יריבי ואויבי, Yerivai Ve’oyevai

**Introduction:** The author of this poem held the medieval Karaite interpretation that all fires were forbidden on the Sabbath, even if those fires were kindled before the onset of the Sabbath. This poem for the Sabbath asserts that metaphorical light—and not the light of the Sabbath Lamp (as is the custom among the Rabbanites) is what illuminates the darkness. This metaphorical light is referenced in different ways throughout the poem: God, the sun of victory, the commandments.

**Category:** Zemirot (Songs)  
  
**Genre:** Zemer for the Sabbath  
  
**Occasion:** Sabbath  
  
**Name:** יריבי ואויבי, Yerivai Ve’oyevai  
  
**Composer**: Yisra’el ben Shemu’el Ha-ma‘aravi Ha-dayyan  
  
**Location:** Cairo, Egypt

**Date:** Died before 1354  
  
**Acrostic:** ישראל דין, “Yisra’el Dayyan”  
  
**Fixed word:** לי, “for me”  
  
**Source:** Leon Weinberger, “Israel Dayyan’s *Zemer* for the Sabbath,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 81 (1990) no. 1‒2, pp. 119‒125. In one place, we have changed Weinberger’s vocalization: in the fifth stanza, we have printed the verbal form בּוֹז, boz, rather than the noun בּוּז, buz, as appears in Weinberger’s printing; the meaning is virtually identical, but boz fits the Biblical allusion to Song of Songs 8:7.  
  
**Davidson number:** [not in Davidson]  
  
**Karaite origin:** Yes  
  
**About the Author:** The author of *Yerivai Ve’oyevai* has been identified as the fourteenth-century Egyptian Karaite poet and halakhist Yisra’elben Shemu’el ha-Ma‘aravi, who lived in Cairo. Yisra’el wrote several works, in both Arabic and Hebrew, on ritual slaughter, the Karaite calendar, and on the Jewish faith. Of note, his work on slaughter and principles of faith has recently been published by The Karaite Press in a volume titled *The Karaite Creed & Discourse on Slaughter* (2017).

**Sources**: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*; Leon Weinberger, “Israel Dayyan’s *Zemer* for the Sabbath,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 81 (1990) no. 1‒2, pp. 119‒125

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yerivai ve’oyevai shim‘u leḳoli  Belel hash-shabbat im tiru ofli  Al taḥshevu ki mata raḡli  Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | יְ֒רִיבַי וְאוֹיְבַי שִׁמְעוּ לְקוֹלִי  בְּלֵיל הַשַּׁבָּת אִם תִּרְאוּ אָפְלִי  אַל תַּחְשְׁבוּ כִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי  כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Hear me, my adversaries and enemies.  If you see me in the dark on the eve of the Sabbath,  Do not think that I am in distress,  Since God is my light in the darkness. | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |
| Shemesh tsedaḳa tizraḥ le‘enai  Bechol lel shabbat ani vahamonai  Beḳori tefilla vesifri lefanai  Leshema‘ ozen yish-shame‘u li. | שֶׁ֒מֶשׁ צְדָקָה תִּזְרַח לְעֵינָי  בְּכָל לֵיל שַׁבָּת אֲנִי וַהֲמוֹנָי  בְּקָרְאִי תְפִלָּה וְסִפְרִי לְפָנָי  לְשֵׁמַע אֹזֶן יִשָּׁמְעוּ לִי: |
| A sun of victory shines before my eyes  Each Sabbath eve, [and] I and my multitude  Read the prayers with my [prayer] book before me.  [My congregants] listen with their ears, thus following me, | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |
| Rinnat ‘adati besimḥa veshirim  Kol hash-shomer ḳolo yarim  Zaraḥ beḥoshech or laysharim  Shemirat shabbat le‘olam hi li. | רִ֒נַּת עֲדָתִי בְּשִׂמְחָה וְשִׁירִים  כָּל הַשּׁוֹמֵר קוֹלוֹ יָרִים  זָרַח בְּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים  שְׁמִירַת שַׁבָּת לְעוֹלָם הִיא לִי: |
| The prayers of my congregation are offered with joy and with song;  All who observe [the Sabbath] raise their voices,  [And] light for the righteous shines in the darkness;  Everlasting is my observance of the Sabbath, | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Or torati yizraḥ sevivi  Vener mitsvotai ya’ir netivi  Vele’or be’or ner mishkan keruvi  Ach oyevai yomeru ra‘ li. | א֒וֹר תּוֹרָתִי יִזְרַח סְבִיבִי  וְנֵר מִצְווֹתַי יָאִיר נְתִיבִי  וְלֵאוֹר בְּאוֹר נֵר מִשְׁכַּן כְּרוּבִי  אַךְ אוֹיְבַי יאֹמְרוּ רַע לִי: |
| The light of my teaching brightens my surroundings.  The lamp of my commandments illuminates my path,  And like candle-light it lends luster to the sanctuary,  Although my enemies speak evilly of me, [I care not,] | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |
| Le‘ammi zechor na ayom venora  Shemirat shabbat ka’asher battora  Vehashev le’oyevai ḥerpa ve‘evra  Gam boz lo yavuzu li. | לְ֒עַמִּי זְכָר־נָא אָיוֹם וְנוֹרָא  שְׁמִירַת שַׁבָּת כַּאֲשֶׁר בַּתּוֹרָה  וְהָשֵׁב לְאוֹיְבַי חֶרְפָּה וְעֶבְרָה  גַּם בּוֹז לֹא יָבוּזוּ לִי: |
| Consider my people, [O God], awesome and imposing,  [Who have] observed the Sabbath as instructed by the Torah.  Return the taunts and anger of my enemies on their own heads.  Then no one will dare despise me, | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |
| Divré tora vedivré nevi’im  Ye‘idun ki hem yeḳarim vena’im  Nafshi a‘orer ashorer ‘adé im  Yashanti az yanu’aḥ li. | דִּ֒בְרֵי תוֹרָה וְדִבְרֵי נְבִיאִים  יְ֒עִידוּן כִּי הֵם יְקָרִים וְנָאִים  נַ֒פְשִׁי אֲעוֹרֵר אֲשׁוֹרֵר עֲדֵי אִם  יָשַׁנְתִּי אָז יָנוּחַ לִי: |
| Both the Torah and the Prophets testify  That they [i.e., my people] are precious and appealing;  I am moved to sing [their praises] until  I sleep, and he lays me to rest, | |
| Ki baḥoshech adonai or li. | כִּי בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יְהֹוָה אוֹר לִי: |
| Since God is my light in the darkness. | |