy.

----- DAY 3 -----

8. **7 ישראל עמך תחינה עורכים** (Selichoh) **Y2**

Thy people Israel travail and need help. We pine with disease and wounds without number. Heal us, O righteous One!⁸ With Thy love and compassion, upraise us, for Thy sake and honor. Regardless of our behavior, we are called Thy children. Advance Thy mercy toward us, to those who desire Thy nearness.

4 i.e. “face us favorably”.

5 According to Leviticus Rabba 36:2, G-d is likened to a guard of a vineyard who never rests or sleeps. Just as the guard climbs to a high place to watch better, so G-d is on High and watches over Israel.

6 The Sifra, Bechukosai 2:5 infers that the nations of the world who do only some of the King’s bidding (have few Mitzvahs) receive their minimal wages in this life while Israel, with whom the King has a great account to settle, are deferred (to a time when the King is free, as it were, to make all the correct calculations).

7 Refers to the torturous, Crusader “Decrees of 856 (1096 c.e.)” and massacres. There are a number of references to Christians and Christianity in this Piyyut as there are in several others.

8 We ask G-d Himself to prepare our healing/treatment.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

9. אליך נשואות עינינו (Sheniyoh) U

Our eyes are lifted toward Thee and we weep. Our voices cry to heaven. Will Thou uproot the land without reason to anger? Our fathers who sleep in the Double Cave, pray for us! Shepherds Moses and Aaron, arise! The nation for whom you toiled is confused. G-d does not rest or sleep.

10. ישראל נושע בה' (Pizmon) S3

Israel's salvation is G-d; save us today. We knock at Thy gates, destitute and poor. We are frightened and troubled. Finish off Seir (and his son-in-law)⁹. Hearken our outcry. Thou are abundantly forgiving and the Master of Mercy.

----- DAY 4 -----

11. אני יום אירא (Selichoh) S9

I am afraid to call to Thee due to my sins. We ask Thee, O G-d, to punish our oppressors and those who wish to eradicate our Faith¹⁰. Save us from being crushed by them. Let them not claim victory over us. Pay them back and lay them to waste. Our hope is in Thee. Comfort us, and show us Thy kindness.

12. איה כל נפלאותיך (Selichoh) G

Revisit us with the awe-inspiring wonders Thou granted our forefathers. Relieve us from our grief, gather our scattered ones, break the wicked and return to us the Temple for us to worship Thee in. We walk in darkness and yearn for light. There we all will worship Thee, and Thy Name will be great forever.¹¹

13. באשמורת הבוקר (Pizmon) Y7

At morning's watch, I call out to Thee, praised G-d. Pour out Thy indignation on our foes. I am wounded with transgressions. See how my contentious adversaries speak cruelly about me and hunt me. Please rescue my soul, my King, my G-d, for it is to Thee alone I pray.

9 Seir refers to Rome while the later addition וחותנו (son-in-law) refers to Christianity.

10 Or "Convert us from our Faith", most likely to Christianity.

11 This Piyyut also has references to Christian proselytizing: להמיר בתלוי נוצר.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

----- DAY 5 -----

14. אִיִּתִּיךָ קוִיִּתִּיךָ (Selichoh) E3

I long and hope for G-d from a distant land. My soul is finished. Out of the depths of my heart I cry to Thee. Raise up the downtrodden from the trash-heaps and filth so that the righteous can praise Thy name, “The strong One, the mighty One, has fulfilled His word.”

15. אִיִּה קִנְאָתְךָ (Selichoh) B

Where is Thy jealousy and mighty deeds? We, who fear Thee, are exceedingly anxious and distressed, humbled, shamed and confused. Save Thy children and exempt them from punishment for Thou are the King of Kings¹² who forgives iniquity, remits transgressions and acquits.

16. שַׁחַר קִמְתִּי לַהוֹדוֹת (Pizmon) S10

At dawn I arise and sing to Thee and confess to Thee my sins. We lack the Temple and the sacrifices to blot out our sins; let our prayers be our offerings instead. Clear away my guilt and let my righteousness answer for me. Spare my life at my request and my people at my petition.

----- DAY 6 -----

17. תַּעֲרַג אֵלַיִךְ (Selichoh) S9

We long for Thee, hoping, waiting and trusting. Our oppressors¹³ hate and despise us. Regard our sins as errors, leave us unpunished. Return the exiled¹⁴ so that we can all appear before Thee in Thy Temple. Drown sin, forget the wickedness, G-d who bears iniquity and disregards sin.

18. אֲרַכּוּ הַיָּמִים (Selichoh) S5

The days of Exile have been prolonged. What has become of the prophecies of redemption? The Temple is destroyed. The people are in mortal danger throughout the lands of the dispersion. Remember Thy kindness and Thy covenant of old. Implement the covenant of peace with Thy people, Thou who sits on the Throne of Mercy.

