

Accompanying Notes by Cantor Moshe Haschel for Shabbat Shira

11 Shevat 5772 - 3/4 February 2012

Kabbalat Shabbat

Lechu Neranenah Lashem

'O come let us sing joyously to the L-rd, let us shout for joy, to the rock of our salvation' (Psalm 98).

With these words we welcome and inaugurate the Shabbat. Already in ancient times Shabbat was described as a queen or a bride. The Talmud (Shabbat 119 a) tells us that as Shabbat drew near Rabbi Chanina put on his best clothes, stood up and exclaimed *'Come, let us go towards Shabbat the queen'*, while Rabbi Yanai used to welcome the Shabbat and say; *'Boi Challa, Boi Challa'* - *'Enter O Bride, enter O Bride'*.

Kabbalat Shabbat as we have it today developed relatively recently. In old siddurim we don't find it even as late as 1678 (Lublin siddur 5438). It was only in the sixteenth century that Safed kabbalists started to welcome Shabbat by the recitation of psalms and songs. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522-1570) introduced the six psalms, 95-99 and 29 and his brother in law Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (1500-1580) composed the beautiful poem Lecha Dodi. Later Kabbalat Shabbat was accepted universally. Its recital to a very special and exhilarating 'Nusach' (the specific tunes for the individual prayers) arouses enthusiasm and exaltation in worshipers. It is only natural that it inspired Chazzanim and choral composers to set parts of its text to music. Thus Kabbalat Shabbat became the centre of the Friday evening service setting that special *'shabesdig'* spirit of delight and tranquility that every Jew associates with Shabbat.

Kol Hashem Chotzev Lahavot Esh

Leib Glantz

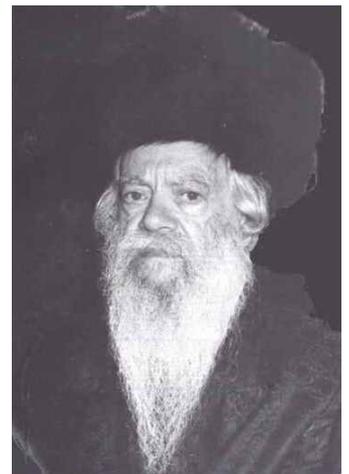


Leib Glantz was born in 1898 into a family of Tolna Chasidim. In *'Kol Hashem'* like in many of his other compositions, Glantz demonstrates his deep understanding of the traditional *'Nusach'*. This enabled him to create on-the spot very exciting improvisations. Nevertheless, Glantz manages to go beyond that Nusach and create a special atmosphere depending on the context or occasion while maintaining the chassidic fervor in his rendition.

LoTevoshi

Rabbi Shemuel Eliyahu Taub

The Chassidim of Modzitz (originally in Poland, now centered in Israel) are known for the great emphasis they place on music as an integral part of Avodat Hashem (the service of G-d). Being true to their philosophy, past and present Modzitzer Rebbis engaged extensively in the composition of beautiful *niggunim* to be sung during prayers, the Shabbat and Yom Tov tables and other religious occasions. Their melodies became popular throughout the Jewish world for their liveliness and musical flow. The tune for Lo Tevoshi, was composed by Rabbi Shemuel Eliyahu Taub (1905-1984), the third Modzitzer rebbe known as the Imrei Esh in 1944. *"Be not ashamed, be not confounded. Why are you downcast"*...It is a Chassidic custom to change the melody at *'Lo Tevoshi'* to a more upbeat tune to reflect a change to a more exhilarating mood conveyed in the text. This beautiful tune is both rousing and soul stirring.





Louis Lewandowski was born in the Wreschen province of Poznan. He received his musical education in Berlin where he was the first Jew to be admitted to the Berlin Academy of Arts. In 1844 the Berlin Jewish community invited him to organize and direct a choir. In 1864 he became the choir director at the new synagogue in Berlin, where he realized his full potential, publishing his '*Kol Rinah*' (1871) and '*Todah Vezimrah*' (1876). Like Solomon Sulzer his music was adopted throughout the world and is still widely used today.

This beautiful 'Tzadik Katamar' is for cantor and choir as opposed to his other setting for choir only (sung here on many Friday night with congregational participation).

Hashem Malach**Joseph Rosenblatt**

Psalm 93 speaks of the Messianic era when the entire world will recognize G-d as the only King. The majesty and elegance of the music portray this very eloquently. Here Rosenblatt utilizes the 'Hashem Malach' mode combining it with more Modern influences to great effect.

