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THE NORTH AMERICAN HAZZAN'S
MANUAL FOR THE NEW ISRAELI REFORM
SIDDUR TEFILAT HA-ADAM

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Abstract

In this thesis, I will study the new Israeli Reform *siddur*, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* and contextualize it within the cultural movement known as “Hitchadshut Yehudit” (Modern Jewish Renaissance in Israel). I will translate, analyze, and give current interpretation to Israeli songs offered in *Tefilat Ha-Adam*. I will suggest ways to offer these songs, which are unfamiliar to the American audience but very well-known in Israeli culture by juxtaposing them with traditional liturgy that is used in American liberal congregations. I will explore new meanings born from juxtaposing these newer texts with the traditional *matbe'a* (order of service) and I will delve into the liturgical and musical meaning of this traditional and contemporary Israeli *nusach*.

As part of the project, I will offer musical arrangements demonstrating the juxtaposition of the Israeli songs with musical settings of traditional liturgy familiar in American synagogues. I will explore how the changing landscape of Judaism in Israel – as reflected in the *siddur* – has the potential to improve the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. I will show how music and prayer can help bridge the gap between these two communities.

There are six chapters in this thesis and an introduction. Every chapter is dedicated to one Israeli song and its accompanying traditional liturgy. Every chapter contains research about the social and historical context in which the song was written, its translation, deep textual analysis and interpretation, and the new meanings that are born from this new juxtaposition.

This project aims to support North American cantors who wish to include Israeli repertoire from the new Israeli Reform *siddur*, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* in their services or as an adult education program.

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Introduction

The North American Hazzan's Manual for Tefilat Ha-Adam

On November 4, 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir, a young, right-wing Israeli who opposed the Oslo Accords, a peace initiative that would have created a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Rabin was one of the architects of the Oslo Accords along with United States President William Jefferson Clinton and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Yigal Amir murdered Rabin in the name of Amir's own so-called Jewish values. Amir's supporters were largely right-wing, Orthodox communities in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. His vision was to not allow one centimeter of land to be given up to the Palestinians for any reason whatsoever. Rabin's assassination caused a deep trauma to the State of Israel and a deep divide between the right-wing, religious Israelis and left-wing, secular Israelis, with many of those secular Israelis either feeling disconnected from Judaism or believing that Judaism had been co-opted by the right-wing.

In reaction to Rabin's assassination, some liberal Jews in Israel were eager to recapture Judaism in the public sphere in a non-Orthodox, non-extreme, egalitarian, inclusive, progressive context. One of the outcomes twenty-five years later is the new Israeli Reform Movement prayer book *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, which was inspired by the "Hitchadshut Yehudit" Jewish renewal movement (or Modern Jewish Renaissance in Israel – more on this later).

This thesis aims to be a guide for North American audiences to the *Tefilat Ha-Adam* prayer book. (Note: The proper spelling of the prayer book's transliterated title is *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, but in other quoted sources, some authors used a different spelling for the transliteration. In this thesis, alternative transliterations will be quoted as spelled in those sources.)

In the 21st Century, liberal Israeli Jews and American Jews are living vastly different lives. Language barriers, cultural barriers, military requirements or non-requirements, political differences – all of these have strengthened the divide between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. My goal in my cantorate is to bridge the gap within *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish People) through music and prayer. As an Israeli, I want to bring my love of Israeli music to the North American synagogue and create connection to Israeli culture and people.

This thesis is designed for North American cantors, synagogue musical directors, and other musical prayer leaders who are seeking to include Israeli music and Israeli texts from the new Israeli Reform prayer book *Tefilat Ha-Adam* in their services. *Tefilat Ha-Adam* is a creative representation of the Israeli Reform community with its diverse identities, values, and culture. This thesis aims to take that creative product and make it accessible and usable in a North American context.

Using the principle of juxtaposition that is common in liberal *siddurim* (prayer books), I made musical selections for the purpose of engaging the North American liberal

community with Israeli music, texts, and culture. This thesis provides musical arrangements, deep textual analysis, the historical background and social context of the songs and their creators (often non-religious artists creating music with religious motifs), as well as suggestions for community engagement strategies using these prayerful songs in ways that should resonate in North American synagogues.

So, what is *Tefilat Ha-Adam* and from where does it originate?

Tefilat Ha-Adam is the new, Hebrew-language, Israeli Reform Movement *siddur* (prayer book) edited by Rabbi Dalia Marx and Rabbi Alona Lisitsa, and published in 2020. A Hebrew-English edition, edited and translated by Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman and Rabbi Efrat Rotem, was published in 2022. Both editions were published by Maram – the Council of Reform Rabbis in Israel, and the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism.

The phrase, “Tefilat Ha-Adam” is a quote from the famous poem “Halichah L’Keisariah” (“Walk to Caesarea” – also known as “Eili, Eili”) by the Hungarian-Israeli poet Hannah Szenes. The poem evokes the memory of the Jewish People’s struggle in the *Shoah* (Holocaust). “Tefilat Ha-Adam” literally means the “prayer of mankind (...or the “prayer of humanity”),” representing a universalistic view. The prayer book *Tefilat Ha-Adam*’s subtitle, “*Siddur Reformi Yisraeli*” identifies it specifically as a product of the Israeli Reform Movement.

Rabbi Alona Lisitsa observes that the term “Reform” in *Tefilat Ha-Adam, An Israeli Reform Siddur for Shabbat* means the *siddur* is committed to both tradition and innovation and that it has the courage to proclaim this to the Israeli public and “not bow to external definitions.”¹

This *siddur* is a collaboration of the entire Israeli Reform Movement and its multiple voices (rabbis, activists, prayer leaders, rabbinical students, youth groups, etc.), and was supported by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). It is designed for Israeli Reform communities and contemporary Israeli *chiloni* (secular) audiences, as well. It was a six-year process to compile, edit, and survey Reform Israeli leaders. The goal of the process was to create a prayer book that would reflect the diversity and the needs of most, if not all, Reform communities in Israel.

Rabbi Dalia Marx, a tenth-generation Israeli, was ordained at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Jerusalem and Cincinnati in 2002, and then completed her doctorate in Midrash at Hebrew University in Israel. Rabbi Marx is a Professor of Midrash and Liturgy at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and is a well-known author and lecturer.

¹ Alona Lisitsa (Email to Rabbi David Ellenson on August 25, 2021). Michael Rosen and David Ellenson, "T'filat HaAdam and the Maturation of Israeli Reform" *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly* (Winter 2022): 74

Rabbi Alona Lisitsa was born in Kiev and was ordained at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem in 2004. Lisitsa teaches at HUC-JIR Jerusalem serving as Coordinator of Student Placement for the Israeli Rabbinic Program. Lisitsa has a Ph.D. in Talmud from Tel Aviv University and is a full-time adjunct professor of *Halachah* (Jewish Law) and Liturgy at the Jerusalem campus of HUC-JIR. Notably, she is the editor of *Dabri Torah*, the recently published Israeli Women's Pluralistic Torah Commentary. Together, Lisitsa and Marx embody and guide a proud new generation of Israeli Reform and liberal Jews and serve as catalysts for a new contemporary Israeli sense of Jewish religion and culture.

So, what is new about *Tefilat Ha-Adam* in comparison with older Israeli *siddurim*?

Michael Rosen and David Ellenson's article "T'filat HaAdam and the Maturation of Israeli Reform" describes the space this *siddur* has carved out in the Reform Movement in general, and in Israel, in particular.

According to Rosen and Ellenson, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* represents a maturation of the Israeli Reform Movement and compare this new *siddur* to its antecedent *HaAvodah SheBaLev* (Work of the Heart), the prior *siddur* of the Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism.

We certainly acknowledge the importance of *HaAvodah SheBaLev* as a precedent for *T'filat HaAdam*. The editors themselves indicate that the text they employed as the basis for their *siddur* was the earlier 1982 Israeli *siddur*. At the same time, we maintain that the current iteration of Reform prayer in Israel unquestionably testifies to a giant leap forward in the growth of Israeli Reform over the past four decades. *T'filat HaAdam* bespeaks a self-confidence and maturity that marks

contemporary Reform Judaism in Israel as it enters the third decade of the twenty-first century.²

However, *HaAvodah SheBaLev* avoided using the word “Reform” to describe itself. Nowhere on the cover or the spine of *HaAvodah SheBaLev* does the term “Reform” or even “Liberal” or “Progressive” ever appear— only on its third page where the title appears does the book identify itself as affiliated with the Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel. The name העבודה שבלב (*HaAvodah SheBaLev*) can resonate with both traditional and liberal Jewish traditions. Clearly the editors of that *siddur*, Yehoram Mazor and the *siddur* committee, were aiming for that kind of crossover appeal, in part by downplaying a denominational affiliation which was not seen as a particular strength.

Both then and now, many Israelis find the term “Reform” alienating, to say the least. According to the President Emeritus of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), Rabbi Eric Yoffie, in Israel the Reform Movement has been perceived as an “assimilatory movement designed to cast away Jewish identity for upper-class elites in *galut*.”³

The late Israeli Rabbi Theodore Friedman stated in 1982, the term “Reform” was “an albatross around our necks.” Indeed, it was Friedman who remarked, “It is revealing that in Israel the movement uses the appellation Progressive Judaism and not Reform.”

² Michael Rosen and David Ellenson “T’filat HaAdam and the Maturation of Israeli Reform,” *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly*, (Winter 2022): 72

³ Rosen and Ellenson, “T’filat HaAdam and the Maturation of the Israeli Reform,” 74

However, on *Tefilat Ha-Adam*'s hardcover, the word "Reform" is prominently displayed. This reflects progress in the Israeli Reform Movement's sense of self.

I would argue that while the Reform Movement originated in Europe and maintained a separate identity in Israel since the 1950s, existing in Israel in the environment of "Hitchadshut Yehudit" has helped the Reform Movement develop and refine its identity and values. The new Israeli Reform *siddur* - *Tefilat Ha-Adam* is a product of this development and refinement.

So, what is "Hitchadshut Yehudit," and how does it relate to the creation of the *Tefilat Ha-Adam* prayer book?

The term "Hitchadshut Yehudit" התחדשות יהודית – Jewish renewal (or Modern Jewish Renaissance in Israel) refers to a cultural and religious phenomenon that aims to connect liberal Jews with Jewish heritage, tradition, Jewish customs, culture, through a re-examination of primary Jewish texts (Torah, Talmud, etc.). Unlike חזרה בתשובה, - "Chazara B'tshuvah" (a process or program of return to Orthodox observance and adherence to Orthodox Jewish law), "Hitchadshut Yehudit's" events or projects are created for the purpose of encouraging the public to embrace spiritual experiences while preserving one's personal autonomy in a pluralistic way. This process is meant to appeal to a pluralistic or secular Jewish public and does not challenge their modern identity.

Both “Hitchadshut Yehudit” and “Chazara B’tshuvah” are phenomena encouraging the embrace of traditional Jewish ideas, but “Chazara B’tshuvah” occurs in a *halachic* (Jewish law) framework and “Hitchadshut Yehudit” generally does not. An important part of “Hitchadshut Yehudit” is to show that these trends are not opposites and can coexist, which is a radical idea, especially now in the current political environment in Israel. While the leaders of “Hitchadshut Yehudit” and “Chazarah B’tshuvah” might disagree regarding the binding nature of *halacha* (Jewish law), both are encouraging meaningful experiences based on the symbols, texts, and rubrics of Judaism.

The seeds of “Hitchadshut Yehudit” were planted in the late 1980s, with the establishment of the first pluralistic *batei midrash* (houses of study) and became more present in the public sphere in the mid-1990s with the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The idea that Judaism should not be given over only to Orthodoxy and there should be a renewed stake on the part of Israeli secular Jews in Judaism allowed “Hitchadshut Yehudit” to gain resonance among wider audiences.

This idea was similar to the Cultural Zionism project of Hayim Nahman Bialik, Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg (also known as Ahad Ha’am) and Shaul Tchernichovsky in the Palestine of the late 1920’s and 1930’s. In 1926, Bialik founded *Ohel Shem*, a Jewish, Hebrew-language, non-Orthodox, public, cultural center in Tel Aviv, which held “*Oneg Shabbat*” events that celebrated Shabbat through a series of lectures, Torah study, poetry, music, and modern texts. The anthologies that were created for these events are still known and used today – among them is ספר השבת (*Sefer HaShabbat - The Book of the*

Sabbath.) Ohel Shem became the home of these scholarly and cultural Shabbat experiences and became an avenue for Israelis to experience Shabbat in a non-*halachic* way.

Cultural Zionism paved the way for – and inspired – the current Israeli movement of “Hitchadshut Yehudit.” According to Ahad Ha’am, Tchernichowsky, and Bialik, it was not just the political structure that mattered for the success of the Zionist project, but culture, too. These cultural structures were crucial for the creation the Jewish State and a flourishing Israeli society.

“Hitchadshut Yehudit” is a return to the same ideas but at a time when secular Jews have become alienated from Jewishness in ways that never would have happened with Bialik, Ahad Ha-Am, and Tchernichovsky, since they grew up in a world of Orthodox observance. There has been a need to go back to primary Jewish texts – Gemara, Tanakh, Talmud, and the whole body of Jewish tradition-- and to marry this with investment in secular culture. I will elaborate further on Hayim Nahman Bialik as an early thinker of “Hitchadshut Yehudit” in the chapter about his poem “החמה מראש האילנות נסתלקה” (“Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalkah” - “The Sun From the Treetops is Now Gone.”) Indeed, their ongoing influence is exemplified through the incorporation of one of Bialik’s famous songs in *Tefilat Ha-Adam* and its continued popularity in various musical settings.

This contemporary phenomenon of Jewish renewal has been abetted, among other things, by the emergence of several pluralistic, egalitarian, inclusive *batei midrash*, and houses of worship like *Hamidrashah B'Oranim* (1989), *Elul*" (1989), and "*Alma*" (1996), as well as by musical circles and groups dedicated to the communal reclamation and recitation of *piyyutim* (liturgical poems).

But how can secular, critical, modern, liberal, Israeli learners relate to and identify with the corpus of Jewish texts and still maintain their *chiloni* (secular) identity?

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's (1913–2005) notion of "Second Naiveté" can be seen in this context as a helpful philosophical paradigm. The idea of a "Second Naiveté" is the innocence that some people recover after learning to be critical and then to reinterpret. It is a more complex, richer kind of empathy, to which they return after critique. "Second Naivete" appears when a person discovers the limits of critique and seeks a way back to the pre-critical experience – not in a way that erases the critique, but that respects it, reinterprets, and reconciles with it. Rabbi Neil Gillman describes this as "...the step whereby we recapture an original, primordial awareness through and beyond criticism."⁴ One could argue that "Hitchadshut Yehudit" (Israeli Jewish Renewal) is an extension of the same idea.

⁴ Neil Gillman, "Epistemological Tensions in Heschel's Thought" *Conservative Judaism*, Volume 50, no. 2-3 (1998): 82

Tefilat Ha-Adam – An Israeli Reform Siddur reflects many of the ideas that drive “Hitchadshut Yehudit” -- its *batei midrash* (study houses) and houses of worship. *Tefilat Ha-Adam* combines the traditions of Jewish worship together with innovation. In a sense, it marks an evolution from Bialik’s *Sefer Hashabbat*. *Sefer Hashabbat* and all of the subsequent *Moed* books also include a whole array of biblical, rabbinic and traditional liturgical sources in addition to modern fiction, essay and poetry. *Tefilat Ha-Adam* seems like a direct descendant of this. The only difference is the editorial juxtaposition, with the modern text right next to the traditional source, rather than later on this book in a modern section.

Tefilat Ha-Adam contains the traditional “*matbe’a*” (the coin of the traditional service) as well as the needs of the contemporary community – “These are woven here together with the issues, insights, and foundational questions that animate our own generation of prayers for whom this *siddur* was created, as they shape today’s prayers through their consciousness.” according to Rabbis Marx and Lisitsa.⁵ Alongside its innovation, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* also added traditional prayers that were omitted from previous Reform *siddurim* (i.e. *Tachanun*, *Kiddush L’vanah*, and others).

⁵ Alona Lisitsa and Dalia Marx, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* (Israel: Maram – the Council of Reform Rabbis in Israel, Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, 2022), 10

Tefilat Ha-Adam is inclusive of material from different Jewish ethnicities (Ashkenazi, Sefardi, Mizrachi, Ethiopian, etc.). It reflects the diversity of the Israeli community through *piyyutim* (liturgical poems), poetry, prose, adding “Song of Songs” for *Kabbalat Shabbat* (according to the Sefardi custom), and blessings for the *Mimouna* (a traditional Maghrebi Jewish celebration dinner that is held the day after Passover).

Tefilat Ha-Adam is gender aware when it comes to references to God (God is sometimes represented as female, sometimes male, sometimes a combination) and there is a significant representation of contributions written by non-male writers.

It includes various reinvigorated or updated texts like “Tigdal Shchinat Olam” by Rabbi Oded Mazor based on the traditional text “Yigdal Elohim Chai,” and “Birkot Hashachar” co-written by Rabbi Ma’ayan Turner and Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman. There is a selection of “Mi Sheberach” prayers written in the context of current Israeli life for people who are drafted into the Israeli Defense Forces, people who are in the process of adoption, conversion, new *olim* (immigrants), for ending a chapter in life like divorce, getting fired, or other crises.

As mentioned earlier, the title *Tefilat Ha-Adam* literally means “The Prayer of Humanity.” This *siddur* offers prayers inspired by ideas of universalism, as well as the inclusion of non-theist prayers like Hayim Nahman Bialik’s famous poem *החמה מראש* *האילנות נסתלקה* - “Hachama Merosh Ha’Ilanot Nistalka” (“The Sun from the Treetops is Now Gone”).

Since this *siddur* only offers texts and not music (unlike *Sefer Hashabbat*, for example, which offers sheet music), in my musical guide thereto I include specific musical settings that are sung in communities in Israel. My musical arrangements based on these settings are aimed to engage North American congregations. I employ a principal of juxtaposition, bringing together modern Israeli texts and songs that are unfamiliar to American Jewry with traditional liturgy and music more typically seen in American synagogues. The goal is to encourage the involvement and inclusion of American Jewry with Israeli music, texts, and culture and by that, help to bridge the gap between American Jewry and Israeli Jewry through music and prayer.

The songs that are offered in this thesis are as follows:

Israeli Prayer	Creators	Juxtaposition With
החמה מראש האילנות נסתלקה Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalka The Sun on the Treetops is Gone	Text: Hayim Nahman Bialik Music: Efraim Shamir's "Hayadata et Haderech"	שלום עליכם Shalom Aleichem
יעלה יעלה, בואי לגני Yalah Yalah, Bo'i L'gani Beloved, Come to My Garden	Text: Israel Najara Music: Moroccan Folk	L'chah Dodi
ניגונים Nigunim Melodies	Text: Fania Bergstein Music: David Zehavi	Yedid Nefesh

מנעי קולך מבכי Minee Kolech Mibechi Restrain Your Voice from Weeping	Music and text: Idan Raichel	Nisim B'chol Yom
אור וירושלים Or Virushalayim Light and Jerusalem	Text and music: Yosef Sarig	Haskivenu/ HaPoreis Sukat Shalom
שיר משמר Shir Mishmar - Guarding Song	Text: Natan Alterman Music: Alexander (Sasha) Argov	V'Shamru Bnei Yisrael

In selecting these songs, I employed a few core principles. I picked examples of exceptionally beautiful Israeli music. I also sought Israeli music that is very familiar in Israel both in synagogues but also in the general, public sphere, but that is not as well known in North America. The questions I asked were: “If we put an American congregation in a room together with an Israeli congregation, what songs would Israelis be moved to hear Americans sing? What songs would Americans relate to musically, textually, and spiritually? What can both communities sing together? What songs and music can transmit shared ideas and values and facilitate mutual learning?”

In addition to principles like beauty, familiarity, and the idea of song as a vehicle for learning and empathy, I was also asking what Israeli music can work in an American prayer setting. Given the language barrier, with most American Jews not speaking Hebrew, my arrangements offer minimal Hebrew language in the choir parts (the arrangements are written for children or adult volunteer choirs). Some songs are translated into English (like Idan Raichel’s “Minee Kolech Mibechi” and “Or

Virushalayim”). Many arrangements use tunes that are familiar to American Jewry (like Ehud Zweig’s “Yedid Nefesh”) or familiar texts to catchy Israeli tunes (like “L’chah Dodi” to the tune of “Yaalah, Yaalah”) making it possible for American congregants to join in song.

The third principle of selection acknowledges the Israeli tension points between *dati* (Orthodox religious) and *chiloni* (secular). I am so moved by the editors’ choices to include songs that were not written for the synagogue setting. In fact, many of the creators of these songs identify as secular. In the spirit of “Hitchadshut Yehudit,” *Tefilat Ha-Adam* connects liberal, modern texts with traditional liturgy that ultimately invites a whole non-religious generation to experience Judaism in an inclusive way while preserving their modern, liberal, perhaps even secular identity. In a highly politically and religiously polarized society, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* is bringing diverse voices together in meaningful way.

Fourth, my selection of the Israeli songs exhibits an array of Israeli identities from different points of time and social background. For example, Israel Najara of the 16th Century Ottoman Empire versus Fania Bergstein of the pre-Israel *chalutzim* חלוצים (pioneers) in the *kibbutz*, or Idan Raichel – a current popular Israeli singer-songwriter who is famous for his music around the world.

I also brought different styles of Israeli music – from Moroccan-folk (“Yaalah Yaalah”), to David Zehavi (“Niggunim”) with his classically trained background, to Idan Raichel. I

used *nusach* (musical style) by Israel Alter together with *misinai* tunes (melodies engrained in our Jewish culture and memory) and current American-Jewish popular prayers – music that speaks to different generations.

Every chapter contains the song's background, translation, the song's analysis, my interpretation and my suggestion for a juxtaposition with traditional liturgy. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted and include input from my advisor Rabbi Dr. Wendy Zierler.

My hope is this material will be used in congregations in North America – as well as Israel – to start forming a common, familiar repertoire for the pluralistic Israeli-Jewish community and Jewish communities in the diaspora. A musical exchange between these communities will provide continuity for visitors from one community to the other and will be a bridge-builder to help strengthen and renew the relationships between them.

**Chapter 1: Hayim Nahman Bialak
“Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalkah”
and the Juxtaposition with “Shalom Aleichem”**

The work of Hayim Nahman Bialik and his innovations that created the “Oneg Shabbat” movement in the 1920s, inspired the creation of “Hitchadshut Yehudit” and the creation of *Tefilat Ha-Adam, An Israeli Reform Siddur for Shabbat*.

My musical arrangement combines Bialik’s poem “Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalkah” in the melody of Efraim Shamir’s music for “Hayadata et Haderech” with the familiar settings of “Shalom Aleichem” by Israel Goldfarb and Shmuel Brazil.

“Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalkah” is already included in *Mishkan T’filah*, but only with the first verse. My suggestion is to add the second verse of the poem and sing “Shabbat Hamalkah” with the music sung in Beit Daniel in Tel Aviv, and the music that is used by Beit Tefilah Israeli. Efraim Shamir, one of the founders of the famous Israeli band Kaveret, is a known left-wing, atheist, Tel Avivian. The fact that his music is included in prayer settings in Israel is another example for what *Tefilat Ha-Adam* is trying to accomplish.

Tefilat Ha-Adam, An Israeli Reform Siddur for Shabbat was created in Israel in 2020 by the Israeli Reform movement and was inspired by principles of the “Hitchadshut Yehudit” movement. But how did this movement originate? Who were the early thinkers who inspired this Israeli Jewish renewal or renaissance?

Hayim Nahman Bialik (1837-1934) was known as Israel's National Poet. Dr. Micah Goodman refers to Bialik as "one of the founders of the Israeli secularism."⁶ Bialik was one of the greatest modern Hebrew-language poets, an essayist, fiction writer, translator, and editor, who greatly influenced the revival of the Hebrew language and modern Hebrew culture. Bialik and the revival of the modern Hebrew language ultimately had a vast religious significance, as well.

Rabbi Esteban Gottfried, founder of Beit Tefilah Israeli, a pluralistic, egalitarian community in Israel, exemplifies the contemporary movement of "Hitchadshut Yehudit." In a 2012 Hebrew Union College Rabbinic thesis entitled, "Heschel, Corner of Bialik," Rabbi Gottfried drew a connection between the writings and views of Hayim Nahman Bialik and those of Polish-born, American-Jewish theologian Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

As Heschel writes in *Israel: An Echo of Eternity*,

A central concern in Jewish thinking is to overcome the tendency to see the world in one dimension, from one perspective, to reduce history exclusively to God's actions or man's actions, either to grace or to man's initiative. The marvelous and the mundane, the sacred and the secular, are not mutually exclusive, nor are the natural and the supernatural, the temporal and the eternal, kept apart. The heart of the relationship of God and man is reciprocity, interdependence. The task is to humanize the sacred and to sanctify the secular.⁷

⁶ Micah Goodman, *Chazara Bli Tshuvah* (Hevel Modi'in, Israel: Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir – Publishing House Ltd., 2019), 72

⁷ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *An Echo of Eternity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 159

Heschel opposed the dichotomy of the secular and religious Jewish experience. He called for ways to bring together the holy and the mundane. Bialik's secularism notwithstanding, he and Heschel shared a sense of the centrality and the genius of Shabbat. Bialik found ways to make these ideas a reality in the pre-Israel Palestine of the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, it was perhaps in reaction to Bialik's own upbringing that he pushed to create the new culture of the Israeli "Oneg Shabbat."

Bialik grew up orphaned by his father and was raised by his grandfather in Zhitomir, Russia, in a very religious household. He studied in Volozhin and became very involved in the "Haskalah" (Jewish Enlightenment) movement. He then joined the cause of cultural Zionism in Odessa and moved to Palestine in 1924. Bialik was very committed to the ideas of Zionism but regretted the lack of *halacha* (Jewish law) in his life. He was known to smoke on Shabbat, but only in private and not in public. On the other hand, when he saw kids playing soccer on Shabbat, he felt pained by the lack of Jewish tradition in their lives.

