תוכן העניינים

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Israel, the Nations, and the Angels in a Qillirian Silluq for Rosh ha-Shanah

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Two great divisions of being structure biblical and post-biblical Jewish thought. The first is that between the divine, the human, and the animal. The second occurs within the human realm, between Israel and the nations.[1] The first might be called universalist, insofar as it takes up humankind as such, while the second, insofar as it distinguishes among human beings, might be called particularist. These divisions are interwoven: Israel enjoys a special relationship with God, for example, and the distinction between Israel and the nations is sometimes reinforced via the depiction of the nations as animals.[2]

1 On the latter dichotomy see most recently, and foundationally, Adi Ophir and Ishai Rosen-Zvi, *Israel's Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

2 See, e.g., Mira Beth Wasserman, *Jews, Gentiles and Other Animals: The Talmud after the Humanities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); Menahem Kister, "Self-Identity, Polemics and Commentary in Ancient Jewish Midrash and Christian Parallels," in *Between Babylonia and the Land of Israel: Studies in Honor of Isaiah M. Gafni* (ed. Geoffrey Herman et al.; Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2016), 329-37. Kister comments on Abraham's injunction to his servants, "Sit you here with the ass" (Gen 22:5), which some rabbinic texts (*Gen. Rab.* 56:2 [595-96] and elsewhere) read as a statement about the ass-like character of slaves. Joseph Heinemann long ago suggested that this interpretation has its roots in an anti-Christian polemic, even though in rabbinic literature, Abraham's servants stand as figures for slaves, not for gentiles. While Kister dismantles Heinemann's reasoning, he finds evidence for the presence of polemic in Christian readings of Gen 22:5 wherein the servants stand for blind and rejected Israel. Kister tentatively suggests that this line of interpretation among Christians may have been a response to a Jewish interpretation of the verse in which the servants in fact stand not for slaves but for gentiles. I wonder whether evidence for Kister's reconstruction might come

The divine realm includes not only God but angels, and they, too, often find themselves enlisted to divide the nations from Israel. One thinks, for example, of the comic story of Elisha and Aram in 2 Kings 6.[3]

from the depiction of the Akedah story in a number of synagogue mosaics at Sepphoris and Beth Alpha, in which the scene of the servants with the ass is accorded the same or nearly the same amount of space as the sacrifice scene itself. Arguably, the interest in the servant scene suggests that it was construed as of importance for the expression of Israelite identity, and thus that the servants stand for gentiles. See also the discussion of Ezek 34:31 below. On the servant scene in the two synagogue mosaics see Joseph Yahalom, "The Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic and its Story," in *From Dura to Sepphoris: Studies in Jewish Art and Society in Late Antiquity* (ed. Lee I. Levine and Ze'ev Weiss; Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2000), 85-88, arguing that the two servants in the Sepphoris servant scene represent Eliezer and Ishmael, debating who will be Abraham's heir after Isaac is sacrificed; and Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues – Archaeology and Art: New Discoveries and Current Research* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 394, arguing, at least against the extension of Yahalom's position to the Beth Alpha mosaic, that in the Beth Alpha servant scene, "the depictions [in the sacrifice scene] were accompanied by the figures' names and other explanatory inscriptions …, so if these youths were identified as suggested, their names would certainly have been added." Hachlili's argument does not, however, account for the fact that the explanatory inscriptions in the sacrifice scene are quotations from the Bible, and so we should suppose that the name labels ("Abraham" and "Isaac") are likewise biblical quotations. Thus the absence of name labels for the servants can simply be attributed to the fact that they are unnamed in the Bible. The servants could, however, have been labeled as נעריו "his servants," the word that refers to them in the biblical episode (Gen 22:3, 5, 19), and the asses, החמור (Gen 22:5), and it is notable that even such quotation-labels are absent. See Lee I. Levine, *Visual Judaism in Late Antiquity: Historical Contexts of Jewish Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 282 n. 13, reasoning from the absence of labels for the servants to a possible "clear indication of their ancillary role in the episode." This inference is sound, but the fact that the mosaic devotes so much space to the servants suggests a conscious intention to *figure* them as ancillary. On the occurrence of texts in images in late antiquity see generally Sean Villareal Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 185-238.

3 On this story see Alexander Rofé, "Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings 6:8-23): Historic-Literary Criticism Sustained by the Midrash," in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near*

The king of Aram hatches a plot to lie in wait for the armies of Israel, but the Israelites somehow seem to know the Arameans' location, and avoid it, "not once and not twice" (2 Kgs 6:10). The king learns that it is Elisha, "the man of God" (6:9), who has been revealing the plot, and he attempts to attack Elisha directly. The Aramean armies come by night and surround Elisha's city, but again, their subterfuge is in vain. When Elisha's servant, upon seeing the armies in the morning, expresses despair, Elisha corrects him: "Have no fear. There are more on our side than on theirs." (6:16 [NJPS]) Elisha prays that the Lord open the servant's eyes, whereupon the servant sees that the hill is aflame with horses and chariots of fire.[4] In the plainest language, this story aligns the fiery armies of angels with Israel: They are "on our side" (אתנו), arrayed against Israel's enemies.

The intersection between the two divisions of being, and in particular the intersection of the boundary dividing the angelic from the human with the division between Israel and the nations, becomes a fertile matrix for theological reflection in late antiquity.[5] In one vector, Israel becomes

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Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine (ed. Robert Chazan et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 345-53; W. Brian Aucker, "Putting Elisha in His Place: Genre, Coherence, and Narrative Function in 2 Kings 2:2-8" (PhD dissertation; University of Edinburgh, 2000), 139-69.

4 The association of angels with fire is a trope, but it is possible that the image of a hill aflame with warriors draws from the martial imaginaire. See 1 Macc 6:39 (NRSV), describing Antiochus' army, arrayed on the hills prior to the battle of Beth Zechariah: "When the sun shone on the shields of gold and brass, the hills were ablaze with them and gleamed like flaming torches."

5 On angels in rabbinic literature and its broader late antique context see now Mika Ahuvia, *Michael on My Right, Gabriel on My Left: Angels in Ancient Jewish Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021). My thanks to Prof. Ahuvia for sharing her book in manuscript form. In light of Ahuvia's observation that while the rabbinic mainstream resists the notion of imitation of or resemblance to angels, including the notion of creation in the image of angels, Yannai joins Jews and Christians outside rabbinic circles in embracing angles, I note that Qillir, in the *qiqlar* for the *qedushta* to be taken up in the continuation, explicitly speaks of Adam whom מרום אותו דימה לאילי "he (i.e., God) imaged/compared to the gods on high (i.e., angels). For this passage see Shulamit

angelic, either in itself or in the form of an eponymous representative. Thus, in the Gospel of John, Jesus defends his own claim to be Son of God by observing that "the Jews" apply the words of Ps 82:6, "I said to you, 'you are gods,'" to "those to whom the word of God came," most likely meaning the people Israel at Sinai. Sources from the late Second Temple period and afterward envision an angelic being named Jacob or Israel who is especially proximate to God, and who is even the subject of angelic veneration.[6] The tradition of angelic veneration of Jacob is probably an echo or revision of one in which Adam, the human being par excellence, is the object of veneration.[7]

Rabbinic texts operating at this intersection—where the boundary between the angelic and the human meets the boundary between Israel and the nations—often take Israel, in a surprisingly non-polemical way, as a synecdoche for or representative of humankind as object of angelic hostility. Consider, for example, *t. Soṭ.* 6:5, a passage that occurs amidst

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Elizur and Michael Rand, *Rabbi El'azar Birabbi Qillir: Liturgical Poems for Rosh ha-Shana* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2014), 305 l. 76.

