יתר פליטת עם, Yeter Peletat ‘Am

**Introduction:** The beginning line of this poem for the Sabbath (“The surviving remnant of the people, silenced and mute…”) may reflect the real-life experiences of the poet during the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648. The poem brings forth the familiar themes of creation and rest on the Sabbath. The keepers of the Sabbath, those who currently live in the darkness of exile, will receive a double portion as their ultimate reward. The poem ends with a plea to God to strengthen his nation, the children of the three patriarchs.

**Category:** Zemirot (Songs)  
  
**Genre:** Zemer for the Sabbath  
  
**Occasion:**  Sabbath  
  
**Name:** יתר פליטת עם, Yeter Peletat ‘Am  
  
**Composer:** Yosef ben Yeshu‘a  
  
**Acrostic:** יוסף בן ישועה חזק, “Yosef son of Yeshu‘a, be strong!”  
  
**Fixed word:**  לעולם, “for eternity”  
  
**Source:** Vilna Siddur, Volume 4, page 110  
  
**Location:** Derażne, Volhynia  
 **Date:**  17th century  
  
**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:**  י 4369  
  
**Karaite origin:**  Yes  
  
**About the Author:**  Yosef ben Yeshu‘a and his family lived in the small town of Derażne (Ukrainian : Derazhnia) in Volhynia. In 1648, troops led by the Ukrainian Cossack leader Bogdan Chmielnicki (1595–1657) murdered thousands of Jews in southeastern Poland-Lithuania (present-day Ukraine and Belarus). Yosef ben Yeshu‘a survived the attacks, but his father, Yeshu‘a ben Simḥa, was among the murdered victims in Derażne. After the attacks, the Karaite survivors left the town and never returned.

After the tragedy, Yosef moved north to Troki, where in 1665, he was appointed as the *rav* of the community. After three years serving in the position, he embarked on a journey to the Holy Land. He hoped to aid the poor and indebted Karaite congregation in Jerusalem, a journey that involved carrying large sums of money. In the Crimea, however, Yosef was arrested and imprisoned for a period of three months. After losing all the funds intended for Jerusalem, Yosef decided to stay in Chufut-Kale rather than continue the unfortunate pilgrimage. In 1670, he returned to Lutsk in Volhynia, where he passed away in 1678. Yosef was the great-grandfather of the prominent Karaite scholar Simḥa Yitsḥaḳ Lutski (died 1760), whose Shabbat poem *Shabbat Menuḥa* is included in this volume.

Some of Yosef’s Hebrew poems describe the trauma caused by the Chmielnicki massacres and the horrors and forced baptisms of Jewish children during the attack. The poem in this volume, for example, begins with a plea to the Karaite survivors, “silenced and mute.” While Yosef ben Yeshu‘a wrote many poems in Hebrew, his reputation in the field of secular Karaim-language poetry is more prominent. There are traces of influence from Ottoman Turkish folk poetry and the works of the famous Jewish poet Israel Najara (Gaza, 1555–1625) in his poems.

**Sources**: Mann, *Texts and Studies*; Mikhail Nosonovskii, “The Karaite Community in Derazhnia and Its Destruction,” *Shvut* 6(22) (1997), pp. 206‒211; Nosonovsky, “The Karaite Community in Deražne and its Leader Ḥazzān Joseph ben Yeshuʿah,” in Dan Shapira et al., *Eastern European Karaites in the Last Generations* (Jerusalem, 2011), pp. 17‒35.

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| Yeter peletat ‘am : dumam venelam  Yoneḳim shedé hammiḳ- : ra mikkelalam  Ḥirdu lemitsvat el : nistar vene‘lam  Uvrosh leyom shabbat : hiḳdish le‘olam. | יֶ֒תֶר פְּלֵיטַת עַם : דּוּמָם וְנֶאְלָם  יוֹנְקִים שְׁדֵי הַמִּקְ־ : רָא מִכְּלָלָם  חִרְדוּ לְמִצְוֹת אֵל : נִסְתָּר וְנֶעְלָם  וּבְרֹאשׁ לְיוֹם שַׁבָּת : הִקְדִּישׁ לְעוֹלָם : |
| The surviving remnant of the people, silenced and mute,  Imbibe from the Bible its principles.  Tremble before the decrees of the hidden and concealed God,  First and foremost. the Sabbath day, forever sanctified! | |
| Beno : beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Uvrov semaḥot ḥak- : ku laḥazoto  Me’et pené melech : davar be‘itto  Ma tov uma na‘im : ḥoḳ el vedato  Natan le‘am nivḥar : lihyot le‘olam. | וּ֒בְרוֹב שְֹמָחוֹת חַ־ : כּוּ לַחֲזוֹתוֹ  מֵאֵת פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ : דָּבָר בְּעִתּוֹ  מַה טּוֹב וּמַה נָּעִים : חֹק אֵל וְדָתוֹ  נָתַן לְעַם נִבְחָר : לִהְיוֹת לְעוֹלָם : |
| With great joy, await a view of its presence!  A royal word, rightly timed—  How good it is! How pleasant is the law of God, and His precepts,  Which He gave to the chosen people for all eternity. | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Sod hammenuḥa bash- : shabbat teḥaddesh  El hannevonim se- : chel zach teḥaddesh  Shem el asher hu naḥ : shavat veḳiddesh  Yom hash-shevi‘i min : dor zu le‘olam. | ס֒וֹד הַמְּנוּחָה בַּ־ : שַּׁבָּת תְּחַדֵּשׁ  אֶל הַנְּבוֹנים שֵׂ־ : כֶל זָךְ תְּחַדֵּשׁ  שֵׁם אֵל אֲשֶׁר הוּא נָח : שָׁבַת וְקִדֵּשׁ  יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִן : דּוֹר זוּ לְעוֹלָם : |
| The esoteric meaning of the Sabbath’s rest—  May you give new understanding to the perceptive ones [to understand it].  [It alludes to] the name of God, who rested, and hallowed  The seventh day from this age evermore. | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |

