

The Art of

CANTOR LOUIS DANTO



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Jack BARAS, *Organ*

Side 1:

EZKERA ELOHIM VS'HEMAYA I REMEMBER WITH AGONY AND HOPE

From the Ne'ila Service
The Conclusion of Yom Kippur
Composed by Leib Glantz

KULAM AHUVIM THEY ARE ALL BELOVED

The Shahrut — Morning Service:
Introducing the Shema
Composed by Herman Zalis

AL HARISHONIM VA'AL HA'AHARONIM

ON ALL GENERATIONS — GONE AND AHEAD
The Shahrut — Morning Service:
Preceding the Shema
Composed by Joshua Lind

HASHKIVENU LET US REPOSE IN PEACE

The Aravit — Evening Service
Composed by Israel Alter

Side 2:

SHEMA ISRAEL HEAR O ISRAEL

The Musaf Service for the Sabbath and Holidays
The Kedusha
Traditional, arr. by Louis Danto - Noah Shall

MAGEN AVOT THE SHIELD OF THE FATHERS

The Aravit LeShabbat
Sabbath Eve Service:
The Abridged Amida
Traditional, arr. by Louis Danto

HINENI MUKHAN UMEZUMAN I AM READY AND PREPARED

A Preparatory Prayer Before Sefirat Ha'Omer
(Counting the days between Pesah and Shavuot)
Composed by Israel Alter

ZOHZLIM V'RO'ADIM WITH FEAR AND TREMBLE

Composed by Louis Danto - Noah Shall

MAROM IM ATZMU MOST HIGH: THOUGH OUR FAILINGS ARE GRAVE

Composed by Leib Glantz

Selichot Service:
Penitential Prayers Commencing the High Holidays

INTRODUCTION

Out of the Depth Mimaamakim

The vocation of the *hazzan* (the cantor) combines mission and artistry. The *hazzan* leads the congregation in prayer; he is their emissary, representing them before God and instilling within them a deep sense of togetherness. He articulates the prayers of old with his pleasing, captivating voice, reviving the traditional melodies with new rhythms and vibrations. The *hazzan* evokes emotions, stirs the depth of the worshipper's heart; his is the art of the soul, expressing his innermost feelings, as well as those of his people.

The role of the *hazzan* complements the rabbi's. The rabbi is called upon to teach by imparting knowledge and guidance; the cantor, to reach the hearts, to kindle a fire of devotion, to evoke memories and commitments — all this through his inspiring singing, communicating out of the depth.

Ezkerah Elohim Ve'Ehemaya
I Remember With Agony and Hope
From the Ne'ila Service,
The Conclusion of Yom Kippur
Composed by Leib Glantz

This poem was composed in Italy in the beginning of the 10th Century by Rabbi Amitai ben Shephatyah. Chanted at the concluding service (Ne'ila) of Yom Kippur, this poem of supplication expresses the agony and hope of the people yearning for Jerusalem, remembering its past glory and bemoaning its humiliation and destruction.

This prayer may be considered as a powerful initiative for the rebuilding of Jerusalem in our own days, now united and rehabilitated under Jewish rule in the modern State of Israel.

This poem of petition and mourning is still recited in our day as a means of forging our links to the past and kindling our desire for full redemption.

Freely translated, the poem reads:

I remember with agony and hope
the city of Jerusalem
When I see every other city
built on its site
While the city of God
is down to the ground.

The poem appeals to the 13 divine attributes of mercy to plead before the Almighty on behalf of the people:

For every heart is in pain
Every head, in distress.

Despite the sad tune, there emerges a strong sense of assurance and confidence:

The gates of tears are never closed;
God, You always hear the voice of weeping
For on You alone we trust.



Kulam Ahuvim

They Are All Beloved
The Shahrut — Morning Service:
Introducing the Shema
Composed by Herman Zalis

Man's clinging to God is a part of a cosmological phenomenon. All nature adheres to the will of God. Man too aspires to worship God by his free choice in the same manner that nature worships Him by law. There is no rebellion against God in nature, which in its various expressions is a constant manifestation of God's glory. Man is inspired to reach the heights.

"They are all beloved" refers to the angels. All the laws of nature are indeed "*malachim*" — angels — agents and messengers of God's will. Man expresses his desire to emulate these divine angels, to follow God's will. This trend of ideas is the theme of the prayer which introduces the Shema.