6 On the passage from John and angelic Jacob/Israel see Menahem Kister, "Son(s) of God: Israel and Christ: A Study of Transformation, Adaptation, and Rivalry," in *Son of God: Divine Sonship in Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (ed. Garrick V. Allen et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 200-08. See also Alexei M. Sivertsev, "Jacob's Image: The History of a Late Antique Motif," in *From Scrolls to Traditions: A Festschrift Honoring Lawrence H. Schiffman* (ed. Stuart S. Miller et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2021), 464-86 (*non vidi*); *idem*, "The Image of Jacob on the Throne of God and the Construction of Liturgical Space in Late Antiquity," *Judaica Ukrainica* 4 (2015), 18-35; Rachel Neis, "Embracing Icons: The Face of Jacob on the Throne of God," *Images* 1 (2007), 36-54.

7 For this claim see Silviu Bunta, "The Likeness of the Image: Adamic Motifs and צלם Anthropology in Rabbinic Traditions about Jacob's Image Enthroned in Heaven," *JSJ* 37 (2006), 55-84. On Adam veneration in Second Temple sources and the echoes of this motif in later rabbinic and Christian sources see also Sergey Minov, "Satan's Refusal to Worship Adam: A Jewish Motif and Its Reception in Syriac Christian Tradition," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity* (ed. Menahem Kister et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 230-271; Gary A. Anderson, "The Exaltation of Adam and the Fall of Satan," *JJTP* 6 (1994), 105-34.

an extended reflection on the song at the sea (Exodus 15). The Tosefta passage puts the Psalmist's exclamation, "what is mortal kind, that you should recall them, and humankind, that you should bring them to mind?" (Ps 8:5), into the mouths of the primordial angels, who question God's choice to create human beings.[8] Other sources have God respond to their challenge by reflecting on human beings as such.[9] But in the Tosefta, God's response comes only with the emergence of Israel, and their praise of God after the splitting of the sea. God points to their song (בואו וראו את השירה "come and see the song"), evidently with the implication that human beings can praise God as well as angels can.[10] The text does not draw attention to the substitution of human beings for Israel; it does not suggest that non-Israelites are less than human, but rather that Israel's song justifies the creation of humankind as a whole.[11]

Again, in *b. Shab.* 88b, when Moses ascends to receive the Torah, he encounters angels who again voice opposition through the words of Psalm 8: God's glory, the Torah, ought to remain in heaven, with the

8 The classic study of such sources, figuring angels as jealous of or rivals to human beings and/or Israel, is Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Englen und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorstellung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975). For a very recent study with different but overlapping organizing categories and chronological range, see Andrei A. Orlov, *Demons of Change: Antagonism and Apotheosis in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Binghamton: SUNY Press, 2020).

9 *GenRab* 8:6 (61) (rejecting the angels' charge at creation); 31:12 (285) (accepting the angels' charge in the generation of Noah).

10 The quotation is from MS Vienna. Appropriately, the angels respond with their own praise, the words of Ps 8:10.

11 On this passage and numerous related ones see Menahem Kister, "Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha* (ed. John C. Reeves; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 7-15. The notion that Israel justifies the creation of humankind is especially clear in *Yalqut Shim'oni* 96 (quoted *per* Kister's translation at *ibid.*, 12), which reflects the alternative view, found also in the above Tosefta passage, that God's reply to the angels comes with the binding of Isaac: "The Holy One said to the ministering angels: Had I listened to you when you say, 'What is man that you are mindful of him,' would Abraham, who glorifies me in the world, exist?"

angels. Moses counters by proving from the content of the Torah itself that it was meant for human beings, a victory that the angels recognize by giving him gifts. The story ends by citing and interpreting a second biblical cornerstone of the story: "'You ascended to heaven, you took a captive, you received gifts through humankind (באדם)' (Ps 68:19): In reward for their having called you human (אדם), you received gifts." Here again the absence of a polemical undertone is notable: Moses establishes that human beings ought indeed to be the recipients of the Torah, and yet there is no attempt to explain or justify the fact that God gives it to Israel alone.[12]

This paper offers a translation and close reading of a long poem by the great early Byzantine *payṭan* Qillir, that in part follows the implicit line of these rabbinic sources, but in part develops a novel configuration of the tensions between the angelic and the human, and between Israel and the nations. Qillir draws on the long tradition of angelic hostility toward humankind, but transforms it by affiliating the angels, within the framework of this tradition, with the nations of the world, so that the angels' ire is directed at Israel alone as a mirror of the nations' hostility toward Israel. Israel in the poem is the quintessential human being, implicitly distinguished from the nations not because the nations are bestial, but precisely because the nations are linked to the angels. By being joined to the angels, the nations, as it were, abandon the category of humankind to Israel, so that, when humankind eclipses the angels, it does so as Israel alone.

12 On this story see recently Itay Marienberg-Milikowsky, *"We Know Not What Has Become of Him": Literature and Meaning in Talmudic Aggada* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2016), 111-14; Christine Hayes, "'The Torah was not Given to Ministering Angels': Rabbinic Aspirationalism," in *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin* (ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 145-48. Marienberg-Milikowsky advances the persuasive hypothesis that the story reworks not only the earlier tradition of angelic objection to the creation of humankind, but also an earlier tradition about the nations' rejection of the Torah. From this perspective, the silence of the story in *b. Shab*. 88b concerning the boundary between Israel and the nations is a matter of erasure rather than mere omission.

The poem occurs in a *qedushta* liturgy for the New Year, אפד מאז "Adorned from then." It is a *silluq*, the concluding poem of the *qedushta*, the poem that leads directly into the *qedushah* recitation for which the *qedushta* is named. Because of their role as a bridge to the *qedushah*, an angelic liturgy, *silluq* poems characteristically make reference to angels, and the *silluq* that is the focus of this paper, מי לא ייראך מלך "Who would not fear you, king," is no exception. The formal constraints governing the classical *silluq* are looser than those that obtain in most other parts of the *qedushta*. The Qillirian *silluq* is a monumental composition—many times longer than the typical *silluq* of his great predecessor, Yannai—and divided into strophes. The number of lines in a strophe can vary widely from strophe to strophe. Within a single strophe, line length can vary, albeit across a relatively narrow range, but all lines end in the same rhyming syllable, or, as often, entirely the same word. The cumulative effect of these loose constraints—what some have called rhymed prose—is a rapid, incantatory rhythm, with a heavy emphasis on the concluding rhyming syllable or repeated word.

