אורי יחידתי, Ori Yeḥidati

**Introduction:** This poem for the Sabbath addresses the human soul with the metaphors of luminous light, preparing for the Sabbath both spiritually and intellectually. In the Kabbalistic style popular among early modern Eastern European Karaites, the refrain welcomes the Sabbath as a bride.

**Category:** Zemirot (Songs)  
  
**Genre:** Zemer for the Sabbath  
  
**Occasion:** Sabbath  
  
**Name:** אורי יחידתי, Ori Yeḥidati  
  
**Composer**: Mordochai Sultansky  
  
**Location:** Lutsk, Volhynia, and Chufut-Kale, Crimea  
  
**Date:** 1772‒1862  
  
**Acrostic:** אברהם בר לוי הראש חזק אמץ “Abraham, the son of Levi ha-Rosh, be strong and courageous” (the name of the poet’s brother-in-law)  
  
**Source:** Vilna Siddur, Volume 4, page 98  
  
**Visual Representation of Meter:** – – v – – – / – – v – –  **Description of Meter:** Each line consists of two half-lines: the first half-line contains two full vowels, followed by a vocal sheva and a full vowel, followed by two more full vowels. The second half-line consists of two full vowels, followed by a vocal sheva and a full vowel, followed by one more full vowel.  
  
**Davidson number:** א 2028  
  
**Karaite origin:** Yes  
  
**About the Author:** Mordochai Sultansky was born in Lutsk, Volhynia. For the first forty years of his life, he worked in Lutsk as a teacher in a religious school. After a devastating fire in Lutsk in 1813, he moved to Chufut-Kale in the Crimea, where he studied with the local scholar, Yitsḥaḳ ben Shelomo (1755–1826), the author of *Or Ha-levana* (“The Light of the Moon”, Zhitomir, 1872) on the Karaite calendar reform. He worked as a teacher both in Chufut-Kale and in Eupatoria and contributed to the printing of Karaite works in Eupatoria. He held a lifelong interest in classical Jewish literature, and studied the works of the Maskilim, the adherents of the Jewish Enlightenment movement Haskalah.

Sultansky wrote a historiographical treatise on the history of Karaite Jews (*Zecher* *Tsaddiḳim*, reprinted in Warsaw, 1920), a work on theology (*Tetiv Da‘at*, 1858), and a Hebrew grammar (*Petaḥ* *Tiḳva*, 1857). Abraham Ha-levi, mentioned in the acrostic of Sultansky’s poem, was a *ḥazzan* in Halicz, and a brother-in-law of Mordochai.

