

THE **אלה אזכרה**: פיוט - WHEN DID EACH MARTYR LIVE?

For some of us, the emotional highlight of the **יום כיפור** service is the recitation of the **עשרה הרוגי מלכות**, **אלה אזכרה**: פיוט, the re-telling of the death of the Ten Martyrs. After describing the **עבודה** of the **כהן גדול** on **יום כיפור** and physically participating by prostrating four times, we tell the tale of the **עשרה הרוגי מלכות** which reminds us not only of those ten sages but also serves as a memorial to all those who died in Jewish tragedies. Thus, whether or not the story told in the **אלה אזכרה**: פיוט is historically correct matters little.

That the Sages referred to in the **פיוט** did not live in the same generation nor did they die during the same period of persecution is confirmed by Rabbinic sources. Alter Villar on page 41 of his book: **עשרה הרוגי מלכות במדרש ובפיוט**, 2005, provides two Rabbinic sources that admit to these chronological issues:

"בל תטעה מהקינוח"

עשרה הרוגי מלכות לא היו בזמן אחד ורשב"ג נהרג עוד בסוף בית שני, קובע, גם בעל 'ספר היוחסין', ר' אברהם זכות. כך הוא כותב: "וזכור", שלא תטעה במעשה דהרוגי מלכות ומהקינוח שכתובות במחזורים, שנראה מהם שהיה (רבי עקיבא) עם רבן שמעון בן גמליאל בזמן אחד, ואינו כן. כי רבן שמעון בן גמליאל, שהוא הראשון, נהרג ביום החורבן (בית שני – א.ו.י.) ורבי עקיבא קרוב משמונים שנה אחריו והיו האחרונים בזמן שנכבשה ביתר ע"ג שנים אחר חורבן הבית, רוצה לומר: ר' יהודה בן בבא ור' חנניה בן תרדין ורבי סימאי(?) ור' חוצפית ור' ישכב הסופר". אך לדעתו נהרג יחד עמו רבי חנניה סגן הכהנים ולא רבי ישמעאל בן אלישע, שחי עוד לאחר החורבן.

Translation: Do Not Error On Account Of The Elegies

That the Ten Martyrs did not live in the same era and that Rabbi Shimon son of Gamliel died just before the destruction of the Second Temple, is also confirmed by the author of the book: Sefer Yuchsin, Rabbi Avrohom Zakut¹. Rabbi Zakut writes: And remember so that you do not err concerning the Ten Martyrs because of the elegies that describe their deaths presented in Machzorim. From the elegies it appears that R. Akiva lived in the same era as Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, which is not true. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who is the first of the Martyrs listed, was killed on the day that the Second Temple was destroyed. R. Akiva was killed some eighty years later and was among the last of the Ten Martyrs who died. His

1. R. Abraham b. Samuel Zakut (Zakuto) was born in Slamenka, Spain, in 1452, to a well-known rabbinic family whose origins were in France. He was a disciple of R. Isaac Abuhav (II). Later, he specialized in the sciences, especially in astronomy and at the age of twenty composed astronomic tables that served mostly for the navigation of ships. These made him famous, and even the discoverer of America sought advice from him before their journey. As a result of the Expulsion of 1492, he relocated in neighboring Portugal. However, after five years, he was forced to flee from there, and he moved to Tunisia. From there he moved to Turkey and eventually to Dasmascus, where he died in 1515. (Bar Ilan Digital Library)

death occurs after Beitar was vanquished, seventy-three years after the destruction of the Second Temple. According to the composer of the elegy R. Yehuda son of Babba, R. Chanaya son of Tradiyon, R. Simai, R. Chutzpis and R. Yishovev the scribe, died at approximately the same time as R. Akiva. But in Rabbi Zakut's opinion, R. Chananya, second highest ranking Kohain, died at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple and not R. Yishmael son of Elisha who was still alive after the destruction of the Second Temple.

לדעת 'צמח דוד' שחיברו ר' דוד גאנז¹⁵, שאר הרוגי מלכות "נהרגו נ"ב שנים לאחר החורבן" ואולי גם מאוחר יותר. "על כן הקורא כל יטעה לומר שהיו כל עשרה הרוגי מלכות בזמן אחד או בזמן קיטר אחד", מרגיש בעל 'צמח דוד'. והוא מוסיף, כי "הסליחה המתחלת 'אלה אזכרה', אשר אנחנו האשכנזים נוהגים לאומרה במקצת מקומות במוסף ובמקצתם במנחה של יום הכיפורים, שנראה מתוכה כאילו היו בזמן אחד, איננו כן. ורק שגגה יצאה מלפני מחברה" (רגש שלי – א.ו.). גם הוא סבור, כבעל 'ספר היוחסין', שר' חנניה סגן הכהנים הוא שנהרג בשעת חורבן בית שני.