The *editio princeps* of the *silluq* מי לא ייראך מלך was published by Yahalom and Loeffler in an article that appeared in 2006, and the poem was reedited for inclusion in the complete corpus of Qillir's poetry for the New Year by Elizur and Rand, published in 2014.[13] Both editions of the *silluq* are accompanied by commentary and discussion.[14] An English translation of the *silluq*, with sporadic commentary, appears in the appendix to this article, following the line numbering for the *qedushta* as a whole as it appears in the edition of Elizur and Rand.[15]

13 Joseph Yahalom and Binyamin Löffler, "'Who Would Not Fear You, O King?': A Lot Qilirian *silluq* for Rosh ha-Shanah," in *Studies in Hebrew Poetry and Jewish Heritage: In Memory of Aharon Mirsky* (ed. Ephraim Hazan and Joseph Yahalom; Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006), 127-58; Elizur and Rand, *Liturgical Poems*, 323-47.

14 For the discussion in the later edition see *ibid.*, 117-21, 139-40.

15 For brief discussion of מי לא ייראך מלך in relation to a *silluq* for Shavuot, וכל העם רואים את הנראה ואת הנשמע "And all the people saw what was visible and audible," see *ibid.*, 120 n. 11; Joseph Yahalom, *Sources of the Sacred Song: Crossroads in Jewish Liturgical Poetry* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2019), 8-11. Yahalom seems to assume, evidently on the basis of the similarities between the poems, that the

The poem begins by marking God as a king to be feared, because as king, "today"—on the New Year—he sits on the throne of judgement, and nothing is concealed from him. (ll. 237-65) The continuation immediately nuances this portrait by taking up different potential outcomes of judgement, in each of which God inclines toward mercy. If an individual's merits and sins are precisely balanced, then God gives him the ten days between the New Year and the Day of Atonement to repent. (ll. 266-72) If his sins exceed his merits by one, then God will ignore that one sin. (ll. 277-83) Even a wicked person is given leave to repent, and even one such who did not repent before the New Year can save himself by repenting up to the Day of Atonement (ll. 284-311), for after all, if God were really to judge without mercy, none alive, not even the angels, could endure it (ll. 312-19).

At this point comes a series of five strophes dedicated to God's thrones of judgement. The first four describe the "fourfold throne" (ריבוע כס) (l. 320). Each is marked by a concluding *leitwort* that names one or another aspect of God: rightness (צדק); judgement (דין); truth (אמת), and kindness (חסד). The fifth strophe introduces a distinct and more exalted throne of mercy (רחמים). In broad strokes, the fourfold throne is the throne of justice, in contrast with the throne of mercy, but the throne of justice itself is split between, on the one hand, a tendency toward strict justice, manifest in the aspects of rightness and judgement, and, on the other hand, a tendency toward mercy, manifest in the aspects of truth and kindness.[16] The throne strophes are structured by the contrast between the nations and Israel: To the nations God comes with rightness and justice,

latter, too, is from Qillir's hand, while Elizur and Rand suppose rather that the author of the Shavuot *silluq* made use of מי לא ייראך מלך. See also Shulamit Elizur, *Rabbi El'azar Birabbi Kiliri: Hymni Pentecostales* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 2000), 22-23 n. 27. Despite the similarities between these poems, the angels in the *silluq* for Shavuot are not aligned with the nations; on the contrary, they rejoice in God's rejection of the nations as recipients of the Torah.

16 These contrasts are worked out in the final lines of successive strophes in the Two: "Support (those who are judged) by means of your kindness and truth, Lord!" (298 l. 32) and "to exchange the throne of judgement with that of mercy" (299 l. 36).

and to Israel, with truth and kindness, and with mercy. These latter three traits are all drawn from the final verses of the book of Micah (Mic 7:18-20), which play so central a role in liturgical and exegetical reflection on the New Year. Coming after a word against the nations (גוים) who are Israel's enemy, and who will fall in silence in fear of God (7:16-17), these verses describe God's forgiveness toward Israel: "He will turn and have mercy on us (ירחמנו), he will suppress our sins, and you shall cast into the depths of the sea all their sins. Give truth (אמת) to Jacob, kindness (חסד) to Abraham, whom you swore to our fathers from of old." An allusion to this passage occurs already in ll. 278-79, where God is said to throw the sin that exceeds an individual's merits into the "mire," but the Micah passage comes to the fore in the throne strophes.

The contrast between the nations and Israel occurs for the first time, explicitly and categorically but also most subtly, as a matter of a single letter, at the end of the צדק strophe. God sits on his throne "to judge the earth with rightness (בצדק),/ to judge his people for rightness (לצדק)" (ll. 325-26). Judging "with rightness" in the first line is in principle ambiguous: It could indicate judging rightly, i.e., fairly, or judging with an inclination toward a verdict of innocence, i.e., mercifully. The first meaning comes to the fore, at least provisionally, by the contrast with "for rightness" in the second line, which unambiguously commits God to a finding of innocence for Israel. Thus the earth as a whole will be judged with fairness, while Israel will be judged with mercy.

The strophe devoted to "judgement" has God condemn the nations for their injustices toward Israel: "They distorted the line of judgement / against all who know law and judgement" (ll. 335-36).[17] Strikingly, the nations are also found guilty of not permitting Israel's judges to judge properly: "And [they] constrained those who sit in judgement / from issuing true judgement." (ll. 337-38) One wonders whether Qillir is alluding to persecution of Israel and its sages in a general way, or whether he instead has in mind, more specifically, jurisdictional limits on

17 "All who know law and judgement" is from Esth 1:13. In context the term refers to the Persian king's advisors, but Qillir borrows it to describe the people Israel, who know the Torah.

Jewish courts.[18] In any case, more importantly for our purposes, Qillir makes reference to simultaneous judgement against the nations' angelic representatives: "Thus he will come among them in judgement,/ and all their hosts (צבאותם) with them will he judge" (ll. 339-40).[19] Qillir will further develop the link between the nations and the angels in the continuation.[20]

The final three strophes of the throne unit concern Israel. As Mic 7:20 speaks of God giving (תתן) truth to Jacob and kindness to Abraham, so the "truth" strophe asserts that "the innocent one (i.e., Jacob) was given a gift of truth" (l. 346), while the "kindness" strophe speaks of "the kindness / that was given to the strong one as a gift of kindness" (ll. 364-65). The "mercy" strophe refers to the merit all of Israel's righteous ancestors, perhaps by way of allusion to the "fathers" in the continuation of Mic 7:20. The cumulative claim of these strophes is that Israel will come out victorious in judgement. The nations are absent from these strophes until near the end of the "kindness" strophe, when we learn that the prosecutors of Israel whom God has stilled are the angelic representatives of the nations. God recalls Israel's forefathers, "through

18 On the question of whether the Justinian Code, in contrast to the earlier Theodosian Code, innovated by asserting jurisdiction over Jews even with respect to internal religious matters, see Catherine Brewer, "The Status of the Jews in Roman Legislation: The Reign of Justinian 527-565 CE," *European Judaism* 38:2 (2005), 132-33. It is also possible that Qillir alludes to something like the Justinian Code's restrictions on Jewish testimony in Roman courts, on which see *ibid.*, 131-32.