All of them are beloved, all of them are pure, all of them are mighty; they all perform with awe and reverence the will of their Creator; they all open their mouth with holiness and purity, with song and reverence, sanctify and acclaim —

The name of the great, mighty and revered God and King, holy is He. (*Daily Prayer Book*, Philip Birnbaum, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, 1949, p. 342.)

(Continued on Insert)

Al Harishonim V'Al Ha'Aharonim**On All Generations — Gone and Ahead****The Shoharim — Morning Service:****Preceding the Shema****Composed by Joshua Link**

This prayer expresses the worshiper's conviction in God's concern and loyalty to His people. It is recited after the declaration of the Shema and before the Amida silent prayer. It conveys the idea that on all generations gone and ahead, the words of God are valid and faithful.

Alike for the first and the last generations this faith is good and valid forever and ever; it is true and trustworthy, a law that will not pass away. True it is that Thou art the Lord our God and the God of our fathers, our King and the King of our fathers, our Redeemer and the Redeemer of our fathers, our Maker and saving Stronghold, our Deliverer and Rescuer. Thou art eternal; there is no God besides Thee. (*Daily Prayer Book*. Philip Birnbaum, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, 1949, p. 348.)

Hashkivenu**Let Us Repose in Peace****The Aravit — Evening Service****Composed by Israel Alter**

This is a prayer for protection at the end of day before one retires. It reflects a mood of awareness and anxiety, as well as a sense of dependency and trust in the Almighty.

Grant, Lord our God, that we lie down in peace, and that we rise again, O our King, to life. Spread over us Thy shelter of peace, and direct us with good counsel of Thy own. Save us for Thy name's sake; shield us, and remove from us every enemy and pestilence, sword and famine and grief; remove the adversary from before us and from behind us; shelter us in the shadow of Thy wings; for Thou art our protecting and saving God; Thou art indeed a gracious and merciful God and King. Guard Thou our going out and our coming in, for life and peace, henceforth and forever. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who guardest Thy people Israel forever. (*Daily Prayer Book*. Philip Birnbaum, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, p. 198.)

Shema Israel**Hear O Israel****The Musaf Service for the Sabbath and Holidays****The Kedusha****Traditional, arr. by Louis Danto**

The Musaf service is the Additional Prayer for the Sabbath and Holidays. It includes the Kedusha, liturgy of Sanctification, which requires congregational participation, a quorum of ten men (minyan). Its unique feature is the recital of Shema Israel, the declaration of God's Oneness.

This recital originated as a result of governmental decrees against Jewish worship in the land of Israel in the 5th Century. Special government officials were placed in synagogues to prevent the congregation from reciting the Shema, which proclaims the unity of God.

Prevented from reciting the Shema properly during the morning service, the worshipers inserted it in an abridged and camouflaged form towards the end of the service. Then the Shema was recited by all with great devotion and enthusiasm.

Although those decrees were later abolished (7th Century), this insertion of the Shema was retained in the Musaf Kedusha in order to remember the past.

The melody of this prayer combines the serenity and dignity of a devotional proclamation with the sorrow and

agony of a protesting supplication. By the recital of the Shema as an integral part of the Musaf Kedusha, the worshipers demonstrate before God that despite all persecution, they cling to Him and remain loyal to their heritage.

From His abode may He turn with love and show grace to those who at evening and morning twice each day ever declare the unity of His name, with love proclaiming:

"HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD IS OUR GOD.
THE LORD IS ONE."

He is our God. He is our Father, He is our Sovereign. He is our Savior. In His tender love He will proclaim again for us in the sight of all living, "... to be your God, I am the Lord your God." (*Daily Prayer Book*. Philip Birnbaum, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, 1949, pp. 280-282.)

Magen Avot**The Shield of the Fathers****The Aravit LeShabbat****Sabbath Eve Service:****The Abridged Amida****Traditional, arr. by Louis Danto**

The Amida prayer of weekdays contains both prayers of thanksgiving (hodaya) and prayers of supplication (bakasha). On the Sabbath and festivals, however, only prayers of hodaya are recited. Days of repose and joy are not to be marred by thoughts of failings and trouble. Thus, the Amida prayer for the Sabbath includes seven benedictions, all of them expressing joy and gratitude.