(see note at the end on Chazan Rosenblatt)

Ma'ariv Service***Hamaavir Banav*****David Koussevitzky**

This beautiful arrangement for chazzan and choir is based on an earlier version by the famous David Moshe Steinberg. It expresses the joy of the Shirat Hayam at the banks of the Red Sea and very appropriately chazzanim sing it on Shabbat Shira.

Veshamru**A. Dunajewski**

Dunajewski was choirmaster in Odessa, the centre of chazzanut in Russia. Veshamru is one of the most popular compositions in the entire cantorial repertoire.

Retzeh Vimmuchateinu**A Himmelstein**

This is the middle and central blessing of the Shabbat Amidah, where we pray to G-d to be blessed by his spiritual bounty. Retzeh is included in the Friday night quasi repetition of the Amidah known as the '*Me'en Sheva*' blessing. Among Himmelstein's teachers we find names such as A. Davidowitz of the Nozcik synagogue in Warsaw (still in existence today) and David Aisenstadt of the Tlomacka synagogue whose influences can clearly be heard in his compositions. In Retzeh, the melodious beauty and the elegance together with the heartfelt supplication, all set in the traditional Friday night 'Nusach' create that special spirit of peace and tranquility associated with Shabbat.

Yigdal**A. Saqui**

This hymn consists of thirteen lines constructed metrically. Composed by the Dayan Daniel Ben Yehuda of fourteenth-century Rome, who took his theme from Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith '*Ani ma'amin*'. The Saqui melody is festive and in some congregations, it used to be sung specifically on Pesach

Shacharit Service***E-l Adon*****HersHKovitz**

HersHKovitz is an Israeli composer based in New York of modern Chasidic music. His tune for Ein Aroch Lecha that we adapted to E-l Adon is very popular worldwide.

Ram Venisa**Joseph Rosenblatt**

Joseph (known by his endearing diminutive "*Yossele*") Rosenblatt was born in the Ukraine in 1882. He began his career as a "*wunderkind*" at the age of nine and became the most popular cantor of his day. He served in synagogues in Hungary, Germany and the USA until his death in Palestine in 1933. As a composer he was prolific - his output totaled several hundred pieces, many of which were recorded by Rosenblatt himself. His music is still widely performed and recorded by various cantors to this day. The popularity of his compositions is a result of their expressiveness and immediate melodic appeal. The climax of the piece occurs at the words '*Shira chadasha shibechnu geulim leshimcha*' – '*With a new song the redeemed people offered praise to Your name at the sea shore*' which are sung very appropriately to a rousing and triumphant march.

Ein Kamocha

Salomon Sulzer was born in Hohenems, Austria. In 1826 he was called to the post of the Viennese Seitenstettengasse Synagogue, where for 45 years he rejuvenated synagogue song and exerted a profound influence on European synagogue music. He produced the first volume of his monumental opus '*Schir Zion*' in 1840. In volume two, produced in 1866, some 37 compositions were contributed by other composers, including Schubert, Von Seyfried and Fischhoff. He was the first to reconstruct the traditional melodies in accordance with the rules of classical harmony.

Solomon Sulzer



Ki Lekach Tov

Zilberts (1881-1949) was a prominent choral conductor and composer. He was the son of cantor Baruch Hirsch of Karlin, Russia. He started his musical career in Poland and in 1920 emigrated to the United States where he was conductor of various synagogue choirs and other choral groups. Some of his numerous liturgical compositions like "Havdala" and "Al Naharot Bavel" (on the rivers of Babylon) have become classics of the Cantorial repertoire. This collection of verses is recited when the Torah scroll is placed back in the Ark after the reading of the Torah - one of the highest points in the service. Zilberts creates an atmosphere of yearning to G-d and adherence to his law, culminating in the last verse: "*Turn us back O L-rd, to You, and we shall return; renew our days as of old*".