19 Elizur *ad loc.* cites this explanation of "their hosts" from a medieval commentator, but herself prefers to see צבאותם as a reference to the crowds of nations themselves. But the phrase "with them" (איתם) seems clearly to indicate that the "hosts" represent a different group.

20 In l. 341, God seals his verdict condemning the nations לנו "for us." This word gives further expression to the notion that the condemnation of the nations is for Israel's sake, but the text is uncertain; another version has למו "for them." Note the interesting parallel to *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* 25: R. Eleazar, son of Yose ha-Gelili, comments in connection with Mic 7:20 that God loves Israel more than the angels. Come the New Year, the angels ask God why he does kindness (חסד) with Israel, and God responds that he does so in the merit of Abraham.

them to shame the princes of peoples, / through them each accuser to silence" (ll. 384-85).

The culmination of Israel's vindication comes in the next strophe (ll. 392-404), which introduces Michael, "the great prince."[21] He receives a crown from Israel's hand and places it on the head of God, who is appeased by the gift and confirms Israel's verdict.[22] Afterward comes a remarkable litany of monikers for the hostile angels in their stunned silence: "Then the ministers on high will be resentful,/ and the host of heaven silent,/ and Erelites of the sky shocked,/ and troops of the temple

21 Compare the role of Michael in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*, on which see Jacob Elbaum, "Rhetoric, Motif and Subject-Matter: Toward an Analysis of Narrative Technique in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 13-14 (1992), 111.

22 This strophe (ll. 392-404) is missing from two manuscripts, and the strophes before and after share the same rhyming syllable, מים-. For this reason, Yahalom and Loeffler take the Michael strophe to be secondary. They omit it from their edition, and construe the מים- strophes on either side as a single strophe. But Elizur and Rand (*Liturgical Poems*, 26-27) contend that the strophe is "undoubtedly" original, for the following reasons. First, it is far better attested: One of the two manuscripts in which it does not appear in fact depends (for the *silluq*) on the other, and so there is only one independent witness to the omission, while there are four direct or indirect witnesses to the strophe. Second, the fact that the strophes on either side share the same rhyme in fact argues for the originality of the Michael strophe, for without it, the unified מים- strophe would be far longer than the typical strophe. Moreover, the presence of the same rhyming syllable in the strophes on either side of the Michael strophe offers an explanation for its omission, by a scribe who was attentive precisely to this fact. Third, the plot of the poem demands the Michael strophe, for only it directly narrates Israel's exculpation. To the considerations advanced by Elizur and Rand we may add that l. 396, within the Michael strophe, echoes a rhetorical strategy evident elsewhere in the *silluq* (on which see more below). Finally, it may be notable that the Michael strophe is located almost precisely in the middle of the *silluq*. The *silluq* runs slightly less than three hundred lines, from l. 237 to l. 530 in the Elizur and Rand edition, so that ll. 392-404 represent more or less the midpoint. From a structural perspective, then, it is not inappropriate that the poem should reach its climax here, and with a strophe whose *leitwort* is גדול "great," and that the climax be signified by the chiastic coupling of strophes with the same rhyming syllable on either side.

astounded" (ll. 410-13), and so on, for thirteen lines in total. Their wonderment finds expression in, among others, the words of Psalm 8 that are familiar to us from the rabbinic texts cited above. I quote their speech in full (ll. 423-34), as of central importance for our purposes.

And they will wonder: How were the innocents found right?

> And how were they acquitted, these little ones among the peoples,
> To be found more right than all nations? [425]
> And before their maker they will proclaim:
> What is mortal kind, to be recalled on high,
> When he is more despised than all peoples?
> And what is the child of a person, to be called to mind for endurance,
> When he is full with ire and brief of days? [430]
> How can the innocent one be accounted before the rock,
> When he is voided with all blemishes?
> And how can he be summoned beyond high ones,
> When he in height is bowed into a crevice of the abyss?

Lines 427 ("What is mortal kind, to be recalled on high") and 429 ("And what is the child of a person, to be called to mind for endurance") draw from the two halves of Ps 8:5, with modifications to suit the rhyme. But in l. 428, Qillir introduces an addition that altogether upends the force of the verse: "When he is more despised than all peoples?" The angels are thus not speaking of humankind in general, but of Israel specifically. They identify not a deficiency in human beings as such, but in Israel specifically, that they are a despised people.[23] The same exegetical dynamic in fact occurs at the very beginning of the angels' speech. The verbs in ll. 423-24 (מה זכו "How were they acquitted" … להצטדיק "to be

23 Elizur comments thus on עממים "all peoples" in l. 428: "The epithet 'peoples' is evidently intended to refer to kinds of creatures, including angels." But this interpretation—which on philological grounds is most strained—erases Qillir's innovation: The angels are not complaining here about humankind having been set above angels, but about the favor shown Israel over other nations.

found righteous") evidently come from Job 25:4, which is cousin to Ps 8:5: "How should mortal kind be found righteous, and how should one woman-born be acquitted?" But Qillir's angels speak not of humankind, but of Israel, "these little ones among the peoples," as not deserving of a verdict denied to "all nations."

The substitution of humankind for Israel in Qillir's appropriation of Ps 8:5 and Job 25:4 is intimately tied to a rhetorical strategy of identifying Israel as the paradigmatic human person. This rhetorical strategy occurs earlier in the *qedushta*, in the Two, where Qillir calls upon God: "If they, person-like, have transgressed the covenant, / God, God-like, look to the covenant!" (299 ll. 41-42).[24] But it is elaborated at greatest length in the *silluq*. In the strophe about the archangel Michael, Qillir characterizes Israel as "the sons of the great person" (l. 396). The great person here is Abraham, on the basis of Josh 14:15, which speaks of Hebron and "the great person among the giants," whom the rabbis consistently identify as Abraham.[25] Notably, Qillir deletes the definite article from האדם "the person" in Josh 14:15, so that, until one encounters the adjective הגדול "the great" at the end of the line, one processes בני אדם as "humankind" or "sons of Adam." Thus, the line, in its syntactic progress, itself displaces humankind in favor of what we might call Israel *qua* paradigmatic human being, or Anthropos Israel.

