**Name:** אביון אשר, Evyon Asher

**Introduction:** This poem, by a Rabbanite poet, was clearly intended by its author for the penitential season; this is clear from the reference to the prayer for forgiveness of sin, in the second line. Both Rabbanites and Karaites include poems of the ‘Aqeda genre in the liturgy of the penitential season; and this very poem is found in prayerbooks of the Rabbanite Roman Rite for the concluding service at the end of Yom Kippur. Nonetheless, the Karaites adopted it for Shabbat Vayyera, because that is when we read the story of the ‘Aqeda in the Torah reading. The poem, as it appears in the Vilna Siddur, is truncated after only five stanzas; but the full version appears in the Roman prayerbooks ([page 1](https://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=45406&st=&pgnum=281), [page 2](https://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=45406&st=&pgnum=282)). In the version in Vilna, the story ends abruptly after Isaac’s response to Ishmael; the full version brings the poem to the end of the story of the ‘Aqeda, where the angel comes to Abraham and says: “Do not slaughter Isaac!” The story of the dialogue between Isaac and Ishmael is taken from the Rabbinic midrash Genesis Rabba 55:4. The epithet “Ezraḥ” for Abraham is from Psalms 89:1, “Ethan the Ezraḥite,” whom Rabbinic tradition identifies as Abraham. The epithet “wild ass” for Ishmael is based on Genesis 16:2: *He (Ishmael) will be a wild-ass of a man*. Finally, note that the last line of the third stanza is in parentheses; originally a different line was here (still found in the Roman version), but it was lost in the process of transmission, and the editor of the Vilna Siddur writes that he noticed that the stanza was missing a line, so he wrote one himself, which is presented in parentheses.

**Category:** Liturgy

**Sub-Category:** Poems

**Genre:** Introduction to Torah-reading, ‘Aqeda

**Occasion:** Shabbat Va’era

**Name:** אביון אשר, Evyon Asher

**Composer**: Anatoli (ben Joseph?)

**Liturgical Slot:** In the middle of the *parasha*, before the reading of the ‘aliyya containing the story of the ‘Aqeda

**Acrostic:** Abridged, so no acrostic remains

**Source:** Vilna Siddur, Volume 1, page 411

**Davidson number:** א 199

**Karaite origin:** No

**Notes on vocalization:** In the fourth line (which repeats as the refrain at the end of each stanza), the poet must have intended the vocalization “ke’or” with sheva (this is clear from the meter), and not “ka’or” with ḳamets. Similarly, in the last line of the first stanza (and the refrain), the author must have intended “ne‘ḳad” with silent sheva, and not “ne‘eḳad” with ḥataf-ḳamets. Finally, in the penultimate line of the fourth stanza, the poet must have written “megolala” with ḳamets, and not “megolela” with sheva. None of these vocalizations changes the meaning. On the other hand, in the second stanza, it is clear from both meaning and meter that the word “roḳeyaḥ,” in its first occurrence, should read “roḳaḥ”; we have translated it as “perfume” (roḳaḥ) and not “perfumer” (roḳeyaḥ). Nonetheless, in all these instances, we have retained the vocalization in Vilna in the Hebrew and the transliteration.