Bialik's attempt to balance a life of the secular and the sacred came to fruition with the founding of Ohel Shem. Ohel Shem was a cultural center built on Balfour Street in Tel Aviv in 1926. Ohel Shem held events called "Oneg Shabbat," which celebrated Judaism and the Hebrew language through a series of lectures about history, literature, Judaism, Jewish thought, Torah study, and musical events. Among the lecturers were Israel's finest scholars like: Jurist Moshe Zilberg, Rabbi Professor Benjamin Ze'ev Benedict, author Shmuel Navon, poet Y.L. Baruch, musician Menashe Rabina, cantors Yosef Rosenblatt, Shlomo Ravitz, and others.

“Oneg Shabbat” was a movement that provided Israelis an avenue to experience Shabbat in a non-*halachic* manner, which in turn, inspired the contemporary movement of “Hitchadshut Yehudit.” Bialik’s “Oneg Shabbat” was an early effort to challenge the dichotomy between the sacred and secular. It used modern Hebrew literature and culture as another layer of sacred interpretation.

In May, 1928, during the ceremony laying the cornerstone of Ohel Shem, Bialik gave a speech in which he argued that celebrating *Shabbat* through music, Hebrew poetry, and texts is essential to the preservation of the Jewish people. He wrote that Israeli Jews need to create an original Jewish identity that will rely on the holy ancient sources, and at the same time reflect modern Israeli life, culture, and language.

<p>“We come to Israel to renew our lives; We want to create our own independent lives here, which have their own face and special character, and the "Oneg Shabbat" founders thought that in order to create original and genuine forms of life with a national characteristics, it was necessary for them to take the material for their creations from the foundation stones of the ancient forms of life, and if it is necessary to carve "from the sources" (מִן הַשְּׂטִיחַ) one must take from the "foundation stone," the stronger foundation, and they did not</p>	<p>אנו באים לא"י לחדש את חיינו; אנו רוצים ליצור לנו כאן חיים עצמיים, שיש להם קלסתר פנים משלהם ואופי מיוחד, ומיסדי "ענג שבת" חשבו, כי לשם יצירת צורות חיים מקוריות ואמתיות בעלות פרצוף ופנים לאומיים, הכרח להם לקחת את החומר ליצירותיהם מאבני היסוד של צורות החיים הקדמוניות, ואם צריכים לחצוב "מִן הַשְּׂטִיחַ" הרי יש לקחת את "אבן השתיה", את היסוד היותר חזק, ולא מצאו צורה יותר עליונה ויותר עמוקה</p>
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<p>find a higher and deeper form to start weaving from it the original forms of life than the creation of Shabbat...</p> <p>In the Shabbat are folded numerous social and national ideas....”⁸</p>	<p>להתחיל לטוות ממנה את צורות החיים המקוריות מיצירת השבת... בשבת מקופלים כמה רעיונות לאומיים וסוציאליים.”</p>
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Bialik used Midrash Mekhilta to support the idea that Jews can choose to express and celebrate Shabbat in ways that correlate with their lives, through freedom and creativity. Shabbat is created when people control their own use of time. The choice of how to spend the time on Shabbat is controlled by the people.

<p>“The Jewish people has control of time. The Jews determine the time of their holidays and they have the Agreement from above – ‘Shabbat is given into your hands, and you are not given to it to die on account of Shabbat.’”⁹</p>	<p>לעם ישראל יש שליטה על הזמן. היהודים קובעים את זמן חגיגה ומגובה מסכימים להם – “השבת מסורה בידכם ואין אתם מסורים לשבת.”</p>
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Similarly, in his book – *The Sabbath*, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote:

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.¹⁰

⁸ Hayim Nahman Bialik, *Sefer HaShabbat* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1952), 519-520.

⁹ Bialik, *Sefer HaShabbat*, 519-520.

¹⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (Canada: HarperCollinsCanadaLtd., 1951), 10

Bialik had the utmost respect for the Jewish Sabbath and recognized its importance in creating a new Israeli Jewish identity. The Sabbath according to Bialik is an opportunity to celebrate the unity of the Jewish people. Shabbat should be the essence of the Jewish People's new lifestyle in Zion.

<p>If we complain about the lack of our own lifestyle, we can start creating our own a style from Shabbat. This day should be a day for the people to gather and meet – in the Sabbath that was given before the Torah and is a symbol of peace and unity. There are many parties with their own ‘Torahs’ and their own ‘<i>Shulkhan Aruchs</i>’ (Code of Jewish Law)– Shabbat should be a symbol of unity. That is the meaning of ‘<i>Oneg Shabbat...</i>’¹¹</p>	<p>אם אנו קובלים על חוסר סגנון חיים משלנו, אנו יכולים להתחיל מן השבת ביצירת סגנון. היום הזה ראוי שבו יפגשו בני העם זה עם זה: בשבת שניתנה לפני התורה, והיא סמל לשלום ואחדות. יש בתוכנו הרבה מפלגות עם "תורות" ו"שולחן ערוך" משלהן- תהי שבת סמל לאחדות. זוהי הכוונה ביסוד המסיבות של "ענג שבת..."</p>
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Bialik's praise for the Sabbath did not come merely to help create a new Israeli lifestyle and Jewish identity in Israel. Its meaning was essential not just for the survival of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, but it had a universalistic meaning, as well. For Bialik, Shabbat reflected the essence of human existence, insofar as it represented the image of God (who rested on the Seventh Day). Without Shabbat, Bialik argued,

¹¹ Bialik, *Sefer HaShabbat*, 520

humankind was no different than the animals. In one of his letters to Mr. M. Kushnir,

Bialik writes:

<p>The Land of Israel will not be rebuilt, rather it will be destroyed, and all your toil will be for naught.</p> <p>The people of Israel will never give up the Sabbath, which is not only the foundation of their Israeli existence, but also their human existence. Without Shabbat there is no image of God and no human image in the world. If work were an end to itself, there would be no difference between humans and animals.¹²</p>	<p>ארץ ישראל בלי שבת לא תיבנה, אלא תיחרב, וכל עמלכם יהיה לתוהו. עם ישראל לא יוותר לעולם על השבת, שהיא לא רק יסוד קיומו הישראלי, אלא גם קיומו האנושי. בלי שבת אין צלם אלוהים וצלם אנוש בעולם. אילו הייתה העבודה תכלית לעצמה, הרי אין מותר לאדם מן הבהמה.</p>
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No wonder then that many of Bialik's poems and other writings talked about Shabbat.

One of his most famous pieces is the poem "ההמה מראש האילנות נסתלקה" ("Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalka" ("The Sun from the Treetops is Now Gone")), also known as "שבת המלכה", "Shabbat Hamalka" (The Sabbath Queen). Bialik wrote it between 1901-1903 (different sources state different dates) in Odessa, when he was teaching at a *cheder* (Kindergarten class) in the Brodsky Synagogue. This poem was part of Bialik's creative curriculum for Hebrew language education.

The poem talks about welcoming the Sabbath with excitement and awe, and paints the unique atmosphere that she (the Sabbath) brings. Many composers wrote musical settings

¹² Hayim Nahman Bialik quoted in Hanan Zusman, "Bialik and His Relationship to Halacha," Zemereshet, 1933, accessed March, 2024, https://www.zemereshet.co.il/m/biography.asp?artists_id=5&id=67

for “Hachamah Merosh Hallanot Nistalkah.” Among them are: Pinchas Minkovsky, Max Janovski, Nurit Hirsh, Yehezkel Braun, Rachamim Amar, Jackie Micha, Atalia Lavi, Josef Tzvi Pinkhoff, and Natalie Young.

The poem is loaded with allusions to the Shabbat liturgy of “Shalom Aleichem” and “L’chah Dodi.” Below is my translation, with a blue highlight for references from “Shalom Aleichem” and a grey highlight for references from “L’chah Dodi.”

<p>The Sabbath Queen/ Hayim Nahman Bialik</p> <p>The sun from the treetops is now gone Come out and greet the Sabbath queen For she is coming down, the holy, the blessed And with her the angels, an army of peace and rest</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Come, come, the queen! Come, come, the queen!</p> <p>May peace be upon you, angels of peace!</p> <p>We received the Sabbath’s face with gladness and prayer, With a heart full of joy we will return home Where the table is set, the candles will glow All the corners will shine, and gleam</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">May this be a blessed and peaceful Shabbat! May this be a blessed and peaceful Shabbat!</p> <p>Come in peace, angels of peace!</p>	<p>שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה / חיים נחמן ביאליק</p> <p>החמה מראש האילנות נסתלקה באו ונצא לקראת שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה הנה היא יורדת הקדושה, הברוכה ועמה מלאכים צבא שלום ומנוחה באי, באי, המלכה! באי, באי, המלכה—! שלום עליכם, מלאכי השלום!</p> <p>קבלנו פני שַׁבַּת ברננה ותפלה הביתה נשובה בלב מלא גילה שם ערוך השלחן הנרות נאירו כל-פנות הבית נרחו, יזהירו.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">שַׁבַּת שלום ומברך! שַׁבַּת שלום ומברך! באכם לשלום, מלאכי השלום!</p>
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<p>Dwell with us, oh pure one, and light upon us with your radiance Night and day, you shall pass And we will honor you with festive cloths, With song and prayer, and three (Sabbath) meals And complete rest And in a pleasant rest Bless us with peace, angels of peace!</p> <p>The sun from the treetops is now gone Come out and escort the Sabbath queen Go out in peace, oh holy one, oh pure one Know that we will await your return for six days...</p> <p>Yes to the next Sabbath, yes to the next Sabbath! Go out in peace, angels of peace!</p>	<p>שְׁבִי, זָכָה, עֲמֵנוּ וּבְזִינֶךָ נָא אֲוֹרֵי לַיְלָה נְיוֹם, אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרֵי וְאִנְחָנוּ נִכְבְּדֶךָ כְּבִגְדֵי תְמוּדוֹת בְּזִמְרוֹת וְתַפְלוֹת וּבְשֵׁלֶשׁ סְעֻדוֹת וּבְמִנוּחָה שְׁלֵמָה וּבְמִנוּחָה נְעֻמָּה בְּרַכּוֹנוֹ לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאַכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם!</p> <p>הַחֲמָה מְרֹאֵשׁ הָאֵילָנוֹת נִסְתַּלְקָה בָּאוּ וּנְלַנֶּה אֶת שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה. צֵאתְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם, הַקְדוּשָׁה, הַזָּכָה דְּעִי; שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים אֶל שׁוֹבֶךָ נִחַכָּה... כֵּן לַשַּׁבַּת הַבָּאָה, כֵּן לַשַּׁבַּת הַבָּאָה! צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאַכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם!</p>
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In many respects, this poem reads like a traditional prayer. However, God appears nowhere in the poem. Unlike “Shalom Aleichem,” there is no mention here of הקדוש ברוך הוא (Blessed be He) or מלך מלכי המלכים (King of all kings). Unlike “L’chah Dodi,” there is no ה' or אל, or mention of the one-ness of God (God is one and His name is one) or כבוד ה' עליך נגלה (the glory of God will be revealed to you).

There is a subtle, perhaps secular, acknowledgement in the first verse, perhaps a doubting mode, in the word נסתלקה (*nistalka*). The word literally means moving aside to give space to something new, perhaps even rushing to move aside for the sake of renewal.

The word: נסתלקה points, perhaps, to Pirkei Avot 1:1

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְהִסְתַּלַּק מִן הַסִּפֵּק

Rabban Gamliel would say: Assume for yourself a master; stay away from doubt.

Doubt according to this verse is something unwanted that one should rush to move away from - להסתלק (*l'histalek*). The verse calls a person who has a doubt to turn to a higher person in the hierarchy of knowledge to take the doubt away. In Bialik’s poem however, the sun נסתלקה (moved away) but instead of moving away from doubt, the sun’s rushing away makes room for the Shabbat queen. The rushing away in the poem brings something sweet, something holy and new. Doubt is perhaps not something to shy away from, but something that can make space for renewal, for holiness and purity.

Nonetheless, this poem is a remarkable testament to the love and commitment in secular circles to celebrate Shabbat in a non-theist way. There is mention of nature (sun, trees, light), which reminds us of the custom of celebrating Shabbat in the fields, as the Chassidim did in Tzfat, after the manner of The Ari (Rabbi Isaac Ben Shlomo Luria, 16th Century) and his students. The Ari and his disciples used to go out on Shabbat wearing white clothes (בגדי המודות perhaps (*bigdey chamudot*)), rejoicing in singing and dancing. בגדי המודות can also be a reference to the liturgical poem (*piyyut*) “מה יְדִידוֹת מְנוּחָתֶךָ”, (“Mah Yedidut Menuchatekh”) “How Sweet Thy Precious Gift of Rest.”¹³

מה יְדִידוֹת מְנוּחָתֶךָ אֵת שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה
 בְּכֵן נִרְוֵץ לְקַרְאֲתֶךָ בּוֹאֵי כְלָה נְסוּפָה
 לְבוּשׁ בְּגָדֵי חֲמוּדוֹת לְהַדְלִיק נֵר בְּבִרְכָּה...

How sweet thy precious gift of rest
 Queen Sabbath, cherished far and wide!
 Let us speed in thy quest,
 Haste, we'll greet our pure bride
 Decked in **splendid robes** to meet her.
 To our homes the candle shall be her sure guide.

This *piyyut* (liturgical poem) by the Spanish-Jewish philologist Menahem Ibn Saruq of the tenth century, is about the corporal customs of Shabbat – the foods, the festive clothing, and the sleep. This *piyyut* describes Shabbat as a taste of *HaOlam Haba* (the world to come) and states that the reward for keeping Shabbat will come in the shape of the *Mashiach* (Messiah). Bialik is neither interested in *Mashiach* nor the world to come, but rather in the social, communal celebrations – the song, prayer and, well, cloths.

¹³ Herbert Loewe, *Mediaeval Hebrew Minstrelsy, Songs for the Bride Queen's Feast* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1926), 41

Again, these references show that Bialik was well-versed in the body of Jewish texts. He based his ideas on deep knowledge and called for renewal of these texts in the form of new and creative interpretations.

Another reference is the phrase “בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה” (*Bo’u v’netze likrat Shabbat hamalkah* (“Come out and greet the Sabbath queen”)) together with the phrase “בואי כלה” (*bo’i chalah* (come bride)). This is an allusion from *Talmud Bavli, Shabbat Tractate 119a*, which is one of the main sources for the custom of *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

רבי חנינא מייעטף וקאי אפניא דמעלי שבתא, אָמַר: “בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה”. רבי ינאי לביש מאני מעלו (שבת) [ומיכסי], ואָמַר: “בואי כלה, בואי כלה”.

Rabbi Hanina would wrap himself in his garment and stand at nightfall on Shabbat eve, and say: Come and we will go out to greet Shabbat the queen. Rabbi Yannai put on his garment on Shabbat eve and said: Enter, O bride. Enter, O bride.

It is clear then that Hayim Nahman Bialik was aware of all of these Talmudic and liturgical sources. He was aware of the medieval kabbalistic origins of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* liturgy, but at the same time, Bialik tried to create a new way to experience *Shabbat*, one that welcomed doubt as well as renewal.

The poem brings the excitement and awe that *Shabbat* inspires with the repetition of the word בואי and the repetition of the sentence: “בואי, בואי, המלכה”. In the end of the poem, in the end of Shabbat, the speaker can hardly maintain the excitement for next Shabbat “כן לשבת הבאה!” (*ken l’Shabbat haba’ah* (“Yes to the next Sabbath!”)).

Just like the previous stanzas, Bialik's poem ends with a direct quote from the liturgical poem "Shalom Aleichem." It was an easy and clear choice for me to juxtapose these two texts together. For the American communities who are not familiar with Bialik's poem, but are familiar with Rabbi Shmuel Brazil's setting of "Shalom Aleichem," my setting would be familiar enough, but at the same time, would offer a new teaching about Bialik, "Hitchadshut Yehudit," or even a deeper dive to the text of "Shalom Aleichem."

"Shalom Aleichem" is a 17th century Shabbat table-song (*zmirah* – זמירה), probably written under the influence of Lurianic Kabbalah. It is traditionally sung at home after coming back from the Shabbat service. However, in modern times, one can hear the melody in most synagogues both in America and in Israel. The most famous melody, that is considered *misinai* (people believe it is the oldest and "most traditional") was written by Israel Goldfarb in 1918 at Columbia University in New York City.

The poem is dedicated to the angels of Shabbat that accompany the people who are returning from the synagogue back to their home, as they are mentioned in the Gemara (Shabbat 119b)

<p>Rabbi Yosei bar Yehudah says: Two servant angels escort a person on Shabbat eve from the synagogue to their home, one is a good (angel) and the other is an evil one.</p> <p>When the good angel finds a lit candle, a set table and a made bed, the good angel says: May it be Your will that another Shabbat will be like this. And the evil angel says: "Amen" against his will. And if not (the candle is not lit, and the bed is not made), the evil angel says: May it be</p>	<p>רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר: שני מלאכי השבת מלווין לו לאדם בערב שבת מבית הכנסת לביתו, אחד טוב ואחד רע. וכשבא לביתו ומצא נר דלוק ושלחן ערוך ומטותו מוצעת, מלאך טוב אומר: "יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך", ומלאך רע עונה "אמן" בעל כרחו. ואם לאו, מלאך רע אומר: "יהי רצון שתהא</p>
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Your will that another Shabbat will be like this. And the good angel says: “Amen” against his will.	לְשַׁבַּת אַחֶרֶת כָּךְ, וּמְלַאֲךְ טוֹב עֹנֶה “אָמֵן” בְּעַל כָּרְחוּ.
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However, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner teaches that the “angels” can also be ordinary people, and we can all be the messengers of the Most High.

They (ordinary people) go about their tasks in holy anonymity, often, even unknown to themselves. Yet, if they had not been there, if they had not said what they said or did what they did, it would not be the way it is now. We would not be the way we are now. Never forget that you, too, yourself may be a messenger, Perhaps even one whose errand extends over several lifetimes.¹⁴

The poem includes four repeating stanzas with a difference between them in the first word that addresses the angels. Another difference in the first stanza, the angels are called “*ministering angels*” (מְלַאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת) while in the other three stanzas the angels are called “*messengers of peace*” (מְלַאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם).

<p><i>Peace be to you, O ministering angels, messengers of the Most High,</i></p> <p><i>Majesty of Majesties, Holy One of Blessing.</i></p> <p><i>Enter in peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High,</i></p> <p><i>Majesty of Majesties, Holy One of Blessing.</i></p> <p><i>Bless me with peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High,</i></p> <p><i>Majesty of Majesties, Holy One of Blessing.</i></p> <p><i>Depart in peace, O ministering angels, messengers of the Most High,</i></p> <p><i>Majesty of Majesties, Holy One of Blessing.</i></p>	<p>שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם מְלַאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת מְלַאֲכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מְמַלְךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא</p> <p>בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מְמַלְךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא</p> <p>בְּרַכּוּנִי לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מְמַלְךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא</p> <p>צֵאתְכֶם לְשֵׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם מְלַאֲכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן מְמַלְךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא</p>
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¹⁴ Lawrence Kushner in *Mishkan T'filah* (New York: CCAR Press, 2007), 143

Opponents to this liturgical poem rose, saying that one should always address God directly, and not through angels or any messengers. In the *Jerusalem Talmud* (Brakhot 9:1:18) we read:

<p>If a person is in crisis, he (or she) should cry neither to Michael nor to Gabriel, but he (or she) should cry to Me and I will answer that person immediately.</p>	<p>אם בא על אדם צרה לא יצווח לא למיכאל ולא לגבריאל אלא לי יצווח ואני עונה לו מיד.</p>
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Moreover, on Shabbat, the custom is to shorten the Tefillah (prayer) to seven blessings only instead of eighteen. What is the point then to pray and plead to angles then?

In a way, Bialik's poem "Hachamah Merosh Ha'llanot" sheds a different light and brings a renewed interpretation to "Shalom Aleichem." His answer to the opponents of "Shalom Aleichem" is that the angels of Shabbat are no longer the focus of this *piyyut*. Instead, Shabbat is about renewal, choice, creativity, and celebration in community.

I suspect that Hayim Nahman Bialik would be very proud of the accomplishments of "Hitchadshut Yehudit" and the creation of *Tefilat Ha-Adam, An Israeli Reform Siddur*, for they are the manifestations of the new Israeli values that Bialik aimed to create.

Chapter 2: “Niggunim” by Fania Bergstein and the Juxtaposition with “Yedid Nefesh”

Can you ever leave your home behind – truly? Can you ever completely reject your traditions without carrying them with you in some way to wherever you go next? Many Ashkenzai Jews who went to Palestine to create the new State of Israel and the “New Jew” attempted to put Europe and its old-world ways in the past. Many who settled on left-wing *kibbutzim* (collective communities) tried to distance themselves from anything that resembled religiosity. But sometimes the music lingered in the memories of those who were building the new nation. Fania Bergstein was one of those Ashkenzai Jews on the *kibbutz*. Her poem “Niggunim” was a tribute to her old world, her departed family, and to the concept of Shabbat. Like Hayim Nahman Bialik’s creation of the “Oneg Shabbat,” Bergstein’s poem is an example of memories of religion in the new Israeli, secular, Zionist setting, and is another precursor to the “Hitchadsut Yehudit” (Jewish renaissance) of modern day. The inclusion of “Niggunim” in the new Israeli Siddur *Tefilat Ha-Adam* illuminates the tension between *dati* (Orthodox) and *chiloni* (secular).

“Niggunim” is offered on page 204 in *Tefilat Ha-Adam* as part of the *Tosefta* (additional modern liturgy) for *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Arvit L’Shabbat* (תוספתא לקבלת שבת ולערבית (לשבת)). It is not specifically attached to a traditional piece of liturgy. My suggestion for the North American *hazzan* (cantor) is to offer this song side-by-side with the liturgical poem “Yedid Nefesh.” I chose to arrange “Niggunim” with its famous melody by David Zehavi along with the liturgy of the “Yedid Nefesh” melody by Ehud and Sara Zweig. In the third stanza of “Niggunim,” the speaker talks about זמירות של שבת melodies, or songs

of Shabbat. As a future cantor, I read it as an invitation to insert a *zmira* (song), and I chose “Yedid Nefesh” because of its connection to parental love, as is Bergstein’s poem.

Fania Bergstein (פניה ברגשטיין) was born in 1908 in the city of Szczuczyn of the Russian Empire (now Belarus). She died in Israel in 1950 and was a proud member of Kibbutz Gvat in the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel. She was an Israeli author and poet, children’s writer and educator, a social activist in the *Histadrut* (ההסתדרות הכללית של העובדים בארץ ישראל - the predecessor of the World Zionist Organization), and a *kibbutz* worker.

From a young age, her father, a Hebrew language teacher, instilled in Fania a love for the Hebrew language. During the 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, when teaching Hebrew was outlawed, her family moved to Poland. Fania then became a member of the *HeChalutz* movement, which called young socialists to make Aliyah to Israel and live a communal life on the *kibbutz*. Even though Fania suffered from a heart condition since the age of eighteen, she moved to Israel in 1930, when she was only twenty-two-years-old.

On the *kibbutz*, Fania packaged grapes during the harvest, educated young children, acted as a councilor for the Working and Studying Youth (*HaNoar HaOved V’Halomed* – (הנוער העובד והלומד), and brought Israeli culture to the *kibbutz* by organizing and presenting lectures about Israeli literature. She was the *kibbutz*’s representative in the United

Kibbutz Council (ועידות הקיבוץ המאוחד) and worked for the *Histadrut* (the National Trade Union.)

Because of her heart condition, Fania was forced to work as a seamstress in the *kibbutz*'s sewing workshop. During the last five years of her life, she was confined to bed and spent half of that time in the *HaEmek* Hospital. She died at the young age of forty-two.

Despite her early passing, she managed to produce a lasting literary legacy, beginning at age eighteen to publish poems and stories in the *HeChalutz* movement newspaper in Poland and later, published many poems and books in Israel. Her most famous work is her children's poem "בוא אלי פרפר נחמד" (Come to Me, Lovely Butterfly) that later became the title of her first Israeli classic book, as well as a beloved children's television show. Many of her writings were written from children's points-of-view about nature, animals, and life on the *kibbutz*. She also wrote three anthologies of poems and stories for adults *בציר* (*Batzir*, Grape Harvest, 1939) *אסיף* (*Asif*, Harvest, Compilation, 1954 posthumously) *רעבים חולפות* (*Avim Cholfot* – Wandering Clouds, 1950).

In 1944, Bergstein wrote the poem "Niggunim" following a conference of the United Kibbutz Council. The poem was first published in July of that year in *Devar HaPoe'let* (The Women's Worker magazine). In 1945, at the end of World War II, David Zehavi set it to music.

At the United Kibbutz Council conference, Fania represented *Kibbutz Gvat*. There she learned from Holocaust survivors' testimonies about the devastating war in Europe. She decided to write letters to the city hall in the town where her parents were last seen in Poland asking about their whereabouts. Fania soon learned she had lost her entire family in the Shoah.

Bergstein's poem was a personal protest against the members of *Kibbutz Gvat* for not approving of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* ceremony she led in the *kibbutz's* Kindergarten class. The pioneers (*chalutzim*) of that era were interested in creating a new life on the *kibbutz* apart from their Eastern European roots, their families' traditions, and religious observances. They wanted to promote the Zionist vision of building Israel through labor, living a communal life, and reviving the modern Hebrew language. The members of the *kibbutz* firmly opposed Fania's adoption of Shabbat rituals.