The rhetorical construction of Anthropos Israel is worked out most densely in the first strophe from God's reply to the angels (ll. 435-69), which, not coincidentally, is unified by the rhyming syllable דם- (*-dām*), the last syllable of the word אדם "humankind." After an introduction to God's speech in ll. 435-36, the very first line of God's speech (l. 437) refers to Israel as human: "How can you be jealous of the flock of humankind?" The next line (l. 438) consists of a parallel question ("And how can you discharge your debt to them?") that is also fronted by מה "how," or literally "what." These questions thus offer a sharp echo of the

24 See also, in the conclusion of the *qiqlar* (315-16 ll. 184-86): "See that there is no man / to entreat on behalf of the sons of a man,/ and you are God, and not man." As Elizur *ad loc.* notes, it is very difficult to know whether the "sons of a man" in this strophe are humankind in general, or Israel specifically.

25 See, e.g., *Sifra aḥare mot* 8:1 (85c); *y. Shab.* 16:1 (15c).

angels' charge against Israel in Ps 8:5, as rewritten with two מה "what" questions in ll. 427 and 429.[26]

The words צאן אדם "the flock of humankind" in l. 437 allude to Ezek 34:31 "And you are my flock (צאני), the flock of my pasture, you are humankind (אדם)." This verse is employed as a hermeneutical key in Palestinian rabbinic literature to decode other instances of the word אדם in the Bible as references to Israel.[27] Now, it is important to underscore that in these other usages, the claim is not that Israel alone is human, and that gentiles are sub-human. Such a claim (whether in a metaphysical or a legal sense, if the two senses can be distinguished) does occur in the Babylonian Talmud, but not in Palestinian sources. The Palestinian sources rather use Ezek 34:31 only as a hermeneutical key, in the sense indicated above: to support the claim that the word אדם in other passages signifies Israel.[28] And at least one Palestinian source uses Ezek 34:31 as evidence that the word צאן "flock," too, can refer to Israel.[29] In the immediate continuation of the *silluq*, as we shall see, Qillir, too, identifies Israel indiscriminately with elements both animal and human. Nevertheless, it is clear that Qillir engages in the *silluq* in a project of constructing Anthropos Israel, and the decision to situate Ezek 34:31 at the outset of God's reply to the angels serves this project. The intent is substantially less adversarial than the Bavli's use of Ezek 34:31, but rather more adversarial than the rabbinic sources surveyed above (*t. Soṭ.* 6:5; *b. Shab.* 88b), which seem to take Israel as a representative of humankind rather than as the paradigmatic human being.

26 In ll. 504-05, God again challenges the angels with a question beginning with מה, and including a reference to Israel as בן אדם "the son of a person."

27 For the contrasting and more "plain-sense" approach, to see the word אדם as signifying humankind as such rather than Israel specifically, see, e.g., *Sifra ʿaḥare mot* 8:3 (86b), interpreting the word אדם in Lev 18:5 to convey that a gentile who observes the Torah attains a status equal to that of the high priest. On this source and related ones see Marc Hirshman, *Torah for the Entire World* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999).

28 Palestinian sources: *Gen. Rab.* 34:13 (324); *Lev. Rab.* 5:3 (340); *Pesiq. R. Kah. Sheqalim* 3 (18). From the Bavli: *b. Yebam.* 60b; *b. B. Meṣ.* 114b; *b. Karet.* 6b.

29 See *Gen. Rab.* 53:3 (556).

In the continuation of the strophe, God tells the angels that they were made to serve Israel, and that even God himself honors them. As evidence of Israel's glory God returns to image of the chariot or throne, for its "four measures" (l. 448)—the four faces of the *ḥayyot*—all plead metonymically for Israel. The lion pleads for Israel insofar as they are "lion's sons" (l. 450, evidently alluding to the characterization of Israel as a lion in an array of verses), and the same for the ox, the eagle, and the person. In the latter case, the person "pleads opposite sons of a person" (l. 453), i.e., Israel; the identification evidently occurs on the strength of Ezek 34:31.[30]

God then makes reference to figures under, in, and above the throne that advocate for Israel: first, again, the *ḥayyot* under the throne, "whose faces are the face of a person" (l. 456), and then Jacob (l. 457), whose image is inscribed on the throne, and finally a figure like a person above the throne (l. 459). With this reference begins a series of nine consecutive lines that all end with the word אדם "person," two of them alluding to this angelic figure, and the other seven to human beings. I take the reference in all of the latter seven cases to be Israel.[31] Let me remark only on ll. 463-64: "Cease yourselves from the person, / for in all my doing I have joined a person." The first line is a verbatim quotation from the first half of Isa 2:22 "Cease yourselves from the person, for of what import is he?" Qillir introduces the second half of the verse verbatim in l. 489, as the culmination of God's rebuke to the angels: Given Israel's cosmic significance, "how can you say: of what import is he?" Elsewhere in rabbinic literature, Isa 2:22 is also cited as God's speech to the angels, but to the opposite effect: The angels wish to worship Adam, and so God puts Adam to sleep, and enjoins the angels to take his sleep as evidence of his insignificance, and to cease from worshipping him.[32] Here, by contrast, the "person" is Israel, and when God tells the angels to "cease"

30 See Elizur and Rand, *Liturgical Poems*, 95 n. 99, for similar exegesis of the four faces in other liturgical poems, three of which explicitly allude to Ezek 34:31, including one by Qillir.

31 After this concentrated sequence, only one other line in the *silluq* (l. 505) identifies Israel as human beings.

32 See *Gen. Rab.* 8:10 (64).

from Israel, he means, not to cease worshipping Israel, but instead, to cease accusing them, and instead to venerate them.[33] In l. 464, God explains why: "for in all my doing I have joined a person." The notion of "joining" in contexts of this sort usually refers to the fact that God's name is joined to Israel, and even incorporated into the name Israel. The sense is probably the same here, only that God calls Israel "person."[34]

I have traced the key moments in the *silluq* in which Qillir works out the identification of the nations with the angels, and Israel with the human. Looking back over the poem as a whole, we may discern a broad division into two main but unequal sections: first, the judgement of the individual before God (ll. 237-319), and second, the vindication of Israel in its judgement before God, and against the angels' charge (ll. 320-530).[35] In both cases, God is very much a partial judge, tending toward acquittal, but this desire becomes manifest in different ways in the two sections. In the first, it becomes manifest chiefly in God's gift of the opportunity (and capacity?) to repent. In the second section, more radically, God's preference for acquittal is bound up with Israel's special status, and God's willingness to be appeased by intercessors and gifts.

In light of this broad division of the *silluq* into two sections, the last strophe of the first section (ll. 312-19) merits a closer look. This strophe is something of a summary of the first section, insofar as it reflects upon the impossibility of being found innocent before God (ll. 312-14), and therefore the need for the gift of repentance (a "balm" in l. 318). But it introduces the two elements that will loom largest in the second section: the angels (the "angels of his lair" and the "stars" in ll. 315-16), and the

33 The only parallel I have found to Qillir's usage of Isa 2:22 is *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* 29, which echoes Qillir's narrative in numerous striking ways.