12 There is an interesting and unusual reference herein to G-d as מֶלֶךְ מַלְכִים rather than the customary מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי מַלְכִים. This phrase is also used in Piyyutim 30 and 75.

13 The term כּוֹמֵר תַּעֲרַג הַגְּלָבִים is a clear reference to the Christian monks who shaved their heads with razors. The author calls them fools and despicable.

14 We ask G-d to “gather up” this exile together with the other nine earlier ones. See Seder Olam Rabba 23 for this particular calculation of exiles.

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19. חננו ה' חננו (Selichoh) S9 or S10

Pardon us, O G-d, pardon us. Answer us, O G-d, answer us. Help us, G-d of our salvation, for it is upon Thee we lean. They rely on chariots and horses, but it is the Name of our G-d we summon¹⁵. Upon their own might do they believe. We rest our hands on the Eternal One of Israel.

----- DAY 7 -----

20. אנחנו החומר (Selichoh) U

We are but clay in the hands of the One who fashions. Accept our prayers and supplications, destroy the wicked and heal the lame. Fulfill Thy oath, hasten salvation. Save the innocent Assembly of Israel whose hour of redemption has come.

21. אריה ביער דמיתי (Selichoh) E3

I am guilty like the lion in the forest. I am faint, banished and despised, full of sorrow and grief. Let Thy kindness and love pass over our sins. Remove our yoke. Let my meditations be regarded as pure and correct. Forgive my unworthy and perverse deeds. Let my words find favor with Thee.

22. יושב בסתר עליון (Pizmon) Y6 or Y7

Thou who sit in the hidden heights, hearken my cry and praise. Deal righteously with Thy people, drown the mischievous of my youth. Be gracious, save me. Sanctify Thy Holy name. To whom else can I turn? Spare my life at my request and my people at my petition.

-----EREV ROSH HASHANNA-----

23. ה' אלקי הצבאות (Pesichoh) S11

The gates of mercy are open to the truly penitent. Remember us, cleanse our stains, remove our defilement. We admit our wickedness. In our distress we seek Thee. Let our humble spirit and broken hearts be acceptable as were the sacrifices. Raise Thy people from destruction. May we who rely on Thy compassion be acquitted¹⁶.

15 The theme of this Piyyut is entirely based on this one cornerstone verse (Psalms 20:8).

16 חופת חיתונים - Israel was wed to G-d when the Torah was given (see Songs 3:11). Rashi says that "Matan Torah" occurred on Yom Kippur when the second set of Tablets was given (Mishna, Ta'anis 4:8).

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24. איככה אפצה פה (Selichoh) E3

How can I open my mouth¹⁷, how can I raise an eye? I have no deeds to my credit and no merit. Be attentive and favorable, O G-d, to my prayer. Wipe away my sins and liability. Remove the obstacle¹⁸ and clear the path. Draw close and rescue me from my distress; hasten to my assistance.

25. אנה עוררה אהבתך (Selichoh) S9 or S10

Awaken Thy old love for the congregation. Remember us and hold not Thy peace. Turn to me and be gracious. Cause those who provoke Thee to perish in wretchedness and poverty. Advance Thy kindness to Thy brethren, forgive our transgressions and misdeeds, O Hope of Israel, be a surety for Thy friends.

26. אל אלוקי דלפה עיני * (Selichoh) Y9

My eye¹⁹ pours out tears to G-d, I cry and He says, "Here I am". Answer me G-d, answer me. Heal my ailing soul²⁰ and instruct me how to repent. On Rosh Hashanna our fate comes before G-d and all pass before Him in Judgment. Have mercy on us, dear G-d, for the sake of the three upright Patriarchs.

27. אדון כתקח מועד 21 (Selichoh) Y10

Lord, the judgment day is upon us. I tremble before Thee. I am unworthy, what can I say? I am afraid. I fear my wickedness and rebellious disobedience. Have mercy and hear the voice of our supplication when we cry to Thee.

28. אדון דין אם ידוקדק (Shleshiyoh) Z

No man is righteous if judged in strictness. We have neither merit nor righteousness; we are full of wrongdoing and wickedness. Show leniency to those who deserve it not. Have pity on us. Harken to the cry of those who supplicate Thee. Thou have informed the humble one²² of Thy thirteen attributes. Turn us not empty from Thy presence.

17 The Shaliach Tzibur asks how can he, being so unworthy, pray on behalf of the Congregation? (See Note 1 above.)

18 The Gemara Succah 52a says that the Yetzer Horoh (Evil Inclination) has seven names, one of which is **מכשול**, Obstacle. (The others being Evil, Uncircumcised, Impure, Hated One, A Stone, My Conscience).

