Et Kos Yeshu‘ot

**Introduction:** This poem for Havdala begins with a modified citation from Ps. 116:13: “I raise the cup of deliverance and invoke the name of Adonai.” The poet recounts the sanctification of the Sabbath and its centrality for the Karaites; by following the Sabbath commandment, one may achieve salvation. The poet urges God to listen to the pleas of his people and to strengthen them. In the last stanza, he compares the Sabbath and the six weekdays to the seven planets circling the earth. The language is quite obscure in places, and thus, our translation is often tentative.

**Category:** Zemirot (Songs)  
  
**Genre:** Zemer for Havdala  
  
**Occasion:** Conclusion of the Sabbath  
  
**Name:** את כוס ישועות, Et Kos Yeshu‘ot  
  
**Composer**: Yosef ben Shemu’el Rodi

**Location:** Halicz, Galicia

**Date:** c. 1650‒1700  
  
**Acrostic:** אני יוסף בן שמואל חזק, “I am Yosef son of Shemu’el, be strong!”  
  
**Source:** Vilna Siddur, Volume 4, page 118  
  
**Visual Representation of Meter:** - - v - - - / - - v - - -  
  
**Description of Meter:** Each line consists of two half-lines, each of which contains two full vowels, followed by a vocal sheva and a full vowel, followed by two more full vowels.  
  
**Davidson number:** א 8547  
  
**Karaite origin:** Yes  
  
**About the Author:** Yosef ben Shemu’el was a scion of the family of Rodi, “red-haired” (*rudy*) in Polish. He was the religious leader (*ḥazzan)* of the Halicz Karaite community in Galicia, although he may have originally hailed from Troki, Lithuania. Ben Shemu’el formulated new regulations following the Lithuanian Karaite custom, and for his innovations and eruditeness, the community honored him with the title *ha-mashbir* (“the Provider”, Gen. 42:6). His offspring, the next generations of the Karaite *ḥazzanim* in Halicz,were eventually known as the “grand-children of the Provider.” Yosef was married twice: first to Menuḥa, and his second wife was named Ḥanna. He had—at least—one daughter, Menuḥa, and three sons, Abraham, Moshe, and Shemu’el.

Yosef ben Shemu’el was a prolific poet; *The* *Thesaurus* *of Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, by Israel Davidson, lists as many as twenty-one Hebrew titles by him.[[1]](#footnote-1) One of his Karaim-language poems was sung at Karaite weddings in Halicz until the 1920s. Yosef also authored several works on various topics: on Hebrew grammar, on the Ten Principles of Karaite Jewish faith, and on the more esoteric aspects of the Torah. He passed away relatively young, in his forties, and was eulogized and deeply mourned in Halicz.

**Sources**: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*; Mann, *Texts and Studies*; Reuven Fahn, *Kitve Reuven Fahn, Ḥeleḳ Rishon: Sefer Ha-ḳara’im* (Bilgoray, 1929). Meir Balaban. “Le-ḳorot haḳara’im be-polin,” *Ha-teḳufa* 16 (1923), pp. 293‒307, 21 (1924): 226‒235, 25 (1929): 350‒487; Mikhail Kizilov, *The Karaites of Galicia: An Ethnoreligious Minority Among the Ashkenazim, the Turks, and the Slavs, 1772‒1945* (Leiden, 2009).

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| Et kos yeshu‘ot : essa beyadi  Uvshem adonai : ḳodshi vehodi  Eḳra beḡilat : rannen kevodi  Anna adonai : ḥosni vedodi  Maḳdish leyomo : mavdil leḥeldi  Tirtsé be‘ovdi : lishmach adonai  Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | אֶ֒ת כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת : אֶשָֹּא בְּיָדִי וּבְשֵׁם יְהֹוָה : קָדְשִׁי וְהוֹדִי אֶקְרָא בְּגִילַת : רַנֵּן כְּבוֹדִי אָנָּא יְהֹוָה : חָסְנִי וְדוֹדִי מַקְדִּישׁ לְיוֹמוֹ : מַבְדִּיל לְחֶלְדִּי תִּרְצֶה בְּעָבְדִי : לִשְׁמָךְ יְהֹוָה תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| I raise the cup of deliverance in my hand, And upon the name of Adonai, my holy Majesty. I shall call, with my soul joyously singing!  Please, Adonai, my precious beloved:  When I hallow the day and divide my time,  Desire my service, in Your name, Adonai.  My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Noi ḥen behan‘im : shabbat ‘asitiv  Me‘od beshish-shi : hen hiḳdashtiv  Ki ḳav leḳav tsav : neḡdi ‘arachtiv  Zochro beyamim : ballev ahavtiv  Shomro beyomo : ḳodesh ḳerativ  Ben ḥol leḳodesh : yavdil adonai. | נ֒וֹי חֵן בְּהַנְעִים : שַׁבָּת עֲשִֹיתִיו מֵעוֹד בְּשִׁשִּׁי : הֵן הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיו כִּי קַו לְקָו צָו : נֶגְדִּי עֲרַכְתִּיו  זָכְרוֹ בְּיָמִים : בַּלֵּב אֲהַבְתִּיו  שָׁמְרוֹ בְּיוֹמו : קֹדֶשׁ קְרָאתִיו  בֵּין חֹל לְקֹדֶשׁ : יַבְדִּיל יְהֹוָה: |
| I have made beauty and grace, making the Sabbath sweet.  Already on the sixth day, I made it holy.  How I arranged all the commandments before me!  “Remembering it” during the week, I cherished it in my heart;  “Observing it” on the proper day, I called it holy!  Adonai will distinguish between the sacred and the profane. | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |

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| Yashar ne’umo : shomer berito  Layyom velel lish- : mor mishpato  ‘Al yad peḳidav : kochav veshivto  Tizkor vetishmor : shovet kedato  Yoshev beli tset : ḥutsa leshivto  Raḳ sha‘ashu‘av : torat adonai. | יָ֒שָׁר נְאוּמוֹ : שֹׁמֵר בְּרִיתוֹ  לַיּוֹם וְלֵיל לִשְׁ־ : מוֹר מִשְׁפָּטוֹ  עַל יַד פְּקִידָיו : כֹּכָב וְשִׁבְטוֹ  תִּזְכֹּר וְתִשְׁמֹר : שֹׁבֵת כְּדָתוֹ  יֹשֵׁב בְּלִי צֵאת : חוּצָה לְשִׁבְתּוֹ  רַק שַׁעֲשֻׁעָיו : תּוֹרַת יְהֹוָה: |
| The words of the One who keeps his covenant are just,  Day and night safeguarding His law  In the hands of His deputies, the Star and the Scepter:  “You will remember and observe!” Those who cease labor as required,  Stay put, and do not leave their place—  Their only delight is Adonai’s Torah! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Yish‘o vechol sod : pishro veḥinno  Yizké leshabbat : tsuro veḳono  Habba berav tuv : orech zemanno  Bo yimtsa ish : ‘oneḡ sesono  Yavin be’ahavat : yirat retsono.  Ki hen be’ellé : ḥafets adonai. | יִ֒שְׁעוֹ֒ וְכָל ס֒וֹד : פִּ֒שְׁרוֹ וְחִנּוֹ  יִזְכֶּה לְשַׁבַּת : צוּרוֹ וְקוֹנוֹ  הַבָּא בְּרַב טוּב : אֹרֶךְ זְמַנּוֹ  בּ֒וֹ יִמְצָא אִישׁ : עוֹנֶג שְֹשֹוֹנוֹ  יָבִין בְּאַהֲבַת : יִרְאַת רְצוֹנוֹ  כִּי הֵן בְּאֵלֶּה : חָפֵץ יְהֹוָה: |
| His salvation and each secret of His interpretation and beauty—  They will merit the Sabbath of their Rock and Creator,  Arriving with abundant goodness, its time extended.  On that day, everyone will find delight and joy,  And understand the love of fearing His will:  “For in these I delight,” declares Adonai. | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Na el yeshurun : mafli bema‘asav :  Zoḳef kefufim : marbé lenissav  Herim le‘ammo : lihyot beḥosav  Masgil leshabbat : ‘im tachsisav  Lahem levaddam : gilla kemusav  Tachin lelibbam : taḳshiv adonai. | נָ֒א אֵל יְשֻׁרוּן : מַפְלִיא בְּמַעֲשָֹיו  זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים : מַרְבֶּה לְנִסָּיו  הֵרִים לְעַמּוֹ : לִהְיוֹת בְּחוֹסָיו  מַסְגִּיל לְשַׁבָּת : עִם טַכְסִיסָיו  לָהֶם לְבַדָּם : גִּלָּה כְּמוּסָיו  תָּכִין לְלִבָּם : תַּקְשִׁיב יְהֹוָה: |
| Please, God of Yeshurun, amazing in His deeds,  Who straightens the bent and multiplies His miracles:  He raised His people up to seek refuge in Him.  He selected the Sabbath amidst his commandments.  His secrets are revealed only to them!  You will make their hearts firm; You will incline Your ear, Adonai! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Shim‘a le‘avdach : hatslaḥ beyado  Ma‘asav levarecho : yishkaḥ nedudo  Ushmor lenafsho : mits-tsar ufido  Af lo yesuggaf : bats-tsuḳ beḥeldo  Tarbé lechoḥo : ta‘ir kevodo  Nafshi beḥelḳi : amera adonai. | שִׁ֒מְעָה לְעַבְדָּךְ : הַצְלַח בְּיָדוֹ  מַ֒עֲשָֹיו לְבָרְכוֹ : יִשְׁכַּח נְדוּדוֹ  וּ֒שְׁמוֹר לְנַפְשׁוֹ : מִצַּר וּפִידוֹ  אַ֒ף לֹ֒א יְסֻגָּף : בַּצּוּק בְּחֶלְדּוֹ  תַּרְבֶּה לְכֹחוֹ : תָּעִיר כְּבוֹדוֹ  נַפְשִׁי בְּחֶלְקִי : אָמְרָה יְהֹוָה: |
| Listen to Your servant and make them succeed!  While praising His deeds, they shall forget their wanderings,  And protect their souls from harm and woe,  May they never again be tortured in sorrow, in their lifetime!  Increase their strength; awaken their glory:  My soul says: “Adonai is my portion.” | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Ḥazzeḳ le‘ammach : na‘ nad beḡalut  Ammets le’evyon : sharuy bedallut  Sammaḥ lelibbi : nichna‘ be’evlut  Dash-shen leroshi : namuch beshiflut  Ḥayyé lenafshi : save‘a beḳallut  ‘Ozzi vezimrat : yah vah adonai. | חַ֒זֵּ֒ק֒ לְעַמָּךְ : נָע נָד בְּגָלוּת  אַמֵּץ לְאֶבְיוֹן : שָׁרוּי בְּדַלּוּת  שַֹמַּח לְלִבִּי : נִכְנָע בְּאֶבְלוּת  דַּשֵּׁן לְרֹאשִׁי : נָמוּךְ בְּשִׁפְלוּת  חַיֵּה לְנַפְשִׁי : שָֹבְעָה בְּקַלּוּת  עָזִּי וְזִמְרַת : יָהּ וָהּ יְהֹוָה: |
| Brace Your people, who ceaselessly wander in exile,  Encourage the pauper trapped in poverty;  Gladden my heart, which is subdued in mourning;  Anoint my head, which is in the depths of lowliness;  Revive my soul, which is so sated from disgrace,  For Yah is my strength and might; hurrah, Adonai! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |

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| Ammen ve’af gam : ḳayyem ne’umach  Litsrof lesiggim : kabbor be‘ammach  Hasir bedilav : lihyot reḥumach  Yalin betsidḳo : ‘ashir veḡam mach  ‘Ad lo yeshuvun : lidov beza‘mach  Im lo lema‘anam : lishmach adonai. | אַ֒מֵּ֒ן֒ וְאַף גַּם : קַיֵּם נְאֻמָךְ  לִצְרוֹף לְסִגִים : כַּבּוֹר בְּעַמָּךְ  הָסִיר בְּדִילָיו : לִהְיוֹת רְחוּמָךְ  יָלִין בְּצִדְקוֹ : עָשִׁיר וְגַם מָךְ  עַד לֹא יְשׁוּבוּן : לִדְאוֹב בְּזַעְמָךְ  אִם לֹא לְמַעְנָם : לִשְׁמָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| Make Your words true and fulfill them:  To smelt out the dross as with lye amid Your people,  Removing all their slag: [they will] be Your beloved!  Rich and poor alike shall dwell in His righteousness  Until they will never again mourn in Your rage.  If not for their sake, for Your name, O Adonai! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Ach li beḥasdach : sammen beracha  Sheshet yemé ḥol : otam betittecha  Lishtsam veḥankal : haḳḳef melucha  Tashḳit mechoni : mikkol mevucha  Atta adon kol : hamma‘aracha  El ha’elohim : eḥad adonai. | אַךְ לִי בְּחַסְדָּךְ : סַמֵּן בְּרָכָה  שֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי חֹל : אוֹתָם בְּתִתְּךָ  לִשְׁצָ''ם וְחַנְכָּ''ל : הַקֵּף מְלוּכָה  תַּשְׁקִיט מְכוֹנִי : מִכָּל מְבוּכָה  אַתָּה אֲדוֹן כָּל : הַמַּעֲרָכָה  אֵל הָאֱלֹהִים : אֶחָד יְהֹוָה: |
| But for me, with Your grace, provide the blessed sign,  When giving [us] those six profane days:  Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon orbiting Your reign,  You will calm my habitation from all confusion;  You are the Lord of the heavenly system!  God, Adonai, is one! | |
| Tehgé leshoni : tsidḳach adonai. | תֶּהְגֶּה לְשׁוֹנִי : צִדְקָךְ יְהֹוָה: |
| My tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Adonai! | |
| Kakkatuv: Shema‘ yisra’el adonai elohenu adonai eḥad. | כַּכָּתוּב: שְׁמַ֖ע יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ יְהֹוָ֥ה ׀ אֶחָֽד׃ |
| As it is written: Hear, O Israel! Adonai is our God, Adonai alone (Deut. 6:4). | |

1. However, he had at least two namesakes, who may have written some of these poems. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)