Translation: In the opinion of the author of the book: "Tzemach Dovid," Rabbi Dovid Ganz, the other martyrs were killed 52 years after the destruction of the Second Temple and perhaps even later. "Therefore those reading the elegy should not err by concluding that all Ten Martyrs lived in the same era or under the rule of one emperor," emphasizes the author of the book: "Tzemach Dovid." He adds that the Selicha that opens with the words "Eilah Ezkara" that some Ashkenazim customarily recite as part of Mussaf on Yom Kippur and some at Mincha, that can be mistaken as providing that all Ten Martyrs lived in the same era, is not based on historical fact. An error was made by the author of the elegy. Rabbi Ganz is of the same opinion as the author of the Sefer Ha'Yuchsin, that R. Chananya, the second highest ranking Kohain, was murdered at the time that the Second Temple was destroyed.

ולבריו מנין העשרה הוא כדלהלן:

"הראשון הוא רבן שמעון בן גמליאל נשיא ישראל, שנהרג עוד בשעת חורבן בית שני.

השני הוא ר' חנניה סגן הכהנים. גם הוא נהרג בשעת החורבן עם רשב"ג.

השלישי הוא ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע שנהרג אחר החורבן.

הרביעי הוא רבי עקיבא שהוצא להורג בימי גזירות השמר של אדריינוס.

החמישי – רבי יהודה בן בבא, על שממך חמישה זקנים בין אושא לשפרעם ועשו כל גופו ככברה בשלוש מאות חצים.

השישי הוא רבי חנניה בן תרדיון שנשרף וספר תורה עמו.

השביעי הוא רבי חוצפית המתורגמן.

Translation: In the opinion of Rabbi Ganz, the list of the Martyrs is as follows:

The first was Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel, the Nasi (spiritual leader) of the Jews in Israel, who was murdered before the Second Temple was destroyed.

The second was R. Chanaya, second highest ranking Kohain. He too was murdered before the Second Temple was destroyed and at the same time as Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel.

להבין את התפלה

The third was R. Yishmael son of Elisha who was killed after the destruction of the Second Temple.

The fourth was R. Akiva who was murdered during the Hadriatic persecutions.

The fifth-R. Yehudah son of Baba who was prosecuted for giving Rabbinic ordination to five Sages at a location somewhere between Usha and Shifrom. The Romans shot 300 arrows into R. Baba's body transforming his body into a sieve through which blood gushed.

The sixth was R. Chananya son of Tradiyon who was burned alive while holding a Sefer Torah.

The seventh was R. Chutzpis the translator.

השמיני הוא רבי ישכב הסופר והשליכו גופו לכלבים.

התשיעי הוא רבי אלעזר בן שמוע. ונראה שהוא נהרג זמן רב אחר רבי עקיבא, מפני שביום שנהרג רבי עקיבא נולד ר' יהודה הנשיא ור' אלעזר בן שמוע היה רבו של רבי.

העשירי: נסתפק בו בעל 'ספר היוחסין': "יש אומרים שהוא רבי יהודה בן תימא ויש אומרים ר' אלעזר בן דמא. ודון יצחק אברבנאל כתב בספר 'נחלת אבות' שר' יהודה בן תימא נקרא בן דמא" (ראה להלן).

Translation: The eighth was R. Yishoveiv the scribe who died as a result of being thrown to the dogs.

The ninth was R. Elazar son of Shamu'a. It appears that he was murdered some time after the death of R. Akiva because on the day on which R. Akiva died, R. Yehudah Ha'Nasi was born and R. Elazar son of Shamu'a is acknowledged to have been the teacher of R. Yehudah Ha'Nasi.

The tenth: the author of the book: Sefer Ha'Yuchsin expresses some uncertainty as to the identity of the tenth Martyr. He writes: some say that it was R. Yehudah son of Teima and some say that it was R. Elazar son of Dama. Don Yitzchok Abarbanel wrote in the book: Nachalas Avos that R. Yehidah son of Teima was also known own as son of Dama.

ובדומה 'סדר הדורות'² המביא גם דברי בעלי הקבלה והסוד, שעשרה הרוגי מלכות נהרגו על חטא מכירת יוסף (ראה להלן). ולדבריו עשרה הרוגי מלכות הם:

א. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל הזקן שנהרג בשעת חורבן.

ב. ר' חנניה סגן הכהנים ואף הוא בזמן החורבן.