19 The peculiar use of the singular **עיני** (my eye) can simply be explained as necessary for the word to rhyme with the other ending words in this verse (**הנני, בהתחנני, ענני**).

20 "...since I am 'lean' in Mitzvahs."

21 The original version of this Piyyut has 28 lines. We say only the first 12 lines. It is not uncommon that the printed versions of Piyyutim, here and elsewhere, were abbreviated, not to mention truncated, altered and corrupted by well-meaning, but misinformed, copyists and printers, Christian censors and self-censorship of presumed objectionable passages.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

29. אדון בפקדך (Sheniyoh)

Y8

Press not justice to its limits²³. Our enemy, the Evil Inclination, lurks within us and entices us daily. G-d, look down on the broken-hearted and acquit in Judgment those who proclaim Thy unity. Thou are close to those who return to Thee. We have not forgotten Thee or Thy Name; forget us not, ever.

30. אדון בשפתך אנוש רמה (Sheniyoh)

E3

Remember Thy graciousness and compassion in Thy wrath. Rebuke the guilty, but clear and justify the simple and erring. Render kindness and goodness to the undeserving. Whiten our sins as snow and wool; deliver us from evil this year²⁴.

31. אך בך לדל מעוה (Sheniyoh)

S9

Thou art the refuge for the poor in distress. Even though we are unworthy²⁵, accept us, Thou who searches for righteousness in order that Thou can judge innocent. Despise not the affliction of the poor. Cast away our sin, remove evil and impurity. Give us a pure heart that we may walk in Thy statutes²⁶.

32. אדם איך יזכה (Sheniyoh)

possibly S4

Our days are few and evil, all our works iniquities and transgressions. But with understanding and repentance²⁷ we can be healed and our voices heard. With acts of virtue and equity, we have shelter and refuge. We weep knowing that the worm inherits us in death. Prayer and charity can spare us affliction.

22 i.e. Moses, in accordance with Numbers 12:3.

23 See Sanhedrin 91b. Our Sages say there that G-d brings the soul, tosses it into the body and judges both together. (Presumably, this is not to our advantage since, I suppose, neither can then blame the other for being the one who really tempted us to sin. - RB)

24 Our Sages say (Ta'anis 11a) that in the Heavenly court everyone will be required to personally sign his own "charge sheet" of sins (see Job 37:7).

25 See how G-d differs from a human king! One goes to a human king full and returns empty. With G-d, however, one goes empty and returns full (Pesikta on Nehemiah 5:13).

26 Rav Ada bar Ahavoh says (Ta'anis 16a), "To whom can we compare the man who grasps sin in his hand, confesses, but does not retract? To one who immerses, even in all waters of the world, while holding a Sheretz (reptile or swarming creature, i.e. the source of defilement) in his hand. Such an immersion has no effect. Should he cast the Sheretz aside, however, immersing in (even the absolute minimum of) forty Seah of water purifies him as it says, 'He who confesses and forsakes shall obtain mercy' (Proverbs 28:13)".

27 "Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai debated for two and a half years. They voted and concluded: Surely it would have been better that a person not be created than be created. Now that he has been created, he must examine his deeds" (and repent) (Eruvin 13b).

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

33. אך במתח דין (Sheniyoh) possibly S9

Do not destroy Thy faithful children with the full rigor of justice and stern punishment. Judge us with equity, rebuke the seducer. Judge our suffering in kindness. Raise up the fallen, be gracious and merciful to Thy righteous ones. We have come to Thee for atonement and comfort. In the morning, turn toward us with mercy.

34. א-ל אמונה עזרה הבה (Shelishiyoh) E4

O faithful G-d, bring us help! Do good for Thy people. Let us approach together for Judgment. G-d's judgments are true, righteous and good. Take vengeance on my enemies who dispersed me in Exile. Let Thy judgments aid me.

35. חיים ארוכים תכתבנו 28 (Shalmonis) possibly E3 or S6

Inscribe for us a life of longevity. Grant us life, Thou the source of life. Invigorate us with the life we desire. Forgive us, atone our sins. Support us with life and peace. May I walk before G-d in the lands of the living²⁹. Revive us on the day of the rebuilding of the Third Temple.

36. * שלוש עשרה מדות 30 (Shalmonis) S7 or S6

Thirteen attributes were pronounced with compassion. Search for my merit among them. Deliver us from evil and wounds this year. Remember the love of those who extol Thee. Be merciful with the remnant of Thy people, Thy servants. Pardon Thy congregation.