Zavel Zilberts

Mussaf Service

Na'aritzcha

Leo Low

The verses of the Kedushah, *Kadosh* and *Baruch* are the descriptions of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel of the way the angels in heaven praise the Al-mighty. We present the Kedushah with the beautiful poetic introduction *Naaritzcha*. "We will revere You and sanctify You with those very words uttered by the holy seraphim who hallow Your name in the sanctuary". From here we get the impression that by saying the words of the Kedushah we try to emulate the angels. In fact the Talmud (Chulin 91b) tells us that the angels in heaven are not permitted to say the Kedushah, until it is being said by the people of Israel. Rabbi Chaim of Wolozhin in his work '*Nefesh Hachayim*' explains that even though the *malachim* are on a much higher spiritual level than us, it is **our** recitation of these verses that gives them the power to utter them themselves. If we take this idea further we could say that the way in which we recite the Kedushah is of the highest significance. The intensity of devotion in which we say these praises will be reflected in the way it will be uttered by the angels themselves since they draw all their substance from **us**. Here again the music has the power to instill in us the proper kavanah

Low was a choral director and composer who did much to raise artistic standards and interest in Jewish music in Poland and the United States. He served as choirmaster in Vilnius and Bucharest. In 1908 he became the choirmaster in the Tlomacka Synagogue in Warsaw where the great Gershon Sirota served as cantor. His *Na'aritzcha* that we sing today became very famous through the recordings of Sirota and Moshe Koussevitzky. This exquisite setting conveys aptly the holiness and majesty contained in these verses. Particularly appealing is the third part-Mimekomo - "*From His place may He turn in mercy to a people who evening and morning proclaim in love 'Hear O, Israel*".

Zvi Talmon was born in Jerusalem in 1922 and studied composition in the Jerusalem Music Academy. He founded Jerusalem's 'Hechal Shlomo' Choir (later to become the Famous Jerusalem Great Synagogue Choir) and was its conductor for many years. Talmon composed both classical and synagogue music. His music is based on European and medieval modes as well as biblical cantillation modes with an added Israeli flavour. A beautiful example is his setting for 'Lecha Dodi' which is based on the traditional melody of 'Shir Hashirim' – Song of Songs (we sang it on previous Shabbat Shira Friday night services). Perhaps his most well known piece is the exquisite 'Ein Ke-lokeinu' which involves a boy solo. 'Uvyom Hashabbat' is a short piece based on the Mussaf Shabbat service 'nusach' and flows smoothly with the recitation of the Musaf Amida repetition.

Yismechu

Yankel Talmud

Yaakov 'Yankel' Talmud (died 1965) was the unofficially appointed composer to the Chassidic court of Gur, first in Poland and later in Jerusalem. The Gerer Chassidim have the principle of '*Sing unto the L-rd a new song*' (Psalm 98) - a new melody makes an impression on the soul. In accordance with this idea Yankel Talmud used to compose before each set of Festivals at least ten new 'niggunim', thus enriching the world of Chassidic music. His output is said to have reached some 1500 melodies. Yismechu like many of them although known worldwide, their composer's identity is almost unknown.



Yosef –'Yossele' Rosenblatt (1882-1933) is generally considered to be the uncrowned king of cantorial music. People often refer to him just as "Yossele," a Yiddish diminutive of Josef. Rosenblatt's greatest hit was his recording of "*Shir Hama'alot*," Psalm 126, to a tune composed by Minkowsky. This psalm is said on festive occasions, just before the "Grace after Meals." This cheerful melody became so popular, that soon it was considered to be the traditional tune for this psalm. When the State of Israel was looking for a suitable National Anthem, Rosenblatt's "Shir Hama'alot" was proposed as a serious candidate.

'Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to Hashem'

The sublime song at the banks of the Red Sea was started by Moshe but the Children of Israel immediately joined in. This was their natural response in the wake of their divine inspiration that was bestowed upon them after witnessing the great miracles at the parting of the sea.

Indeed, the obligation to praise and thank Hashem is on every individual. Ramban (Nachmanides) in his commentary at the end of Parashat Bo says that the primary intention of G-d's creation of the world was that man should know that he was created by Him and give thanks and praise to the A-lmighty for being created. He states: '...the purpose of **raising** (our) **voice in prayer** and the intent of (having) synagogues and the merit of the many (i. e. the congregation), is that there should be a place for people to gather and give thanks to the A-lmighty who created them...and they would publicize this by saying before Him 'we are your creations' '.

In our services we have parts which are recited loudly by the chazzan who represents the congregation in prayer. But the individual's duty of praising G-d cannot simply be fulfilled by proxy. Our devotion has to be not only sincere and heartfelt but also expressed externally **by raising our voices in song** to Hashem. Congregational singing, in various parts of the service, is there to provide with the power of music the opportunity to fulfill this noble idea. I would like to invite you all to join me and the choir, were appropriate, with great enthusiasm and dedication to offer our songs and praises to our Creator.

Moshe Haschel