ג. ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע כ"ג, נהרג אחר החורבן.

ד. ר' עקיבא.

ה. רבי יהודה בן בבא.

Translation: A similar opinion is expressed in the book: Seder Ha'Doros² which incorporates the works of Kabbalists. It is the Kabbalists who link the death of the Ten Martyrs to the sale of Joseph by his brothers. In the opinion of the author of the book: Seder Ha'Doros, the Ten Martyrs consisted of the following:

2. Rabbi Yechiel Halperin, originally published in 1769.

1. Rabban Shimon son of Gamliel the elder who was murdered at the time the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed.
2. R. Chanaya, the second highest ranking Kohain. He too was murdered at the time the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed.
3. R. Yishmael son of Elisha, Kohain Gadol, who died after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.
4. R. Akiva.
5. R. Yehudah son of Babba.

ו. רבי חנינא בן תרדיון (כ"א סיון או כ"ה סיון) נשרף וס"ת עמו.

ז. ר' חוצפית המתורגמן.

ח. רב ישבב הסופר.

ט. ר' אלעזר בן שמעון. ונראה שנהרג זמן רב אחר ר' עקיבא, לפי שביום שמת ר"ע נולד רבינו הקדוש ור"א בן שמעון היה רבו של רבי.

י. העשירי, יש אומרים שהוא רבי יהודה בן תימא ויש אומרים ר"א בן דמא, ואברבנאל ב'נחלת אבות' כתב שרבי יהודה בן תימא הוא נקרא בן דמא. ויש אומרים כי רבי חנינא בן חכנאי היה מן העשרה. ויש אומרים רבי יהודה הנחתום ('סדר הדורות' המסתמך על ספר היוחסין לר' אברהם זכות).

כמו כן ציינו חכמים נוספים, שהעשרה לא נהרגו בזמן אחד, כגון: רבינו בחיי (פרשת מקץ).

Translation: 6. R. Chanina ben Tradiyon (on the 21st or 25th of Sivan) who was set on fire while holding a Sefer Torah.

7. R. Chutzpis the translator.

8. R. Yishoveiv the scribe.

9. R. Elazar son of Shamu'a. It appears that he was murdered much after R. Akiva because on the day on which R. Akiva died, R. Yehudah Ha'Nasi was born and R. Elazar son of Shamu'a is acknowledged to have been the teacher of R. Yehudah Ha'Nasi.

10. The tenth, some say that it was R. Yehudah son of Teima and some say that it was R. Elazar son of Dama. Don Yitzchok Abarbanel wrote in the book: Nachalas Avos, that R. Yehidah son of Teima was also known as son of Dama. Some say that R. Chanina son of Chacheinai was the tenth of the Martyrs. Others say that the tenth was R. Yehudah Ha'Nachtom. (Seder Ha'Doros cites the Sefer Ha'Yuchsin written by Rabbi Abraham Zakut).

So too additional sages, such as Rabbeinu Bachya (Parsha Mikeitz), wrote that the Ten Martyrs did not die in the same era.

Which ten of our Sages are viewed as having been the עשרה הרוגי מלכות is an additional issue. Villar on page 38 of his book provides a chart of the various sources that refer to the names of the עשרה הרוגי מלכות and presents the names identified in each as being one of the martyrs:

להבין את התפלה

יש לציין גם כי רשימת הקדושים במדרשים ובפיוטים היא שונה ונמנים בה כארבעה עשר שמות, כפי שמפורט להלן.

חלמוד בבלי	חלמוד ירושלמי	איכה רבה	מדרש תהלים שומר טוב	היכלות רבותי	מדרש שיר השירים	מדרש אלה אזכרה	פיוט אלה אזכרה
ר' שמעון	ר' שמעון	ר' ישמעאל (ללא שם אביו)	ר' שמעון בן גמליאל	ר' שמעון בן גמליאל	ר' שמעון בן גמליאל	ר' שמעון בן גמליאל	ר' שמעון בן גמליאל
ר' ישמעאל	ר' ישמעאל	ר' ישמעאל (בן גמליאל)	ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע	ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע	ר' ישמעאל	ר' ישמעאל בן גמליאל	ר' ישמעאל בן גמליאל
ר' עקיבא	ר' עקיבא	ר' ישכב	ר' ישכב הסופר	ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' חנניה המפורסם	ר' עקיבא	ר' עקיבא
ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' חנניה	ר' חנניה המפורסם	ר' אלעזר בן רמא	ר' יהודה הנחום	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' יהודה בן בבא
ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה הנחום	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' יוסי		ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין
ר' חנניה המפורסם	ר' חנניה הנחום	ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' יהודה בן בבא		ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין
		ר' יהודה בן בבא	ר' יהודה הנחום		ר' עקיבא	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין
		ר' שמעון בן עזאי	ר' שמעון בן עזאי		ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין
		ר' עקיבא בן חרדין	ר' חנניה		ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין
הרוגי יולנטס הפסוס (שמעיה ואחיו)		ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' עקיבא		ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין	ר' חנניה בן חרדין

8. הערת ש. באבער.