37. שופט כל הארץ 31 (Pizmon) S6 or possibly S10

Thou are the Judge of all the Earth. Bestow life, and favor the afflicted nation. Since we may have no good deeds, remember the merit of the Patriarchs. Deal kindly with Zion. Observe His testimonies and He will pardon your sins. Seek G-d and His strength continuously as were the continual, daily burnt-offerings.

28 The longest Piyyut we recite, this one comprises 96 stanzas or 24 groupings of 4 lines, each beginning and ending with the word **חיים** (life) with a concluding verse from the Tanach.

29 Says G-d to Israel, "Be superb in Mitzvahs so that you will be favorable to me" (Sifri, Deut. 36).

30 The Paytan here addresses each of G-d's thirteen attributes, requesting their intercession on behalf of Israel.

31 Dr. Goldschmidt points out that the version of this Piyyut that is commonly recited is defective in that several lines are missing and there are many other textual changes.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

38. מפלטי א-לי צור (בוקר) (Akedoh) possibly M2

Be compassionate and kind, dear G-d, for Thou are good and forgiving. Purify and purge our sins without suffering. Raise up the fallen, be gracious and merciful to Thy righteous ones. We have come to Thee for atonement and comfort. In the morning, turn toward us with mercy.

39. 32 זכור ברית אברהם... (אבדנו) (Pizmon) M2 or G

Remember the covenant with Abraham and the binding of Isaac. Restore the tents of Jacob. We are in exile; the Holy City is spoiled. Deliver us. Avenge our blood. We have nothing but the Torah³³. Save us, redeem us, the remnant of Israel, for the sake of Thy name.

40. איש ענו חלה (Sheniyoh) G

A humble man (Moses) prayed on behalf of the congregation, please respond in the manner of Thy true nature. With a powerful arm Thou saved us from Egypt. Our love for Thee cannot be extinguished. May Thy might increase, pray Thee, forgive! as Thou said to him, "I have forgiven as you say".

41. 34 תפילה תקח (Techinoh) M1

Accept our prayers and supplications as Thou would the daily offerings³⁵. Embrace our worship as Thou would have welcomed our service in the Temple. May the arrangement of our prayers be agreeable to Thee. Join our merits together. Plead justice for Israel. Let righteousness move Thy tenderness to be merciful with us.

----- TZOM GEDALYOH -----

42. אז טרם נמתחו (Pesichoh) S11

Penitence was created before Creation³⁶ and destined to cleanse the polluted. We appear before Thee praying that Thou cleanse us from offenses and defilement. Let our words be as acceptable as were the sacrifices. Draw us near to Thee, and sink our sins under the wings of Thy great mercy.

32 Although the original Piyyut has 26 lines, we recite but 14 today and a slightly different set of 14 on Fast of Gedaliah (Number 50. below).

33 But for the Torah there would be no difference between us and the Gentiles (Sifra, Bechukosai 8:10).

34 This Piyyut is a detailed review of the Temple service.

35 Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says that our prayers are analogous with the sacrificial offerings (Berochos 26b).

36 Pesochim 54a: "Seven things preceded the creation of the world: the Torah, Penitence, Gan Eden, Gehinnom, the Heavenly Throne, the Beis Hamikdosh and the name of the Moshiach" which, according to Sanhedrin 98b, is Yinon (see Psalms 72:17).

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

43. את ה' בהמצאו (Selichoh) E3

I seek Thee now³⁷, pardon my sins³⁸, dear G-d. I sleep little. I am shameless and faithless. I lack an intercessor. I have become vile and abhorrent. I am destroyed, ruined and devastated. Hear my supplication; favor me. Strengthen and shield me. Be attentive to my voice. Let the ransomed return to Zion singing.

44. אבלה נפשי וחשך תארי (Selichoh) S1

My soul mourns, my face is gloomy. The raging flames overwhelmed the Sanctuary. How can I express my sufferings, they are so burdensome? My soul is weary. O Mighty One, arouse and awaken to our plea. May Thy mercies be stirred towards us. Show us Thy kindness and wondrous deeds.

45. אמנת מאז ארשת ניב שפתים (Selichoh) B

Thou have assured us that sincere prayer and supplication will not go unanswered. We come to Thee broken in spirit and contrite in heart. Thou, Who hearest prayer, receive us graciously, grant us pardon, judge us with charity and compassion so that we may extol Thee forever with every manner of praise.

46. אורך ואמתך שלח (Shelishiyoh) S5

Send us Thy light and truth. Favor Thy faithful ones for Thou are good and forgiving. Look upon our affliction and set us free. Let our cries be heeded. Look down upon us from the highest heaven. Be pleased with our prayerful thanksgiving and incline the scale in our favor, Thou, who causes pain and brings healing³⁹.