In the poem, Bergstein describes her deep yearning for the melodies of her lost family and pre-war Jewish tradition left behind when she made Aliyah to Israel. The poem represents the tension between past and present (looking to the future), the choice to leave Jewish traditions behind to build a new home in Israel, all the while missing one's childhood home and the ways of the past. It echoes the issues of the current religious-secular cleavage in Israel.

Niggunim – Translation

<p>You planted melodies in me, my father and mother, Melodies, forgotten songs. Seeds, my heart carried seeds – Now they are rising and growing</p>	<p>שְׁתַּלְתֶּם נְגוּנִים בִּי, אִמִּי וְאָבִי, נְגוּנִים מְזוּמָרִים שְׁכוּחִים. גִּרְעִינִים; גִּרְעִינִים נִשְׁאָם לְכַבִּי – עַתָּה הֵם עוֹלִים וְצוֹמְחִים.</p>
<p>Now they are sending branches in my blood Their roots are intertwined in my veins, Your melodies, my father, and your songs, my mother, In my pulse they are waking up and coming back.</p>	<p>עַתָּה הֵם שׁוֹלְחִים פְּאוֹרוֹת בְּדַמִּי, שְׁרָשִׁיהֶם בְּעוֹרְקֵי שְׁלוּבִים, נְגוּנֶיךָ, אָבִי, וְשִׁירֶיךָ אִמִּי, בְּדַפְקֵי גְעוּרִים וְשָׁבִים.</p>
<p>Behold, I will listen to my distant lullaby From the mother's mouth to a daughter. Here, with a tear and a laugh, The book of <i>Eicha</i> and melodies of Shabbat will glow for me.</p>	<p>הִנֵּה אֲזוּזִין שִׁיר עֲרָשִׁי הַרְחוּק הַבִּיעַ פִּי אִם אֵלַי בַּת. הִנֵּה לִי תוֹמָרְנָה בְּדַמְעָה וְשִׁחּוּק "אֵיכָה" וְזַמִּירוֹת שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.</p>
<p>Every syllable will end, and every sound will be hushed Your distant voices will call within me. I will close my eyes, and there I am with you Above the darkness of the abyss.</p>	<p>כָּל הֶגְהָ יִתֵּם וְכָל צְלִיל יֵאָלֵם בִּי קוֹלְכֶם הַרְחוּק כִּי יְהוּם. עֵינַי אֶעְצֵם וְהִרְיֵנִי אִתְּכֶם מֵעַל לְחֻשְׁכַּת הַתְּהוֹם</p>

Interpretation of Niggunim

The poem has four verses and it is written in an alternate rhyme form. The first and third lines rhyme, and the second line rhymes with the fourth, etc. (ABAB, CDCD). In her poetry, Bergstein uses words, similes, and images from three different spheres. The world of agriculture (highlighted in green), the human body (highlighted in red), and the world of music (highlighted in pink).

<p>You planted melodies in me, my father and mother, Melodies, forgotten songs. Seeds, my heart carried seeds – Now they are rising and growing</p>	<p>שְׁתַּלְתֶּם נִגּוּנִים בִּי, אִמִּי וְאָבִי, נִגּוּנִים מְזֻמְרוּרִים שְׁכוּחִים. גְּרַעֲיָנִים; גְּרַעֲיָנִים נִשְׁאָם לִבְכִי – עֵתָה הֵם עוֹלִים וְצוֹמְחִים.</p>
<p>Now they are sending branches in my blood Their roots are intertwined in my veins, Your melodies, my father, and your songs, my mother, In my pulse they are waking up and coming back.</p>	<p>עֵתָה הֵם שׁוֹלְחִים פָּאָרוֹת בְּדַמִּי, שְׂרָשִׁיָּהֶם בְּעוֹרְקֵי שְׁלֹבִים, נִגּוּנֵיךְ, אָבִי, וְשִׁירֵיךְ אִמִּי, בְּדַלְקוֹ גְּעוֹרִים וְשָׁבִים.</p>
<p>Behold, I will listen to my distant lullaby From the mouth of a mother's to a daughter. Here, with a tear and a laugh, the book of Eicha and melodies of Shabbat will glow for me.</p>	<p>הִנֵּה אֶאֱזִין שִׁיר עֲרָשִׁי הַרְחוֹק הַבֵּיעַ פִּי אִם אֶלֵּי בַת. הִנֵּה לִי תוֹהֲרֵנָה בְּדַמְעָה וְשִׁחוּק "אֵיכָה" וְזִמְרֵי שַׁבָּת שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.</p>
<p>Every syllable will end, and every sound will be hushed Your distant voices will rage/roil. I will close my eyes, and there I am with you Above the darkness of the abyss.</p>	<p>כָּל הִגָּה יִתֵּם וְכָל צִלְיָה יֵאָלֵם בִּי קוֹלְכֶם הַרְחוֹק כִּי יְהוּם. עֵינַי אֶעֱצֵם וְהִרֵנִי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל לְחֹשֶׁכֶת הַתְּהוֹם</p>

The area of agriculture is naturally inspired by the life and labor of the pioneers on the *kibbutz*. Working the land was not just a way to survive, but it was a Zionist ideal that came with the devotion and love for the land and the life of work it required.

It is important to note, however, that Bergstein uses these nature images to describe the deep connection she feels not to *kibbutz* life but to her family of origin. Perhaps, this is her attempt to bridge the gap between the *kibbutz* members and their Eastern European roots. Perhaps this was her way to show how the members of the *kibbutz* should find a way to intertwine these two worlds and strike a balance between the past and the present, between the image of the new Israeli Jew and traditional European Jewish culture. By using agricultural images to describe the connection to her past, Bergstein tries to bring the members of the *kibbutz* closer to their heritage and to show how the connection to culture or rituals is as important as the connection to the land.

In the same way that working the land requires labor, close attention to details of seeding (גרעינים, גרעינים) (*gar'inim gar'inim* - seeds) and planting, as well as a great deal of patience and love until it bears fruit, so too does the work of Jewish education. In the same way that her parents planted those Hebrew seeds in her, Bergstein attempts throughout this poem to urge her fellow *kibbutz* members to keep “planting the seeds” of Jewish education so as to preserve their Jewish identity from generation to generation.

“Seeds, my heart carried seeds – Now they are rising and growing.” In this metaphor, the heart can be the soil in which the seeds grow. The verb *olim* (rising) brings to mind the

importance of Zionist Aliyah, while “carried”)גשאים(can be interpreted as a woman carrying a child in her womb, that is, the embodied nature of this cultural project.

Indeed, the human body is central here, given that the poet since suffered from a heart condition that impeded her ability to realize the ideal of physical labor on the land, and ultimately caused her early death. In the world where physical labor is especially prized, being physically impaired or weak can be devastating.

The personal nature of this insight is underscored by the choice to end all the words that relate to the human body with the personal possessive suffix ’ “yud,” meaning “my.” (My heart, my blood, my veins, etc.) For the speaker, the melodies of her childhood home are part of her body in the deepest ways. Perhaps, *davka* because that world was now gone, destroyed forever by the Nazis, its memories and rituals are even more important to Bergstein, and she wants to hold on to them now more than ever before. Music and sound come to represent the past and the speaker’s lost family. The melodies and songs that came from her parents marked the most joyous of occasions (such as Shabbat) as well as times of mourning (the book of *Eicha* on *Tisha B’Av*). This music brought both tears and laughter. The speaker remembers the lullabies of her youth, songs passed down from mother to daughter. But now every sound and syllable seems to disappear, as all these people are gone. As a result, their memory wells up and rages within her. In the last two lines of the poem, the speaker expresses her yearning to be with her parents again. The abyss represents the horrors of the Holocaust, or the abyss that separates the generations apart from each other.

Juxtaposition of New and Traditional Liturgy

“Yedid Nefesh” is attributed to Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri (1533-1600) - the sixteenth-century Sephardic kabbalist. The poem was first published in *Sefer Charedim* in Venice, 1601, but Azikri never claimed authorship of it. Other suggested authors of this poem are Judah Halevi or Israel Najara (more about Najara in Chapter 5.)

The first letters of each of the four verses make up the four letter name of God, known in English as the tetragrammaton.

Beloved soul mate, a compassionate father	יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ אָב הַרְחֵמֵן.
Draw Your subject to Your will	מְשׁוֹךְ עֲבָדְךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ .
Your subject will hurry like a ram	יְרוּץ עֲבָדְךָ כְּמוֹ אֵיל .
To bow before Your splendor	יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל מוֹל הַדְּבָר .
To him, Your love will be more pleasant than a honey nectar or any other taste.	יִעָרַב לוֹ יְדִידוֹתְךָ מִנוּפֶת צוּף וְכֵל טַעַם :

My musical arrangement includes the first verse of “Yedid Nefesh.” I chose to pair these two texts together because of their thematical resemblance.

In the *piyyut*, God is called a compassionate *father*. Bergstein’s poem is all about the relationship between parents and their children. The father is also a soulmate or a friend of the soul. In the poem, the parents’ legacy becomes part of the speaker’s heart. In both texts, the relationship is very deep.

The root *נ.ש.נ* in the second line in the *piyyut* is translated as “draw,” but it can also be translated as “pull.” The word pull seems to suggest some form of struggle. Why does the subject ask to be pulled? Is it the struggle of the subject who wants to be close to his Father, but something – God’s invisibility, or theological doubt, perhaps – is getting in the way of that desire? Why does the subject need to be pulled by his divine soulmate? In contrast, in Bergstein’s song, the speaker finds herself far away from her parents, and yet her parents still live within her. She is “drawn” to her roots because long ago they became part of her, and now the roots are growing.

In the *piyyut*, the subject runs like a ram – quickly and willingly – to bow. In Bergstein’s case, she tried to run *away* from her past. She then realizes there is no point in running because her past is literally inside her.

In “Yedid Nefesh,” bowing signifies deep respect or awe. It suggests submissiveness or surrender. How is all of this reflected in Bergstein’s poem/song? Does the speaker surrender to her past, showing it deep respect? Juxtaposing the *piyyut* with Bergstein’s poem provokes these questions and this further consideration.

The love of the soulmate, or the father, is the ultimate goal of the subject. The subject is interested in the love and relationship of his father. Just like the *piyyut*, Bergstein’s text is about the love for her parents, and how she is drawn to her past and childhood home. Just like the *piyyut*, Bergstein wishes to reunite with her parents. Her writing this poem is a

way of stubbornly reaching beyond the abyss of tragedy and death to shore up the connection.

Chapter 3: “Shir Mishmar” by Natan Alterman and the Juxtaposition with “V’shamru Bnai Yisrael”

Years after Hayim Nahman Bialik, Natan Alterman was also referred to as the national poet of Israel. Like Bialik, Alterman was of Eastern European descent and dedicated his life to developing and reviving Israeli culture through Hebrew literature. Both men were highly influential in the political sphere of their time – Bialik was the poet of the revival generation, influenced by the Haskalah movement and the first Zionist Congresses, writing poems such as: "El HaAggada" (אל האגדה) (or "On the Threshold of the Beit Midrash" (על סף בית המדרש), as well as the poems - "The Diligent One / The Diligent Student" (המתמיד) (, or "In the City of Slaughter" (בעיר ההריגה). Later, Natan Alterman was the poet of the generation struggling for Israel's independence and shaping the face of the country that was just born. Though never holding any elected office, Alterman was highly influential in Socialist Zionist politics, both before and after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. He wrote, "The Joy of the Poor" (שמחת עניים), and the cycle of poems "City of the Dove" (עיר היונה) as well as the poems of "The Seventh Column" (טור (השבועי), which were published on a weekly basis on Fridays in the socialist newspaper, *Davar*.

Both poets, Bialik and Alterman, carried the so-called national burden on their shoulders, but they did not spare their criticism of the Jewish people and the Hebrew *Yishuv* (people who settled the land), who were establishing its new state/political presence in its old homeland. The Israeli public did listen to their works because that public understood "the

wounds of love are faithful” (Proverbs 27:6). In other words, Alterman’s criticism was accepted since his love for the *Yishuv* was recognized and well-known.

In Alterman’s own life, he was a “man of oxymorons,”¹⁵ and embodied irreconcilable paradoxes: he was a national – as well as an anti-establishment – poet in the style of the Avraham Shlonsky school of modernist iconoclastic poetics (see below). Alterman believed strongly in individualism but was part of the literary circle *Yachdav* (Together) – a group of young Israeli writers who met frequently at a Tel Aviv coffee shop between 1926 and 1939. The group members actually rebelled against the literary establishment identified at that time with Hayim Nahman Bialik and his followers. Later on, its members became the leading Israeli poets and authors. Among them were Avraham Shlonsky, Leah Goldberg, Avraham Halfi, Alexander Penn, Eliezer Steinman, Yaakov Horowitz, Yokheved Bat Miriam, and others.

Alterman was a man of spirit and a man of exact sciences. When he was nineteen-years-old, he traveled to Paris to study at La Sorbonne (the University of Paris), but a year later decided to go to Nancy to study agronomy. After three years in France, Alterman came back to Tel Aviv and joined the agricultural school Mikveh Yisrael, but soon after left it in favor of working as a journalist and a poet. Alterman was both a man of the land and a cosmopolitan – perceived by some as a new Israeli and by some as man of the Diaspora.

¹⁵ Ziva Shamir, “Natan Alterman V’Yetzirato” Atar Natan Alterman. Accessed January 14, 2024. http://www.alterman.org.il/Portals/0/Ziva_Home_page.pdf

Alterman stood for brotherhood and he adored the concept of camaraderie (רעות), but was an outsider in the *Yachdav* group. As opposed to the other modernist poets who occupied the extreme ends of the political map, Alterman was a political centrist, and the only one who made a living solely from his writing. He was the only poet of his time who commented on current events week after week for many years by way of journalistic poems published in "The Seventh Column" – הטור השביעי. When he wrote articles that were crystal clear, it was hard to believe they were composed by the same person who wrote such obscure and enigmatic poems.

Alterman's use of journalistic poetry to comment on current events was likely a shield to protect himself from criticism from the public and/or authorities who may have had differing opinions. Poetry (or poetic writings, not necessarily in the form of poetry) can be a tool to soften political messages and messages of social justice. Like Bob Dylan writing "Blowing in the Wind" instead of just yelling at bigots to stop calling African-American men "Boy"; like George Orwell who wrote "Animal Farm" using animal characters to subversively point the finger at authoritarians; like modern science-fiction writers who set their morality-plays with alien characters in outer space; and perhaps like the writers of Deuteronomy who likely used the literary character of Moses to express their own frustrations in Babylonian exile as a commentary on their own inability to enter the Promised Land, poetry helps soften the blow of criticism from people in power.

Alterman cared about the future of the people and the world, and gave expression to this in his extensive work, which continues to live in the heart of Hebrew poetry lovers. His books continue to be published in new editions, poems such as "The Silver Platter" (מגש הכסף) and "Of All Nations" (מכל העמים) continue to be recited on Yom haZikaron (the Memorial Day for the fallen soldiers of Israel's various wars); Alterman's works for children are published in new editions; new shows dedicated to his work continue to appear on stage. Musical renditions of his poems continue to be heard over the airwaves, even receiving new performances and new tunes.

Alterman was a devoted family man, but at the same time a bohemian who did not abstain from wine and women. In August 1934, he married Rachel Marcus, an actress in "The Cameri Theatre" (התיאטרון הקאמרי). Their only daughter, Tirtza Atar, was born in January, 1941. Tirtza grew up to become a poetess herself, while suffering from mental illness.

"Shir Mishmar" (שיר משמר), other known as "Shimri Nafshech" (שמרי נפשך) is a poem Natan Alterman wrote for his daughter in response to her struggles with mental illness. This poem is one of the pillars of Israeli culture, a powerful, touching song that was written from a father to his mentally ill daughter, who threatened to put an end to her own life. On one hand, it was written in the most intimate way by a father who was afraid of losing his daughter, but later it became a hymn promoting awareness of mental health issues. It is the song for family members of people who are struggling with mental health challenges, and for women's mental health, in particular.

Natan Alterman's friend and author, Yoram Kaniuk, spoke in 1996 about the circumstances under which the poem was written:

<p>Tirzah was fragile, like a driven leaf. We were called to her house that night. Miranda (my wife) and I ran there with Natan. Tirtza locked the door from the inside. The smell of gas reached us from inside the house. It was a suicide attempt. An ambulance was called. She refused to open (the door) to her father. It is hard to imagine the situation that was going on there. And even harder to describe what he (Natan) did or said, in front of the locked door. In the end, Miranda was answered and (Tirtza) opened the door. Tirtza was taken to a hospital and treated there.</p>	<p>תרצה הייתה שברירית, כעלה נידף. קראו לנו באותו לילה לביתה. מירנדה (אשתי) ואני רצנו לשם עם נתן. תרצה נעלה את הדלת מבפנים. ריח הגז הגיע אלינו מתוך הבית. זה היה ניסיון להתאבד. אמבולנס הוזעק. לאבא שלה סירבה לפתוח. קשה לחשוב על מצב כמו שהיה שם. ועוד יותר לתאר מה הוא עשה או אמר, מול הדלת הנעולה. בסוף נענתה למירנדה ופתחה. תרצה נלקחה לבית חולים וטופלה שם.¹⁶</p>
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This part of the description was verified by people who were present. Later in that interview, Kaniuk recalled going with Natan Alterman to Alterman's house and sitting with him while Natan wrote the poem. According to Kaniuk, Alterman was furious about the fact that his own daughter did not open the door for him, but instead opened it to a family friend. In his rage, Alterman cursed Kaniuk and then apologized. Kaniuk stated that after Alterman finished writing the poem (in one sitting), they drank together, and

¹⁶ Yoram Kaniuk quoted in Hadar Ben Yehuda's article, "'Shimri Nafshech': HaSipur M'achorai Shir Mishmar." *HaSafranim Blog HaSifria HaLeumit*. Accessed January 3, 2024, https://blog.nil.org.il/shir_mishmar/.

while drunk, Alterman read the poem to Kaniuk as if he was reading it to his daughter, Tirtza.

After Alterman's death, as a response to Kaniuk's description of that night, Aki Lahav, Tirtza Atar's cousin, publicly doubted Kaniuk's story:

<p>Alterman never let anyone set foot inside him. This included the people closest to him, both from the scene, family, or others. I can't imagine a picture where Natan sits and writes one of his most "bloody" works in the presence of Kaniuk, of all people.</p> <p>It's simply inconceivable.</p> <p>Kaniuk's description, as if he pulled this super-polished song "out of his sleeve" in "one stroke," sounds completely absurd. It is clear to me that he worked on it a lot. The man may have been a "genius," but not God. In addition, we also have his own lyrical testimony to his way of writing lyrics:</p> <p>"Love the beautiful words like a vein Which gurgle in the entanglement of a poetic phrase and a thornbush.</p> <p>It is chased untouched till the ends of the Hebrew language Dragged by its braids (back) home."</p>	<p>אלתרמן מעולם לא נתן לאיש דריסת רגל בתוכו. זה כלל את האנשים הקרובים לו ביותר, הן מהבראנז'ה, הן מהמשפחה ואחרים. אני לא מעלה על הדעת תמונה שבה נתן יושב וכותב את אחת היצירות "זכות הדם" ביותר שלו, בנוכחותו של קניוק דווקא.</p> <p>זה פשוט לא יתכן.</p> <p>גם התיאור של קניוק כאילו נתן "שירוול" את כל השיר הסופר מלוטש הזה ב"מכה אחת", נשמע מופרך לגמרי. לי ברור שהוא עבד עליו הרבה מאד. האיש היה אולי "גאון" אבל לא אלוהים.</p> <p>בנוסף יש לנו גם עדות לירית שלו עצמו לדרכו בכתיבת ליריקה:</p> <p>"אהבו המלים היפות כמו וריד המפכות בסוככי מליצה נשית לבלי יגע נדפון עד קצווי העברית גררון בצמות אל הבית"</p>
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<p>(The Cabin, Song of Ten Brothers, The Pigeon City)</p> <p>This is how Alterman writes lyrics: drags every word home by its braids. Not "out of his sleeve."¹⁷</p>	<p>הבקתה, שיר עשרה אחים, עיר היונה)</p> <p>כך אלתרמן כותב ליריקה: גורר כל מילה אל הבית בצמותיה. לא "משרוול."</p>
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In 1965, the poem “Shir Mishmar” (Guarding Song), was published as part of the book “Summer Celebrations” (הגיגות קיץ) and was arranged and produced as a play for the Cameri Theater in 1972, two years after Natan Alterman passed away. It was composed by Alexander (Sasha) Argov, who chose to include only a part of the song. Four verses were included – the first, the second, the third and the sixth. In *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, the poem appears in its shorter version.

In 1972, the song was first performed in the Cameri Theatre by Aviva Schwartz. A year later, it was recorded by Chava Alberstein in her album “*Lu Yehi*” (לו יהי – “Let it Be”). The song was also sung by Achinoam Nini with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, Margalit Tzan’ani, Matti Caspi, Yehudit Ravitz, and other leading Israeli musicians.

According to Atar, this was the way she and her father communicated – through poetry.

This is what she said in an interview with Talila Ben Zakai:

<p>And one day, so he said, he wrote a poem for me. I no longer had to guess what was written about me and for me between the lines, this</p>	<p>ויום אחד, כך אמר, כתב שיר בשבילי. שוב לא הייתי צריכה לנחש בין השורות מה נכתב עלי ובשבילי, הפעם זה היה גלוי, פתוח. הייתי באותה</p>
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¹⁷ Aki Lahav quoted in Hadar Ben Yehuda’s article, “Shimri Nafshech’: HaSipur M’achorai Shir Mishmar.” *HaSafranin Blog HaSifria HaLeumit*. Accessed January 3, 2024, https://blog.nil.org.il/shir_mishmar/.

<p>time it was clear, open. I was in a crisis at the time, it happens to young people. Another father would take his daughter for a talk, sit with her over a cup of coffee or a drink, and talk. He said everything in his own way, in a poem. [...]¹⁸</p>	<p>תקופה במשבר, זה קורה אצל צעירים. אב אחר לוקח את בתו לשיחה, יושב איתה על כוס קפה או כוסית, ומשוחח. הוא אמר הכל בדרכו שלו, בשיר. [...]</p>
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Atar responded to her father's poem with a poem of her own, entitled "Shir Hanishmeret" (The Song of the Guarded). In 1977, seven years after her father's death in 1970, Tirtza Atar tragically fell to her death from the sixth floor of her apartment. The cause of death was never determined. She was thirty-six-years-old and left behind two children.

¹⁸ Tirtza Atar quoted in Hadar Ben Yehuda's article, "'Shimri Nafshech': HaSipur M'achorai Shir Mishmar." *HaSafranim Blog HaSifria HaLeumit*. Accessed January 3, 2024, https://blog.nil.org.il/shir_mishmar/.

Shir Mishmar – שיר משמר – Guarding Song/Natan Alterman

<p>Guard your soul, guard your strength, guard your soul, Guard your life, your wisdom, guard your life, From a falling wall, a burning roof, a dark shadow, From a sling stone, from a knife, from claws. Guard your soul from that which burns, from that which cuts, From the nearby like dust and like the sky, From the stillness, from what awaits and pulls you in, And from what kills like well-water and stovetop-fire. Guard your soul and your mind, the hair upon your head, Guard your skin, guard your soul, guard your life.</p>	<p>שמרי נפשך, כחך שמרי, שמרי נפשך, שמרי חייך, בינתך, שמרי חייך, מקור גופל, מגג נדלק, מצל חשך, מאבן קלע, מסכיון, מצפרניים. שמרי נפשך מן השורף, מן החותך, מן הסמוך-כמו עפר-וכמו שמים, מן הדומם, מן המפכה והמושך והממת-כמי-באר ואש-כירים. נפשך שמרי ובינתך, שער ראשך, עורך שמרי, שמרי נפשך, שמרי חייך.</p>
<p>It is seemingly a summer evening, it is allegedly Just a good-old, ordinary summer evening, That comes for loving-kindness and mercy, not to cause fear Not for whispering murmurs, suspicions or guilt, That come with smell of cooking and with a lamp That will stay lit until our rest and sleep.</p>	<p>זה ערב קיץ לכאורה, זה לכאורה רק ערב קיץ טוב, ידוע ונישן, שקב לחסד ולרחמים, לא למורא ולא לרשש חשדות-ודבר אשם, שקב עם ריח תבשילים ונעם מנורה אשר תאיר עד אם ננוח ונישן.</p>
<p>Until we rest and sleep It is allegedly just a good-warm summer evening Just a hot summer evening that does not come to cause fear.</p>	<p>עד אם ננוח ונישן רק ערב קיץ חם וטוב הוא לכאורה, רק ערב קיץ חם שקב לא למורא.</p>
<p>For the wind sends a hand and with no sound Suddenly a window opens slowly in the darkness. Say why are you laughing like fear,</p>	<p>הנה הרוח יד שולחת-ובלי רחש פתאום חלון לאט נפתח בחשכה. אמרי מדוע את צוחקת-כמו פחד,</p>

Say why do you freeze like joy?	אמרי מדוע את קופאת. כמו שמחה?
Say why the world is still so estranged	אמרי מדוע העולם כה זר עדין
And fire and water stare at it from all sides?	ואש ומים מביטים בו מכל צד?
Say why your life flutters	אמרי מדוע בו מפלפלים חייך
Like a frightened bird in the palm of a hand?	כמו צפור מבהלה בתוך כף יד?
	אמרי מדוע את מעוף נרעד רב
Tell me why you are the flight and the deep tremble	כמו צפור בהדר בחפשה אשנב?
Like a bird in a room looking for a small window?	
It is a summer evening, supposedly...	זה ערב קיץ לכאורה...
Guard you tired soul, guard your soul,	שמרי נפשך העייפה, שמרי נפשך,
Guard your life, your mind, guard your life,	שמרי חייך, בינתך, שמרי חייך,
The hair upon your head, guard your skin, guard your beauty,	שער ראשך, עורך שמרי, שמרי יפיך,
Guard your kind heart, embrace it with your hand.	שמרי לבך הטוב, אמציהו בידך.