34 In her commentary *ad loc.*, Elizur recognizes this usage, but contends that "here is the opposite of the more prevalent description," in that here God joins himself to humankind, not Israel. I contend that here, too, the reference is to none other than Israel. The only difference here is that Qillir constructs Israel as the paradigmatic human being.

35 On this division see Elizur and Rand, *Liturgical Poems*, 118-19. The second Nine poem (*ibid.*, ll. 560-86) is especially striking for the way in which it tacks back and forth between the judgement of the individual and the judgement of Israel.

people Israel ("his faithful ones" and "his sons" in ll. 317-18). The final line of the strophe develops what I believe is the only extended metaphor in the entire *silluq*: God gives repentance to Israel "so as not to deliver the slave to his master" (l. 319), where the "master" is evidently the evil inclination, to whom humankind are enslaved.[36]

To understand why the evil inclination is accorded such prominence, as the subject of a rare extended metaphor and at the hinge between the two sections of the *silluq*, we must first appreciate that the basic ingredients of the second section of Qillir's *silluq*—a judgement scene centered on multiple thrones, nations hostile to Israel, angelic correlates to these nations, a human-like figure, the angel Michael as defender of Israel—all occur in the second half of the book of Daniel, the major apocalyptic work in the Hebrew Bible.[37] The second section of the *silluq* can be understood as a rewriting of Daniel's apocalyptic vision through the prism of rabbinic exegesis, and as part of a broader attempt to coordinate the annual Rosh ha-Shanah judgement with the eschatological judgement day. The evil inclination is part of this same trajectory, as it also looms large in apocalyptic thought, not in the book of Daniel but in later works in the same or related genres, and adjacent to rabbinic literature, like *4 Ezra* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.[38]

36 The metaphorical treatment of the evil inclination may begin in ll. 306-11; see the translation of these lines below, with the accompanying notes.

37 On the reception of Daniel's apocalyptic visions in rabbinic literature see especially the work of Rivka Raviv, e.g., *eadem*, "The Design of the Throne Vision (Daniel 7:9-10) in Rabbinic Literature and Rabbinic Attitudes toward Anthropomorphism," *Sidra* 31 (2016), 139-64. The association of the nations with the angels figures also in Deuteronomy 32, and it is around Deuteronomy 32 that the rabbis devote most of their attention to that association. On this exegetical trajectory see recently Shraga Bar-On and Yakir Paz, "'The Lord's Allotment is His People': The Myth of the Election of Israel by Casting of Lots and the Gnostic-Christian-Pagan-Jewish Polemic," *Tarbiz* 79 (2010-11), 23-62.

38 See Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires: Yetzer Hara and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Andrei A. Orlov, *Yetzer Anthropologies in the Apocalypse of Abraham* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

The coordination of the New Year with the eschatological judgement day is only implicit in the *silluq*, but it features very explicitly in the Three poem, אף אורח משפטיך "Lo, your just ways."[39] Qillir's coordinative work in this poem, and its background in Second Temple and rabbinic literature, have been brilliantly clarified by Yehoshua Granat. [40] Here I will briefly summarize the poem, in order to highlight other elements in it that resonate with motifs in the *silluq*. The first two strophes (ll. 49-56) work out a parallel between the congregation in the current liturgical moment, and God in the order of creation: Just as the blowing of the shofar "today" was preceded "yesterday" (presumably the eve of the New Year) by importunings from leading members of the congregation, so God created repentance before judgement.[41] The next three strophes (ll. 57-64) work out a different parallel between the congregation and God. On the one hand, the two "hearts" (שני לבביהם), i.e., the good inclination and bad inclination, are to be searched out, so that God may discover what is hidden there (מחבואיהם); and should Israel be found wanting, God will recall the deeds of the ancestors, and in particular Joseph.[42] On the other hand, there is something hidden in God's own

39 The poem is at Qillir and Rand, *Liturgical Poems*, 301-04.

40 See Yehoshua Granat, "Before 'In the Beginning': Preexistence in Early Piyyut against the Background of its Sources" (PhD thesis; Hebrew University, 2009), 220-29.

41 On this parallel in the first two strophes lines see *ibid.*, 243-46. To Granat's analysis we may add that Isa 26:9, which immediately follows the verse that structures the first two lines of the poem, speaks of appealing to God at night (בלילה) and in the (following?) morning (אשחרך).

42 The appearance of Joseph is somewhat surprising: The first three poems of the *qedushta* all lead into verses recalling God's covenant with the three patriarchs, and Abraham and Isaac are referenced in the first two poems, and so we should expect Jacob to appear in the Three, yet Joseph appears in his stead. On the anomalous appearance of Joseph in the poem see Elizur and Rand, *Liturgical Poems*, 131-32. Of course, Joseph is Jacob's son, and there is a ready link between Joseph and the New Year, in that, according to the tradition on which Qillir evidently relies, Joseph exits the prison on the New Year. But I wonder whether the reference to Joseph was also inspired by or at least connected to the last line of the strophe that precedes his, which calls upon God to call to mind (פקד תפקד) the ancestors. The notion of calling to mind is of course one of the

heart (טמינת לב), namely, the end time, when God will take vengeance against Israel's enemies (נקימת קץ).[43] The last strophe describes the end time in more detail, specifying, in particular, two events to occur thereon: "thorns to Give-Give to rot in his flame,/ to remove the stumbling block from the twisted heart" (ll. 70-71). I.e., God will send the nations ("thorns") to Gehenna ("Give-Give"), and he will do away with the evil inclination (the "stumbling block"). Having already introduced the evil inclination and the nations earlier in the poem, Qillir joins them in this couplet, and thus implies a certain relationship between them, as internal and external threats to Israel.

We emerge from the two poems, the Three and the *silluq*, with Israel arrayed, on the New Year's judgement and in the anticipated eschatological judgement, against three loosely related forces: the evil inclination, the nations, and the angels. Israel is the ultimate person, the human being as such, and yet the nations that oppose Israel are not beasts. Nor are they altogether evil. To be sure, the Three associates them with the evil inclination, and imagines their destruction, but the *silluq* is considerably more nuanced. In the first section of the *silluq*, the protagonist is not Israel but the individual, and while Qillir sometimes makes offhand reference to Israel in this section, in a way that makes clear that he thinks of this individual first and foremost as a member of the people Israel, it is clear that he remains committed to the notion that all mortals, Israelite or otherwise, are judged on the New Year. Again, in the second section, the nations are joined to the angels, who are not evil

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great themes of the New Year, but these words also famously occur (in the third person) in the mouth of Joseph, in Gen 50:24-25; Ex 13:19.