47. תשוב תרחמנו (Shalmonis) S9

Return compassion upon us. Return our captives. Renew Thy love for Thy people. Turn from Thy fierce wrath. Save us for the sake of Thy kindness. To we who pray that Thou forgive us, answer, "I forgive". Return us to Thee, O G-d, and we shall be restored.

37 Now, during the Ten Days of Repentance, when G-d is to be found (Rosh Hashanna 18a).

38 The Beis Medresh of Rabbi Yishmoel teaches that sin makes one's heart foolish (Yoma 39a, based on Leviticus 11:43).

39 In accordance with Job 5:18.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

48. הורית דרך תשובה (Pizmon) B

Thou taught us the ways of repentance⁴⁰, and we shall return to Thee. They who knock at Thy gates do not return empty-handed. Teach us to walk the straight path and if our transgressions and offenses are numerous, return us for Thy sake. Return us to Thee, O G-d, and we shall be restored.

49. אזי בהר מור (Akeidoh) S10

Isaac rejoiced when Abraham came to offer him on Mount Moriah. Abraham did not grieve, for the Will of the Creator was his pleasure and delight. The Angels wailed, "Who can bear to see the innocent slaughtered?" The pious one was spared, the lad escaped the sharpened sword. Grant us peace. Remember Thy covenant with his descendants.

50. זכור ברית אברהם... (אבדנו) see Piyyut 39. above and footnote 32.

51. תורה הקדושה * (Techinoh) S5

May the Holy Torah pray for us before G-d. Have we not said, "We shall do and obey?"⁴¹ We attach ourselves to the Law, rejoicing at Thy Word. Thy loving ones honor Thee. Thy Word is precious and sweet. Daily we inquire and ponder Thy perfect laws. By virtue of pure worship and piety may Thee rescue us and Thy City.

----- 2nd DAY of the ASERES YIMEI TESHUVOH -----

52. אליך לב ונפש נשפך (Pesichoh) E3

To Thee, G-d of Heaven, we pour out our hearts and souls like water. Let us cleanse ourselves of sinfulness and wicked transgressions. Let us multiply our prayers so that Thou will not despise us. Hear our calls, Mighty G-d, comfort those who rely on Thy kindness and trust in Thy mercy.

40 Reference is made here to those who confessed and repented, and had their decrees canceled: Adam (ראש עפרות תבל), Cain (דמי אחיו בשפחו), Reuben (מחלל יצועי יולדו), Judah (גור אריה), Ahav (בן עמרי), the people of Nineveh (עיר הגדולה) and Joseph (כשורה).

41 We observe so many commandments and yet look at the Gentiles! Even their own seven they don't keep! (see Avodah Zoroh 2b).

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

53. אני קראתיך כי תענני א-ל (Selichoh) S5

I have called to Thee, for I am certain that Thou will answer me, O G-d. I ask for tolerance like a pauper begging at the door. Suppress our iniquities. Atone for our errors. Elevate our lowliness. Strengthen us. May our supplications be pleasing to Thee, the One Who hears our praise.

54. אלכה ואשובה (Selichoh) Y6 or Y7

(Allegorically, Israel has betrayed its betrothal to G-d and the Torah) I shall return to my first husband. We were wedded with a contract (the ten commandments) and rites (the Torah). But, He withdrew. My heart yearns for His return. “Turn to me”, I beg in vain. I wait patiently for the day of comfort. Hear my voice; hide not Thy ear.

55. אזעק אל אלוקים קולי (Shelishiyoh) S9

My voice cries to G-d. O mighty One, remove from us plague and disease. Grant us pardon. Withhold Thy anger from Thy beloved ones. Do not extend contention against us. Turn to the cry of the grief-stricken and anguished. As a father has mercy on his children, hasten mercy to Thy people who hope and trust in Thee.

56. אמרנו נגזרנו לנו 42 (Shalmonis) S9

We are cut off⁴³, we are guilty and our friend (G-d) has forsaken us. We are overwhelmed by our calamities and grief. Because of our iniquities, we have been cast off, defiled and soiled. We have dealt falsely with Thee. Rehabilitate us that we may again be worthy of being called Thy people, for Thou art our G-d and for Thee we wait.

57. בין כסה לעשור (Pizmon) E2

Between Rosh Hashanna and Yom Kippur we cast away the Evil Inclination⁴⁴. O G-d, absolve us. Look at our bitter misery. Behold the spirit and heart of Thy people. In unison we seek to appease Thee with prayer. Remember Thy assurances of comfort and kindness, remove our stains now, between Rosh Hashanna and Yom Kippur.

42 The second half of this Piyyut is a description of the four kingdoms who have ruled over Israel, one after the other, as per Daniel’s prophesy (Daniel 7:17).