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| Pinu beyom zé ya- : shir rov tehilla  La’el asher hitḥil : gamar vechilla  Ma‘sav beshesh yamim : matta uma‘la  Uvyom shevi‘i vo : ḥadal le‘olam. | פִּ֒ינוּ בְּיוֹם זֶה יָ־ : שִׁיר רוֹב תְּהִלָּה  לָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִתְחִיל : גָּמַר וְכִלָּה  מַעְשָֹיו בְּשֵׁשׁ יָמִים : מַטָּה וּמַעְלָה  וּבְיוֹם שְׁבִיעִי בוֹ : חָדַל לְעוֹלָם : |
| Today our mouths will sing ample praises  For God, who began, completed, and put finishing touches on  His deeds in six days, both below and above—  And on the seventh day, He ceased forever. | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Bo yimtsa shomero : et kol mevaḳsho  Yitten leḡuf resen : yitron lenafsho  Yifḥad leval yifḳod : pish‘o ve‘onsho  Ha’el velo ya‘nish : zar‘o le‘olam. | בּ֒וֹ יִמְצָא שֹׁמְרוֹ : אֶת כָּל מְבַקְּשׁוֹ  יִתֵּן לְגוּף רֶסֶן : יִתְרוֹן לְנַפְשׁוֹ  יִפְחַד לְבַל יִפְקֹד : פִּשְׁעוֹ וְעָנְשׁוֹ  הָאֵל וְלֹא יַעְנִישׁ : זַרְעוֹ לְעוֹלָם : |
| One who keeps it will find all he desires :  Restraint of his body [gains] benefit for his soul;  He should fear lest God punish him for his sin—  May He never punish His children forevermore! | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Nefesh asher ta‘rim : lifrots gedero  Tissa ‘avonah ki : ‘amoḳ meḳoro  Uvshomrah te‘erav : la’el ve‘ezro  Yaḥish leḳarev lo : yiznaḥ le‘olam. | נֶ֒פֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תַּעְרִים : לִפְרוֹץ גְּדֵרוֹ  תִּשָֹּא עֲוֹנָהּ כִּי : עָמוֹק מְקוֹרוֹ  וּבְשָׁמְרָהּ תֶּעֱרַב : לָאֵל וְעֶזְרוֹ  יָחִישׁ לְקָרֵב לֹא : יִזְנַח לְעוֹלָם : |
| One who plots to breach His fence  Shall bear his sin, for His Source is deep.  By keeping [the Sabbath], it will delight God, his Helper,  And He will hasten to bring him near; He will never reject [him]. | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Yoshevim beḥeshkat hag- : galut ve’oflo  Shovetim beyom shabbat : ish toch gevulo  Uvmitsvot lav bo : rotsim lesovlo  ‘Al zé secharam el : yachpil le‘olam. | י֒וֹשְׁבִים בְּחֶשְׁכַּת הַ־ : גָּלוּת וְאָפְלוֹ  שׁ֒וֹבְתִים בְּיוֹם שַׁבָּת : אִישׁ תּוֹךְ גְּבוּלוֹ  וּ֒בְמִצְוֹת לָאו בּוֹ : רוֹצִים לְסָבְלוֹ  עַ֒ל זֶה שְֹכָרָם אֵל : יַכְפִּיל לְעוֹלָם : |
| Those who sit in the darkness and the gloom of exile  And cease labor on the Sabbath day, each within his border,  And yearn to abide by the prohibitions on that [day]—  For this, God will double their reward for all eternity! | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Ha’el asher at ram : ‘al kol meromim  Ḥazzeḳ yedé om ha- : holechim betamim  Nit‘é shelosha a- : vot hattemimim  Tashḳit vetani’aḥ : lahem le‘olam. | הָ֒אֵל אֲשֶׁר אַתְּ רָם : עַל כָּל מְרוֹמִים  חַ֒זֵּ֒ק֒ יְדֵי אוֹם הַ־ : הוֹלְכִים בְּתָמִים  נִטְעֵי שְׁלֹשָׁה אָ־ : בוֹת הַתְּמִימִים  תַּשְׁקִיט וְתָנִיחַ : לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם : |
| God—You, who are above all the heights :  Strengthen the hands of the people who virtuously stride,  The offshoots of the three upright fathers—  Calm and assuage them for all eternity. | |
| Beno, beno levenenu : ot hi le‘olam. | בֵּינוֹ : בֵּינוֹ לְבֵינֵינוּ  : אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם : |
| Between Him—Between Him and us, it will be a sign forever. | |
| Kakkatuv : Beni uven bené yisra’el ot hi le‘olam. | כַּכָּתוּב : בֵּינִ֗י וּבֵין֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל א֥וֹת הִ֖וא לְעֹלָ֑ם |
| As it is written : It shall be a sign for all time between me and the people of Israel (Ex. 31 : 17). | |