9. לא במפורש, אלא אלישע בן אבויה ראה לשונו בפי כלב שותת דם.

10. במדרש עשרה הרוגי מלכות נוסח ב' נאמר ר' אלעזר בן רמא.

It is clear that each of the martyrs found in the various lists was murdered during one of two revolts that the Jews undertook in opposition to the Roman occupation of Israel; the Great Revolt (67-73 CE) and the Bar Kochva Revolt (135-137 CE). The historical background as to what prompted each revolt provides a glimpse as to why so many major Torah scholars lost their lives during those revolts. The following histories are taken from the book: A History Of The Jewish People, Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, editor, Harvard University Press, 1976. The first excerpt appears on pages 296-297, written by Menahem Stern:

The Causes and The Nature of the Great Revolt

The powerful clash between the Jews and the Roman Empire at the end of the Second Temple era was the result of an accumulation of several factors, some specific grievances, others imponderable. In the ideological sphere there was a sharp

conflict between the Jewish concept of Israel as the elect, with a glorious political and spiritual future, and the reality of the all-powerful Roman Empire, in which Judea was merely one of many subject provinces. This contrast found release in messianic hopes and the anticipation of heavenly salvation, which would bring eternal sovereignty to the Jewish nation as the heir of the Roman Empire: 'Most were convinced that it was written in the ancient priestly writings that in those times the East would gain in might and those who came forth from Judea should possess the world (Tacitus, Histories 5.13)'. This messianic vision was the inspiration of the Jewish fighters, and until the flames rose from the Temple Mount, they expected a divine intervention that would save the Temple and annihilate the enemy. This belief was promulgated to the end by prophets arising among the besieged, and to some degree it infected even the enemy armies, some of whose soldiers deserted to the Jewish side during the siege. The ideology of messianism and of the election of the Jewish people had borne a clear activist overtone among certain circles ever since Roman rule had begun. They regarded the duty to fight against Rome as a positive commandment, which should compel even the hesitant among the nation to take up arms, for the Jews had no master but G-d. The contrast between ideology and reality was pointed up by the very nature of the Roman Empire, with its characteristic tyranny and the paganism that pervaded even the political sphere, as in the cult of the emperor. To the Jews, Roman rule was identical to the rule of evil and of Satan. Caligula's mad attempt to impose the cult of his divinity on the Jews revived the atmosphere of the Antiochan persecution and showed what dangers the Jewish nation had to expect if Roman rule in Judea were to continue.

As had already been indicated, there were also specific aspects of Roman rule that severely offended Jewish sensitivities. Roman control of the Temple and of the Temple cult and the imposition of harsh taxes and duties, which placed a heavy burden on the population, all caused the masses to hate the foreign rulers. Most of all, the anger of the Jewish population of Palestine was aroused by the Roman administration's support of the non-Jewish, Greco-Syrian element. After its decline during the heyday of the Hasmonean Kingdom, this element had recovered with the establishment of new settlements under Pompey and Gabinius and had gained further strength under Herod and the Roman governors at the end of the second Temple era.

The second excerpt is taken from pages 339-331 written by Shmuel Safrai.

The Revolt Of Bar Kokhba

The revolt of Bar Kokhba had the support of R. Akiva and other Jabneh scholars, many of whom, with their disciples, fought in the war. Since nearly all the rabbis of this generation were killed in the war itself or in the persecutions that followed it, there is no generation of scholars that is so clearly demarcated from the next. The revolt also marked the end of the Jabneh era in the geodemographic sense, for it was

followed by the devastation of Judea and the shift of the Jewish centre to Galilee.

With the accession of Hadrian to the imperial throne (117) a trend of pacification and restoration began in the East, accompanied by respect for national character and for the needs of the provinces. The Jews of Judea shared in the benefits of this trend. In the course of his efforts to rehabilitate ruined cities and devastated areas, the emperor promised the Jews that he would rebuild Jerusalem, return it to them and allow the Temple to be rebuilt. The image of Hadrian during his first stay in the orient soon after his rise to the throne, as reflected in Jewish tradition, is generally positive. Not only are there stories of promises made to the Jews, but the emperor is presented as a man who thirsted for knowledge and wished to study the Jews and their faith. The report of the emperor's activities soon spread throughout the Diaspora. Many Jews came to Jerusalem, and financial and other preparations for the rebuilding of the temple were undertaken.