Interpretation

At the center of Natan Alterman's "Guarding Song" stands a monologue where the speaker expresses his anxiety and fear for the wellbeing of a female figure. We know that the poem was written for Alterman's daughter, and yet it reads like a speech by any caring speaker to a female figure – a parent to a daughter, a lover to a female beloved or a close friend, etc. Whatever the relationship is between the two people conversing in the song, the speaker feels deep love and concern toward this woman. The poem brings to

mind the form of an operatic aria where the main character offers a monologue addressed to a known, but non-present figure.

In the first verse, the word שמרי (guard, or keep) repeats ten times. The word נפשך (your soul) repeats five times. The word הייך (your life) repeats three times. These repetitions suggest the speaker's passionate call and desperate pleading for the woman to guard herself, her soul, and her life. The reader/listener gets the sense that the woman is surrounded by great dangers – physical as well as mental.

In the first stanza, the speaker addresses the female character in the first-person-singular and describes the complex circumstances in which she finds herself and the various dangers that surround her. The dangers in the first stanza are described by way of specific nouns (“From a falling wall, from a burning roof,” “a knife,” etc.), general and abstract warnings (“...from that which burns, from that which cuts,” etc.) and similes (“From the nearby, like dust and like the sky,” “From what kills like well-water and stovetop-fire.”) The image of a dark shadow may suggest depression. The word ציפורניים (*tzipornaim*) can mean claws of an animal, but also the woman's own fingernails – the danger can also come from within herself. All of the references to sharp objects suggest both the danger of a predator or aggressor as well as the specter of self-harm.

These sources of harm can be found at the home as well as in nature, suggesting ubiquitous danger. The speaker knows that the woman is drawn to these dangers. At

some level, these dangers seem “inviting” to this woman, and he pleads to her to resist them – “from what awaits and pulls you in.”

At the end of the stanza, the speaker emphasizes his wish, or prayer, for the woman to guard herself: Guard her soul, her strength - the powers of mind and body – her hair and skin (the hair can be a symbol of physical strength like Samson). He pleads for her to guard her life - her quality of life, and its very existence. And guard her mind - the sanity, resourcefulness, life skills, adaptation to circumstances and the transformations life invites.

In the next stanza that serves as a chorus in Argov’s setting, the speaker offers comfort and sanity, a warm and homey memory in the summer evening, which has something familiar and soothing: “good-old, ordinary summer evening," the smell of cooking, a shining lamp, summer warmth, kindness and mercy. It seems he is trying to hold on to the everyday simplicity of a normal and pleasant evening at home to calm and encourage the woman in her turmoil, but once again the anxiety is lurking behind the peaceful appearance of the summer evening and is revealed. It seems the speaker himself is not convinced of the existence of this positive reality, and therefore he repeats the word “supposedly” or “allegedly” (לכאורה (*lich'orah*) three times - a repetition that casts doubt on the possibility of the pleasantness of that "good summer evening," behind which lurks “whispering murmurs, suspicions or guilt.”

In the last stanza – the shortest in the poem – the speaker returns and turns to the woman with the same words of warning he used earlier (in the first stanza), but this time he adds concern to her tired soul and good heart. His fatherly appreciation and love are evident in these words of concern. In the expression "Keep your good heart, embrace it in your hands," the speaker asks the recipient to take care of herself and do it on her own, in her own hands. He is trying to believe that she is capable of this (maybe convince himself? Maybe convince her?). The root of the word אִמְצִיָהּ (*amtzihu* – embrace it) is א.מ.צ. which also suggests the word אִוִּמָּץ - courage. Guarding one's life takes courage, and that is the speaker's wish and prayer for his daughter. לְאִמֶּץ (*l'ametz*) or לְהִתְאִמֵּץ (*l'hit'ametz*) can also suggest מְאִמֵּץ – (*ma'amatz*) making an effort. This can be a loving embrace, or a firm hold.

**The Juxtaposition of שיר משמר (*Shir Mishmar*)
with ושמרו בני ישראל (*V'shamru B'nai Yisrael*)**

“Shir Mishmar” appears in *Tefilat Ha-Adam* on page 145, as part of the *tosefta* (supplement) for the daily *minchah* (afternoon prayer). It comes after an alternative Amidah by Rabbi Dan Prat that finishes the prayer for Jerusalem (בנין ירושלים) with the following *chatima* (the seal of the prayer): שומר ישראל וכל העמים. – Blessed are You God, the **guardian** of Israel and all nations.

The word שומר (*shomer* - guard) serves as a transition and a common idea for both texts (שמרי נפשך) (*shimri nafshech*).

In the interest of accessibility for the American congregation, I chose to juxtapose “Shir Mishmar” with the liturgy of “V’shamru B’nai Yisrael” which is more commonly used here in the United States, and which contains the same root in its first word – ש.מ.ר – as Alterman’s poem. Alterman’s poem continues with the word נפשך (*nafshech* - your soul) and repeats it five times in the first verse. Similarly, in “V’shamru,” the last word of the prayer is וינפש (*vayinafash* - and rested), which contains the same root as נפשך – נ.פ.ש. Perhaps, the closeness of the words in Hebrew suggests that when you keep (or guard) your soul, or care for your mental health, you are blessed with rest, and Shabbat is an opportunity for rejuvenation and restoration of body, mind, and soul.

According to Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish, the words שבת וינפש (*Shavat vayinafash* – ceased from work and was refreshed) suggest that on Shabbat a person receives an

additional soul that stays until the end of Shabbat. This idea is known as the “*neshama*

yeterah” -נשמה יתירה-:

דאָמער רבי שמעון בן לקיש: נשמה יתירה נותן הקדוש ברוך הוא באדם ערב שבת, ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו, שנאמר: “שבת וינפש”, כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש.
(תלמוד בבלי, מסכת ביצה, דף ט"ז, עמוד א')

As Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, gives a person an additional soul on Shabbat eve, and at the conclusion of Shabbat removes it from him, as it is stated: “He ceased from work and was refreshed [*vayinafash*]” (Exodus 31:17). Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish expounds the verse as follows: Since he ceased from work, and now Shabbat has concluded and his additional soul is removed from him, woe [*vai*] for the additional soul [*nefesh*] that is lost. (Talmud Babil, Beitzah 16a)

Singing “Shimri Nafshech” next to the liturgy of “V’shamru” gives a whole new meaning to the idea of keeping Shabbat. In this context, Alterman’s song might be read as speaking to the need to guard the additional soul of Shabbat for as long as possible after the end of the Shabbat and into the week. In other words, bring the holy, or the sacred energy of Shabbat to your mundane existence. Or perhaps it is about the need to guard the additional soul of Shabbat for generations to come. Shabbat represents the life of the Jewish people, and one of the reasons for their survival through turmoil in their history (שמרי חיך - guard your life). It was Ahad Ha’am who said, “More than the Jewish People have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.”¹⁹ Shabbat represents our ability to keep our Jewish identity, gather as community and celebrate our ancient wisdom (שמרי...בינתך) (*shimri...binatch* – guard your wisdom).

¹⁹ Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg (a.k.a. Ahad Ha’am), “Yalkut Katan” *Hashiloach* Chapter 30 (June 1, 1898): 560

Another big idea common to both texts is the passing of knowledge, wisdom, and Torah from generation to generation. Alterman wrote this poem for his daughter, who was also a poet. This was his way of communicating with her and passing down to her the family tradition of the written word, of poetry.

In “V’shamru” the hope or the prayer, is that the people of Israel will keep, or guard Shabbat לְדֹרוֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם (*l’dorotam b’rit olam*) – for generations to come, forever.

Shabbat represents part of the covenant between God and the People of Israel. Later in the text, we read:

בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעֹלָם. (*beini uvein bnai Yisrael ot hi l’olam* – between Me and the children of Israel it is a symbol forever). The word אוֹת (*ot*) can be translated as “a symbol” or a mark (like, אוֹת קַיִן (*ot Kain*), but it can also be translated as “a letter.”

Letters build words, words build verses, and verses build the entire Torah. The word אוֹת (*ot*) might be a mention of the written word of the Torah, which is another symbol of the relationship between God and Israel. Just like the relationship between God and Israel is depicted by the written word of the Torah, the relationship between Natan Alterman and his daughter Tirtza Atar is depicted by the written word – poetry.

Alterman and Atar, together with many other “people of the written word” bring individual voices, and by compiling them in *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, they become the voice of a nation. The idea of generations and generations of poets, liturgists who then became “the soul of the Hebrew nation” by writing in the context of keeping and celebrating Shabbat brings us back to Bialik’s *Sefer HaShabbat*.

In the introduction to this unique compilation of poetry, stories, visual art pieces, sheet music and even jokes, the editor Y. L. Baruch writes:

“שלשלת של דורות עוברת על פנינו מהר סיני ועד עתה, וכל דור ודור ו”מסכת השבת” שלו... השירים ששרו לכבודה, יצירות האמנות והספרות שנוצרו בהשפעתה ומכוחה - שלשלת ארוכה לאין מידה... תעודתו של “ספר השבת” היא אפוא לשמש אספקלריה לכל הדורות הללו, שינקו מהר סיני והביעו את רוחה של השבת דור דור לפי שיטתו וסגנונו ולפי הצורה הנהוגה בימיו, אספקלריה לכל היצירות שיש להן ענין לשבת, שיצרה **נשמת האומה העברית** בכללותה מיום היותה ועד עתה.

A chain of generations passes before us from Mount Sinai until now, and each generation and its "Sabbath Tract"... the songs sung in her (Shabbat) honor, the works of art and literature created under its influence and power - an immeasurably long chain. The power of the *Book of Shabbat* is therefore to serve as a mirror for all these generations, who absorbed from Mount Sinai and expressed the spirit of Shabbat from generation to generation according to their method and style and according to the form used in its day, a mirror to all the works that have something to do with Shabbat, that the **soul of the Hebrew nation** created as a whole from the day of its existence until now...²⁰

By compiling the individual voices of Natan Alterman together with many others, *Tefilat Ha-Adam* is a natural successor to Bialik's *Sefer HaShabbat* (The Book of Sabbath) – a mirror to the soul of the Hebrew nation.

²⁰ Y.L. Baruch, *Sefer HaShabbat*, (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1952), xix

**Chapter 4: “Min’ee Kolech Mibechi” by Idan Raichel
and the Juxtaposition with “The Daily Miracles” – “Nisim B’chol Yom”**

Certain texts are written for certain purposes. Some texts become timeless because of their ability to mean different things to different people in different times. The text from Jeremiah 31:15-16 is a great example for a timeless text that allows different people to read it in different times and give it their own interpretation.

<p style="text-align: right;">כֹּה אָמַר ה' מְנַעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיְבֵי:</p> <p>Thus said GOD: Restrain your voice from weeping, Your eyes from shedding tears; For there is a reward for your labor —declares GOD: They shall return from the enemy’s land.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">וַיִּשְׂמַח ה' לְאַחֲרֵיתָךְ נְאֻם־ה' וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם:</p> <p>And there is hope for your future —declares GOD: Your children shall return to their country.</p>	
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The prophet Jeremiah turns to Rachel (who is called *Rachel Imenu* – she is considered to be the mother of the nation) and asks her not to weep for her sons because they will return again.

Idan Raichel, one of Israel’s most popular, modern, singer-songwriters, embedded the ancient words of Jeremiah in a modern song “Min’ee Kolech Mibechi” with topical meanings that speak of pain and longing. He wrote it as a commissioned work for Israel’s 60th Independence Day celebration in May, 2008, but it was released a month later when the remains of four Israeli Defense Forces soldiers who were captured two years earlier were returned from Lebanon. In Israel’s public consciousness, the song became tied to

that event. Building on that association, the editors of *Tefilat Ha-Adam* included the song's lyrics in that prayer book, but now with a different meaning. The lyrics are offered on page 395, on the same page as the holidays *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day), *Yud-Zayin B'Tamuz* (The fast of Tamuz 17th) and *Tish'a B'Av* (The 9th of Av).

In my correspondence with Rabbi Dalia Marx, she explained:

“השיר של עידן רייכל התאים בעינינו לצומות שקשורים בחורבן המקדש, ובעיקר לתשעה באב, שבו האבל מקושר לתקווה לגאולה (שעולה מן השיר).”

“In our opinion, Idan Raichel's song was appropriate for the fasts associated with the destruction of the Temple, and especially for *Tisha B'Av*, where the mourning is linked to the hope for redemption (which emerges from the song).”²¹ (Translation SR)

And later, the song took on new significance and associations again.

On October 7, 2023, Israel suffered an unimaginable attack by the terrorist organization Hamas from the Gaza Strip. Approximately 1400 Israelis were murdered and numerous others were injured and sexually assaulted. Hundreds of people were captured and held in Gaza. It was the most deadly attack on Jews since the end of the Holocaust.

The ancient words of Jeremiah brought by Idan Raichel, now became the words of a lamenting nation suffering from a – not post, but – “Present Traumatic Stress Disorder.”²²

²¹ Dalia Marx, E-mail message to author, November 30, 2023.

²² Wendy Zierler, “Shir Hadash,” E-mail message to author January 23, 2024.

In order to include this song in the North American Reform synagogue, I want to expand its use and offer it with the juxtaposition to *Birkot Hashachar* which we say every day, and not to *Yud Zayin B'Tamuz*, *Tish'a B'Av* or *Yom Yerushalayim*.

As of this writing, the 2023-2024 Israel vs. Hamas war continues. Jews outside of Israel have sought to support the war effort. To connect with each other's communities, Diaspora Jewry needs entry points into Israeli culture, and non-Orthodox Israeli Jews need entry points into the concepts of liturgy and prayer. Raichel's song – and its inclusion in *Tefilat Ha-Adam* – helps to bridge that gap.

Background

When we talk about current popular Israeli music, one of the first artists who deserves mention is Idan Raichel, a producer, keyboardist, lyricist, composer, and performer. “The Idan Raichel Project” has included approximately 95 musicians from around the world (Israel, Ethiopia, Germany, Yemen, North and South America, and more) where the youngest member was sixteen-years-old and the oldest was ninety-one-years-old. Raichel's musical style is as Israeli as it is multi-cultural and can be perceived as world music. When Raichel was asked about the musical style of his first album in an interview with Yair Lapid (then a journalist and TV host, later centrist party *Yesh Atid* politician and the leader of the opposition party in the Knesset), Raichel said:

“יש משהו בי שהוא כאילו חסר שורשים... יותר פולני ממני לא תמצא בקהל... יש בארץ המון מוסיקאים...
ששמרו על התרבות שלהם למרות הנסיון הזה להיות... (ישראלי...)”²³

“There is something in me that is root-less. [On one hand] you cannot find somebody who is more Polish than me in the audience. [On the other hand] there are so many musicians in Israel who kept their culture despite the attempt to become Israeli.”

He mentioned Moroccan Israeli musician Kobi Oz, Yemenite cantors, Ethiopian musicians, etc.

Many believe that Raichel’s diversity of musicians, languages, and musical richness depicts the very essence of Israeli society.

In Israel, his total album sales are approaching 700,000 units; there have been more than two-million digital downloads, and numerous streaming events. The number of “hits” on YouTube was around the 345 million mark as of May 2022.²⁴

After the Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023, Idan Raichel did not spare his pain in the Israeli media, as well as media worldwide. In an interview for the Israeli TV network, Channel 12, as reported in the Jerusalem Post, Raichel shared his personal loss of close friend, Colonel Roi Levy. In the live broadcast, Raichel was overcome with

²³ “ Idan Raichel – Im Telech R’ayon Yair Lapid – Israeli Archive – Oztrot Archion Yisraeli – Ron Bachar,” posted August 25, 2023,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKm3GdrfOoE>

²⁴ Idan Raichel Official Website, accessed January 2024,
<https://idanraichelproject.com/en/about/#:~:text=On%2030th%20May%2C%202021%2C%20Idan,of%20Israeli%20and%20international%20music.>

emotion. As he was recalling memories from Roi and his tragic death by infiltrators from the Gaza Strip, Raichel also passionately expressed how if Levy could witness the extraordinary civilian response to helping those who were harmed in southern Israel, it would undoubtedly touch his heart. "You see, this is why we fought for civilian leadership," Raichel imagined his late friend saying. Overwhelmed by grief, Raichel broke down during the interview and tearfully requested to leave the studio. "We're live (on TV). I need to step away," he sorrowfully explained.²⁵

On October 31, 2023, Raichel released the song "תחזור" (*Tachzor* – Return) featuring the singer Roni Dalumi, and dedicated the song to the Israeli hostages in Gaza and their families. Raichel wrote:

“אנחנו מדינה שכולה, שתקום ותפרח, מתוך עוצמות הגעגועים, מתוך התקווה שישבו, שיחזרו, מתוך הכאב והכבוד לאלו שכבר לא יחזרו, ויחיו בלבנו לתמיד. נמשיך ונהיה מגדל של אור אחד לשני. נהיה טובים יותר, חזקים יותר, ראויים יותר.”

“We are a country in mourning, that will rise and blossom from the strength of our longing, from the hope for their return, from the pain and honor for those who will not return and who will live in our hearts forever. We will continue to be a tower of light (lighthouse) for one another. We will be better, stronger, and more worthy...”²⁶

²⁵ Walla, “Idan Raichel Breaks Down During Interview About Friend Murdered By Hamas,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 16, 2023, <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-768428>

²⁶ “Tachzor Hayom: Idan Raichel B'Shir Hadash Hamoukdash Lachatufim,” *Maariv Online*, October 31, 2023, accessed January 2024, <https://www.maariv.co.il/culture/music/Article-1048818>

Three weeks after its release, the song “תחזור” (*Tachzor* - Return) had almost two-hundred-sixty-thousand views on YouTube. It was sung in pro-Israel demonstrations in the United States and during religious services in North American synagogues.

Fifteen years earlier, in June 2008, Raichel wrote the song “מִנְעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי” “Min’ee Kolech Mibechi” (Restrain Your Voice From Weeping) which is the focus of this thesis chapter. “Min’ee Kolech Mibechi,” like the song “Tachzor” was released shortly after an act of terrorism. “Min’ee Kolech Mibechi” was released as a separate single from the album בין קירות ביתי “Bein Kirot Beiti” (Between the Walls of My Home). Like the rest of the album, the song was written and produced by Idan Raichel and Gilad Shmueli.

The song was written for גלגלצ (Galgalatz), one of two Israeli radio stations that are operated by Israel Defense Forces Radio. It was commissioned for Israel’s 60th Independence Day celebration (May, 2008), but was released a month later when the terror organization Hezbollah returned to Israel the remains of four Israeli soldiers who were captured two years before. Maj. Nisan Shalev (36, Kibbutz Evron), captain Daniel Gomez (25, Nechalim), Warrant officer Ron Mashiach (33, Gedera), Maj. Sami Ben Naim (39, Rechovot). The country was still waiting to receive two more bodies – Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, who were returned a month later in July 2008.

Raichel’s song shed a new light on the familiar verses from Jeremiah Chapter 31. It connected Rachel’s lament to the pain of the entire State of Israel. Instead of singing about the people of Israel, who are scattered in the *galut* (diaspora), Raichel connected

the ancient text to the entire country's prayer to bring back Israel's sons from Lebanon. Literally, this is the biblical Rachel's lament, but it could easily be the voice of any mother, wife or daughter who is waiting for her loved one to come back.

"Min'ee Kolech Mibechi" became part of the modern Israeli repertoire on *Yom Hazikaron* (Israel's Memorial Day) as well as *Yom Ha-Atzmaut* (Israel's Independence Day), and is heard on national radio, at official ceremonies, and now in religious services. The song was included on the weekly גלגלצ (Galgalatz) best-selling charts for thirteen consecutive weeks since its release and became the number one song for four weeks starting December 6, 2008.

“Min’ee Kolech Mibechei” – Translation

<p>For in the nights your sleep wanders And every terror is alive Tilt your ear to the silence The voice of kind compassion will yet rise, He will arrive</p>	<p>כי בלילות שנתך נודדת וכל חלום הוא למורא הטי אז את אוזןך לשקט קול חסד רחמים עוד יעלה הנה הוא בא</p>
<p>Since it's for him that your soul is guarded Indeed the hour's drawing near When they'll return to their border He'll fall broken in your arms But at last he will be here</p>	<p>כי בשבילו נפשך נשמרת הרי קרבה היא השעה עד ששדוד בזורעומוך פול בסוף הדרך כשישובו לגבולם</p>
<p>Just restrain your voice from weeping And your eyes from shedding tears For the gate will open He will come through the storm When they'll be marching back to here</p>	<p>רק מנעי קולך מבכי ועיניך מדמעה כי השער יפתח לו יבוא בו בסערה כשישובו לגבולם</p>
<p>Through what's left of your resilience Till the waters of the stream If brought back, we will return Restrain your voice from weeping The hope is not a dream</p>	<p>עד אל נחלי המים דרך שארית כוחד אם ישיבנו אז נשובה מנעי קולך מבכי יש תקנה לאחרימך</p>
<p>Just restrain your voice from weeping</p>	<p>רק מנעי קולך מבכי...</p>

The Song's Analysis

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the song is based on verses from the Book of Jeremiah 31:15-16.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מְנַעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לְפַעֲלֹתַי ה' וְיָשׁוּבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב:

Thus said GOD:
 Restrain your voice from weeping,
 Your eyes from shedding tears;
 For there is a reward for your labor
 —declares GOD:
 They shall return from the enemy's land.

וְיִשְׁתַּקְּנָה לְאַחֲרֵימֶךָ נְאֻם-ה' וְיָשׁוּבוּ בָנִים לְגִבּוֹלָם:

And there is hope for your future
 —declares GOD:
 Your children shall return to their country.

The verses describe God's reaction to Rachel's lament over her sons (the People of Judah) when they were sent into exile. God offers comfort and reassurance to Rachel and promises hope for her future, and her sons will come back to their land. Rachel represents the mother figure who prays and asks for the redemption of her own sons, or the entire nation's.

Below are two examples of uses of Jeremiah 31:15-16: "Midrash Eikhah" and Rashi's comments on Genesis 48:7.

In the "Petichta" (proem) to *Midrash Eikhah Rabbah*, the biblical forefathers—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jeremiah — ask for God's redemption of Israel and plead for Israel's return from the *galut*. Only when Rachel comes and makes her own plea, does God hear her prayer and brings back her lost sons. Rachel convinces God to bring the

sons of Israel back from the *galut* by reminding God about the way she gave up Jacob to her sister Leah on her own wedding day. Rachel gave Leah certain signs that she had resolved with Jacob to help Leah pretend that she was Rachel so that Jacob would marry Leah. Rachel did so despite her love for Jacob. Her intention was to spare Leah's feelings and prevent Leah the public embarrassment on the wedding day.

In the *midrash*, God ignores the pleas of the forefathers; only after Rachel's makes her case, does God listen and agree to return Israel from its exile:

“מִיָּד נִתְגַלְגְּלוּ רַחֲמָיו שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָמַר, בְּשִׁבְיַלְךָ רַחֵל אֲנִי מִחֲזִיר אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִקוּמּוֹ, הֲדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב (יִרְמִיָּה לֵא, טו :) כֹּה אָמַר ה' קוֹל בְּרַמָּה נִשְׁמָע...”

“Immediately, the mercy of the Holy One blessed be He was aroused and He said: ‘For you, Rachel, I will restore Israel to its place.’ That is what is written (Jeremiah 31:15) “So said the Lord: A voice is heard in Rama...”

In Genesis 48:7, Jacob buries Rachel on the way to Ephrath, on the side of the road.

וְאָנֹכִי בָבְאִי מִפְּדָן מִתְּהֵא עָלַי רַחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּעוֹד כְּבַרְת־אֶרֶץ לְבָא אֶפְרַתָּה וְאֶקְבְּרָהּ שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרַת הוּא בֵּית לְחָם:

I [do this because], when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, while I was journeying in the land of Canaan, when still some distance short of Ephrath; **and I buried her there** on the road to Ephrath”—now Bethlehem.

Rashi comments on Genesis 48:7 quoting the same verses from Jeremiah 31:15-16:

אֶקְבְּרָהּ שָׁם. וְלֹא הוֹלַכְתִּיהָ אֶפְלוּ לְבֵית לַחַם לְהַכְנִיסָהּ לְאֶרֶץ, וְיִדְעָתִי שִׁישׁ בְּלִבְךָ עָלַי; אָבָל דַּע לְךָ שֶׁעַל פִּי הַדְּבוּר קְבַרְתִּיהָ שָׁם, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לְעֶזְרָה לְבְנֵיהָ כְּשִׁיגְלָה אוֹתָם נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן, וְהָיוּ עוֹבְרִים דֶּרֶךְ שָׁם, יוֹצֵאת רַחֵל עַל קְבֻרָהּ וּבוֹכָה וּמְבַקֶּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם רַחֲמִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר קוֹל בְּרַמָּה נִשְׁמָע וְגו'.

AND I BURIED HER THERE and did not carry her even the short distance to Bethlehem to bring her into a city. I know that in your heart [Joseph] you feel some resentment against me. Know, however, that I buried her [Rachel] there by the command of God.” And the future proved that God had commanded him [Jacob] to do this in order that she [Rachel] might help her children when Nebuzaradan would take them into captivity. For when they were passing along that road Rachel came forth from her grave and stood by her tomb weeping and beseeching mercy for them, as it is said, (Jeremiah 31:15) “A voice is heard in Rama...”

Rashi explains that the reason Jacob chose to bury Rachel outside Bethlehem is because God commanded Jacob to do so. God knew that in the future when the sons of Israel will become captives, Rachel will be able to rise from her tomb by the side of the road, see her sons and pray for their sake. Her prayer would bring them back, as it is said in Jeremiah 31:15.