**Sources**: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*; Mann, *Texts and Studies*.

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| Ori yeḥidati : shiri ve’ema  El yah tehallel lo : kol hanneshama  Ki va zeman ratson : ora shelema  Ḳaddem levat gilech : pitsḥi vezimra. | א֒וֹרִי יְחִידָתִי : שִׁירִי בְאֵימָה  אֶל יָהּ תְּהַלֵּל לוֹ : כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה  כִּי בָא זְמַן רָצוֹן : אוֹרָה שְׁלֵמָה  קַדֵּם לְבַת גִּילֵךְ : פִּצְחִי בְזִמְרָה: |
| Shine my precious one, sing in awe.  Let all that breathes praise Yah!  When the auspicious moment arrives, the perfect light,  Go towards your joyous partner; break into song! | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Bini le‘atsmutech : borech be’erech  Shiti levavech bin : sod raz ḥaverech  Tede‘i metsi’ut tsur : yotser yetsarech  Ki hu be’aḥduto : nimtsa tedira. | בִּ֒ינִי לְעַצְמוּתֵךְ : בּוֹרֵךְ בְּאֵרֵךְ  שִׁיתִי לְבָבֵךְ בִּין : סוֹד רָז חֲבֵרֵךְ  תֵּדְעִי מְצִיאוּת צוּר : יוֹצֵר יְצָרֵךְ  כִּי הוּא בְּאַחְדּוּתוֹ : נִמְצָא תְּדִירָה: |
| Understand your essence, your cistern and your well.  Pay attention; discern the enigmatic secret of your mate [God]!  You will know the essence of the Rock, the Creator of your form,  For He in His oneness exists constantly. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Rutsi geveret hak- : koḥot nesucha  Min‘i lemerkavech : mikkol melacha  Ḳeruv sheḳi‘a ‘et : reshit beracha  Shivvuy leshabbaton : dimyon devora. | ר֒וּצִי גְּבֶרֶת הַ־ : כֹּחוֹת נְסוּכָה  מִנְעִי לְמֶרְכָּבֵךְ : מִכָּל מְלָאכָה  קֵרוּב שְׁקִיעָה, עֵת : רֵאשִׁית בְּרָכָה  שִׁוּוּי לְשַׁבָּתוֹן : דִּמְיוֹן דְּבוֹרָה: |
| Run, O anointed Lady of the reign!  Stop your chariot from all work.  The sunset is approaching; it is time to begin the blessing.  The Sabbath is being placed, similar to a honeybee! | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Hayyom meḳuddash hu : ‘iḳḳar beyamim  Af at menats-tsaḥat : hatmim geshamim  Ḳiddush shenechem ot : ameru ḥachamim  Ta‘nuḡ beruḥani : babba shemura. | הַ֒יּוֹם מְקֻדָּשׁ הוּא : עִקָּר בְּיָמִים  אַף אַתְּ מְנַצַּחַת : הַתְמִים גְּשָׁמִים  קִדּוּשׁ שְׁנֵיכֶם אוֹת : אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים  תַּעְנוּג בְּרוּחָנִי : בַּבָּא שְׁמוּרָה: |
| Today is holy, the most important of days:  You will triumphantly bring [our] bodies into perfection!  “The sanctification of both of them is a sign,” declared the Sages.  “Spiritual delight, preserved in the World-to-come!” | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Motnech be‘oz ḥiḡri : hallel letsur kol  Ḥiḳri besifré dat : lidbaḳ elé chol  Dirchi shevil binat : heman vechalkol  Tarbi lemuskalech : da‘at berura. | מָ֒תְנֵךְ בְּעֹז חִגְרִי : הַלֵּל לְצוּר כֹּל  חִקְרִי בְּסִפְרֵי דָת : לִדְבַּק אֱלֵי כֹל  דִּרְכִי שְׁבִיל בִּינַת : הֵימָן וְכַלְכֹּל  תַּרְבִּי לְמֻשְׂכָּלֵךְ : דַּעַת בְּרוּרָה: |
| Gird yourself with strength and praise the Rock of everything.  Study the books of faith and be devoted to it all.  Follow the path of understanding of Heman and Calcol.  Brace your intelligence [with] pure knowledge. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Barechi le’el ki hu : ori veyish‘i  Baḥar leyisra’el : ḳiddesh shevi‘i  Sod hash-shevita vo : remez bede‘i  ‘Edut leḥiddush kol : mofet yetsira. | בָּ֒רְ֒כִי לְאֵל כִּי הוּא : אוֹרִי וְיִשְׁעִי  בָּחַר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל : קִדֵּשׁ שְׁבִיעִי  סוֹד הַשְּׁבִיתָה בוֹ : רֶמֶז בְּדֵעִי  עֵדוּת לְחִדּוּשׁ כֹּל : מוֹפֵת יְצִירָה: |