However, a few years later, the emperor changed his mind about the restoration of Jerusalem as a Jewish city and the rebuilding of the Temple. His reasons remain a matter of speculation; he may have been deterred by the emotional reaction of the Jews and a fear of the political consequences of allowing them to recover control of Jerusalem. It is also possible that his sympathy towards the Jews and Judaism had changed; from early in the second decade of the century and throughout the remainder of his reign, he displayed clear pan-Hellenistic tendencies and did much for Hellenism in all the countries in the hellenistic East. Sources confirm that he detested 'foreign', i.e., oriental, religions, an attitude that induced him to forbid circumcision, which he included in the category of castration, an act that was forbidden on penalty of death. The ban was not aimed specifically against the Jews, but applied in equal measure to others. Whatever the reasons, Hadrian now sought to convert Jerusalem into a pagan Roman city, without regard to its past or its place in Jewish thought and aspirations. His ambition seems to have been to construct a Greek world within the orient. Since he had lived in the East before becoming Emperor (having been governor of Syria) and had been in contact with Jews, he must have been well aware of the effect his measures would have on the Jews, though he deliberately disregarded their sensitivities.

Hadrian's moves, coming as they did after the elation aroused by the prospect of rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple, inflamed the feelings of the Jews and resulted in preparations for war against Rome. Fortifications were built in secret and, above all, arms were collected and made ready. Dio Cassius, the Roman historian whose works are our main source for the history of the revolt, reports that the Jews would intentionally damage arms that the Romans had given them to repair, so that they would be rejected on inspection and could be retained by them without arousing suspicion. As long as Hadrian stayed in or near the Land of Israel (128-132), the Jews did not revolt openly. But even then there were serious acts of terrorism, to the extent that the Roman garrison was unable to deal with the situation and an

additional legion, the Sixth Ferrata, was brought in. The Sixth Legion also remained in the Land of Israel after the revolt. encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. In addition, the Tenth Legion was reinforced by recruits from nearby countries. As soon as Hadrian had left the East, the revolt broke out on a large scale, for the 'Jews in the entire world also arose and joined them, and created much trouble for the Romans, secretly or openly, and even many gentiles came to their aid' (Dio Casius, lib. LXIX). The Samaritans, or at least some of them, also joined the rebels.

Simon, Prince of Israel

During the first stages of the revolt and the disorders that preceded it, we find-as in the Great Revolt-local heroes, and various messianic and royal pretenders. As the revolt took its course, however, they were all overshadowed by the messianic figure of Simon bar Kosiba. He became the acknowledged leader of the revolt and the head of the nation, and the coins struck during the revolt are inscribed with the designation, 'Simon, Prince of Israel'. Christian sources report that he was referred to as Bar Kokhba ('Son of the Star'), because of the messianic character that was attributed to him. Even R. Akiva recognized his messianic character and proclaimed, 'This is the king and Messiah!'

In caves in the Judean desert, documents and letters from the time of the war have been discovered; these belonged to refugees from En-gedi and other places in the vicinity who had sought shelter there. In these documents we find Simon bar Kosiba, Prince of Israel, sending instructions and orders, and leases of public lands are drawn up in his name. Despite this appellation, his rule was not that of an anointed monarch; he had a priest as colleague, just as the local command of En-Gedi was entrusted to a duumvirate. In fact, a number of the coins of the revolt bear, in addition to the name of Simon, Prince of Israel, also that of Eleazar the Priest-presumably Elazar of Modi'in, one of the Jabneh scholars, whom Talmudic tradition links with Bar Kosiba and places at Betar together with him. The Sanhedrin and Patriarchate were at Betar; in fact, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, the Nasi of the next generation, was educated at Betar. What the relation was between Simon bar Kosiba and the Patriarchate and whether the Sanhedrin had any actual share in the government are not known.

Query?

*Did the Jews persist in revolting against the Romans in the hope that a miracle such as the one that occurred in the period of the **השמונאים** would take place in their era as well? That the **רבנו של עולם** performed a miracle during the revolt of the **השמונאים** but not during the Roman revolts is an example of the following lesson in prayer taught by Jakob J. Petuchowski in an article entitled: *Petition And Praise*, on page 40 of the book: *Understanding Jewish Prayer, Ktav, 1972*: Put differently, the same thought may be expressed by saying that G-d's "answer" to man's prayer need not invariably be an affirmative answer. G-d must also be thought capable of saying "No."*