43 “G-d, who is close to those who call to Him, distances Himself from sinners” (Dr. Goldschmidt).

44 Our Sages call the Evil Inclination, “the yeast in the dough” (Berochos 17a), i.e. it causes our hearts to sour (see Rashi there).

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

58. איתן למד דעת (Akedoh) possibly S2

Abraham⁴⁵ taught the world of G-d. He rejected and broke the idols. Thou promised him a great reward. Abraham suppressed his paternal pity on Isaac that he may obey Thy will. As Thou redeemed Isaac, so too do not spurn our petition and affliction. Turn to us in mercy, for Thou are called G-d, overflowing with mercy.

59. 46 שערי שמים (Techinoh) possibly S5

Open the gates of heaven to those who pray. Allow our prayers to ascend on high. Open the gates for those who are painfully oppressed. Listen to the prayers of Thy beloved people. Open the gates to the children of the three Patriarchs so that their prayers may ascend to He who resides in the Heavens.

----- 3rd DAY of the ASERES YIMEI TESHUVOH -----

60. שחרנוך בקשנוך (Pesichoh) S12

We seek Thee early in the morning. We enumerate our infractions and pray to Thee in shame and confusion. We are alarmed and terrified. We dread and fear our accusers. Our faces are blackened and we go about in gloom. We substitute our prayers for offerings confidently trusting in Thy mercy.

45 Abraham here is called Eison in accordance with Baba Basra 15a.

46 The Gemara, Chagiga 12b, quotes Resh Lokish as saying that there are seven heavens, each with its own attributes and functions. This Piyyut is a review of each heaven (the first one "שמים" is generic). Interestingly, already in the second line of this Piyyut we are told that there are three hundred and ninety heavens(!) in accordance with the Aggada Derech Eretz Rabba, end Chapter 2 which says that G-d dwells in all of these. The seven heavens are:

- 1) וילון whose only function is to enable the flow-through of the morning and evening. It symbolizes the daily renewal of the Creation.
- 2) רקיע where the Sun, Moon, stars and constellations reside.
- 3) שחקים which contains the mill which grinds the Manna for the righteous.
- 4) זבול where the Heavenly Jerusalem, Temple and Altar are found and where Michael (השר) offers sacrifices.
- 5) מעון where the attending angels sing at night but are quiet during the day out of respect for Israel's honor (when we do the singing).
- 6) מכון occupied by the snow, hail, storms, etc.
- 7) ערבות where righteousness, justice, charity, life, peace and blessing are stored.

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61. אֵךְ בַּךְ מִקּוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' (Selichoh) S9

Thou, G-d, are our only hope. We are anguished and our bones are dry. The Temple is destroyed. Our redemption is lacking. Why do the wicked continue to flourish? We will praise Thee forever. Thou are the G-d for Whom we shall rejoice and be glad in His salvation.

62. אֵלֶיךָ ה' שׁוֹעֲתִי (Selichoh) Z

To Thee, O G-d, I cry and appear with supplication. I rely and trust in the greatness of Thy mercy. Guide me in Thy truth, and teach me. Let me know the path of Thy commandments. Rescue us from sin, purify our guilt. Regard our meditation as burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, G-d, who sits on the Throne of Mercy.

63. אֱלֹהִים אֵין בְּלִתֶּךָ (Shelishiyoh) Z

There is no G-d besides Thee. Mighty are Thy wonders. Thy kingdom endures forever. Why have Thee forsaken us, the sons of Jacob? We are obscured and shamed. We have sunk and stumbled. We cry bitterly to Thee. We seek Thee with prayer and entreaty. Be favorable, O G-d, to us this hour; hear our supplication.

64. אֵיךְ אוֹכֵל לֶבַע עֵדֶיךָ (Shalmonis) Y4

How can I approach Thee when prevented by those who worship other gods. They dwell securely while I am in Exile. They mock me, but I don't listen. They torment and vilify me. Hurl them out of Thy dwelling place that I may enter⁴⁷.

65. 48 יַחְבִּיאֵנוּ צֶלֶיֶךָ (Pizmon) Y5

May the shadow of Thy hand shield us under the Divine wings. O G-d, hear our supplication. I see that there is no refuge from Thee, I can not flee from Thy presence. Accept the cries of Thy lambs and the suffering of Thy stray sheep. Deliver us, protect us, come be our salvation as Thou were to Simon and Levi⁴⁹.

47 There are unusual references in this Piyyut to the Arabs (קדר, a son of Yishmael) and Mohammed (הקוראים נביא ל...מעולם לא נבא).