43 A parallel to the implicit comparison here of the human will, which is judged for having chosen good or evil, and the divine will, in which the future is concealed, occurs, but explicitly, in *Apoc. Abr.* 26:5-6, in God's speech to Abraham: "As the counsel of your father is in him, as your counsel is in you, so also the counsel of my will is prepared. In days to come you will not know them in advance." See R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 702.

but jealous.[44] Ultimately, in the *silluq*, the nations, like the angels, are not so much condemned or rejected as displaced: They would wish to be the center of the story, but God instead insists that both must stand at the periphery, in service to Israel.

44 See also *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* 5, where, in the messianic age, the nations and the angels alike will despair—the nations outside God's chambers, the angels within—at not having attained to Israel's state; *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* 9, where, with the Babylonian exile, the angels come to comfort God by noting that, despite Israel's absence, God yet enjoys the presence of seventy nations, and countless angels.

Translation

Who would not fear you, king,
King over every king,
For before there reigned a king,
And to the very last king, [240]
Fitting for you is the kingdom of a king.
And today you have appeared as king,
And sat on the throne for judging a king,
To judge commoner with king,
Showing no favor to a king,
Nor gracing pauper in a quarrel with a king.
And today will it be known to strongman and king
That before you there is no greatness for a king.
And then will proclaim every king:
For rightness' sake reigns a king. [250]

They stand for your judgements today, king.
And the Lord shall be king,
To be girded by power of the pride of a king,
To stand in the assembly of sons of a king,
Aright to judge and inspect sons of a king.[45]

The king who over all roam his eyes,
And fools cannot stand before his eyes,
And there is no hiding from before him,
And heart and face are the same before him,
And each mortal's judgement will be examined before him, [260]
And he will perceive his secret deposits,
And will attend to his hidden interiors,[46]
And will look into all of his corners.
And a word well-fashioned will be seen,
And he will decree with the shutting of his eyes.[47]

45 בצדק, rendered here "aright," could also indicate: with charity.
46 Or: "to his hidden pearls."

And if his rightness balances his guilt,
He will wish to deem him right from his skies,
And he will raise a remedy for his omissions,
To give him ten days for his fortifying,
To find in them ransom for his doings,
To scour the stench of his stains,
That he be clean on the day of his sealings.
…[48]

And if a single sin overtips his rightness,
He will sink in the mire the sin that is his troubler,
And will raise him without troubling him,
And will heed his pleading prayer.
And he will bring out to the light his rightness,
In judgement to deem him right,
Through his portion of merits to judge him right.

And if his evil before him should be recurrent,
And from mouths of accusers retold,
But he wants to turn and be distressed,
And afflict himself and beseech,
And in Shaddai's shadow to camp,
Then this one will see sin and not attend,
And search to find him a gift,
That by horn's sound he be shielded.

47 The meaning is obscure. Following one suggestion by Elizur *ad loc.*, I take the shutting of the eyes to be an allusion to Isa 33:15 "shutting eyes so as not to see evil." The line thus expresses the paradoxical hope that, having inspected everything, God will nevertheless shut his eyes, as it were, in actually formulating the judgement decree, and ignore the bad deeds that he has seen. For the same idea see l. 289.

48 The final four lines of the strophe are too fragmentary to translate.

And if he has done wantonly and not turned,
On the day of wrath he will be accounted,
And on the Day of Blasts[49] he will sum his account.
And from the court an echo will be heard:
Woe to this one, that he did not turn;
Despite all of this he was not turned!
With the pit-descenders will he be counted,
For he knows men of little worth.[50]

But[51] if prior to the Day of Atonement he should broach, [300]
In the Ten Days of Repentance to intone,
With whole heart to turn to the shining one,
To make his blotch like milk to shine,
Then one intercessor from a thousand will broach his merit,
And the merciful one will heed him and not kill.
And the rock will have joy from him who shines,[52]
When the besieger[53] is defeated.
And he will be defeated when he defeats,
And yet when he is defeated,
Then with songs for the defeater [310]
There will be declaiming for the defeater.[54]

If he seized by hand his judgements,

49 The New Year.

50 "He" is God. Qillir alludes to Job 11:11.

51 I take this strophe to be a continuation of the preceding one: Even the unrepentant sinner has a second opportunity to seek forgiveness during the days between the New Year and the Day of Atonement.

52 Following Elizur, I read מצח rather than מצר.

53 *Per* Elizur: the evil inclination, whose defeat at the hands of the shining penitent will bring joy to the rock, i.e., God. But the text and the sense of this word are uncertain.

54 *Per* Elizur: In judging sinners, God loses when God wins (i.e., when the human defendant is condemned), and wins when he loses, because he wants defendants to be acquitted. Thus, when God is defeated, i.e., when the defendant comes out innocent, God is the true victor, and will be praised as such.

And examined with judgement the case of his judged,
Nothing alive would be deemed right before him,
And he would find fault in the angels of his lair,
And the stars would not be innocent before him.
For, wishing to deem right his faithful ones,
A balm did he compound to give his sons,
So as not to deliver the slave to his master.

And thus will be founded the fourfold throne of rightness, [320]
With kindness, truth, judgement, and rightness.
And he will sit on it with rightness,
And open his hand, full of rightness.
Before him shall go rightness
To judge the earth with rightness,
To judge his people for rightness,
To see his face with rightness.

And then will be set a throne of judgement,
Nations on it to judge,
And he will sit against them in judgement, [330]
To stretch against them the measure of judgement,
So that they will know that there is judgement;
From heaven to make heard judgement,
To examine with precision the judgement.
As they distorted the line of judgement
Against all who know law and judgement,
And constrained those who sit in judgement
From issuing true judgement,
Thus he will come among them in judgement,
And all their hosts with them will he judge, [340]
And today in their case will he sign for us the avowal of judgement.[55]

And further will be laid a throne of truth,

55 God will sign the verdict consigning the nations to punishment for their treatment of Israel.

And he will sit on in in truth.
With every person's hand he will seal in truth.
And for the one inscribed he will recall Torah of truth.
The innocent one was given a gift of truth.
And a people, all of them seed of truth,
When they see that sprouted is truth,
Will shout to the God of truth,
And express with sound a blaring of truth: [350]
And the Lord, God, is truth,
Whose every deed is truth,
Whose hand's signet is truth,
And he decrees and annuls and suspends in truth,
Till he seals what is inscribed with a record of truth.

And installed will be a further throne, of kindness,
Founded from then with kindness.
For comers in the world he does kindness,
For with God is kindness,
Slow to anger and abounding in kindness, [360]
Preserving the covenant and the kindness,
That they be remembered on the day of kindness
For the people that in youth did kindness,
To arouse[56] for them the kindness
That was given to the strong one as a gift of kindness,
To repay his sons repayment of kindness,
To magnify for them the magnitude of kindness,
In their judgement to extend kindness.
For forever and ever is kindness, [370]
To treat every generation with kindness.

