

ABSTRACT

Ke-ha-yom ha-ze bi-Yerushalayim: The Origins, Distribution and Evolution of a Prayer  
Marking the Conclusions of Ceremonies

Shulamit Elizur

At the conclusions of various ceremonies, there appears a pericope expressing the hope of repeating the ceremony in Jerusalem in the following year and rejoicing in the rebuilding of the Temple. Frequently, it is accompanied by other wishes for the increase of joyous occasions among Israel. Up to now, the earliest known source for this pericope has been Tractate *Soferim*, to be recited at the ends of festive meals for the New Moon. The pericope marks the conclusion of family celebrations: weddings or circumcisions. In addition, it is recited after reading the Torah on Simḥat Torah and the *Megillah* on Purim, as well as after a festival *qiddush*. In the case of Simḥat Torah, poetic expansions of this pericope have even been found. These are published in the present article, in which a number of parallel prayers are also reviewed.

The most significant contribution of this article consists in the identification of an early source for Tractate *Soferim*, which documents the use of this prayer at the conclusion of the *Hoshanot* on Hoshana Rabba. The text is embedded as a poetic embellishment of a *Hoshana* by R. El'azar be-Rabbi Qillir, and alongside the formula כהיום הזה [בירושלים] ששים ושמהים בבניין בית המקדש, the *Hoshana* also contains the cantor's valedictory blessing to his congregation, וכולכם ברוכים, followed by the congregation's response: ברוך תהיה. This *piyyut* therefore allows us to date the use of the prayer כהיום הזה בירושלים at least 100 years earlier than has previously been possible, and it even suggests the possibility that it was intended *ab initio* for the end of the *Hoshanot*, and that its other uses derive from this locus.