Both examples, the proem to Eikhah Rabbah and Rashi's comments on Genesis 48:7, show how Rachel is a symbol of the power of prayer. Rachel's prayer is so pure and powerful that it is irresistible even to God. Until this day, Rachel's graveside in Bethlehem is a main place of worship for women who are barren, who pray for bearing children or finding a life partner.

First Stanza:

For in the nights your sleep wanders	כי בלילות שנתך נודדת
And every terror is alive	וְכָל חַלּוּם הוּא לְמוֹרָא
Tilt your ear to the silence	הִטִּי אָז אֶת אוֹזְנְךָ לְשִׁקֵּט
The voice of kind compassion will yet rise,	קוֹל חֶסֶד רַחֲמִים עוֹד יַעֲלֶה
He will arrive	הִנֵּה הוּא בָּא

קול - The word *kol* can mean many things. Below is an example from Exodus 19:1

This verse describes the Sinaitic revelation as accompanied by “קלות-וברקים” (*kolot uvrakim* – sounds and lightning) and by שַׁפַּר תְּזַק מְאֹד (*Kol shofar hazak me'od* – a very loud shofar blow). There the word *kol* connotes thunder and a blast. In Rachel's song however, the word suggests a softer, more comforting voice.

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַּהֲנִיחַת הַבֶּקָר וַיְהִי קִלְת־וּבְרָקִים וַעֲנַן כָּבֵד עַל־הַהָר וְקוֹל שַׁפַּר תְּזַק מְאֹד וַיִּחַרְדוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה:

On the third day, as morning dawned, there was **thunder**, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud **blast** of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled.

חֶסֶד רַחֲמִים - (chesed rachamim – kindness and compassion) May be an allusion to Zechariah 7:9.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְאֵמֶר מִשְׁפָּט אֱמַתְךָ שִׁפְטוּ וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אֶחָיו:

Thus said GOD of Hosts: Execute true justice; deal **loyally and compassionately** with one another.

God is calling Israel to treat one another (literally, a man and his brother) with loyalty and compassion. The *kol chesed rachamim* in Idan Raichel's song can be the voice of divine intervention, directing the return of the soldier. It can be the hope for a compassionate voice from the other side of the war. But if we apply the verse from Zechariah 7:9, it might be Raichel's way to call for the people of Israel to be kind to one another. Our unity as a people and our loyalty and compassion will make us stronger. In the context of October 7, 2023, this makes me think of the long period of massive demonstrations against the judicial reform. There was so much division among Israelis leading up to October 7, 2023. Some would say this made Israel more susceptible to Hamas's attack.

Second Stanza:

Since it's for him that your soul is guarded	כִּי בְשִׁבִילֹו נִפְשְׁךָ נִשְׁמֶרֶת
Indeed the hour's drawing near	הֲרֵי קָרְבָה הִיא הַשָּׁעָה
When they'll return to their border	עַד שֶׁשׂוֹדֵד בְּנִרְעוּתֶיךָ
He'll fall broken in your arms	יָפֹל כְּסוּף הַדָּרֶךְ
But at last he will be here	כְּשֶׁיָשׁוּבוּ לְגִבּוֹלָם

– **נִפְשְׁךָ נִשְׁמֶרֶת** (*nafshech nishmeret* – your soul is guarded) The words **נִפְשְׁךָ נִשְׁמֶרֶת** seem to allude to Natan Alterman's - "שִׁיר מִשְׁמַר" - "*Shir Mishmar*" – see last chapter.

Guard your soul, guard your strength, guard your soul, Guard your life, your wisdom, guard your life,	שמרי נפשך, כחך שמרי, שמרי נפשך, שמרי פיך, בינתך, שמרי פיך,
--	---

In the poem, Alterman pleads to his daughter to guard her soul and warns her of life's dangers. The first words of the poem "שמרי נפשך" (*shimri nafshech* – guard your soul) and other coins of text became common in Israel, especially in the context of mental illness and women's mental health, in particular. In Idan Raichel's song, this allusion to the Alterman song sheds light not only on the soldiers' condition but also the mental health and emotional state of the people the soldiers left behind.

קִרְבָּה הִיא הַשָּׁעָה - (*kreva hi ha'sha'ah* – the hour is drawing near) This line may refer to Yoni Ro'eh's song "Pri Ganech," (The Fruit of Your Garden) which describes a woman who is waiting for her beloved who promised to come back, but never did. The quote from this 1989 song: ²⁷"שהנה קרבה אותה השעה שבה הבטיח לשוב בחזרה" (*Shehineh kreva otah hash'a'ah sh'bah hivtiach lashuv bachazarah* - that hour when he promised to return is drawing near) recognizes our past as a people who suffered greatly from soldiers/warriors/citizens who were lost in war, and the families who await their return. This is not one story. This is part of our collective memory.

בְּסוֹף הַדֶּרֶךְ – (*B'sof Haderech* – the end of the road) This, too, may be a reference to Natan Yonatan's (1923-2004) poem titled the same, "B'sof Haderech." Natan Yonatan's poem

²⁷ Yoni Ro'eh, "Pri Ganech," Shironet, accessed January 2024, <https://shironet.mako.co.il/artist?type=lyrics&lang=1&prfid=4576&wrkid=2659>

is often read on *Yom Hazikaron* (Israel Memorial Day) and describes the different stages of life. It starts with “In every place,” then it goes to “In every shacharit (morning prayer)” and ends with “In every arvit (evening prayer).” “In every arvit (evening prayer)” ends with “there is a rock for those who lie in the end of the road (the dead).”²⁸ In Raichel’s song, the “end of the road” is not yet known but is hopeful for the return of the missing person.

וְשִׁיבוּ לְגְבוּלָם – (ksh’yashuvu ligvulam – When they will return to their border) The line comes from Jeremiah 31:16

וְשִׂיבָה לְאַחֲרֵיךָ נְאֻם־ה' וְשִׁבוּ בְנֵי מְלָכִים לְגְבוּלָם:

And there is hope for your future — declares GOD: Your children **shall return to their country.**

Chorus:

Just restrain your voice from weeping	רק מנעי קולך מבכי
And your eyes from shedding tears	ועיניך מדמעה
For the gate will open	כי השער יפתח לו
He will come through the storm	יבוא בו בסערה כשישובו לגבולם
When they'll be marching back to here	

השער יפתח – (hasha’ar yipatach - the gate will open) Can be the gate to the city, or the border. It reminds us of the gates of the old city of Jerusalem. Perhaps *Sha’ar Harachamim* (the Gate of Compassion, since we had the word *rachamim* before. The

²⁸ Natan Yonatan, “B’sof Haderech,” Shironet, accessed January 2024, <https://shironet.mako.co.il/artist?type=lyrics&lang=1&prfid=713&wrkid=16611>

gate can also be *sha'arey shamayim* the gates of heavens that open in the time of *Ne'ilah* at the end of *Yom Kippur* – where everything is finally resolved and there is a feeling of elation (*hit'alut hanefesh*).

Last Stanza:

Through what's left of your resilience	עד אל נחלי המים
Till the waters of the stream	דרך שארית כוחך
If brought back, we will return	אם ישיבנו אז נשובה
Restrain your voice from weeping	מנעי קולך מבכי
The hope is not a dream	יש תקנה לאחריה

נחלי המים – (*nachaley hamayim* – the waters of the stream) The stream represents sustenance and safety, and a place reached with the guidance of God. Raichel is aware of the hope to reach that safety, but he is also aware of the price – the pain, anxiety, and unbearable patience that the woman left behind has to suffer, using up all of the remnants of her strength) **שארית כוחך** (*she'erit kochech* – what's left of your resilience) as she awaits her beloved's hope-for return home.

נחלי המים (*nachaley hamayim* – the waters of the stream) is another allusion to the Book of Jeremiah chapter 31, this time – verse 8.

”בבכי יבאו ובהתחננונים אובילים אולכים אל־נחלי מים בדרך ישר לא יכשלו בה כִּי־הייתי לישראל לאב ואפנים
בְּכֹרִי הוּא:”

“They shall come with weeping, and with compassion will I guide them. I will lead them to **streams of water**, by a level road where they will not stumble. For I am ever a Father to Israel, Ephraim is My first-born.”

שְׂאֵרֵית כּוֹחֵךְ (*She'erit Kochech*) reminds us of the expression “שְׂאֵרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל” (*She'erit Yisrael*), the remnant of the people of Israel. It is a clue, perhaps, that the woman is not just one woman who awaits her beloved, but a whole survivor nation that awaits its soldiers or missing people.

יָשִׁיבֵנוּ אִם נָשׁוּבָה (*yashiveinu az nashuva* – if brought back, we will return) alludes to the plea to be returned to God and to Jerusalem that caps the Book of Lamentations, which has also been incorporated into the Torah service liturgy, to mark the moment when the Torah is returned to the ark.

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ ה' אֵלֶיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָה [תִּלְשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם]:
Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself, And let us come back; Renew our days as of old!

The same exilic plea to return and be returned appears in Jeremiah 31, from which we have been quoting throughout this chapter:

שָׁמוֹעַ שְׁמָעֵתִי אֶפְרַיִם מִתְנַדָּד יִסְרְתָנְגִל וְאֶנְסָר כְּעַגֵּל לֹא לָמַד הַשִּׁיבֵנִי וְאָשׁוּבָה כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי:
I can hear Ephraim lamenting: “You have chastised me, and I am chastised Like a calf that has not been broken. Receive me back, let me return, For You, O ETERNAL One, are my God.
<i>Jeremiah 31:17</i>

שׁוּבִי בְתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁבִי אֶל-עָרֶיךָ אֵלֵה: Return, Maiden Israel! Return to these towns of yours!
<i>Jeremiah 31:20</i>

In the case of Raichel’s song, the soldiers/missing people are asking either God or the political forces who have the power to negotiate their return to bring them back, and they

will return. The last stanza ends with the repeated quote from Jeremiah 31:15, but this time adds verse 16 as well: מְנַעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי גַשׁ תִּקְוָה לְאַחֲרִיתֶךָ (restrain your voice from weeping, the hope is not a dream).

The Juxtaposition of the song with “*Birkot HaShachar*” – “The Daily Miracles”

In order to help American Jewry access the song “מְנַעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי” (“Min’ee Kolech Mibechei” - Restrain Your Voice From Weeping), to talk about the current situation with the Israel vs. Hamas war through Israeli repertoire, and to promote the use of the new Israeli *siddur*, *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, my suggestion would be to connect the song to the Daily Miracles – “Birkot Hashachar.” The recurring prayer would be:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מְתִיר אֲסוּרִים: (Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who frees the captive.) The language of *matir asurim* also appears at the beginning of the Amidah... סוּמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים וּמְתִיר אֲסוּרִים. I connected the new liturgy by Idan Raichel to the traditional liturgy, and by that I tried to infuse new and current meanings to the ancient text.

For in the nights your sleep's elusive

להבחין בין יום ובין לילה

(Who has given the mind to distinguish day from night)

And every terror is alive

הנותן ליעף כוח

(Who gives strength to the weary)

Lend your ear to the silence

The voices of compassion will rise,

He will arrive

מתיר אסורים

(Freer of the captives)

For him your soul is being guarded

שעשני ישראל

Who made me a Jew

And the hour's drawing near

פוקח עורים

(Who opens the eyes of the blind)

When they'll march back to their border

He'll fall broken in your arms

But at last he will be here

מתיר אסורים

(Freer of the captives)

Just restrain your voice from weeping

And your eyes from shedding tears

For the gate will open

He will come through the storm

When they'll be marching back to here

מתיר אסורים

(Freer of the captives)

Through what's left of your resilience

אוזר ישראל בגבורה

(Who girds Israel with strength)

Till the waters of the stream

רוקע הארץ על המים

(Who stretches the earth over the waters)

If brought back, we will return

Restrain your voice from weeping

The hope is not a dream

מתיר אסורים

(Freer of the captives)

Just restrain your voice from weeping
 And your eyes from shedding tears
 For the gate will open
 He will come through the storm
 When they'll be marching back to here

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם מתיר אסורים
**PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
 Freer of the captives²⁹**

Every *brachah* (blessing) is connected to a phrase from the song. When the song talks about how the woman's sleep is elusive, I attached the *brachah* "to distinguish between day and night." When the song reads "And every terror is alive," it is as if the prayer is born from the challenge – may God give us strength when we are weary. The recurring phrase in this setting is the "freer of the captives," since this arrangement is dedicated to the captives and their families in the current situation in Israel.

I connected נשמרת נפשך (ki bishvilo nafshech nishmeret) "For him your soul is being guarded," in the song and the *brachah* שעשני ישראל (she'ehsani Yisrael) "Who made me a Jew." The word soul – נפש (nefesh) reminded me of the phrase נפש יהודי (nefesh Yehudi – Jewish soul) from the Israeli national anthem – "Hatikvah." The *brachah* expresses gratitude for being a Jew. In the context of the song, the blessing reminds us to guard our Jewish soul even in trying times. The phrase in the song and the *brachah* are connected through the word guarded (with the root ש.מ.ר). This reminded me of the liturgy of "שומר ישראל" (shomer Yisrael - the guardian of Israel) which again led me to the *brachah* שעשני ישראל (she'ehsani Yisrael – who made me a Jew).

²⁹ Elyse D. Frishman, *Mishkan T'filah* (New York: CCAR Press, 2007), 36-38

הרי קרבה היא השעה (*harei kreva hi hasha'ah*) “And the hour’s drawing near” in the song is now connected with the *brachah* פוקח עורים (*poke'ach ivrim* - who opens the eyes of the blind) because as the woman is waiting for the hour, she is blind to when that time will come. As that woman, so are we as the Jewish people – we are all feeling blind in this time of confusion and loss.

”דרך שארית כוחך - (*derech she'erit kochech*) “Through what’s left of your resilience” in the song is connected with the *brachah* אוזר ישראל בגבורה (*ozar Yisrael bigvurah* - who girds Israel with strength), because in order to cultivate resilience, we need strength as a people. The resilience of the individual can grow with the strength and support of *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish People).

”דרך נחלי המים” (*derech nachalei hamayim*) - “Till the waters of the stream” in the song to רוקע הארץ על המים (*roka ha'aretz al hamayim* - who stretches the earth over the waters), because of the connection to water, and the understanding that God is the one who provides water on earth, or in the song’s context, God can provide safety and hope even in the most challenging times.

As we connect our daily *brachot* to a new text that speaks about a current situation, we give those *brachot* new meanings that help our *kavanah* (intention). Especially in this difficult time of war in Israel, American Jewry is looking for ways to support Israel and feel connected. This is a way to bridge the gap between American and Israeli Jewry through music, prayer, and new and traditional liturgy.

Chapter 5: “Yaalah, Yaalah” by Israel Ben Moses Najara and the Juxtaposition with “L’chah Dodi”

Gaza of the 16th Century C.E. was not the Gaza of today. It was one of the hubs of the Jewish community that remained in the Holy Land after the expulsion of Jews by the Roman Empire in the year 70 C.E. Israel Ben Moses Najara was born around 1555 C.E. in Damascus and lived for about 70 years. In his later years, he was the Chief Rabbi of Gaza. His numerous liturgical poems were created in Jobar, near Damascus, and in other places he lived – all under control of the Ottoman Empire at that time. Najara, who was influenced by Lurianic Kabbalah was considered one of the most influential liturgical poets of his time, in addition to being a biblical commentator, a *posek* (judge), a *sofer* (scribe).

Descended from a family that originated in Spain, but fled due to the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 to what is now Israel, Najara was a native to the Holy Land and its culture of poetry, which included influences from his Spanish family and the surrounding Ottoman culture. His poems were born of that place. They are native to the land.

Najara’s suggestive poem “Yaalah Yaalah” metaphorically sexualizes the relationship between God and Israel. For this, Najara was severely criticized by Jewish scholars and rabbis of his time. Najara’s poems, which were written in a kabbalistic imagery, were considered profane and disrespectful. He was the subject of harsh critique on account of his unconventional practices, indicative of the ongoing differences between Jews of different theological and behavioral stripes. Similarly, many of the poets and writers in

the Israeli Reform siddur, *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, have no business placing their creations in a religious context, and yet they did. Perhaps the proverbial line between the sacred and the secular is not so clear. Najara danced on that line.

Rabbi Menahem Lonzano wrote in his book *Shetei Yadot* (שתי ידות, דף קמ"ב),

"התיר עצמו לומר לה' יתברך כל מה שהנואפים אומרים זה לזה" – "(Rabbi Israel Najara) let himself say to God blessed-be-He all that the adulterers say to each other."³⁰

Rabbi Hayyim Vital (1542-1620), one of the leading Rabbis of Tzfat, and like Najara, a disciple of Isaac Ben Shlomo Luria (1534-1572) accused Najara of using foul language in his liturgical poems, as well as being a drunkard, a homosexual, and having sexual relations with non-Jewish women. Vital did not make these accusations based on observation, but rather based on mystical revelations which he claimed to have received from a spirit. However, Vital wrote that Najara did admit that on a Sabbath evening he sang sacred poems while being drunk, with his head uncovered. He was singing *shirei kodesh* (sacred songs), not *shirei hol* (mundane songs), albeit in a manner seen as unbecoming:

³⁰ Menahem Lonzano, *Shetei Yadot* (Venice: Self Published, 1618), 142

”קבע סעודתו בשעה פלונית בבית יעקב מונידאש והניח כובעו בקרקע וזימר שירות בקול רם ואכל בשר
 ושתה יין.”

“He was having his meal in a certain hour in the house of Jacob Monidash, and he laid his hat on the ground and sang sacred songs and ate meat and drank his wine,” (which means he sang sacred songs without a head covering.)³¹

Najara was also criticized for using Arabic style and Arabic meters in his poetry. As a young poet, Najara composed many hymns to Arabic and Turkish tunes. However, Isaac Luria, Najara’s mentor, had other thoughts. Luria praised him. Najara was also praised by other prominent rabbis and scholars, like Rabbi Yosef David Azulai (a.k.a. the Hida) (1724-1806), Mordechai Margulies (1909-1968), and Moses Sofer (1762-1839).

³¹ Hayyim ben Joseph Vital, *Hemdat Yamim* (Izmir Ottoman Empire: Algazi, 1731), Vol. 3, Chapter 3, 6-7

“Yaalah Yaalah” – Translation

(literally, a female ibex. Also, a name for the People of Israel)

<p><i>Chorus: (Dod)</i> Beloved, beloved, come to my garden A pomegranate has budded, my vine has blossomed</p>	<p>(דוד) יַעֲלָה יַעֲלָה בּוֹאֵי לְגַנִּי הַגֵּץ רִמּוֹן גַּם פְּרָחָה גִפְנֵי</p>
<p><i>Verse One: (Yaalah)</i> My beloved will come, (he) will hasten his steps And will eat his sweet fruit If my beloved’s wanderings would be elongated How would I sit solitary upon my dwelling</p>	<p>(יעלה) יָבֹא דוֹדִי יַחֲזִישׁ צַעְדָיו וַיֹּאכַל אֶת פְּרֵי מִגְדָיו אִם יִדְוִי אַרְכּוֹ נְדוּדָיו אֵיךְ יִחַדָּה אָשֵׁב עַל כְּנִי</p>
<p><i>Verse Two: (Dod)</i> Return to me, beloved daughter Come back, and I will then return (to you) Behold there is a written sign within me For within you I Shall make my dwelling place</p>	<p>(דוד) שׁוּבִי אֵלַי, אֶת־בַּת אֲהוּבָה שׁוּבִי אִתִּי, נֹאנְנִי אֲשׁוּבָה הִנֵּה עָמִי זֹאת אוֹת כְּתוּבָה כִּי בְתוּכְךָ אֶתֵּן מִשְׁכְּנִי</p>
<p><i>Verse Three: (Yaalah)</i> My friend, my beloved, my whole being you have redeemed And since then, you acquired me as a daughter (wife) But now you have scattered me among the nations, How could you say that you loved me</p>	<p>(יעלה) רַעִי, דוֹדִי, נַפְשִׁי פָדִיתָ וּלְבַת מֵאָז אוֹתִי קָנִיתָ עַתָּה לִי בֵין עַמִּים זָרִיתָ וְאֵיךְ תֹּאמַר כִּי אֲהַבְתָּנִי</p>
<p><i>Verse Four: (Dod)</i> My awesome (beloved), I have scattered you for the good For praise and good have I struggled with you For I had loved you an eternal love Therefore, I will seat you on my platform</p>	<p>(דוד) אֲנִימְתִי, לְטוֹב זָרִיתִיךָ וּלְתַהֲלָה וּלְטוֹב שָׁרִיתִיךָ כִּי אֲהַבְתָּ עוֹלָם אֲהַבְתִּיךָ עַל כֵּן אוֹשִׁיבְךָ עַל־דּוֹכְנִי</p>
<p><i>Verse Five: (Yaalah)</i> May your words come true, my love Now hastily gather my wanderings (wanderers) And guide my battalion to Zion There, I will offer you a sacrifice</p>	<p>(יעלה) לוֹ יִהְיֶה כְּדַבְּרְךָ, יְדִידִי עַתָּה מְהֵרָה תִּאָּסַף נְדוּדֵי וּלְתַנְךָ צִיּוֹן נָחָה גְדוּדֵי וְשָׂם אֲקָרִיב לְךָ אֶת קָרְבְּנִי</p>
<p><i>Verse Six: (Dod)</i> Be strong, my wife, your palate like choicest wine. The bud of my salvation is fresh and moist I will carve up and decimate your enemies And will soon send my disciple (Messiah)</p>	<p>(דוד) חֲזִקִי רַעְיָה חֲזַק כְּיַיִן טוֹב כִּי צִיץ יִשְׁעֵי רַעְיָנוּ וְרִטָּב וּלְסִירְךָ אֲכַרֹּת וְאֲהַטֵּב וַחֲזִישׁ אֲשַׁלַּח לְךָ אֶת סְגְנִי</p>

This *piyyut* (liturgical poem) is written as a conversation between the *Dod* (beloved), and the *Yaalah* (literally, a female ibex, but in this context, a female lover). It has six verses, and in practice the first two lines are recurring, which makes them a chorus. Each verse contains four lines. The first three lines rhyme, but the last line of each verse ends with the suffix “ni” (כני, משכני, אהבתני, דוכני, קורבני, סגני). The first letter of the first five verses spells the name of the author ישראל (*Yisrael* - the first words are (יְבוֹא שׁוּבֵי רְעִי, אֲנִימְתִּי לוֹ)).

The *piyyut* has many allusions and is inspired by the content and language of the *Song of Songs*. It can be read as a suggestive, sensual text between a man and a woman, or as the love story or relationship between God and the assembly of Israel (כנסת ישראל). God is represented by the *Dod* while Israel is the *Yaalah*. Israel is scattered among the nations in the diaspora (*galut*), and God’s response is, “I will carve up and decimate your enemies,” and will soon send my disciple (Messiah).

יַעַל הַנְּעַל הַבּוֹא יִלְגְּנֵי
הַנִּץ רִמּוֹן גַּם פְּרִיָה גַפְנֵי

In the chorus, the male lover calls the female to his garden. The garden (גן) can be a reference to the Garden of Eden – a place of serenity and peace, or the garden in the *Song of Songs* – a place of mystery and unfulfilled (or unreachable) desire.

גַּן | נְעוּל אַחֲתִי כִלְיָה גַל נְעוּל מְעִנָּה חֲתוּם:

A garden locked
Is my own, my bride,
A fountain locked,
A sealed-up spring.

(*Song of Songs* 4:12)

In this context, the garden can represent the land of Israel. Perhaps God is asking Israel to return from the diaspora back to its homeland.

כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נִחַם כָּל־חֲרָבֹתֶיהָ נִשְׂשַׁם מִדְּבָרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעַרְבָתָהּ כְּגִוַי־יְהֹנָה שְׁשׂוֹן וְשִׁמְחָהּ יִמְצֵא כָּהּ תוֹדָה וְקוֹל זִמְרָה: (ס)

Truly the LORD has comforted Zion,
Comforted all her ruins;
He has made her wilderness like Eden,
Her desert like the **Garden of the LORD**.
Gladness and joy shall abide there,
Thanksgiving and the sound of music.

(Isaiah 51:3)

The language of invitation is (sexually) suggestive (a pomegranate has bloomed, my vine has blossomed) and alludes to *Song of Songs*:

נִשְׁלִימָהּ לְכַרְמִים נִרְאָה אִם־פְּרִיחָהּ הַגֶּפֶן פֶּתַח הַסִּמְלֵךְ הַנֶּצֶוּ הַרְמוֹנִים שָׁם אֲתֵן אֶת־לִדְי לְךָ:

Let us go early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the **vine has flowered**,
If its blossoms have opened,
If the **pomegranates are in bloom**.
There I will give my love to you.

(Song of Songs 7:10)

Verse one:

י בּוֹאֲדוֹךְ יִיחַ יִשְׁצַעְדִי וַיֵּאֵךְ לֹא תִפֵּר יִמְגִדוּ
אִם יְדִידִי אֶרְכּוּ נְדוּדָיו אֵיךְ יַחֲדָה אֲשׁוּב עַל כְּנִי

In verse one, the *Yaalah* – or Israel – is asking her beloved to hurry up and redeem her from her misery and loneliness. There is a reference to God's promise to Israel in the Book of Isaiah. God will come to the aid of Israel in due time:

הַקָּטָן יִהְיֶה לְאַלְפָּה וְהַרְבֵּעִיר לְגוֹי עֲצוּם אֲנִי ה' בְּעֵתָהּ אֶחֱיִשְׁנֶנָּה: } ס {

The smallest shall become a clan;
The least, a mighty nation.
I the LORD will **speed it** in due time.