| Bless God, for He is my light and my salvation,  Who chose Israel and sanctified the seventh [day].  The mystical meaning of resting on it—an allusion in my mind,  A witness to the innovation of everything, the miracle of creation! | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
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| Livshi temima ḥen : keter emuna  Uvsod shevi‘iyyot : tihyi shenuna  Yaḥadi meḡammatech : lir‘ot beḡanna  Netsaḥ beḥayyé ‘ad : ḥelḳech netsura. | לִ֒בְשִׁי תְּמִימָה חֵן : כֶּתֶר אֱמוּנָה  וּ֒בְסוֹד שְׁבִיעִיּוֹת : תִּהְיִי שְׁנוּנָה  יַ֒חֲדִי מְגַמָּתֵךְ : לִרְעוֹת בְּגַנָּה  נֶצַח בְּחַיֵּי עַד : חֶלְקֵךְ נְצוּרָה: |
| Dress, O perfect one, in the glory and the crown of faith!  Be inculcated with the secrets of the Sevens!  Strive to graze in the Garden!  Your portion is forever safe in the eternal life. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Hitḳosheshi nafshi : kalla kelula  Raḥshi bemif‘alech : laḥshi lema‘la  Esh dat belimmudech : dibbuḳ pelila  Ḳir’i letsur yaḥmol : ‘eda fezura. | הִ֒תְקוֹשְׁשִׁי נַפְשִׁי : כַּלָּה כְּלוּלָה  רַ֒חְשִׁי בְּמִפְעָלֵךְ : לַחְשִׁי לְמַעְלָה  אֵ֒שׁ֒ דָּת בְּלִמּוּדֵךְ : דִּבּוּק פְּלִילָה  קִרְאִי לְצוּר יַחְמוֹל : עֵדָה פְזוּרָה: |
| Be gathered up, my soul, the perfect bride  Teem with your work; whisper upwards:  The Fiery Law in your studies; devotion to the law—  Pray to the Rock; He will have mercy on the exiled congregation. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Ḥannun zeḳof ḳeren : yoshevim benuḥa  Shomerim leshabbatot : ḳore’im besimḥa  Yizku letuv tsafun : yitron menuḥa  Yit‘addenu tamid : mizziv nehora. | חַ֒נּוּן זְ֒קוֹף קֶ֒רֶן : יוֹשְׁבִים בְּנוּחָה  שׁוֹמְרִים לְשַׁבָּתוֹת : קוֹרְאִים בְּשִׂמְחָה  יִזְכּוּ לְטוּב צָפוּן : יִתְרוֹן מְנוּחָה  יִתְעַדְּנוּ תָמִיד : מִזִּיו נְהוֹרָה: |
| O Merciful One, raise up the horn of those that sit restfully,  Observing the Sabbaths and joyfully reading.  May they merit the concealed good, the benefit of rest:  May they forever delight in the luminous splendor. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
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| Ammets ayummatecha : uḡal letsonecha  Nahel vetitta‘em : lishkon be‘irecha  Bet ḳodshecha taḳim : shachlel devirecha  Tashkin kevodecha : nir’é be’ora. | אַמֵּץ אֲיֻמָּתְךָ : וּגְאַל לְצֹאנְךָ  נַהֵל וְתִטָּעֵם : לִשְׁכּוֹן בְּעִירְךָ  בֵּית קָדְשְׁךָ תָּקִים : שַׁכְלֵל דְּבִירְךָ  תַּשְׁכִּין כְּבוֹדְךָ : נִרְאֶה בְּאוֹרָה: |
| Strengthen Your awesome one and redeem Your flock,  Lead and settle them in Your city,  Build Your holy house, complete Your Temple,  Set Your glory [there]; we shall see the light. | |
| ‘Uri yeḥidati : yafa uvara  Hitaḥadi ‘im yom : shabbat beḥevra. | עוּרִי יְחִידָתִי : יָפָה וּבָרָה  הִתְאַחֲדִי עִם יוֹם : שַׁבָּת בְּחֶבְרָה: |
| Awake, my precious one, beautiful and radiant.  Become one with the Sabbath day in union. | |
| Kakkatuv: Ki ‘immecha meḳor ḥayyim be’orecha nir’é or. | כַּכָּתוּב: כִּֽי־עִ֭מְּךָ מְק֣וֹר חַיִּ֑ים בְּ֝אוֹרְךָ֗ נִרְאֶה־אֽוֹר  (תהלים פרק לו,י): |
| As it is written: With You is the fountain of life; by Your light do we see light. (Ps. 36:10). | |