48 This entire Piyyut is built on Psalms 139.

49 Who were willing to sacrifice their lives for their sister Dina (Medresh Bereshis Rabba 80:9).

50 See Baba Basra 15a.

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66. אזרחי מעבר הנהר (Akeidoh) U

The native from beyond the river (Abraham)⁵⁰ ran to Thee and did not delay. Thou tried him ten times and he was found perfect. He fulfilled Thy commandment and offered up his son as a burnt offering. Spare those who are sentenced to death because of their sins. Forgive and absolve our crimes and wickedness. Redeem us.

67. * שבת הכסא (Techinoh) S5

King, who sits upon the throne, cleanse our sins; awaken those who are exhausted by the Exile. Do not judge us strictly. Direct our eyes to the straight path, we who are to be transported on the wings of eagles⁵¹. Fulfill Thy oath with the last of the generations.

----- 4th DAY of the ASERES YIMEI TESHUVOH -----

68. שושנת ורד (Pesichoh) possibly S13

We feel as abandoned as an unfaithful wife. Zion is desolate and no one is there to comfort her. We have been flung far to all corners and corridors. Our people are laid bare to the elements of the desert. No one but Thee can remove our burden. Upon Thy many mercies do we depend.

69. 52 אליך (ה') אקרא איום (Selichoh) G

I call to Thee, the awesome and feared One. Hide not Thy face from seeing our troubles. The cursed ones hound us. Be zealous towards Thy Name. We shall thank Thee and acclaim Thee. With G-d is the salvation. It is for Thee to perform miracles and for us to bless Thee and praise Thee.

70. אתה הוא מקדם (Selichoh) G

Thou have been our Lord and Master from the earliest of times. We attest that there is no one besides Thee in greatness. Uphold with us the covenant Thou made with our fathers. Forgiveness is with Thee. Please forgive the trespasses of the guilty, G-d who sits on the Throne of Mercy.

51 See Exodus 19:4.

52 Dr. Goldschmidt claims that there are several anti-Christian references in the Piyyut, e.g. העצב נבזה, טמא ומת חדש הבא מקרוב.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

71. שוממתי ברב יגוני (Shelishiyoh) S10

I am appalled in my deep affliction; what shall I plead before my G-d? I am desolate and speechless, ashamed and confused by my guilt. What excuse do I have? My proud heart deceived me. My soul is desolate. Look upon my affliction, open Thy gates and answer me. Forgive our guilt for our days are but a shadow.

72. תחרות רוגז הניח (Shalmonis) E3

Abandon Thy anger, O G-d, and remember Thy forbearance. Be gracious to Thy pious ones. Have pity on the remnant. We beseech Thee to speedily assemble and hasten to help Thy faithful friends. Save those doomed to death and slaughter. Let they who hope for Thy salvation give thanks and praise to Thee.

73. 53 ישמיענו סלחתי (Pizmon) S8

Let us hear Thee say, "I have forgiven". Thou who dwell in a secret high place, hear and forgive us when we cry to Thee. We have placed our reliance on Thee. Remove our sins, one by one, acquit the sinners and forgive the transgressors. Remember this day in our favor as we say, "And G-d descended in a cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed in the name of G-d."

74. אם אפס רובע הקן (Akeidoh) E4

Although the Temple is destroyed and the poor man's offerings have ceased, we possess Abraham and his righteousness. Willingly did Isaac run to him, and without hesitation. Abraham said, "G-d will provide". Let this memory be engraved before Thee in Heaven. Regard the piety of that sacrifice, for the merit of the bound Isaac.

75. מלך מלכים ורם (Techinoh) possibly M3

King of kings, exalted on High, see the suffering of the afflicted and grieved. We are scattered and dispersed, dishonored and covered with contempt and insult all due to our own iniquities. We have sinned and turned aside from Thy goodly Laws. O G-d, forgive us and show compassion. Show mercy toward us.

53 Dr. Goldschmidt claims that the text we have of this Piyyut is corrupted, thus making it difficult to interpret accurately.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

----- 5th DAY of the ASERES YIMEI TESHUVOH -----

76. עם ה' חזקו (Pesichoh) possibly E3

People of G-d, be strong and call to G-d with strength! Confess and return to G-d that He may show His mercy. Seek and approach Him with prayer; He may be appeased! Seek G-d, pray and worship that He may return from His fierce wrath. He delights in prayer more than in burnt offerings, in obedience more than the fat of rams.

77. אני ברוב חסדך (Selichoh) U

In Thy great mercy, I come to Thy House. I shall bow in awe of Thee in the Hall of Thy Holy Temple. Thy Name is great, Thy words are true. We are Thy people and flock. Be gratuitously gracious with all Thy creations. Enwrap Thyself in mercifulness. May graciousness and humility come before Thee.