(Isaiah 60:22)

The *Yaalah* is inviting her beloved to eat his sweet fruit (פרי מגדיו), with a reference to the *Song of Songs*:

עוֹרֵי צְפוֹן-וּבֹאֵי תִמֹן הַפִּיחֵי מִנִּי יִזְלוּ בְשִׁמְיוֹ וַיָּבֵא דוֹדִי לִגְנוֹ וַיֹּאכַל פְּרִי מִגְדֵיָיו:

Awake, O north wind,
Come, O south wind!
Blow upon **my garden**,
That its perfume may spread.
Let my beloved come to his **garden**
And enjoy its **luscious fruits!**

In this verse, the wife (*r'ayah* – רעיה) is asking the winds to blow the scents of the garden to attract her beloved and bring him back to her. The wife is in the garden, while the male lover is wandering. Like the verse, in the *piyyut*, the *Yaalah* is in the garden while the *Dod* is wandering.

Verse two:

שׁוּבֵי אֱלֹהֵי, אֵת בֵּית אֶהוּבָה שׁוּבֵי אֵת, וְאֲנִי אֶשׁוּבָה

הִנֵּה עָמִי זֹאת אוֹת כְּתוּבָה כִּי בְּתוּכָךְ אֵתָן מִשְׁכְּנֵי

In the third verse “שׁוּבֵי אֱלֹהֵי... וְאֲנִי אֶשׁוּבָה” the *Dod* (God) is pleading his beloved *Yaalah* (the People of Israel) to come back and presents an image of mutual return: If you come back, I will come back, too. This image of mutual return originates in the book of Malachi:

למימי אבותיכם סרתם מחקלי ולא שמרתם **שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם** אמר יהוה צבאות

From the very days of your ancestors you have turned away from My laws and have not observed them. **Turn back to Me, and I will turn back to you**—said GOD of Hosts.

Malachi 3:7

As from this verse from the consoling end of the biblical Book of Lamentations:

השיבנו יהוה אלהינו ונשוב (ונשובה) חדש ימינו כקדם:

Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself,
And let us **come back**;
Renew our days as of old!

Lamentations 5:21

In these verses, God calls the Israelites to come back to God’s laws. Israel has “wandered away” from God’s ways by practicing sorcery, committing adultery, swearing falsely, cheating laborers of their hire, and subverting the cause of the widow, orphan, and stranger. If the people turn away from these ways, God promises to reciprocally return to the people.

However, in the context of Rabbi Israel Najara’s life this text can bear another meaning. Najara was born in 1555 C.E. in Damascus, but his familial origins were in the Spanish city of Najara. Najara, the poet, was born sixty-three years after the Jews were expelled from Spain, and the Jews were still suffering the consequences of this exile. Perhaps, for Israel Najara, the idea of “returning to God” meant a return to a feeling of safety, and to the sense of home that the Jews of Spain once had.

In the third verse the words *הנה עמי זאת אות כתובה כי בתוכך אתן משכני* suggests that there is a covenant between God and Israel. *אות כתובה* can be translated as “a written letter,” or a written sign. Perhaps it is the Torah that is the written word between God and Israel. The word *כתובה* with an accented “bet” also means a marriage contract (*ketubah*).

The theme of a marriage between God and Israel appears also in the liturgical poem “L’cha Dodi” which I chose to juxtapose to this *piyyut* and will focus on later.

I translated the words *כי בתוכך אתן משכני* as “for within you I will dwell.” If we read it as words that are said between a man and a woman, the subtext is very sensual and suggestive. However, if we focus on the word *משכן* – literally the tabernacle, or the place where God dwells, the text reminds us of the verse from *Parashat Terumah*:

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם: And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. Exodus 25:8
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In the second verse, God calls Israel to return to God, so that God can return to the people of Israel and dwell among them.

Verse three:

רַעֲיָה יְדוּדָה יִגְנֹשׁ יְפֹדֵיתָ וְלֵב תִּמְאָה זֹאת יִקְנִיתָ
 עַתָּה הֲלֵבִי נְעַמְ יִסְזָרִיתָ וְאֵי יִתְאַמֵּן רַב יִאֲהַבְתָּנִי

In the third verse, the *Yaalah* reminds the *Dod* how he redeemed her and acquired her as a beloved (literally here, a daughter). This language of redemption recalls God's redeeming of the Children of Israel from Egypt:

תְּרַנְנָה שִׁפְתַי כִּי אֶזְמְרֶה-לְךָ יְיָ וְנִפְשִׁי אֲשֶׁר פָּדִיתָ:

My lips shall be jubilant, as I sing a hymn to You,
my **whole being**, which You have **redeemed**.

Jeremiah 31:11

We can also find the root פ.ד.ג.ה. In our daily prayers, which refers to God's ransom of Jacob, or also to Israel's redemption from Egypt, by the hand of God:

“אֹתִי קָנִיתָ” (*oti kanita*) - The “acquisition of Israel” by God “since then” (*me'az* - מֵאָז) was done by מתן תורה (*matan Torah*) - giving Israel the Torah, on *Har Sinai* (Mount Sinai).

כִּי־פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְגֹאֲלֹו מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ:

For GOD will **ransom** Jacob,
Redeem him from one too strong for him.

In the third and fourth lines in the third verse, Israel briefly departs from the prior tone of adoration to protest God and asks how God could claim to love Israel if God has scattered Israel among the nations. The allusion here is taken from the book of Psalms. In these verses, Israel is pleading for God's love and support after giving numerous

תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֲכָל־יְבִגְוִים זְרִיתָנוּ:

You let them devour us like sheep;
You **disperse us among the nations**.

Psalms 44:12

examples of the troubles Israel is experiencing. Israel, the *Yaalah*, claims that despite the challenges with which God has struck Israel, Israel did not forget God and was faithful to the covenant.

Verse four:

אַיִמַת נֶלֶט וּבְזָרִיתִי הִוֵּלְתָּהּ לֵהֲלֹךְ וּלְטַח וּבְשָׂרֵי תִיבֵךְ
כִּי נִאֲהָבָה תַעֲוֹל מֵאֲהָבָתִי הֲעָלֶךָ לְךָ וְנֹאשִׁיבֶךָ הֲעָלֶךָ לְדוֹכֵנִי

The word **איִמַתִּי** (*ayumati*) has multiple meanings, both negative and positive. The word **איִוִּם** (*ayom*) can be translated as horrible, terrible, or even a threat. We can see an example of the negative translation in Exodus 15:16.

There is a mention of the acquisition of Israel in this verse. “עַם זֶה קָנִיתִי” (*am zu kanita*) – which appeared earlier on verse three of the *piyyut*.

תִּפְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָהּ וְנִפְסְדוּ
בְגִלְלֵי זְרוּעֶיךָ יִדְמּוּ כְּאֶבֶן
עַד-יַעֲבֹר עִמָּךְ ה' עַד-יַעֲבֹר עִמָּנוּ
קָנִיתִי:

Terror and dread descend upon them;
Through the might of Your arm they are still as stone—
Till Your people cross over, ‘ה,
Till Your people cross whom You have ransomed.

Exodus 15:16

However, in *Song of Songs* we see this word in a different context of a loving relationship.

יָפֵה אַתְּ רַעֲיִתִי כְתָרְצָה נְאֻמָּה כִּירוּשָׁלַם אֵימָה כְּנִדְגָלוֹת:
You are beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah,
Comely as Jerusalem,
Awesome as bannered hosts.

Song of Songs 6:4

How can the scattering of Israel among the nations be for the good?

On Pesachim 87b:18 Rashi comments “צדקה עשה שפיזרן - שלא היו יכולין לכלותם יחד”: The scattering of Israel among the nations was for the good since their enemies could not decimate them all at once.

וְלִתְהִלָּה וְלִתְהִלָּה וְלִתְהִלָּה – “I will release thee for fame and for good.”

According to Ibn Ezra on Genesis 25:24:1, the word תומים (*tumim*) which appears in relation to the birth of Jacob and Esau, is similar to the word שריתך (*saritich*) since they are both missing an א (*aleph*). Ibn Ezra suggests that the word תומים (*tumim*) should actually be read as תאומים (*t'omim*), and שריתך (*saritich*) as שאריתך (*sh'eritech*), each with an extra aleph. שאריתך (*sh'eritech*) calls to mind נתתי שאריתך לטוב (*natati sh'eritech l'tov*) (Genesis 24:25) - I will deal well with thy last years (*she'erit*). Or in other words, fear not (Israel) for I will grant you fame and goodness for the remaining time, or, the rest of your days.

Another allusion to which this line may refer is from the prophecy of Zephaniah:

בָּעֵת הַהִיא אֶבְיָא אֶתְכֶם וּבָעֵת קִבְצִי אֶתְכֶם כִּי־אֶתֶן אֶתְכֶם לְשֵׁם וְלִתְהִלָּה בְּכָל־עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ בְּשׁוּבִי אֶת־שְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם לְעֵינֵיכֶם אָמַר ה':

At that time I will gather you,
And at [that] time I will bring you [home];
For I will make you **renowned and famous**
Among all the peoples on earth,
When I restore your fortunes
Before their very eyes
—said GOD.

Zephaniah 3:20

Israel Najara brings God's words as they appear in Zephaniah's prophecy to reassure Israel regarding their future.

אהבת עולם אהבתיך על כן אושיבך על דוכני – Eternal love I have loved you, therefore, I will place you on my platform. The platform is the place on which the Levites were stationed for the service of song in the Temple. In this context, the *Dod* (or God) expresses his love toward the *Yaalah* (Israel) and promises to cherish her.

Verse five:

לְיָוֵהּ בְּכַדְבָּרְךָ יְיָ יָדִיד נֵעַת תָּמָה רַחֵם אֶת־הַנְּדָוִדִּי
וּלְתִּי וְרָצִיו נְנַחֵם גְּדוּד יוֹשֵׁב פְּאֶקֶר יִבֵּל בְּאֵ תִקְרָבֹנִי

Yaalah's reaction to the *Dod's* reassurance is trust and hope that his words will become true. The reference here is the words Laban spoke to Jacob:

And Laban said, "Very well, let it be as you say."

בִּיאֹמֵר לָבוֹ טוֹ לוֹ יְעָי כְּדַבְּרֶךָ:

Genesis 30:34

The *Yaalah* (Israel) is asking the *Dod* to gather her wanderers (the People of Israel) and guide them into Zion. The People of Israel's image is an army battalion – a hope for strength and unity. When the People of Israel will get to return to their home, they will show their gratitude to God by making an offering.

Verse six:

חֲזַק בְּרַעֲי הַחֶכֶךְ כְּכַיִּי נָט וּבְכֵי יָצִי יְיָשָׁע בְּרַעַנ נְוֹרָטָב
וּלְסִירֵי דְאֶכְרוּ תִנְאָחָט בְּנֹחֵי שְׂאֲשֵׁל חֵל בְּאֵ תִסְגֹּנִי

The *Dod* reassures the *Yaalah* and wishes her strength - *חִזְקֵי רְעִיָּה* (*hizki r'ayah*). The word *חִכְךָ* (*hikech*) comes from *חֵיךְ* (*hech*) – a palate. In this context, the *Dod* says to the *Yaalah* that her words are as pleasant and tasteful as a good wine. The allusion is taken from “Song of Songs”:

וְחִכְךָ כְּגִיּוֹר עֲטוּיֹב הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדַי לְמִישְׁרָיִם דּוֹבֵב שְׁפָתַי יְשָׁנִים:
 And your **mouth like choicest wine**.
 “Let it flow to my beloved as new wine
 Gliding over the lips of sleepers.”

Song of Songs 7:10

כִּי צִיץ יִשְׁעֵי רַעֲנָן וְרֹטֵב (*ki tzitz yish'i ra'anan v'ratov*) literally, the bud of my salvation is fresh and wet. The salvation is described by an image of a bud waiting to grow. In other words, salvation will be coming to fruition soon – salvation is near. At the same time, the language here again is suggestive and sensual.

וְלִסְרֵי דְאֶכְרוֹת וְאֶחְטֵב (*ul'siraich echrot v'echtov*) – I will carve up and decimate your enemies. The roots *ת.כ.ר.* and *ב.ט.ח.* also come from the world of nature – chopping wood (*lichrot*, and cutting trees) *לחטוב* (*lahtov*). This continues the theme of the garden (*gan*, the bud (*ציץ*) *tzitz*, sweet yield (*פרי מגדיו*) *pri m'gadav*, etc. This time, it is about the protection that God will provide to the People of Israel by defending them against their enemies. The word *סִרְיָךְ* (*siraich*) is interchangeable with the word *צִרְיָךְ* (*tzoraich*) from the root *צ.ר.ר.* – enemies.

וְחִישׁ אֶשְׁלַח לְךָ אֶת סַגְנִי (v'chish eshlah lah et sgani) - And I will soon send my disciple (Messiah). God's promise of reassurance to the people of Israel in their time of need is sending the Messiah.

The Juxtaposition of Yaalah Yaalah and L'chah Dodi

The *piyyut* “Yaalah Yaalah” appears in *Tefilat HaAdam – An Israeli Reform Siddur for Shabbat* on page 205 as part of תוספתא לקבלת שבת ולערבית לשבת (*Tosefta L'Kabbalat Shabbat v'L'Arvit l'Shabbat* – Supplement to Welcoming the Sabbath and Sabbath Evening Prayer). My suggestion would be to juxtapose this *piyyut* to another *piyyut* – “L'cha Dodi.”

Both *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) were written by men who lived in the same era. “Yaalah Yaalah” by Rabbi Israel Najara (1555-1625), and “L'chah Dodi” by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (1505-1584). It is likely that Najara was familiar with “L'chah Dodi.”

Both *piyyutim* also have these themes in common:

1. God-Israel relationship as a male-female courtship.
2. The wandering in the *galut* and the hope to go back home.
3. God's promise to protect Israel from its surrounding enemies.
4. The understanding that consummating the relationship between God and Israel will bring Israel prosperity and fame among the nations.

1) God-Israel relationship as a male-female courtship

In “Yaalah Yaalah,” Israel is described as יַעֲלָה (*yaalah* - female ibex), בַּת אֲהוּבָה (*bat ahuvah* - beloved daughter), and at the end is called רַעְיָה (*ra'yah* - wife) which suggests that the relationship was consummated by a wedding. The *dod* is described as רַעִי יְדִידִי (*re'i y'didi* - my friend, my beloved). There is also a mention of אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם (*ahavat olam* – eternal love).

In “L'chah Dodi,” the *dod* (uncle, beloved) can also be God, while the *kallah* (bride) is the People of Israel. The wedding is stated in verse seven:

יָשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּמָשׁוּשׁ הָתָן עַל כְּלָהּ (*yasis alaich elohaich kimsos hatan al kallah*) - God will rejoice upon you as the joy of a groom over (his) bride. In another interpretation, the *dod* can be Israel, while the *kallah* is the Sabbath.

2) The wandering in the galut and the hope to go back home.

In “Yaalah Yaalah,” Israel begs God to show her His love and redeem her from her *galut*. God's response is reassuring.

<p>Since you scattered me among nations, How can you say you have loved me?</p>	<p>עֲתָה לִי בֵין עַמִּים זָרִית וְאֵיךְ תֹאמַר כִּי אֲהַבְתָּנִי</p>
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<p>You are scattered for the good</p> <p>I will grant you fame and goodness for the rest of your days</p>	<p>לְטוֹב זָרִיתֶיךָ וְלִתְהִלָּהּ וְלִטּוֹב שְׂרִיתֶיךָ</p>
<p>Now hastily gather my wanderers (wanderers)</p> <p>And guide my troupe into Zion</p> <p>There, I will offer you a sacrifice</p>	<p>עֲתָה מְהֵרָה תִּאֲסַף גְּדוּדֵי</p> <p>וְלִתְנוּךְ צִיּוֹן נָחָה גְּדוּדֵי וְשֵׁם אֶקְרִיב לְךָ אֶת קָרְבָּנִי</p>

In “L’chah Dodi,” there are numerous calls for Israel to rise from a state of mourning, or from a condition of suffering and *galut* to a redeemed state:

<p>Arise, escape from the midst of the chaos</p> <p>Long have you sat in the valley of tears</p>	<p>קוּמִי צְאִי מִתְנוּךְ הַהֶפְכָּה</p> <p>רַב לְךָ שְׁבַת־בְּעַמְּקֵי הַבְּכָא</p>
<p>Shake it off, from the ashes get up!</p> <p>Put on the clothes of your glory, my people!</p>	<p>הִתְנַעְרִי מֵעַפְרֵי קוּמִי</p> <p>לְבָשֵׁי־בְגְדֵי תִפְאָרְתְּךָ עַמִּי</p>
<p>Nearer to my soul is its redemption!</p>	<p>קָרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּהּ</p>
<p>Why be depressed? Why be upset?</p>	<p>מָה תִשְׁתַּחֲחִי־וּמָה תִהְיֶימִי</p>
<p>In you my poor people will be sheltered</p> <p>And she shall be rebuilt - the city on her hill!</p>	<p>בְּךָ יִחְסוּ עַנְיֵי עַמִּי</p> <p>וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלָהּ</p>

3. God's promise to protect Israel from its surrounding enemies.

In "Yaalah Yaalah," God promises to protect Israel from its enemies:

I will carve up and decimate your enemies	וּלְסִירֶיךָ אֶכְרוֹת וְאֶהָטַב
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In "L'chah Dodi," God states the same:

And attacked shall be those who attack you	הִיוּ לְמַשְׁסָה שְׂאֵסֶיךָ
And far distant will be those who devoured you.	וַרְחֲקוּ כָּל מְבַלְעֶיךָ

4. The understanding that realizing the relationship between God and Israel will bring Israel prosperity and fame among the nations.

In "Yaalah Yaalah," God promises Israel a better future:

My awesome (beloved), you are scattered for the good	אֲנִימְתִי, לְטוֹב זָרִיתֶיךָ
I will grant you fame and goodness for the rest of your days	וְלִתְהִלָּה וּלְטוֹב שְׂרִיתֶיךָ

In "L'chah Dodi," it states that if Israel will keep and remember the one-ness of God, God will grant Israel glory and fame among the nations.

"Keep" and "remember" in one saying	שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוֹר אֶחָד
We were caused to listen by the Unified God	הִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמִּיחָד
Adonai is One, and His Name is One	ה' אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד

(Israel will become) known, glorified, and praised	לְשֵׁם וּלְתִפְאָרַת וְלְתִהְיֶה
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The power of this juxtaposition between “Yaalah Yaalah” and “L’chah Dodi” is connecting the familiar with the unfamiliar. “Yaalah Yaalah” alone would not necessarily work for the typical North American congregation and is unfamiliar. But “L’chah Dodi” shines a light on the two pieces’ common themes. Many regular shul-goers in North America will be familiar with the words of “L’chah Dodi” and its many popular melodies. Those familiar words will be an entry point into “Yaalah Yaalah” and will create an opportunity for diaspora Jews to feel at home in a Shabbat service in Israel that uses “Yaalah Yaalah” and would also bring “Yaalah Yaalah” to the diaspora.

Chapter 6: “Or Virushalayim” by Yosef Sarig and the Juxtaposition with “Hashkivenu”

Historically, Reform Movement theology often downplayed and/or outright rejected the idea of the centrality of Jerusalem in Judaism. While Orthodox and Conservative *siddurim* (prayer books) are littered with prayers, poems, and readings lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem and calling for the city’s redemption and resurrection, and the Jewish people’s return to Jerusalem, the Reform Movement generally took the approach that each Jewish community is central to itself, and each Jew is autonomous. Leading a full Jewish life neither required a Jewish state, nor Jerusalem as its capital. A Reform Jew, in theory, could be at home in any community in which there was a community. References in old Reform prayer books regarding returning to Jerusalem were few and far between. But since the rise of Nazism and the founding of the State of Israel, there has been a shift in the Reform Movement’s attitude toward Zionism. According to Rabbi Dalia Marx in her article “Zion and Zionism in Reform Prayer Books”:

The early and classical Reform prayer books were characterized not only by the omission or obscuring of the petitions for a return to Zion and an ingathering of the exiles, but also sometimes by a reduction in the number of references to Zion as the cradle and spiritual center of the Jewish people. In the case of the *American Union Prayer Book*, these petitions were completely omitted. From the 1930s onward, however, a gradual change can be seen in the attitude of Reform Judaism toward Zionism. The horrors of the Holocaust, on the one hand, and conversely the establishment of the State of Israel, followed by the existential anxieties of the young state during the period before the Six-Day War and the ensuing sense of relief, all led to significant developments in prayer. Many liturgical sections that had previously been omitted were reinstated in the prayer book.”³²

³² Dalia Marx, “Zion and Zionism in Reform Prayer Books,” in *The Fragile Dialogue*, ed. Stanley M. Davids and Lawrence A. Englander (New York: CCAR Press, 2018), 168

The Reform Movement now is largely pro-Israel and in favor of diaspora communities supporting a strong Jewish State. However, the news of that diasporic pro-Israel shift has not always been successfully disseminated to Israeli Jews in Israel. There is still a lingering feeling amongst many in the Israeli Jewish population that the Reform Movement is anti-Zionist and “not Israeli.”

So, what does the new *Tefilat Ha-Adam* prayer book do to counter this narrative? How does it speak to the average *chiloni* (secular) Israeli who may be checking out the Reform Movement for the first time? How does this prayer book speak to the disaffected *dati* (Orthodox) Israeli who may be looking for a more pluralistic approach to Judaism? How does *Tefilat Ha-Adam* deal with the very “reality” of Jerusalem for Jews who actually live in Israel, yet still promote universal values?

In this chapter, I will examine *Tefilat Ha-Adam*'s inclusion of Yosef Sarig's prayer/song, “Or Virushalayim,” a beautiful love song and tribute to Jerusalem. What is this song doing in a Reform Movement prayer book? And what does that say about the modern Reform Movement in Israel, and the Reform Movement in general? What new meanings are born from my idea of the juxtaposition of “Or Virushalayim” with the “Hashkivenu” prayer? What is *Tefilat Ha-Adam*'s *chidush* (innovative idea) in “Hashkivenu,” and what does it say about the current values of the Israeli Reform Movement?

First, some information about the composer: Yosef Sarig was an Israeli poet, musician, and composer. He was born in Kibbutz Beit Hashitah in the Beit She'an Valley and was

killed during the Yom Kippur War when he was only twenty-nine-years-old. He was born to Nahum Sarig, commander of the legendary Palmach unit in the Negev Desert during the 1948 War of Independence, and to Tikva Sarig, a published children's author and educator.

After graduating high school, Yosef enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces and completed an armored officers' course. Upon his release from the army in 1966, he worked in agriculture while studying music at the Oranim Seminary and served as a music teacher in the Beit She'an Valley area. He was a singer in the United Kibbutz Choir (מקהלת הקיבוץ המאוחד) - *mak'helat hakibbutz ham'uchad*) for many years. In the years since his death, the choir has included some of his songs in its regular repertoire.

In the Yom Kippur War, Sarig fought as a tank company commander in the battles of the Golan Heights. It was there he lost his life. Sarig was one of the eleven kibbutz members from Beit Hashitah who were killed during the Yom Kippur War; indeed, that kibbutz was the community in Israel with the highest per capita casualties in the war. The heavy grief led to the creation of two songs that were identified with the terrible disaster of the families and the kibbutz, and are treasures of Israeli music ever since: "The Wheat Grows Again" (החיטה צומחת שוב) - *hachitah tzomachat shuv*) with text written by kibbutz member Dorit Tzameret (music composed by Haim Barkani from Kibbutz Sha'ar Golan), and "Unetaneh Tokef," with music composed by Yair Rosenblum, who also lived in Kibbutz Beit Hashitah, and was made famous by the performance of HaGevatron ensemble. After

Sarig's death, he was decorated with the badge of honor and was promoted to the rank of major.

Yosef Sarig was married to Nurit Moran-Sarig and left behind two sons. His son Assaf Sarig was five-years-old at the time of his father's death. Assaf is a member of Eifo HaYeled, (איפה הילד) the Israeli rock band, and he composed the music for his father's poem, "Wings, You Don't Hear" (*Knafayim, Eincha Shome'a* שומע אינך, כנפיים). Assaf also performed the song "My Death Comes to Me Suddenly" (מותי בא לי לפתע) – *Moti Ba Li L'feta*, which Yosef wrote about six months before his death.

Yosef Sarig wrote and composed many songs, which were collected and published under the title *Twenty Poems*. His best known song is "Or Virushalayim" ("Light and Jerusalem") which he wrote in 1972, a year-and-a-half before his death.

The story of how "Or Virushalayim" came about is as moving as the song itself. In the television program *To All Your Songs*, (לכל שיריך - *L'chol Shirayich*) which was broadcast in May 1992, the poet and composer Naomi Shemer told the story of this song's birth, as told to her by the poet's mother, Tikva. On a winter day in 1965 (different sources state it was 1963), the Sarig family traveled from the Jezreel Valley to Jerusalem to lay to rest their grandmother who had passed away. It was a rainy winter's day and all of a sudden, as they approached the beginning of the steep ascent to Jerusalem (at Sha'ar Hagai), the sun came out and a rainbow appeared. The rays of the sun piercing through the clouds

which accompanied them all the way to the cemetery particularly made an impression on Yosef.