The Magen Avot prayer, "Me'ein Sheva," an abridged form of all seven benedictions, was originally added to the service in order to enable late-comers who missed the full Amida to complete their prayers and leave the synagogue with their fellow worshipers.

The tune of this prayer is based on a special melodic form for the Sabbath eve in which the sense of thanksgiving is still engulfed by a touch of sadness; it is only the beginning of the Sabbath and the yoke of the six weekdays is still felt. This melodic form reflects the worshiper's inner struggle to overcome the tediousness of the weekdays and reach more and more of the light of the Shabbat which has just begun.

He was a shield of our fathers with His word,
And by His bidding He revives the dead.

He is the holy God;

There is none like Him.

He gives rest to His people on His holy Sabbath day,
For it pleased Him to give them its repose.

Each day we worship Him in reverence and awe,

And ever praise His name with the prescribed blessings.

God of praise, Lord of peace,

He hallows the Sabbath and blesses the seventh day;

He grants rest and sanctity to a people abounding
with joy.

It is a remembrance of His work of creation.

(*The Traditional Prayer Book for Sabbath and Festivals*.
David de Sola Pool, Behrman House, Inc., New York,
1960, p. 82.)

Hineni Mukhan Umezuman**I Am Ready and Prepared****A Preparatory Prayer Before Sefirat Ha'Omer****(Counting the days between Pesah and Shavuot)****Composed by Israel Alter**

The days between Pesah and Shavuot, which mark the beginning and the end of the Harvest Season in Israel, are counted day by day. During the ages, this ritual of counting has been charged with much emotion and tension. After the destruction of the agricultural settlement in the land of Israel, notably after the failure of Bar Kochba's

revolt (135 C.E.), the festive Harvest Season, known as the Sefira Period, became a time of sadness and nostalgia; its days were counted, but no crops were gathered.

The prayer which is recited by the *hazzan* before the actual counting of the day reflects in its melody, as well as in its content, deep aspirations for full redemption — of the individual and of all mankind.

I am spiritually prepared and set to fulfill the command of counting the Omer, as prescribed in the Torah: "From the morrow after the day of rest, from the day of your bringing the sheaf (Omer) of the wave-offering you shall count for yourselves seven weeks; complete they shall be, until the day following the seventh week you shall count fifty days." (*The Traditional Prayer Book for Sabbath and Festivals*. David de Sola Pool, Behrman House, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 466.)

Zohalim V'Ro'Adim**With Fear and Tremble****Composed by Louis Danto****Marom Im Atzmu****Most High: Though Our Failings Are Grave****Composed by Leib Glantz****Selihot Service:****Penitential Prayers Commencing the High Holidays**

The Seliha, a plea for Divine forgiveness, is an ancient form of liturgical poetry. Its main theme is man's awareness of his inherent responsibility for failures and misfortune, and his resolve to improve himself and the world by positive attitudes and deeds, seeking Divine inspiration and direction.

The Selihot prayers reflect deep humility, as well as strong determination, stemming from the conviction that God's concern overrules man's destructiveness; eventually the purity of man's heart will overcome his failings — the darkness in the world will be conquered by the Divine light kindled in man.

The Selihot services are an introduction to the High Holidays. They are customarily conducted at midnight, recalling the phrase (Psalm 119:62): "At midnight I rise to acknowledge You." At the serenity of night, these prayers evoke a transcendental sense, the worshiper being elevated above time, above his conventional sphere — as if he were standing with himself alone encountering his existence and destiny. There is an aura of remoteness from the established routine, a deep sense of fear and tremble.

The two parts sung by Hazzan Danto are both from the Pizmon (poem) Bemotzai Yom Menuhah, an anonymous alphabetic acrostic, which starts, "In the conclusion of the Day of Rest, we approach You first."

The Selihot services are conducted at Saturday midnight, four days before Rosh Hashana.

The melody of Selihot heralds the approaching of the High Holidays; it combines feelings of yearning, awesomeness, and petition.

Freely translated, it reads:

With fear and tremble we approach Your day
of coming.

You are the Creator of all creations.

Most High,

Though our failings are grave

We are looking for the treasures of Your
goodness and graciousness.

Lishmo'A El Harina Veel Hatefila

This is the poem's refrain which is a plea to God to accept our song and our prayers.

The introduction and the explanations were written by
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