Yigdal Elohim Chai - יגדל אלוהים חי
R. Daniel ben Yehudah

About the Piyut

In this Piyut the author, R. Daniel ben Yehudah, the Judge of Rome, who lived in the 13th century, lists the thirteen Principles of Faith as phrased by Maimonides in his commentary to the Mishnah. The Piyut gained great popularity, was adapted to many different tunes, and incorporated into most traditions. It is genreally sung at the end of the prayer service. Many authors tried to imitate the Piyut and some even wrote parodies. Interestingly enough, R. Yitzchak Luria Askenazi opposed this Piyut, mainly because he disagreed with defining and declaring principles of faith. As a result, those who follow his rulings do not include 'Yigdal' in their prayer books.

Aramaic and Hebrew Text

Yigdal Elohim chai v'yishtabach / nimtza v'eyn et el m'tziyuto	נִמְצָא וְאֵין עֵת אֶל מְצִיאוּתוֹ	יִגְדַּל אֱלֹהִים חַי וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח
Echad v'-eyn yachid k'-yichudo / Ne'elam v'-gam eyn sof l'-achduto	נֶעְלָם וְגַם אֵין סוֹף לְאַחְדּוּתוֹ	אֶחָד וְאֵין יָחִיד כְּיִחוּדוֹ
Eyn lo d'mut haguf v'-eyno guf / lo na'aroch elav k'dushato	לֹא נַעֲרֹךְ אֵלָיו קְדֻשָּׁתוֹ	אֵין לוֹ דְּמוּת הַגּוּף וְאֵינוֹ גוּף
Kadmon l'chol davar asher niv'ra / rishon v'-eyn reshit l'reshito	רִאשׁוֹן וְאֵין רֵאשִׁית לְרֵאשִׁיתוֹ	קַדְמוֹן לְכָל דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא
Hino adon olam l'-chol notzar / Yoreh g'dulato u'malchuto	יוֹרֶה גְדֻלָּתוֹ וּמַלְכוּתוֹ	הִנּוֹ אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם לְכָל נוֹצָר
Shefa n'vuato n'tano / el anshei s'gulato v'-tifarto	אֶל אַנְשֵׁי סְגֻלָּתוֹ וְתִפְאַרְתּוֹ	שֶׁפַע נְבוּאָתוֹ נְתָנוֹ
Lo kam b'-yisrael k'moshe od / navi u'-mabit et t'munato	נָבִיא וּמַבִּיט אֶת תְּמוּנָתוֹ	לֹא קָם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה עוֹד
Torat emet natan l'-amo El / al yad n'vi'o ne'eman beito	עַל יַד נְבִיאוֹ נֶאֱמַן בֵּיתוֹ	תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת נָתַן לְעַמּוֹ אֵל
Lo yachalif ha-El v'-lo yamir / dato l'-olamim l'-zulato	דָתוֹ לְעוֹלָמִים לְזוּלָתוֹ	לֹא יַחֲלִיף הָאֵל וְלֹא יָמִיר
Tzofeh v'-yodeia s'tareinu / Mabit l'-sof davar b'-kadmato	מַבִּיט לְסוֹף דָּבָר בְּקַדְמָתוֹ	צוֹפֶה וְיוֹדֵעַ סְתָרֵינוּ

Gomel l'-ish chesed k'-mif'alo / *noten la-rasha ra k'-rish'ato*	נוֹתֵן לְרָשָׁע רָע כְּרִשְׁעָתוֹ	גּוֹמֵל לְאִישׁ חָסִיד כְּמִפְעָלוֹ
Yishlach l'ketz yamim m'shicheinu / *lifdot m'chakey ketz y'shu'ato*	לִפְדּוֹת מְחַכֵּי קֵץ יְשׁוּעָתוֹ	יִשְׁלַח לְקֵץ יָמִים מְשִׁיחֵנוּ
Metim y'chayeh El b'rov chasdo / *Baruch adey ad shem t'hilato*	בָּרוּךְ עֲדֵי עַד שֵׁם תְּהִלָּתוֹ	מֵתִים יְחַיֶּה אֵל בְּרֹב חַסְדּוֹ

English Translation

Exalted be the Living God, and praise He exists and his existence is unbound by time

He is One and there is no unity like his Oneness, inscrutable and infinite is his Oneness

He has neither form of body nor is he corporeal nor may his holiness be compared to aught

He preceded all that was created the First, and nothing preceded His precedence

Behold, the Master of the universe to all creations demonstrating His greatness and sovereignty

An abundance of prophecy he has bestowed upon His treasured and splendorous people

There has not arisen in Israel another like Moses, a prophet who beheld His image

A Torah of truth God gave his nation by means of His prophet, the faithful of His house

God will never exchange or alter His Law for any other, for all eternity

He sees and knows our most hidden secrets, He perceives a matter's outcome at its inception

He rewards man with kindness according to his works,

> He places evil on the wicked according to his wickedness.

He will send our Messiah at the End of Days to redeem those waiting for His final salvation

God will revive the dead in His abundant kindness

> May His splendorous Name be blessed forever more

Recording by the Piyut North America ensemble