In 2003, Yosef's brother Tzchaki wrote:

<p>When we escorted our grandmother with Nachum our father from her last home in Beit Hashitah in the Valley to her first and last place in Jerusalem, a heavy rain accompanied us. It was a day in the month of Shvat, January 1963, and the five of us, Nachum and Tikva's sons, Yosef the middle son, were sitting all around Grandma's coffin in the "box" of the truck looking all the way for an escape from the bewilderment of this strange place that we found ourselves all the way to Jerusalem together with our grandmother's coffin.</p> <p>Our mother also sat with us in the back, because there was room only for Father in the front. Later, Mother told us that suddenly, close to the ascent to Sha'ar HaGai, a soft sun came out, as if smiling, and made the rainy and gloomy road into something that could perhaps be overcome.</p> <p>Mother also said, many years later, that halls of turquoise were revealed in the sky, and rays shone</p>	<p>כשלווינו את סבתא שלנו, עם נחום אבינו, מביתה האחרון בבית השיטה שבעמק אל מקומה הראשון והאחרון בירושלים, ליווה אותנו גשם זלעפות. היה יום שבת, ינואר 1963, וחמישתנו, בני נחום ותקווה, יוסף האמצעי שבנו, ישבנו סביב לארונה של סבתא ב"ארגז" המשאית, מחפשים כל הדרך מפלט מן המבוכה במקום המשונה הזה שנקלענו כל הדרך לירושלים עם ארונה של סבתנו.</p> <p>גם אמא שלנו ישבה איתנו מאחור, כי רק לאבא היה מקום בקבינה ליד הנהג. לימים סיפרה אמא שלפתע פתאום, סמוך לתחילתה של העלייה בשער הגיא, יצאה לה שמש רכה, כמו מחויכת, ועשתה מן הדרך הגשומה והקודרת משהו שכבר אפשר אולי לצלוח אותו. עוד סיפרה אמא, שנים הרבה אחר כך, שניגלו היכלות של</p>
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<p>with a wonderful light all the way to Jerusalem, landing among masses of pine trees, like ten-thousand diamonds. Later, Mother told me that she met there, in the unforgettable moment of the comforting sun above Jerusalem, the eyes of her son Yosef, my brother. His eyes were filled with infinite pleasure, she told us years later, when she no longer had this son.</p>	<p>טורקיז בשמים, ושקרניים זרחו באור נפלא כל אותה הדרך לירושלים, נוחתות להן בין המוני עצי האורן, כמו ריבואות יהלומים. לימים סיפרה אמא שפגשה שם, ברגע הלא נשכח של שמש הניחומים במעלה ירושלים, את עיניו של יוסף בנה, אחי. עיניו רגשו בעונג אין קץ, היא סיפרה לנו שנים אחר כך, כשכבר לא היה לה הבן הזה.</p>
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Yosef Sarig wrote and composed “Or Virushalayim” in January 1972. The song was commissioned by Dov Carmel, a well-known composer. HaGevatron ensemble sang the song for the first time in celebration of the fifth anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem (*Yom Yerushalayim*). HaGevatron recorded the song as part of the album *My Valley* (*עמק שלי - Emek Sheli*). According to different Sarig family members, the song was translated into ten different languages, among them is Japanese and Arabic (Lebanon).

In 2016, a basalt stone memorial was placed at the site of Yosef Sarig's death in the Golan Heights. The monument, which was nicknamed “Or Virushalayim,” is the work of the sculptor Yuval (Yuvi) Lufen of Kibbutz Ginosar.

“Or Virushalayim” became an instant “hit” and ever since has become an integral part of Israel’s musical legacy. A folk dance to the song was choreographed by Shoshana

Koplewitz. Ironically, the lyrics do not mention the name of the city, except in its title. Perhaps, there is no need, since the song describes Jerusalem in a most unique and beautiful way. In 1975, Yosef was posthumously awarded the Medal of Distinguished Service (*Itur Hamofet*), but his songs – especially “Or Virushalayim” – were his awards to the nation.

The song was recorded by the famous duo - HaParvarim (הפרברים). It was also recorded by Ruhama Raz, Yehoram Gaon, and more recently by Yuval Dayan, as well as Maya Belzitsman with Yagel Harush.

Translations

Below are two translations for “Light and Jerusalem.” Nadavi Noked translated the poem for the movie *The Museum* by director Ran Tal. The movie was screened in The Jerusalem Film Festival in July 2017. Noked’s version is poetic and it captures the spirit of the poem. In addition to Noked’s translation, I added another version based on Noked’s translation and Rabbi Wendy Zierler’s suggestions for a more literal translation of the poem. While this translation is more accurate, it is not meant to be sung.

Words and Music: Yosef Sarig Translation adapted from Nadavi Noked

<p>The silence falls again when evening skies are dusking Like birds of prey that glide above the deep, A red ray like a flaming sword kissing the heights, the towers and walls.</p>	<p>הַשְּׁקֵט שׁוֹב צוֹנֵחַ כְּאֵן מִשְׁמֵי הָעֶרֶב כְּדֹאֵת דְּיָה מֵעַל הַתְּהוֹמוֹת וְלָרֶן אֲדָמָה נוֹשֶׁקֶת לֵהֵט הָרֵב אֶת הַפְּסָגוֹת, הַמְּגִדִּים וְהַחוֹמוֹת</p>
<p>I saw a city wrapped in light More bountiful than the colors of the rainbow And she plays upon me like a harp I saw a city wrapped in light</p>	<p>רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר וְהִיא עוֹלָה בְּשֵׁלֶל צְבָעֵי הַקְּשֻׁת וְהִיא נוֹגֶנֶת בִּי כְּנִבְלַת הָעֶשׂוֹר רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר</p>
<p>And now the shadow crawls its way from distant pine hills nearing the neighborhoods secretly like a lover It faces twinkling eyes, so many and so light-filled In sudden awe they open wide, so clear, so bright</p>	<p>הִנֵּה זוֹחֵל הַצֵּל מִבֵּין גְּבְעוֹת הָאֲרָן קָרֵב בְּסִתְרֵי כְּאוֹהֵב אֶל הַשְּׂכוֹנוֹת. וּמוֹל פְּנֵיו קָרִיצוֹת, רְבוּא עֵינֵי הָאֹר הֵן, לְפִתַע נִפְקְחוּ אֵלָיו כְּנִפְעָמוֹת.</p>
<p>I saw a city wrapped in light...</p>	<p>רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר...</p>
<p>Amidst the silence of the final watch – it's breathing The last pieces of the velvet heaven fade to white Yet the dawn is already reddening its golden dome It's caressed by warmth of the newborn light</p>	<p>בְּדוֹמִית אֲשֶׁמֶרֶת אַחֲרוֹנָה נוֹשְׁמֶת וּבְקִטִּיפַת אֲשֶׁקִּים-רְסִיס אַחֲרוֹן מִחֹוִיר אֵךְ שַׁחַר כְּבָר כִּפְתָה זָהָב שְׁלֵה אֲדֻמָּת לְמַגְעוֹ הַחֵם, הָרֵךְ שֶׁל אֹר צָעִיר.</p>

Words and Music: Yosef Sarig Translation Nadavi Noked

Words that describe light and colors are highlighted in yellow. Words from the world of aviation are highlighted in light blue. Words that describe sound are highlighted in grey.

<p>The silence falls again when evening skies are dusking like birds of prey that glide above the deep, the soil The setting sun (literally, red ray) now meets the flaming sword, it's basking caressing mountain tops, the towers and the walls</p>	<p>הַשְּׁקֵט שׁוֹב צוֹנֵחַ כְּאֵן מִשְׁמֵי הָעֶרֶב כְּדֹאֵית דִּינָה מֵעַל הַתְּהוֹמוֹת וְקָרְוֹ אֶתְמָה נוֹשֶׁקֶת לַהֵט הָרֵב אֶת הַפְּסוּגוֹת, הַמְּגִדִּים וְהַחוֹמוֹת</p>
<p>I saw a city embracing light Transcending all the colors of the rainbow A harp within my soul resounding in delight I saw a city embracing light</p>	<p>רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר וְהִיא עוֹלָה בְּשֶׁלֶל צְבָעֵי הַקְּשֶׁת וְהִיא נוֹגֶנֶת בִּי כְּנִבְל הָעֵשׂוֹר רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר</p>
<p>And now the shadow crawls its way from distant pine hills The masqueraded lover nears the streets till night It faces twinkling eyes, so many and so light-filled In sudden awe they open wide, so clear, so bright</p>	<p>הִנֵּה זוֹחֵל הַצֵּל מִבֵּין גְּבְעוֹת הָאֲרֶז קָרֵב בְּסֶתֶר כְּאוֹהֵב אֶל הַשְּׂכוֹנוֹת. וּמוֹל פְּנָיו קָרִיצוֹת, רְבוּא עֵינֵי הָאֹר הֵן, לְפֶתַע נִפְקְחוּ אֵלָיו כְּנִפְעָמוֹת.</p>
<p>I saw a city embracing light...</p>	<p>רָאִיתִי עִיר עוֹטְפֶת אֹר ...</p>
<p>Amidst the silence of the final watch – it's breathing Last pieces of the velvet heaven fade to white Its golden dome is dawning (literally, becoming red) and</p>	<p>בְּדוֹמֵמַת אֲשֶׁמֶרֶת אַחְרוּנָה נוֹשֶׁמֶת וּבְקִטִּיפַת שְׁהָקִים רְסִיס אַחְרוֹן מְחִיר</p>

<p>the darkness – leaving</p> <p>when it's caressed by warmth of the newborn light</p>	<p>אֶךְ שֶׁחַר כְּבֹר כֶּפֶת זָהָב שְׁלֵה אוֹדֶמֶת</p> <p>לְמַגְעוֹ הַחֶם, הַרְךְ שֶׁל אוֹר צְעִיר.</p>
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Song's Analysis

This song is a love song for the city of Jerusalem. Even though the name of the city is not mentioned in the text itself but only in the song's title, it was written about none other than Jerusalem. The song describes the city's unique views: the Dome of the Rock, the pine trees, the Old City's towers, the walls (perhaps the Western Wall) and the Old City's neighborhoods.

The poem starts with the evening twilight (שמי הערב – *shmei ha'erev* – evening sky), the sunset (קרן אדומה – *keren adumah*) literally, red ray of light, moves to the crawling shadow with the flickering artificial lights of the city (ריבוא עיני האור – *kritzot, ribo ha'or*) and then to the morning light (אור צעיר – *or tza'ir* - literally, young light). The text brings to life the famous views of the city in lively, romantic colors. (See the highlighted words in yellow).

Jerusalem is described as a “city embracing light” and “transcending all the colors of the rainbow.” This matches the description that Naomi Shemer recalled from Yosef Sarig's mother – about the view of the city from Sha'ar HaGai, and the rainbow that Yosef saw there. It can also be the description of the city in general, the golden dome in the red ray of sunset, the pine trees in the evening shadows, the “velvet heaven fade to white” and the newborn light.

The song also contains images and verbs from the world of aviation. Yosef Sarig was one of five siblings. He had three brothers and one sister. One of his brothers was a pilot and was a great influence on Yosef. The words צונה (*tzone'ach* - literally, to parachute or descend), דאיה (*d'iyah* - glide), דיה (*dayah* - bird of prey - a kite), שחקים (*sh'chakim* - heavens or sky), מעל התהומות (*m'al hat'homot* - above the abyss, or great depth) are all inspired by that area of interest.

The poet describes the moment of sunset as a unique sensory experience of sight and hearing, of external and internal experiences - a whole world of contrasts that create wholeness. This perfection is expressed in the metaphors בְּשֵׁלֶל צִבְעֵי הַקֶּשֶׁת (*bishlal tziv'ei hakeshet*) "all the colors of the rainbow" (an external visual experience) - which expresses the perfection of the world of colors, and כְּנִבְּלֵי הָעֶשׂוֹר (*k'nevel he'asor*) "the harp of the decade" (an internal auditory experience) - in which the experience of seeing the light becomes the internal playing of that ten-stringed violin (Psalms 92:4) which symbolizes perfection and the circularity of the world (more on that later).

The moment of sunset is described in the first stanza as a moment of silence, which descends quietly and taking over the city. A silence accompanied by a special light of "a red sun kissing the heat of a sword" (נושקת להט חרב – *nosheket lahat cherev*), a phrase that expresses the tension and contrast that exists between "a kiss and a sword," as a metaphor for the soft, warm, but hard, painful, and fighting city.

להט חרב is also a quote from Genesis 3:24:

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׂכְּרוּ מִלְּפָנָיו אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִּים וַיָּצֵא לְהֵט הַחֶרֶב הַמְתְּהַלֵּכָה לְשָׂמֹר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

It (the man, or the human race) was driven out, and the cherubim were stationed east of the garden of Eden and the **fiery ever-turning sword**, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Did the red ray of sunset remind Sarig of an ever-turning sword? Perhaps, in the context of Jerusalem's unification in 1967, five years before the song was written, Jerusalem seemed like the Garden of Eden, and the life before the city's unification when the Jewish People were not permitted to visit the holy sites in the old city, felt like God's banishment of Adam and Eve from that former paradise.

But precisely at the time of sunset, which brings the coming of night, the "darkness" that approaches and descends on the city, precisely at this moment of twilight, in contrast to the sense of descent and unease existing in space, the poet experiences elevation and ascension, as expressed by the line, "and it rises in the multitude of colors of the rainbow" (*v'hi olah bishlal tziv'ey hakeshet*). Jerusalem is a city of "twilights," a city where the hidden is greater than the visible, and precisely when it rises, and not at all silently, it "plays the harp of the decade in me," or, plays the ten-stringed harp in me, (*nogenet bi k'nevel he'asor* – נוגנת בי כנבל העשור). The poet expresses here the struggle between the inner strength of Jerusalem and the "darkness" and "silence" that descend upon it.

As mentioned earlier, the chorus contains the words: כְּנִבְלַת הָעֶשׂוֹר, which is a quote from Psalm 92:3-4.

<p>To proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak, Your faithfulness each night</p>	<p>לְהַגִּיד בְּקֶרֶךְ חֲסִידֶיךָ וְאַמּוֹנֶתְךָ בַּלַּיְלוֹת:</p>
<p>With a ten-stringed harp, with voice and lyre together.</p>	<p>עָלֵי-עֶשׂוֹר וְעָלֵי-גִבְלַת עָלֵי הַיְגָיוֹן בְּכַנּוֹר:</p>

The songwriter thus conducts a dialogue with Psalms 92:3, and the author of the Psalms, King David, who expresses the need to thank God for moments of light in the morning, and for moments of darkness, "...to praise in the morning your kindness and your faithfulness at night" (חֲסִידֶיךָ וְאַמּוֹנֶתְךָ בַּלַּיְלוֹת לְהַגִּיד בְּקֶרֶךְ).

In the morning when everything is bright and clear and God's presence is easily felt, it is easy for a person to believe and express gratitude. But in dark times, at night, one needs faith to believe that God's presence and protection still exist in the world, even if danger and darkness are all around. The author of the Psalms suggests showing gratitude by playing "a **ten-stringed** harp, with voice and lyre together."

הַיְגָיוֹן (*higayon*) comes from the root ה.ג.ה – להגות, to pronounce or to think. In other words, one's voice, words or thoughts of gratitude must be accompanied by the harp of the decade, namely, a ten-stringed violin, or harp.

While I am not sure if Sarig had this idea in mind, I do believe he knew Naomi Shemer's song "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav." "Jerusalem of Gold" was written five years before "Or

Virushalayim.” Sarig’s line והיא נוגנת בי כנבל העשור (*v’hi nogenet bi k’nevel he’asor* - and she plays upon me like a harp), reminds me the final line in Shemer’s chorus: הלא לכל שיריך אני כינור (*halo l’chol shirayich ani kinor* - behold, I am a violin to all your songs). Psalm 92:3 connects all these concepts together – the violin, the harp of the decade (or, the ten-stringed violin), and the concept using music for praise even in dark times, when the night falls.

And indeed, Sarig’s second stanza describes the night falls. Here, the night, or the shadow is a mysterious lover approaching the city. There is a hint of danger, perhaps tension in this scene, but the city of Jerusalem responds with ten thousand (*ריבוא* - *ribo*) winks (*קריצות* - *kritzot*) of the city’s nightlights (*עיני האור* - *eynei ha’or*). From a possible experience of danger that the night brings, we discover a potential love scene, perhaps a forbidden love between the night (perhaps a male lover) and the city (perhaps a female lover). The city’s nightlights are open wide with excitement for this affair.

Another interpretation is that at night, when the people and the city are in their darkest moments and are looking for a source of hope, when there is no external light and the world is forced to search for its inner light, Jerusalem surprises and shines with an inner light – a light the people illuminate. These people are the people of Jerusalem we know from the present and throughout history. One of these people is King David.

Indeed, following this comes the repetition of the chorus where we hear the words of King David resonating through Psalms 92:3-4.

The third stanza can be understood as depicting the birth of the new day, which begins in the last third of the night (אַשְׁמֹרֶת אַחֲרֹנָה - *ashmoret aharonah*). We might hear in the night “breath” (אַשְׁמֹרֶת אַחֲרֹנָה נוֹשְׁמֶת) - *ashmoret aharonah noshemet*) an evocation of the panting of labor, or merely the sound of the last breaths of night-time sleep. The end of this night watch, however, and this sleep, brings a new young light (אוֹר צָעִיר) - *or tza'ir*), a new day rising over Jerusalem, the one that will "drive out" the darkness. This light is also born in a multi-sensory experience of hearing (דוּמְיָה - *dumiyah* - silence), sight (מַחְוִיר - *mahavir* - fade to white, (אוֹדֶמֶת - *odemet* - becomes red) and touch (מַגְעוֹ הַחַם - *maga'o hacham* warm touch), like that of a newborn baby.

But it can also be seen as a meeting of a couple in love who meet and blush every day. Now, the night becomes day, the crawling, dark shadow from the second stanza becomes white, velvet heaven (perhaps, a wedding gown?) and the city blushes with its dome (כַּפֶּת אוֹדֶמֶת) - *kipat zahav shelah odemet*).

The Juxtaposition with Hashkivenu

The song “Or Virushalayim” appears in *Tefilat Ha-Adam* on page 201 as part of the “Tosefta for Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit for Shabbat.” The immediate reason I wanted to juxtapose the song with the “Hashkivenu” prayer is the common theme of “Jerusalem.”

In an Israeli context, this song is sung during Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day), as well as Yom Hazikaron (Israeli Memorial Day). As a child, I sang this song as part of the Jerusalem children’s choir – the Ankor Choir. We sang it in official events in Jerusalem for dignitaries who came from abroad, or when we represented the city in choir

conventions in Israel and in Europe. This song was part of the choir's regular concert repertoire.

The song starts in the twilight of evening. If sung on Friday, that would be just the time that Shabbat begins. Darkness brings unease and fear. The "Hashkivenu" prayer seeks comfort and safety in the face of danger. If the song talked about shadows creeping to the city, the prayer states many other potential dangers: אויב (*oyev* - enemy), דבר (*dever* - sickness or disease), וחרב (*v'cherev* - war, literally: sword), ורעב (*v'ra'av* - hunger), ויגון (*v'yagon* - grief), עון ופשע (*avon vafesha* - transgression and crime).

The song includes imagery from the world of aviation. The prayer contains the phrase ופרוש עלינו סוכת שלומך (*ufros aleinu sukkat shlomecha* – spread upon us a shelter of peace). The root ש.פ.ר can also refer to spreading wings, which makes for a nice connection to the song and to the theme of winged flight. Later in the prayer, there is a wish for taking shelter under the wings of *Shechina* ובצל כנפך תסתירנו (*uv'tzel k'nafecha tastirenu*) – and hiding, or protecting us under the shadow of Your wing.

The word shadow (צל – *tzel*) appears in both the song and prayer. In the song, the shadow appears as a potential danger at first, crawling from the distant pine hills, but then we realize the same shadow is hiding like a lover (קרב בסתר כאוהב אל השכונות - *karev baseter k'ohev el hashchunot*). In the prayer, the shadow is a source of comfort and divine protection (ובצל כנפך תסתירנו – *uv'tzel k'nafecha tastirenu*). In fact, God is described as מצילנו (*matzilenu*) – our savior – and the word is built from the same root.

If we import from the prayer to the song the idea of God as צל (*tzel* - a shadow), we bring a whole new meaning to the scene depicted in the song. On Shabbat evening, God is seen

“crawling” into the city like a lover from the pine trees. The ten thousand lights winking from the city can refer to the Shabbat candles, lit by people bringing in Shabbat.

In both the song and prayer there are descriptions of downward and upward movement:

In the song it says, השקט שוב צונה (*hasheket shuv tzone'ach* - the silence **falls** again when evening skies are dusking) and the shadow crawls (down) from the pine hills; in the prayer – השכיבנו (*hashkivenu* - lie us down) and הפורש סוכת שלום (*hapores sukat shalom alenu* - spread over us a shelter of peace). Examples of upward movement in the song are ראיתי עיר עוטפת אור והיא עולה בשלל צבעי הקשת (*ra'iti ir otefet or v'hi olah bishlal tziv'ey hakeshet* - I saw a city embracing light **transcending** all the colors of the rainbow). And in the prayer, there is the plea of העמידנו (*ha'amidenu* - raise us up).

In both the song and prayer, there is a feeling of a divine embrace. In “Or Virushalayim,” the city is embracing light (עוטפת אור – *otefet or*) and is transcending in all colors of the rainbow. Light can represent the presence of God. In “Hashkivenu,” the divine embrace occurs through the spreading of the shelter of peace – הפורש סוכת שלום – (*hapores sukat shalom*) and through the hope to be hidden by God’s sheltering wings – ובצל כנפך תסתירנו – (*uv'tzel k'nafcha tastirenu*).

In the prayer, we have three words with the same root – ש.מ.ר. God is called שומרנו – (*shomrenu*) - our guard, our protector (והעמידנו שומרינו לחיים, כי אל שומרינו ומצילנו אתה) – *v'ha'amidenu shomrenu l'chayim, ki el shomrenu umatzilenu atah* – and raise us up our protector to life because You are our guard God and our savior) and in the form of imperative (ציווי - *tzivui*) ושומר צאתנו ובואנו (*ushmor tzetenu uvo'enu* - and guard our

coming and going). In the song, the same root builds the word אשמורת (*ashmoret* – watch) in the third stanza.

The word אשמורת (*ashmoret*) appears in Exodus 14:24

וַיְהִי בַּאֲשֶׁמֹרֶת הַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁקֹף יְהוָה אֶל־מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ וְעָנָן וַיִּהְיֶה אֵת מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם:

At the morning **watch**, ‘ה looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into panic.

באשמרת הבקר (*b’ashmoret haboker*) - In the morning watch — the three divisions of the night are each called an אשמורה (*ashmura* - a watch) (Berakhot 3b), and that which immediately precedes the morning is called “the morning watch.”

The word משמר (*mishmar*) describes a group that is responsible for a certain role in its turn. For example: משמרות כהנים (*mishmarot kohanim* – the priests’ watches) שירה של מלאכי מרום (*mishmarot shirah shel mal’achei marom* – the heaven’s angels’ singing watches). The word אשמורת (*ashmoret* – a watch) is a third of the night.

According to Rashi, it is called so because every period of time in the night represents the standing time of each of the sects of the ministering angels in reciting a song.

Rashi’s commentary about Exodus 14:24:

“I am of opinion that because the night is divided for the watches (משמרות) of the song of the ministering angels — company after company — into three divisions, therefore each division of the night is termed, for all purposes, an אשמרת (another form of משמר the angel’s watch).”

While the word אשמורת (*ashmoret* – a watch) according to Rashi is associated with singing, music, and angels, the context in “Or Virushalayim” is the silence of the night,

and the moments before the first light is born. If we apply Rashi's interpretation of the word אשמורת (*ashmoret*) to the occasion this song is used in *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, we might think about the angels that bring us the Sabbath day – the angels we are asking for protection, divine shelter, and to be covered by their holy wings.

In the last stanza, as mentioned before, we learn about the birth of a new day. למגעו החם (למגעו החם) הרך של אור צעיר (*l'maga'o hacham shel or tza'ir* – to its warm touch). The theme of “life” can also be found in the “Hashkivenu” prayer - והעמידנו שומרינו להיים (*v'ha'amidenu shomreinu l'chayim* - and raise us up, our Guardian, **to life** renewed), and ושמור צאתנו ולשלום (שמור צאתנו ולשלום) (*ushmor tzetenu uvo'enu l'chayim ul'shalom* - guard our going and coming, **to life** and to peace, evermore). The song “Or Virushalayim” is somehow the prayer of “Hashkivenu” coming true.

Conclusion

I was a fifteen-year-old high school student in Israel when the September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda terrorist attacks destroyed the World Trade Center in New York. To me – and most people around the world – “9/11” was an “international” event of “international” significance. But when I moved to New York in 2011, I learned that for New Yorkers “9/11” was seen more as a “local” story. It was New Yorkers who died in the attacks, it was New Yorkers who had to flee the city, it was New Yorkers whose daily lives were disrupted, and it was New Yorkers who had to deal with the lingering health effects from the “9/11” dust for decades following the attacks.

Similarly, Jerusalem – for Jews living in the diaspora – may have been historically more of a concept and/or aspiration rather than a reality. But for Jews living in Israel, it is impossible to ignore the centrality of Jerusalem in their lives. The city and its daily frustrations and joys are part of everyday life. Jerusalem is where Israelis catch a connecting bus to other Israeli cities. It is where Israelis sit in rush hour traffic, go shopping in the *shuk*, get parking tickets, go to school, stand in line for passport renewals in government offices, and report for duty when joining the Israeli Defense Forces. Jerusalem is not a “concept” for Israelis. It is an actual city. Jerusalem is a “local” story for people who live there. *Tefilat Ha-Adam* reflects that reality.

For Israelis who may be encountering the Reform Movement for the first time, the inclusion of poems and songs about Jerusalem will be natural. There is no theological problem regarding Jerusalem and Israel for people who live the reality of Jerusalem and

Israel – especially for people who were born and raised there. Jerusalem and Israel are the “normal” for anyone who has never known anything else.