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| אֶבְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר כַּפָּיו לְךָ שֹׁטֵחַ  תִּרְצֶה וְחַטָּאתוֹ הֱיֵה סֹלֵחַ  בִּזְכוּת אֲבוֹתָיו בָּא וּבָךְ בֹּטֵחַ  אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעֱקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Evyon asher kappav lecha shoteyaḥ  Tirtsē veḥattato heyē soleyaḥ  Bizchut avotav ba uvach boteyaḥ  Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘eḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| [I], the poor person, who spread out [my] hands to you –  Find [me] favorable, and forgive [my] sin.  [I] come in the merit of [my] ancestors, and put trust in you;  [My ancestors are] the Ezraḥ [Abraham], who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one [Isaac], who was bound upon the altar. | |
| אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעְקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘ḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| The Ezraḥ, who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one, who was bound upon the altar. | |
| אַחַר בְּלוֹת שָׂרָה וְנָס הַלֵּחַ  יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם שְׁתִיל פֹּרֵחַ  נִמּוֹל וְהֶעְלָה יוֹם שְׁמִינִי רֵיחַ  בָּשְׂמוֹ כְּרֹקֵחַ מַעֲשֵׂה רֹקֵחַ  צִדְקוֹ לְעַם בֹּכֶה וּמִתְאַנֵּחַ  תִּזְכֹּר וְאֵלָיו חַסְדְּךָ הוֹכֵחַ  אָנָּא וְאוֹתוֹ אַל בְּאַף תּוֹכֵחַ: | Aḥar belot sara venas halleyaḥ  Yaleda le’avraham shetil poreyaḥ  Nimmol vehe‘la yom shemini reyaḥ  Bosmo keroḳeyaḥ ma‘asē roḳeyaḥ  Tsidḳo le‘am bochē umit’anneyaḥ  Tizkor ve’elav ḥasdecha hocheyaḥ  Anna ve’oto al be’af tocheyaḥ. |
| After Sarah had withered, and her moisture had dried up,  She gave birth to a flowering sapling of Abraham.  He was circumcised, and his [sacrificial-like] aroma ascended on the eighth day,  His fragrance was like perfume, made by a perfumer.  His merit – on behalf of the people that are weeping and moaning,  Remember it! And direct your kindness to them;  Please do not punish them angrily! | |
| אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעְקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘ḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| The Ezraḥ, who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one, who was bound upon the altar. | |
| נֶגֶד אֲרוֹנְךָ עַמְּךָ שׁוֹחֵחַ  דֹּאֵג לְחַטָּאתוֹ וּמַר צֹרֵחַ  אַךְ מִמְּךָ צוּרִי לְךָ בֹּרֵחַ  דָּמָיו בְּמֵימֵי יִשְׁעֲךָ יָדִיחַ  כִּי אַתְּ לְבַד שֹׁמֵר אֱמֶת פֹּקֵחַ  עִוְרִים וְהַסֹּגֵר וְהַפֹּתֵחַ  (אָנָּא זְכוֹר רַחֵם לְעַם בֹּטֵחַ): | Neḡed aronecha ‘ammecha shoḥeyaḥ  Do’eḡ leḥattato umar tsoreyaḥ  Ach mimmecha tsuri lecha boreyaḥ  Damav bememē yish‘acha yadiyaḥ  Ki at levad shomer emet poḳeyaḥ  ‘Ivrim vehassoḡer vehappoteyaḥ  (Anna zechor raḥem le‘am boteyaḥ). |
| Facing your [Torah’s] ark, your people prostrates,  Concerned about their sin, and bitterly cries,  But, while fleeing from you, O my Rock, they go towards you,  Cleansing their filth [literally: blood] in your rescuing waters.  For you alone are the guardian of truth, and giver of sight  To the blind, and you close and you open.  (Please, remember to have mercy for the people that trusts [you]!) | |
| אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעְקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘ḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| The Ezraḥ, who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one, who was bound upon the altar. | |
| נִגַּשׁ יְלִיד אָמָה וְכִמְפַתֵּחַ  הֻלַּל וְהִתְפָּאַר בְּשָׁוְא הָפֵחַ  נָם בֶּן שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה בְּיוֹם קֹדֵחַ  מַלְתִּי וְלֹא קַמְתִּי לְהִתְוַכֵּחַ  גָּדוֹל זְכוּתִי בוֹ לְהִתְמָרֵחַ  עָרְלָה מְגוֹלְלָה בְּיוֹם רֹתֵחַ  וּבְחֵץ כְּאֵבִי הַכְּאֵב פֹּלֵחַ: | Niggash yelid ama vechimfatteyaḥ  Hullal vehitpa’ar beshav hafeyaḥ  Nam ben shelosh ‘esrē beyom ḳodeyaḥ  Malti velo ḳamti lehitvakkeyaḥ  Gadol zechuti vo lehitmareyaḥ  ‘Orla meḡolala beyom roteyaḥ  Uvḥets ke’evi hakke’ev poleyaḥ. |
| [Ishmael], the son of the handmaiden, approached [Isaac], and, as if already victorious,  Praised and glorified himself, vainly puffing:  He said: “When I was thirteen, on a blazing hot day,  I was circumcised, and I did not get up to protest.  I have great merit, that [my body] was smoothed out,  That my foreskin was rolled off on a burning hot day,  And the pain, the arrow of my pain, shot through me.” | |
| אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעְקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘ḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| The Ezraḥ, who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one, who was bound upon the altar. | |
| נֹעַם הֱשִׁיבָהוּ לְהִנָּצֵחַ  יִצְחָק, וְנָם לוֹ, אֵל זְבוּל מֹתֵחַ  דִּבֵּר, וְעַצְמִי לוֹ אֲנִי זֹבֵחַ  אַךְ אוֹתְךָ פֶּרֶא הֲלֹא שֹׁלֵחַ  גַּם מוֹסְרוֹת עָרוֹד כְּבָר פִּתֵּחַ  כָּל מוּם בְּךָ עִוֵּר וְגַם פִּסֵּחַ  אֵין לָךְ בְּנַחְלַת אֵל לְהִסְתַּפֵּחַ. | No‘am heshivahu lehinnatseyaḥ  Yitsḥaḳ, venam lo, el zevul moteyaḥ  Dibber, ve‘atsmi lo ani zoveyaḥ  Ach otecha pere halo sholeyaḥ  Gam moserot ‘arod kevar pitteyaḥ  Kol mum becha ‘ivver veḡam pisseyaḥ  En lach benaḥlat el lehistappeyaḥ. |
| Responding to him with goodness, victoriously,  Isaac said to him: “If God, who stretches out the heavens,  Would speak [and command me thus], I would sacrifice myself for him.  But you, O wild ass, he has sent away,  And already set you loose from your chains as a wild donkey!  You have all kinds of blemishes in you – blindness and lameness;  It is not for you to take a part in God’s inheritance.” | |
| אֶזְרָח אֲשֶׁר זָרַח כָּאוֹר זֹרֵחַ  וּזְכוּת יְדִיד נֶעְקָד עֲלֵי מִזְבֵּחַ: | Ezraḥ asher zaraḥ ka’or zoreyaḥ  Uzchut yedid ne‘ḳad ‘alē mizbeyaḥ. |
| The Ezraḥ, who shone like shining light,  And the merit of the beloved one, who was bound upon the altar. | |