יה זמרתי, Yah Zimrati

**Introduction:** A poem for the Sabbath day, praising God and the holiness of the Sabbath. The poet compares the Sabbath to other Jewish traditions linked with the number seven: Yom Kippur in the seventh month of the year, the sabbatical year in the Land of Israel, and the seven days spent in booths on the Festival of Sukkot. The Sabbath must be celebrated with food of high quality, as learned from the experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness, where God supplied them with two days’ worth of food. While we presently do not have firm insight as to who wrote the poem, *Yah Zimrati* is included in the Venice Karaite siddur; thus, the author must have lived prior to 1528.

**Category:** Zemirot (Songs)  
  
**Genre:** Zemer for the Sabbath  
  
**Occasion:** Sabbath  
  
**Name:** יה זמרתי, Yah Zimrati  
  
**Composer**: Yehuda (otherwise unknown)  
  
**Acrostic:** יהודה, “Yehuda”

**Date:** Before 1528  
  
**Meter:** Eight syllables per line, with each sheva counting as a full syllable.  
  
**Source:** Vilna Siddur, Volume 4, page 105. (However, in the fourth stanza, the first word of the second line is printed here as לחם, in accordance with the reading found in the Venice Siddur.)  
  
**Davidson number:** י 4369  
  
**Karaite origin:** Yes

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| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָ֒הּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
| Yah, my song, has commanded you,  the people of Israel, with [a day of] your rest:  Keep the Sabbath day.  It shall be a sign between me and you. | |
| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָהּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם  אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
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| Hu yom ḳadosh min hayyamim  Or hagganuz sod lattemimim  Remez gadol re’aḥ sammim  Ḥuḳḳat ‘olam ledorotechem. | ה֒וּא יוֹם קָדוֹשׁ מִן הַיָּמִים  אוֹר הַגָּנוּז סוֹד לַתְּמִימִים  רֶמֶז גָּדוֹל רֵיחַ סַמִּים  חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדוֹרוֹתֵיכֶם: |
| It is the holiest of days,  the hidden light, the secret for the upright,  the great allusion, the scent of incense,  a law for all time for all your generations. | |
| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָהּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם  אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
| Yah, my song, has commanded you,  the people of Israel, with [a day of] your rest:  Keep the Sabbath day.  It shall be a sign between me and you. | |
| Ur’u ud‘u shabbat ḳodesh  Yom kippurim hu laḥodesh  Ushnat sheva‘ gam hi ḥofesh  Hi ḥochmatchem uvinatchem. | וּ֒רְאוּ וּדְעוּ שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ  יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים הוּא לַחֹדֶשׁ  וּשְׁנַת שֶׁבַע גַּם הִיא חֹפֶשׁ  הִיא חָכְמַתְכֶם וּבִינַתְכֶם: |
| Look and learn how holy the Sabbath is:  like the Day of Atonement of the seventh month,  and even like the seventh year of freedom!  This is your wisdom and discernment. | |
| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָהּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם  אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
| Yah, my song, has commanded you,  the people of Israel, with [a day of] your rest:  Keep the Sabbath day.  It shall be a sign between me and you. | |
| Dishné erets hechin ayom  Leḥem mishné teref yom yom  Ichlu ha‘am shabbat hayyom  Ki ḳodesh hu yihyé lachem. | דִּ֒שְׁנֵי אֶרֶץ הֵכִין אָיוֹם  לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֶה טֶרֶף יוֹם יוֹם  אִכְלוּ הָעָם שַׁבָּת הַיּוֹם  כִּי קֹדֶשׁ הוּא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם: |
| The Awesome One prepared the fats of the earth: / two days’ worth of food today!  Eat, my people! Today is the Sabbath, / forever kept holy for you! | |
| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָהּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם  אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
| Yah, my song, has commanded you,  the people of Israel, with [a day of] your rest:  Keep the Sabbath day.  It shall be a sign between me and you. | |
| Halleḥem hu mish-shamayim  Tseda shalaḥ el haḥayyim  Gam lo hivish zé yomayim  Lema‘an yed‘u dorotechem. | הַ֒לֶּחֶם הוּא מִשָּׁמָיִם  צֵדָה שָׁלַח אֶל הַחַיִּים  גַּם לֹא הִבְאִישׁ זֶה יוֹמָיִם  לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם: |
| The bread is from heaven.  He sent provisions for the living:  It would not rot for two days,  so that your future generations would know! | |
| Yah zimrati tsivva etchem  Ish yisra’el bimnuḥatchem  Yom hash-shabbat shimru lachem  Ot hi beni uvenechem. | יָהּ זִמְרָתִי צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם  אִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל בִּמְנוּחַתְכֶם  יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם  אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם: |
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