For those local people, however, what is notable about *Tefilat Ha-Adam* are the theological differences in some of the prayers. Whereas, in the traditional “Hashkiveinu,” for example, the prayer includes language for spreading a shelter of peace “over us, over all Your people, and over Jerusalem,” (הפורש סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים) *Tefilat Ha-Adam* changes the language to spreading the shelter of peace “over us, over the whole community of Yisrael, over all the people of **the world**, and over Jerusalem.” (הפורש סוכת שלום עלינו ועל כל עדת ישראל ועל כל באי עולם ועל ירושלים). This is a more universal message, rather than tribal or local one, and it may be more appealing to liberal Israelis who associate the original traditional language with the Orthodox Judaism they may have rejected or had no contact with whatsoever.

Another interesting difference in *Tefilat Ha-Adam*'s version of “Hashkiveinu” is the use of the word עדה (*adah*) instead of the word עם (*am*). *Adah* is a group unified by a common goal or common action. *Am*, however, is a whole “people” connected by ethnicity, language, historical connections, common roots, etc. A person does not need to do anything to belong to an *am*. It is automatic upon birth, or a choice to convert to that group. An *adah*, on the other hand, affiliation is by mindset and values. “Hashkiveinu,” as it appears in *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, takes a more universal approach and connects the pray-er to people with the same mindset.

The word עדה (*adah*) was used by Moses when he said to Korach:

אתה וְכָל-עַמְּךָ הַנֹּעְדִים עִלֶּיךָ (במדבר ט"ז:י"א)

It is against ה' that you and all your company have banded together.
(Numbers 16:11).

עדה (*adah*) is a gathering for a specific purpose. According to this, it seems to say that the name “Adat Yisrael” speaks of a situation where there is a goal or action that unites Israel, as opposed to the name “Am Yisrael” which indicates the unity of Israel by the very fact they belong to one nation. According to *Tefilat Ha-Adam*, we pray for shelter for the people of Israel who are united with the same goals or values, and also for the people of the world who share those values. We do not only belong to a particular nation, but to a universal group of people, as well.

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Score

Nigunim/ Yedid Nefesh

Mother-Daughter Duet

David Zehavi/ Ehud and Sara Zweig

Arrangement: Shirel Richman

Flute

p misterioso

Piano

misterioso

Mezzo-Soprano
Mother

Voice
Daughter

The first system of the score features a Flute part with a melodic line in 3/4 time, marked *p misterioso*. The Piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand part with chords and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note bass line, also marked *misterioso*. The Mezzo-Soprano and Voice parts are currently silent, indicated by horizontal lines on their staves.

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

7

You planted melodies in me, my father and mother,

mp Sh'-tal - tem ni-gu - nim bi a - vi v' - i - mi ni-gu-

The second system begins at measure 7. The Flute part has a rest, while the Piano accompaniment continues with its rhythmic pattern. The Mezzo-Soprano part remains silent. The Voice part enters with the lyrics "You planted melodies in me, my father and mother," marked *mp*. The lyrics continue as "Sh'-tal - tem ni-gu - nim bi a - vi v' - i - mi ni-gu-".

2
13

Fl.

Nigunim

Pno.

p *mp*

Mezzo

Melodies, forgotten songs. Seeds, my heart carried seeds

nim miz-mo - rim sh'-chu - chim gar-i - nim gar-i - nim n' - sa -

19

Fl.

p

Pno.

Mezzo

Now they are rising and growing

am l' - va - vi a - ta hem o - lim v' - tsom - chim

Nigunim

24

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

Now they are sending branches in my blood

Mezzo

a - *mf* hem shol - chim po - rot b' - da - mi shor-she-

29

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

Their roots are intertwined in my veins,

Your melodies, my father, and your songs, my mother,

29

Mezzo

hem b'-or - kai sh' - lu - vim *mp* ni - gu - ne - cha a - vi v'-shi-

Nigunim

4
35

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

In my pulse they are waking up and coming back.

ra - yich i - mi b'-dof - ki n' - o - rim v' - sha - vim

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

Behold, I will listen to my distant lullaby

From the mouth of a mother's to a da

mp Hi - ne' a - a - zin shir ar - si ha - ra - chok hi - bi - a pi em e - lei

p Lu lu - lu lu lu lu Hi - bi - a pi em e - lei

Nigunim

47

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

47

Here they will glow ...with a tear and a laugh

bat *fi* - ne li tiz - har - na b' - de - ma us - chok Ei -

bat lu *fu* lu Ei -

53

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

53

The book of Eicha, and Shabbat melodies Every syllable will end

cha uz - mi - rot shel Sha - bat *mf* Kol he - ge yi - tam v'-chol

cha zmi rott shek Sha - bat *mf* Kol He - ge yi - tam v'-chol

Nigunim

6
59

Fl.

Flute part for measures 59-64. The melody begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note Bb4. It continues with a half note Bb4, a half note A4, and a half note G4. The piece concludes with a half note F4 and a quarter rest.

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measures 59-64. The right hand features chords and moving lines, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Mezzo

Mezzo-soprano vocal line for measures 59-64. The lyrics are: "and every sound will hushed Your distant voices will call within me." The Hebrew lyrics are: "tslil y'-a - lem Bi kol - chem ha-ra - chok ki y' - hom ei -".

Mezzo-soprano vocal line for measures 65-68. The lyrics are: "tslil y'-a - lem Y' - hom".

Fl.

Flute part for measures 65-68. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, a half note Bb4, and a half note A4.

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measures 65-68. The right hand has chords, and the left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *subito p* is present.

Mezzo

Mezzo-soprano vocal line for measures 65-68. The lyrics are: "I will close my eyes, and there I am with you". The Hebrew lyrics are: "nai e - e - tsom va-ha - rei - ni it - chem m' - al l' - chesh - chat ha - t' - Above the darkness of the abyss."

71 *Nigunim* 7

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

77

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

hom lai...

lai lai lai...

8
83

Fl.

Nigunim

Pno.

Mezzo

88

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

Ei _

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written for three parts: Flute (Fl.), Piano (Pno.), and Mezzo-soprano (Mezzo). It is in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The first system begins at measure 83. The Flute part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 83-87. The Piano part has a complex accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. The Mezzo-soprano part has a vocal line with a long note in measure 87. The second system begins at measure 88. The Flute part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 88-92. The Piano part has a complex accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. The Mezzo-soprano part has a vocal line starting in measure 88, ending with the syllable 'Ei'.

Nigunim

93 *sub. p*

Fl.

93 *subito p*

Pno.

93 I will close my eyes, and there I am with you

Mezzo

nai e' - e' - tsom va-ha - rei - ni__ it - chem m' - al l' - chesh -

98

Fl.

98

Pno.

subito p

98 Above the darkness of the abyss.

Mezzo

chat ha - t' - hom

ei - nai e' - e' - tsom va-ha -

Nigunim

10
103

Fl.

Pno.

Mezzo

103

rei - ni - it - chem m' - al l' - chesh - chat ha - t' - hom

108

Fl.

f

Pno.

108

mf

Mezzo

108

m' - al l' - chesh - chat ha - t' - hom

m' - al l' - chesh - chat ha - t' - hom

Nigunim

This musical score is for a piece titled "Nigunim". It features three parts: Flute (Fl.), Piano (Pno.), and Mezzo-soprano (Mezzo). The score is divided into two systems, each containing six measures.

System 1 (Measures 113-118):

- Flute (Fl.):** Measures 113-118. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4 and Bb4. Measures 114-115 feature a half note G4 with a slur over it. Measures 116-117 show a descending eighth-note scale: G4, F4, E4, D4. Measure 118 ends with a half note G3. A dynamic marking of *p* is present at the start of measure 113, and a hairpin crescendo is shown over measures 116-118.
- Piano (Pno.):** Measures 113-118. The right hand plays chords of G4, F4, and E4. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, F3, E3, D3. A dynamic marking of *subito p* is present at the start of measure 113. A hairpin crescendo is shown over measures 116-118.
- Mezzo-soprano (Mezzo):** Measures 113-118. The vocal line consists of six whole rests.

System 2 (Measures 119-124):

- Flute (Fl.):** Measures 119-124. Measure 119 starts with a half note G4 marked with an accent (>). Measures 120-121 have whole rests. Measures 122-124 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes: G4, F4, E4, D4. A hairpin crescendo is shown over measures 119-124.
- Piano (Pno.):** Measures 119-124. The right hand plays chords of G4, F4, and E4. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, F3, E3, D3. A hairpin crescendo is shown over measures 119-124.
- Mezzo-soprano (Mezzo):** Measures 119-124. The vocal line consists of six whole rests.

Min'ee Koleh Mibechi

with Birkot Hashachar

Idan Raichel
Pinchas Spiro Shabbat Nusach
Arranged by Shirel Richman

Cantor freely
Ba-ruch a - tah A-do-nai e-lo-he-nu me-lech-ha-o-lam_ a-she-er na - tan la-sech-vi vi-nah l'-hav

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

sfp oom _____ mm _____

sfp oom _____ mm _____

sfp oom _____ mm _____

sfp oom _____ mm _____



5
chin bein yom ³u-vein-lai - lah Ba-ruch-a - tah A - do-nai e - lo - hei - nu me-lech ha - o - lam_ sh' - a -

S
A
T
B

sfp oom _____

sfp oom _____

sfp oom _____

sfp oom _____

8 (♩ = 100)

sa - ni b'-tsal-mo___

S
sub. *p*_{oo}

A
sub. *p*_{oo}

T
sub. *p*_{oo}

B
sub. *p*_{oo}



13 (♩ = 100) **Andante moderato** ♩ = 98

S

A

T

B

Pno. *mf*

(♩ = 100) **Andante moderato** ♩ = 98

B. Dr.

Min'ee Kolech Mibechi

3
16

mf Ki ba - lei - lot shna-tech no - de - det

p Shna - tech no -

p Shna - tech no -

p Shna - tech no -

p shna - tech no -

19

v'-khol cha - lom hu l'-mo - ra Ha - ti az et oz - nech la -

de - det cha - lom mo ra ah -

de - det Cha - lom mo - ra ah

de - det cha - lom mo - ra ah

de - det cha - lom mo - ra ah

she - ket kol che - sed ra-cha - mim od ya - a'-leh hi - ne' hu ba

S
ah che - sed ra-cha - mim hi - ne' ba

A
ra - cha - mim hi - ne' ba hi - ne hu

T
she - ket cha - mim hi - ne' hu ba hi - ne hu

B
ra - cha - mim hi - ne' ba

Pno.

B. Dr.

Ki bish - vi - lo naf-shech nish me - ret Ha-rei kre - vah hi ha-sha'

S
*p*lo naf - shech nish - me - ret vah

A
ba *p*lo naf - shech nish - me - ret vah

T
ba *p*lo vah

B
ba *p*lo vah

Pno.

B. Dr.

a ad sh' - sha - dud biz - ro' - o - ta - yich yi - pol b'-sof ha -
 S hi ha - rei kre - vah ah - ah ah
 A hi ha - rei kre - vah ah
 T kre - vah hi ah
 B vah ah
 Pno.
 B. Dr.

31
 de - rech k'-she-ya-shu - vu lig - vu - lam *mf* Rak min - ee ko-lech mi -
 S lig - - vu - - lam *p* Ken lig - vu - lam *mp* Rak min - ee ko-lech mi -
 A lig - vu - lam Ken lig - vu - lam *mp* Rak - min - ee ko-lech mi -
 T lig - - vu - - lam *p* *mp* Rak min ee -
 B lig - vu - lam *mp* Rak rak -
 Pno.
 B. Dr.

S
A
T
B

be - chi v' - ei - na - yich mi - dim - a
 be - chi mi - be - chi na - yich mi - dim - 'a
 be - chi mi - be - chi na - yich mi - dim - 'a
 be - chi v - ei - na - yich mi - dim - 'a
 be - chi v' - ei - na - yich mi dim a ei - na - yich mi - dim

Pno.

B. Dr. ||



S
A
T
B

ki ha - sha - ar yi - pa - tach lo ya - vo bo bis - a - ra k' - she - ya - shu - vu lig - vu -
 yi - pa - tach ra shu - vu lig - vu -
 yi - pa - tach ra shu - vu lig - vu -
 yi - pa - tach ra shu - vu lig - vu -
 'a pa - tach ra shu - vu lig - vu -

Pno.

B. Dr. ||

S
lam *mp* Rak min-ee ko-lech mi - be - chi v' - ei - na - yich mi - dim - 'a

A
lam lig - vu - lam *p* Rak min-ee ko-lech mi - be - chi mi - be - chi na - yich mi - dim -

T
lam *p* Ah be - chi v' - ei - na - yich mi - dim - 'a

B
lam *p* Ah be - chi Ah

Pno.

B. Dr.

44

S
ki ha - sha - ar yi - pa - tach lo ya - vo bo bis - a -

A
'a 'a sha - ar yi - pa - tach lo

T
'a 'a yi - pa - tach lo

B
'a sha - ar yi - pa - tach lo

Pno.

B. Dr.

ei - na - yich mi - dim - 'a sha - ar yi - pa - tach lo

47

(♩ = 100)

ra k'she-ya-shu - vu lig - vu - lam

ra shu - vu lig - vu - lam

ra shu - vu lig - vu - lam

ra shu - vu lig - vu - lam

ra shu - vu lig - vu - lam

Pno.

B. Dr.

50

mf For in the nights your sleep's a -

pp l' hav-chin bein yom u - vein

pp l' hav-chin bein yom u - vein

pp l' hav-chin bein yom u - vein

pp l' hav-chin bein yom u - vein

Pno.

B. Dr.

93

lu - sive And eve - ry te - ror is a - live
 lai - lah Ha - no - ten la - ya - ef ko - ach
 lai - lah Ha - no - ten la - ya - ef ko - ach
 lai - lah Ha - no - ten la - ya - ef ko - ach
 lai - lah Ha - no - ten la - ya - ef ko - ach

56

lend your ear to the si - lence the voi - ces of com - pa - ssion will rise he will a -
 Ma -
 Ma -
 Ma -
 Ma -
 Ma -

rive For him your soul is be - ing guar - ded

S -tir a - su - rim *pp* sh' - a' - sa - ni yis 3 ra - el

A -tir a - su - rim *pp* sh' - a' - sa - ni yis 3 ra - el

T -tir a - su - rim *pp* sh' - a' - sa - ni yis ra - el

B -tir a - su - rim *pp* sh' - a' - sa - ni yis 3 ra - el

Pno.

B. Dr.

62

And the hour's dra - wing near When they'll march back to their

S Po - ke - ach iv - rim

A Po - ke - ach iv - rim

T Po - ke - ach iv - rim

B Po - ke - ach iv - rim

Pno.

B. Dr.

bor - der He'll fall bro - ken in your arms but at last he will be here

Ma - tir a - su - rim

Ma - tir a - su - rim

Ma - tir a - su - rim

Ma - tir a - su - rim

Just res - rain your voice from wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

Just re - strain your voice from wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding

Just re - strain your voice from wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding

Ah wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

Ah

For the gate will o - pen He will come through the
 tears Ah o - pen
 tears Ah o - pen
 Ah o - pen
 Your eyes from she-dding tears Ah o - pen

storm When they'll be mar - ching back to here *f* Just res - rain your voice from
 storm mar - ching back to here *p* Back to here *mf* Just res train
 storm mar - ching back to here *p* Back to here *mf* Just re-strain your voice from
 storm mar - ching back to here *mf* Ah
 storm mar - ching back to here *mf* Ah

wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

S
wee - ping *p* from wee - ping eyes from she - dding tears

A
wee - ping *p* from wee - ping eyes from she - dding tears

T
wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

B
wee - ping Ah tears Your eues from she-dding

Pno.

B. Dr.

80

For the gate will o - pen He will come through the storm When they'll be mar - ching back to

S
tears gate o - pen He will come through the storm *pp*Ma -

A
tears gate o - pen He will come through the storm *pp*Ma -

T
tears gate o - pen He will come through the storm *pp*Ma -

B
tears gate o - pen He will come through the storm *pp*Ma -

Pno.

B. Dr.

here

S
tir a-su-rim ma-tir a-su-rim 3

A
tir a-su-rim Ma-tir a-su-rim 3

T
-tir a-su-rim pMa-tir a-su-

B
-tir a-su-rim pMa-

Pno.

B. Dr.

Through what is left of your re-si-lience

S
O-zer Yis-ra-el big-vu-rah 3

A
pp O-zer Yis-ra-el big-vu-rah 3

T
pp O-zer Yis-ra-el big-vu-rah 3

B
rim pp O-zer Yis-ra-el big-vu-rah 3

tir 3a-su-rim pp O-zer Yis-ra-el big-vu-rah 3

Pno.

B. Dr.

Till the wa-ters of stream If brought back we will re -

S
Ro - ka ha - a-rets al ha ma - yim

A
Ro - ka ha - a-rets al ha ma - yim

T
Ro - ka ha - a-rets al ha ma - yim

B
Ro - ka ha - a-rets al ha ma - yim

Pno.

B. Dr.

92

turn re - strain your voice from wee-ping The hope is not a dream

S
Ma - tir a - su - rim

A
Ma - tir a - su - rim

T
Ma - tir a - su - rim

B
Ma - tir a - su - rim

Pno.

B. Dr.

Just res - rain your voice from wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

Just re - strain your voice from wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding

Just re - strain your voice from wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding

Ah wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

Ah

Pno.

B. Dr.

For the gate will o - pen He will come through the

tears Ah o - pen

tears Ah o - pen

tears Ah o - pen

Your eyes from she - dding tears Ah o - pen

Pno.

B. Dr.

storm When they'll be mar - ching back to here *mf* Just res - train your voice from

S storm mar - ching back to here Back to here Just res train_____ *p* *mp*

A storm mar - ching back to here *p* Back to here Just re - strain your voice from *mp*

T storm mar - ching back to here *mp* Ah_____

B storm mar - ching back to here *mp*

Pno.

B. Dr.

wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

S wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding tears

A wee - ping from wee - ping eyes from she - dding tears

T wee - ping And your eyes from she - dding tears

B wee - ping Ah tears Your eues from she - dding

For the gate will o - pen He will come through the
 tears gate o - pen He will come through the
 tears gate o - pen He will come through the
 tears gate o - pen He will come through the
 tears gate o - pen He will come through the



storm When they'll be mar - ching back to here
 storm Ma - tir a - su - rim
 storm Ma - tir a - su - rim
 storm Ma - tir a - su - rim
 storm Ma - tir a - su - rim

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

Piyyut for Shabbat

Moroccan Folk
Arr: Shirel Richman

(♩ = 120)
Allegro

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Clap

p *misterioso*

Clap

Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey

Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey

(♩ = 120) Allegro

animato

Ya' - la ya' -

mf

Piano

5

S

A

T

B

p *marcato*

Bo - i l'-ga - ni Par - cha gaf - ni

Bo - i l'-ga - ni Par - cha gaf - ni

Bo - i l'-ga - ni Par - cha gaf - ni

Bo - i l'-ga - ni Par - cha gaf - ni

Bo - i l'-ga - ni Par - cha gaf - ni

la bo'-i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo'-i l'-ga -

5

Pno.

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

10

S Bo - i l'-ga-ni Par - cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri

A Bo - i l'-ga-ni Par - cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri

T Bo - i l'-ga-ni Par - cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri

B Bo - i l'-ga-ni Par - cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri

ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya' - la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri

Pno.

15

S mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

A mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

T mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

B mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he - netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

Pno.

20

S
ni Ya - vo - do - di chish ts' - a - dav V' - yo - chal pri pri m' - ga - dav

A
ni Ya - vo do - di chish ts' - a - dav V' - yo - chal pri pri m' - ga - dav

T
ni Ya - vo do - di chish ts' - a - dav V' - yo - chal pri pri m' - ga - dav

B
ni Ya - vo do - di ya chish ts' - a - dav V' - yo - chal et pri pri m' - ga - dav

ni Ya - vo do - di ya - chis - ts' - a - dav v' - yo - chal et pri m' - ga - dav im y' - di -

Pno.

Molto legato

25

S
sub. p di di di di di da da da da da da da da da da da da da da

A
sub. p di di di di di da da da da da da da da da da da da da da

T
sub. p di di di di di da da da da da da da da da da da da da da

B
sub. p Di dop dop di dop dop di dop dop

di ar - chu n' du - dav eich y' - chi - da e - shev ab - ka -

Pno.

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

28

S da — Ya-la ya-la Snap Ya-la ya-la Snap Ya-la ya la bo-i l'-ga-

A da — *mp* Ya-la ya-la Snap Ya-la ya-la Snap Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la

T da — *mp* Snap Men turn to women Bo-i l'-ga-ni Snap gam par-cha gaf-ni Ya-la ya la bo-i l'-ga-

B da — Snap *mp* Bo-i l'-ga-ni Snap gam par-cha gaf-ni Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la

ni Ya-la ya - la bo-i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya - la bo-i l'-ga-

Pno.

34

S ni — he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya' -

A ya - la ya - la hey Ya - la ya - la hey hey hey ya - la ya - la hey *mf*

T ni — he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya' -

B ya - la ya - la hey Ya - la ya - la hey hey hey ya - la ya - la hey

ni — he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya-la ya' -

Pno.

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

37

S
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ra - ya chi - kech

A
ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa wa ya - la ya-la hey Ra - ya chi - kech

T
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ra - ya chi - kech

B
ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa wa ya - la ya-la hey Ra - ya chi - kech k'

Pno.

la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Chiz - ki ra - ya chi - kech k' - yein

42

S
k' - yein tov Ki tzitz yish - i ra - nan v'-tov doo doo doo doo doo doo

A
k' - yein tov Ki tzitz yish - i ra - nan v'-tov Doo doo doo doo doo doo

T
k' - yein tov Ki tzitz yish - i ra - nan v'-tov Doo doo doo doo doo doo

B
k' - yein tov Ki tzitz yish - i ra a - nan v'-tov Doo dop dop

Pno.

tov ki tzitz yish - 'i ra'-a - nan - v'-ra - tov u - l'-si - ra - yich ech - rot v'ech -

sub. p Molto legato

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

46

S
doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo — Ya-la ya-la

A
doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo — Ya-la ya-la

T
doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo da — Snap

B
Doo dop dop doo dop dop da — Snap

Pno.
tov v'-chish esh lach lach es sga - ni Ya'- la ya - la bo'-i l'-ga -

50

S
Snap Ya-la ya-la Snap

A
Snap Ya-la ya-la Snap

T
Bo' - i l'-ga-ni Snap gam par-cha gaf-ni

B
Bo' - i l'-ga-ni Snap gam par-cha gaf-ni

Pno.
ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Drum Solo

54

S

A

T

B

Pno.

59

S

A

T

B

Pno.

Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey ya-la ya-la_ ya-la ya-la

Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey ya-la ya-la_ ya-la ya-la

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

64

S
ya - la ya-la hey Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya hey ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya - la ya - la hey

A
ya - la ya-la hey Ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya hey ya-la ya-la ya-la ya-la ya - la ya - la hey

T
8

B

Pno.

69 Choir + kahal

S
Ya-la — ya-la ya-la — ya-la ya - la ya-la hey ya-la — ya-la ya-la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey

A

T
8
Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la hey hey hey ya - la ya-la hey

B
Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la hey hey hey ya - la ya-la hey

Pno.

73

S
Ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya hey ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya-la hey

A

T
8
ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa wa ya - la ya-la hey

B
ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa wa ya - la ya-la hey

Cantor joins last time

Ya' - la ya -

Pno.

77 Choir + kahal

S
Ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya-la hey__ ya - la__ ya - la__ ya - la__ ya - la

A
Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la hey hey hey

T
8
Ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya-la hey__ ya - la__ ya - la__ ya - la__ ya - la

B
Ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la ya - la ya-la hey Ya - la ya-la hey hey hey

la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf -

Pno.

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

80

S
ya - la ya-la hey Ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya hey ya-la ya-la ya-la__ ya-la

A
ya - la ya-la hey ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa__ wa

T
ya - la ya-la hey Ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la__ ya-la ya - la ya hey ya-la ya-la ya-la__ ya-la

B
ya - la ya-la hey ya - la ya-la hey hey hey wa wa wa wa__ wa

Pno.

ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf -

84

S
ya - la ya-la hey la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' -

A
ya - la ya-la hey la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' -

T
ya - la ya-la hey la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' -

B
ya - la ya-la hey la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' -

Invite the kahal to sing in unison

ni Ya'-la ya' - la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri mon gam par-cha gaf - ni Ya'-la ya' -

Pno.

89

S
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni L'-cha do - di Li - krat ka -

A
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni L'-cha do - di Li - krat ka -

T
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni L'-cha do - di Li - krat ka -

B
la bo' - i l'-ga - ni he-netz ri - mon gam par-cha gaf - ni L'-cha do - di Li - krat ka -

Pno.

94

S
la p'-nei Sha - bbat n' - ka-b' - la L'-cha do - di li - krat ka - la p'-nei sha

A
la p'-nei Sha - bbat n' - ka-b' - la L'-cha do - di li - krat ka - la p'-nei sha

T
la p'-nei Sha - bbat n' - ka-b' - la L'-cha do - di li - krat ka - la p'-nei sha

B
la p'-nei Sha - bbat n' - ka-b' - la L'-cha do - di li - krat ka - la p'-nei sha

Pno.

Yaalah Yaalah Boi L'gani

99

S
bbat n' - ka - b' - la Repeat L'cha Dodi with Kahal until cantor's cue

A
bbat n' - ka - b' - la Repeat L'cha Dodi with Kahal until cantor's cue

T
bbat n' - ka - b' - la Repeat L'cha Dodi with Kahal until cantor's cue

B
bbat n' - ka - b' - la Repeat L'cha Dodi with Kahal until cantor's cue

Pno.
99

The musical score is written for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano (Pno.). The vocal parts are in a single melodic line with lyrics: "bbat n' - ka - b' - la". Each vocal line includes the instruction "Repeat L'cha Dodi with Kahal until cantor's cue". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a triplet of chords, and the left hand plays a triplet of notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a dynamic of *99* (fortissimo).