And over all of them will be raised on high
The installed seat, the throne of mercy.

56 The choice of "arouse" may anticipate the reference to Abraham ("the strong one") in the next line, by allusion to Isa 41:2 מי העיר ממזרח "who aroused from the east," a verse often interpreted in relation to Abraham.

And he will sit upon it who is full of mercy,
To judge with mercy a people borne with mercy.
And them will aid the horn of mercy,
And seek for them mercy,
And advocate on their behalf for consoling,
To set them for mercy,
To crown them with kindness and mercy, [380]
And he will recall the deeds of the innocents
Who under the throne are sealed,
And in the throne chariot are inscribed,
Through them to shame the princes of peoples,
Through them each accuser to silence.
And from below him the throne of mercy
Will low and roar to seek mercy
To seal their bond for judgement,
Through their blasts to shine stains,
Through their blares to cleanse guilt, [390]
Through their pleas to find consolation.

Then Michael will stand, the great prince,
Who stands over the great nation,
And will open a great opening
To vindicate in the great court
The sons of the great person.
And he will take from their hand a great crown
Which was given on the great day
At the blasting of a great horn,
And he will place it on the head of a great king, [400]
Thereby to win over the great God,
And so he will be appeased with a great crown,
And will announce in a great voice:
I am appeased toward the little and the great.

And when the angels on high see
That the judgement is concluded for mercy,

And the books have been sealed for innocence,
And the decree has been issued for endurance,
For there to be living and enduring,
Then the ministers on high will be resentful, [410]
And the host of heaven silent,
And Erelites of the sky shocked,
And troops of the temple astounded,
And crowds of the lair red-faced,
And dwellers of the edifice abuzz,
And residents of the clouds muzzled
And wheel and trindle made mute,
And beast and cherub muted,
And the supernal seraphs out of sight,
And all the luminaries ashamed, [420]
And all the accusers of this people smitten,
And all the host above confused,
And they will wonder: How were the innocents found right?
And how were they acquitted, these little ones among the peoples,
To be found more right than all nations?
And before their maker they will proclaim:
What is mortal kind, to be recalled on high,
When he is more despised than all peoples?
And what is the child of a person, to be called to mind for endurance,
When he is full with ire and brief of days? [430]
How can the innocent one be accounted before the rock,
When he is voided with all blemishes?
And how can he be summoned beyond high ones,[57]
When he in height is bowed into a crevice of the abyss?

Then he will have a ready reply against them,
With a reply for them to tell them:
How can you be jealous of the flock of humankind,
And how can you discharge your debt to them?[58]

57 How can Israel be summoned by God to stand where even the angels cannot?
58 Lit.: How can you go out from their hand?

You were made to honor them,
To minister to them and serve them. [440]
You and I together for their honor:[59]
For my honor is their honor,
And with them I will stand in their assembly,
To be called the rock who bears them.
Why do you wonder, and agitate to disturb them?
Understand this, and know their splendor,
The splendor of the chariot sensed by their hand.[60]
The four measures of my throne are under their hand:
Lion, ox, eagle, and person.
Lion roars beside lion's sons to spur them. [450]
Ox lows opposite ox-uprooters lest in judgement they frighten them.
Eagle rushes opposite ones eagle-borne against scattering them.
Person pleads opposite sons of a person against scaring them.
See the throne of glory fixed in their assembly!
And under the throne there is pleading on their behalf,
Through the image of ones whose faces are the face of a person,
And as inscribed on the throne is the image of their bearer,
At every time and moment his entreaty bolsters them.
Above the throne the sound of the voice of a person
Advocates the right cause for sons of a person. [460]
And on the image of the throne an image like the sight of a person
Desires and receives the repentance of a person:
Cease yourselves from the person,

59 Yahalom and Loeffler point to *Tanḥuma* (Buber) *va-yera'* 4 to elucidate this striking line, which has God join himself to the angels as beings devoted to the honor of Israel. It is indeed notable that this *Tanḥuma* passage twice refers to the New Year. But I think the closest parallel is *Tanḥuma* (Buber) *bo'* 13.

60 For the high status to be accorded the "sensor of the chariot" (החושש במרכבה) see *Hekhalot Rabbati* 2:2, 2:3 (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr., 228, as transcribed in Maagarim). Elizur *ad loc.* offers an alternative rendering, based on the use of ח"ש in the context of chariot mysticism to indicate fire, that has מחוששת function not as a verb but as an anarthrous attributive adjective: "The splendor of the enflamed chariot is under their hand." See also Yahalom, *Sources*, 30.

For in all my doing I have joined a person.
This is the book of the generations of a person,
And this is the Torah of the person,
Which is expounded by the son of a person,
And examined in their assemblies,
And with them I agree in their assembling.

If they agree that it be the New Year, [470]
Then I will fix judgement on the New Year,
To sit in judgement and search out the deeds of all the year.
And if they decide to intercalate the year,
I will be resolved with them in intercalation of the year,
And hold back judgement so as not to sit then,
And return to the sheathe the whetted sword,
And fold scrolls and silence scribes not to utter judgement,
Until they complete below the proclaiming of the New Year,
And then I will descend from heaven's abode
And infuse below my presence. [480]
In the council of five sages of assembly will I be present,
With them to sanctify the sanctification of the New Year,
And as they agree so I will agree.

When for Israel it is a statute,
For the God of Israel is it a judgement.
And if below it is a holy convocation,
A day of judgement is it above.
And if in all this important is he,
How can you say: of what import is he?
And if he is right just as he is, [490]
And understands that I, I am he,
We will be secluded forever, I and he,
And you, outside his dwelling will be,

And from his appearance you will be dimmed,[61]
And from his enclosure you will shine,
And from fear of him you will be confused,
And his glory you will see and wonder at.
And then you will see and know that he is he,[62]
A righteous one ruling by fear of the rock is he,
The vision's image seeing is he, [500]
And with finger: This is he,
And articulation of the name by its letters articulates he,
And after one word its articulation mentions he.

And you, why do you abound to empower your speaking
Against the son of a person, when he overpowers you,
And he with power suppresses you?
In the vision of Shaddai in your observing
You do not view the face of your maker,
And do not recognize the image of your rock,
And you are not allowed in your blessing [510]
To extol first your creator.
And the name of holiness in your calling,
Is by epithet and not explicitly in your articulation.
…[63]

61 "From" can indicate either the cause (i.e., the angels will be dimmed on account of Israel's brightness) or comparison (i.e., the angels will be dim by comparison to Israel's brightness).

62 Elizur *ad loc.* observes that this line transfers to human beings what Deut 32:39 (and following it, l. 491) predicates of God, i.e., "I am he." But the transference is not to human beings in general, but specifically to Israel.

63 The remaining lines of the *silluq*, totaling to seventeen, are fragmentary, but they all represent the continuation of the same strophe, with God addressing the angels in the second person plural.