78. אלוקים בישראל גדול נודעת (Sheniyoh) possibly Z

Israel recognizes G-d as great. Thou art G-d, our father. We call upon Thee and Thou draw us close. We have strayed. Do not cast us off in old age. May Thy attribute of goodness and Thy humility come before Thee⁵⁴.

79. אתה חלקי וצור לבבי (Shelishiyoh) E3

Thou art my portion and rock of my heart. I desire Thee. I call to Thee when my heart is faint. We are greatly distressed; how can we justify our unrighteousness? I trust that Thou will forgive and pardon me. Strengthen the stumbling, fortify the feeble, establish the Temple, restore the Palace and return Thy favor to Zion⁵⁵.

80. תוחלת ישראל (Shalmonis) S9 or S10

G-d, we trust that Thou shall not abandon Thy kindness and that Thy faithfulness will not desert us. Thou extended Thy hand to receive us, but we rebelled. We hope, wait and suffer. Let us speedily find Thee, for we are in despair. Draw us near to Thee, for in Thee alone do we hope. Comfort us and let Thy kindness be upon us.

54 Dr. Goldschmidt says that the last two lines of this Piyyut (beginning with the words תביט ותציץ) were later additions to the original.

55 Reference is made in this Piyyut to the Clouds of Glory which encompassed the Children of Israel in the desert in the merit of Aaron. In Midrash Numbers Rabba 1:2, Rabbi Hosaiyoh says that they were seven Clouds of Glory (שבעת חיפות חזיזים); חזיז = rain cloud (see Zachariah 10:1).

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

81. אָזוֹן תַּחַן וְהִסַּכְתָּ עֵתִירָה (Selichoh) U

Listen attentively to our prayer. Dismiss Thy anger and quell Thy wrath. With bitter souls, we beseech Thee. May we find help by invoking Thy great Name. Bend Thy ear toward our supplication. Favor us as we cry, "O G-d, O G-d..."

82. ה' ה' א-ל רחום וחנון (Pizmon) A1

O G-d, O G-d, be merciful and gracious. Thou are slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth. Thou keep kindness for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Forgive us. Hear our voice of weeping. Deliver us from cruel decrees for upon Thee alone our eyes are fixed.

83. אֵל הַר הַמּוֹר גְּבַעַת הוֹרִיָּה (Akeidoh) M1

When Abraham seized the knife to offer up Isaac, the angels rose and cried, "Lay not your hand on your beloved only son!" Thus, G-d has committed to answer the prayers of their children when in distress and absolve their iniquities. Raise us, O Mighty and Glorious One, for in Thy light we see light.

56 אֵנָה הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא E1

Accept our prayers as Thou would the incense. Support and strengthen us for the sake of Thy Holy Throne. Thou are the One whose Name is glorious and awesome. Thou are the source of life and by Thy light we shall see light⁵⁷.

84. מִקֵּוֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשִׁיעוֹ (Techinoh) possibly M3

Hope of Israel, Savior in time of trouble! Be merciful with Thy poor and lonely nation. We are bereaved and broken. Do not reject us. Take vengeance for us. Comfort Zion and mend her breeches, for greatness and might are yours, O G-d.

56 This Piyyut is read together with אֵל הַר הַמּוֹר and is printed in the common Selichos books as one.

57 See Psalms 36:10.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ELUL AND TISHREI SELICHOS PIYYUTIM

----- EREV YOM KIPPUR -----

85. אָדוֹן דִּין אִם יִדּוּקֵדֵק (Sheleshiyoh) Z

No man is righteous if judged in strictness. We have neither merit nor righteousness; we are full of wrongdoing and wickedness. Show leniency to those who deserve it not. Have pity on us. Hearken to the cry of those who supplicate Thee. Thou have informed the humble one²² of Thy thirteen attributes. Turn us not empty from Thy presence.

86. אָדוֹן בִּפְקֻדָּךְ (Sheniyoh) Y8

Press not justice to its limits. Our enemy, the Evil Inclination, lurks within us and entices us daily. G-d, look down on the broken-hearted and acquit in Judgment those who proclaim Thy unity. Thou are close to those who return to Thee. We have not forgotten Thee or Thy Name; forget us not ever.

87. יִרְצֵה צוֹם עַמְךָ (Pizmon) Y1 or Y3

Let the fasting of Thy people be acceptable as the sprinkled blood of the sacrifices. We beseech Thee, "Come hear and accept our prayer." Remember the kindness of our fathers when we come to plead before Thee. May truth and peace emerge together as a sign tomorrow, on Yom Kippur⁵⁸, of G-d's forgiveness.

58 See Eccl. 7:14. Truth and peace unite when people are accepting of one another. Yom Kippur does not atone for man-to-man sins until each person is fully agreeable to his fellow.