

אל אֲדוֹן עַל כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים,  
בְּרוּךְ וּמְבָרָךְ בְּפִי כָּל־נִשְׁמָה,  
גְּדִלוֹ וְטוֹבוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם,  
דַּעַת וְתְבוּנָה סוֹבְבִים אוֹתוֹ.

הַמְתַּנַּאֵה עַל חַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ,  
וְנִהְדָּר בְּכְבוֹד עַל הַמְרַכְּבָה,  
זְכוּת וּמִישׁוֹר לִפְנֵי כְסֵאוֹ,  
חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים לִפְנֵי כְבוֹדוֹ.

טוֹבִים מְאֹרֹת שֶׁבְּרָא אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
יִצְרָם בְּדַעַת בְּבִינָה וּבְהַשְׁכָּל,  
פָּח וּגְבוּרָה נָתַן בָּהֶם,  
לְחַיּוֹת מוֹשְׁלִים בְּקֶרֶב תֵּבֵל.

מְלֵאִים זֵיו וּמְפִיקִים גְּגֵה,  
נִאֵה זֵיוֹם בְּכָל־הָעוֹלָם,  
שְׂמֵחִים בְּצִאתָם וְשֹׁשֵׁי־בְבוּאָם,  
עֹשִׂים בְּאֵימָה רְצוֹן קוֹנָם.

פְּאֵר וְכְבוֹד גּוֹתְנִים לְשִׁמוֹ,  
צְהֵלָה וְרִנָּה לְזִכְרֵ מַלְכוּתוֹ.  
קָרָא לְשִׁמְשׁ וַיִּזְרַח אוֹר,  
רָאָה וְהִתְקִין צוּרַת הַלְּבָנָה.

שֶׁבַח גּוֹתְנִים לוֹ כָּל־צְבָא מְרוֹם,  
תְּפִאֲרַת וּגְדֻלָּה, שְׂרָפִים וְאוֹפָנִים וְחַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

GOD, MASTER אֵל אֲדוֹן. This *piyyut*, commonly attributed to mystics of the 1st millennium, uses imagery based on the visions of Ezekiel that describe a variety of heavenly hosts. It further develops the theme enunciated in the previous prayers that everything in creation praises God. Here that thought is extended to the heavenly hosts: even heavenly powers offer praise to God. The use of an alphabetical acrostic may suggest that God's word is the primary constitutive element of all creation.

HAPPY שְׂמֵחִים. Not infrequently in alphabetical poetry, the letter *sin* (ש) is substituted for the similarly sounding *samekh* (ס), as it is here. Such substitutions are even found in biblical acrostics. Most, if not all, worshippers in ancient times did not have prayer-books, and this substitution is quite natural in an oral culture.

S'RAFIM . . . OFANIM שְׂרָפִים . . . אוֹפָנִים. Angelic songs figure prominently in ancient mystical texts. Descriptions of different groups of angels singing hymns to God surely mirrored the seekers' own

mystical experiences. The angels pictured here are closest to God's throne. In Jewish mystical thought, the *ofanim* are the wheels of God's chariot, first mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel; the *s'rafim* are the fiery angels pictured as flaming serpents in Isaiah's vision of heaven. The holy beings (*hayot ha-kodesh*) were thought of as the legs upholding God's throne.

*A Prayer for the World*

Let the rain come and  
wash away  
the ancient grudges,  
the bitter hatreds  
held and nurtured over  
generations.  
Let the rain wash away  
the memory  
of the hurt, the neglect.  
Then let the sun come  
out and  
fill the sky with rainbows.  
Let the warmth of the sun  
heal us  
wherever we are broken.  
Let it burn away the fog  
so that  
we can see each other  
clearly.  
Let the warmth and  
brightness  
of the sun melt our  
selfishness.  
So that we can share the  
joys and  
feel the sorrows of our  
neighbors.  
And let the light of the sun  
be so strong that we will  
see all  
people as our neighbors.  
Let the earth, nourished  
by rain,  
bring forth flowers  
to surround us with  
beauty.  
And let the mountains  
teach our hearts  
to reach upward to  
heaven. *Amen.*

—HAROLD KUSHNER

God, master of all existence,  
praised by all that breathes,  
the world is filled with Your greatness and glory;  
knowledge and understanding surround You.

Exalted above holy beings,  
resplendent in glory on Your chariot,  
integrity and mercy stand before Your throne,  
love and merit accompany Your presence.

How good are the lights that our God created—  
fashioned with understanding, intelligence, and insight;  
endowed with the strength and power  
to have dominion over earthly realms.

Fully luminous, they gleam brightly,  
radiating splendor throughout the world.  
Happy as they go forth, joyous on their return,  
they accomplish, with awe, the will of their creator.

They give glory and honor to the name of God,  
invoking God's sovereignty with joyful song.  
God called forth the sun, and light dawned,  
then considered and set the cycles of the moon.

And so the array of heaven,  
*s'rafim, ofanim*, and holy beings,  
all the heavenly hosts,  
give praise, and glory, and honor to God—

El adon al kol hama-asim, barukh u-m'vorakh b'fi kol n'shamah.  
Godlo v'tuvo malei olam, da-at u-t'vunah sov'vim oto.  
Ha-mitga-eh al hayot ha-kodesh, v'nehdar b'khavod al ha-merkavah.  
Z'khut u-mishor lifnei khiso, hesed v'rahmim lifnei kh'vodo.  
Tovim me'orot she-bara eloheinu, y'tzaram b'da-at b'vinah u-v'haskel.  
Ko-ah u-g'vurah natan ba-hem, lihyot moshlim b'kerev teiveil.  
M'lei-im ziv u-m'fikim nogah, na-eh zivam b'khol ha-olam.  
S'meihim b'tzeitam v'sasim b'vo-am, osim b'eimah r'tzon konam.  
Pe'eir v'khavod notnim lishmo, tzoholah v'rinah l'zeikher malkhuto.  
Kara la-shemesh va-yizrah or, ra-ah v'hitkin tzurat ha-l'vanah.  
Shevah notnim lo kol tz'va marom,  
Tiferet u-g'dulah, s'rafim v'ofanim v'hayot ha-kodesh.