

## Parashath Beha'alothkha

### Introduction

This poem, like many of Aaron ben Joseph's others, begins with general praise of God and Torah: God removes the mask from our thoughts, and thus allows us to clearly see the hidden, secret meanings contained within the Torah. It is possible that the poet is using the imagery of clarity of vision because he will be speaking of kindling the lamps of the Menorah in subsequent lines, and lighting lamps brightens vision; but it is also possible that this connection is coincidental.

After the discussion of the Menorah, the poet discusses various other sections of our *parasha*: the selection and purification of the Levites, who will serve the priests in the Tabernacle; the Israelites' travels through the desert, at God's command; Moses's song when the Ark sets forth and in their travels, and for when it comes to a rest when they camp; the complaints of the people; and God's instruction to Moses to gather seventy elders, to whom God gave the splendor of prophecy. The poem concludes with several lines praising God, all beginning with the fixed words "He, in truth". This gives festivity to the end of the poem, which is then followed by one line of prose liturgy, which, in turn, leads into the Biblical verses at the end, concluding with the *qedusha*-verse: *And Thou art Holy, enthroned on Israel's praises.* (Psalms 22:4)

פיוט לקדושה הראשונה ("ואתה קדוש") לפרשת בהעלתך, חתום "אהרן" בראשי ארבע השורות הראשונות; והכל חורז בחרוז אחיד.

לפני אמירת הפיוט, כל הקהל אומרים ביחד את הפסוקים הללו:

וְאֵלֵּמי תְדַמְיוּנוּ אֵל | ויִמַּהֲדָמוּת תַּעֲרֹכוּ לִי: (ישעיהו מ:יח)  
לְמי תְדַמְיוּנִי וְתִשְׁגֹּנוּ | וְתִמְשְׁלוּנִי וְנִדְמָה: (ישעיהו מו:ה)  
וְאֵלֵּמי תְדַמְיוּנִי וְאִשְׁגֶּה | יֹאמֶר קְדוֹשׁ: (ישעיהו מ:כה)

אָמַר | אֲדַנִּי הָאֲדָנִים:  
הִמְסִיר אָפֶר | מֵעַל עֵינֵי רַעֲיוֹנִים:  
רַב עֲלִילָיָה | וְרוֹזֵי דָתוֹ צְפוּנִים:  
נִירוֹת מְנוֹרָה יֵאִירוּ | לְמוֹל שְׁלֶחַן הַפָּנִים:  
לְוִיִּם יִטְהַרוּ | וְיִהְיוּ לְאֶהֱרֹן וּלְבָנָיו נְתוּנִים:  
מִבֶּן חֲמִשׁ וָעֶשְׂרִים עַד חֲמִשִּׁים | לְעַבְדֵי יְהוָה מִמְּנִים:  
אֲחֵרֵי כֵן בְּבֵית יְהוָה | שָׁרִים וְנוֹגְנִים:  
חֶסֶד אֵל פָּרוּשׁ לְעַמּוֹ | סִכְכֶם בְּעֵנִים:  
עַל פִּי יְהוָה נִסְעִים | וְעַל פִּי יְהוָה חֲנִים:  
וּבִנְסֵעַ הָאָרֶץ | יֹאמֶר מִלְּשָׁה בְּרוּנִים:  
קוּמָה יְהוָה | וְיִפּוּצֻ אוֹיְבֵיךָ וְשׁוֹטְנֵיךָ:  
וּבְנַחֲזָה יֹאמֶר שׁוֹבָה יְהוָה | רַבְבוֹת מְמֻלְכֹת כְּהֲנָנִים:  
וְאִשׁ אֶכְלָה | עִם מִתְאוּנָנִים:  
וְכִרְאוֹת נִבְיָא אֵל | רֹאשׁ לְמַאֲמִינִים:  
רַעֲיוֹן אֲנוֹשׁ | תֵּאֲוֹת דְּאָבָה וְדְמִיוֹנִים:  
בִּקְשׁ מֵאֵל | הִיּוֹת מְנַהֲיָגִים מְזַמְנִים:  
נֹאמַר לוֹ | לְאַסֹּף שְׂבָעִים זְקֵנִים:  
וּמַהוֹדוּ חֲנָנִים | הוֹד מְעַדְנִים:  
הוּא בְּאֵמַת | עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּעֵלְיוֹנִים:  
הוּא בְּאֵמַת | מִשְׁגִּיחַ גַּם בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים:  
הוּא בְּאֵמַת | לְרֹאשֵׁינִים וְגַם לְאַחֲרֵינִים:  
◊ קֵהֵל: הַכֹּל יוֹדוּהוּ וְהַכֹּל יִשְׁבְּחוּהוּ | וְהַכֹּל לְהַקְדִּישׁוּ עוֹנִים:

חזן: אֵיךְ קְדוֹשׁ פִּיהֶנָּה פִּי־אֵינוּ בְּלִתְהָ | וְאֵינוּ צוּר בְּאֵלֵהֶינוּ: (שמואל א ב:ב)

קהל: וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ | יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל: (תהלים כב:ד)

### Parashath Beha'alothkha

Before the poem is recited, the entire congregations says the following verses in unison:

And to whom could ye compare God; and what comparison could you make to Him? (Isaiah 40:18)

To whom could you compare me, and declare me similar; or note resemblance to me, and they could be compared? (Isaiah 46:5)

And to whom could ye compare me, and I would be similar – says the holy One. (Isaiah 40:25)

Says the Lord of Lords –

Who removes the mask from the eyes of thought,

The one who is great in [His] deeds, and the secrets of His law are concealed

–

That the Menorah's lamps should shed light, facing the Table of the Show[bread].

The Levites should purify themselves, and be given over to Aaron and his sons,

They should be appointed to work from age twenty-five to fifty;

And afterwards, they should sing and make music in Adonai's house.

God's mercy is spread out over His people – He sheltered them in clouds;

They would travel forth at His command, and camp at His command.

And when the Ark would travel forth, Moses would say, in song:

“Rise up, O Adonai, and may the enemies and foes be scattered!”

And when it would rest, he would say: “Return, O Adonai, [among] the myriads of the Kingdom of Priests.”

And a fire consumed the people who were complaining,

And when God's prophet, the head of all believers, saw

That human thoughts were [occupied with] lugubrious craving and imagination,

He asked God for leaders to be appointed,

And he was told to appoint seventy elders.

[God] graciously gave them pleasurable splendor, of his splendor.

He, indeed, makes peace on high.

He, indeed, also looks over [earth], down below.

He, indeed, [has done so] for the earlier [generations], and also for the later [ones].

*Cong.* All acknowledge Him, and all praise Him, and all respond to declare His holiness:

There is none holy like Adonai, for there is none but Thee; and there is no rock like our God. (I Samuel 2:2)

*Congregation:* **And Thou art Holy, enthroned on Israel's praises.** (Psalms 22:4)