Volume 2
CANTOR JOSEF ROSENBLATT
Masterpieces of the Synagogue
MASTERPIECES OF THE SYNAGOGUE, Volume 2: THE ART OF CANTOR JOSEF ROSENBLATT

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Band 2 — WEHU RACHUM (And He Being Merciful) (Recorded October 18, 1928)

Band 3 — NISHMAS (The Breath of Every Living Being) (Recorded April 1 and May 15, 1926)

Band 4 — ROM W'NISSEO (High and Exalted) (Recorded August 21, 1924)

SIDE 2

Band 1 — U'VNUCHO YOMAR (And When it Rested, He Said) (Recorded May 1, 1928)

Band 2 — TAL Dew (Recorded January 17 and February 13, 1923)

Band 3 — UMPINE CHATOENU (Out Because of Our Sins) (Recorded November 4, 1920 and January 31, 1921)

Band 4 — KOL NIDREI (All Vows) (Recorded May 2, 1930)

RACHEM NO

Have mercy, we pray Thee, O Lord our God, upon Israel Thy people, upon Jerusalem Thy city, upon Zion the abiding place of Thy glory, upon the kingdom of the house of David Thine anointed, and upon the great and holy house that was built by David Thy name, O our God, our Father, feed us, nourish us, sustain, support and relieve us, and speedily O Lord our God, grant us relief from all our troubles. We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, let us not be in need either of the gifts of flesh and blood or of their loans, but only of Thy hand, which is full, open, overflowing and ample, so that we may not be ashamed nor confounded for ever and ever. Rebuild Thou also Jerusalem the holy city speedily in our days. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who in Thy compassion rebuildest Jerusalem. Amen.

—the third paragraph of the grace after meals.

This impassioned plea on behalf of Israel and Jerusalem, the house of David and the Temple, is heightened by repetition in a crescendo variant. A more subdued petition for personal sustenance follows. Then, as the petitioner asks for freedom from dependence on human help, preferring to be beholden to God alone, the tone rises again. The recitative ends on a note of confidence in the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

WEHU RACHUM

And He being merciful, forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not: yea, many a time He turneth His anger away, and doth not stir up all His wrath. Save, Lord, may the King answer us on the day when we call.

—psalm 78, verse 38 and psalm 20, verse 10, introducing the weekday evening service.

The bell-like quality of Rosenblatt's mellow, yet resonant tenor are fully displayed in this recitative. The pomp and majesty of the opening declaratory phrases are set off by the more tender lyrical passages that follow.

NISHMAS

Hitherto Thy tender mercies have helped us, and Thy loving kindnesses have not left us; forsake us not, O Lord our God, for ever. Therefore the limbs which Thou hast fashioned in us, and the spirit and breath which Thou hast breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue which Thou hast set in our mouths, lo, they shall thank, bless, praise, glory, extol, reverence, hallow and assign kingship to Thy name, O our King. For every mouth shall give thanks unto Thee, and every tongue shall swear unto Thee; every knee shall bow to Thee, and whatsoever is lofty shall be prostrate itself before Thee, and all the inward parts and reins shall sing unto Thy name, according to the word that is written. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee? Thou dost deliver the poor from him that is stronger than he, the poor and needy from him that robeth him. Who is like unto Thee, who is equal unto Thee, who can be compared unto Thee, O God, great, mighty, and awful, most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth: We will praise, and glory Thee, and we will bless Thy holy name, as it is said, Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

—from the longer conclusion of the "verses of song" recited on the Sabbath and the festivals prior to the morning service.

This Handelian oratorio utilizes all the skill of cantorial art—coloratura, falsetto, rapidly interlocking phrases, tricky notes, adoration and pathos. This magnificent hymn of praise is truly impressive with its many contrasts.

ROM W'NISSEO

High and exalted, great and revered, He bringeth low the haughty, and raiseth up the lowly, leadeth forth the prisoners, delivereth the meek, helpeth the poor, and ansaethereth His people when they cry unto Him. Praiseth to the Most High God, blessed is He, and ever to be blessed. Moses and the children of Israel sang a song unto Thee with great joy, saying, all of them... "O Rock of Israel, arise, to the help of Israel, and deliver, according to Thy promise, Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast redeemed Israel."

—the end of the benediction of "Redemption" following the Sh'ma of the daily morning service and preceding the silent devotion.

The recitative opens, as does the text, on a "high and exalted" note. Then in a lower register and a minor inflection, it depicts the humbling of the pride and the elevation of the meek. This gives way to a melodious chant of gaiety. The conclusion is a tearful entreaty as befits a prayer for Israel's redemption.

U'VNUCHO YOMAR

And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel. Arise, O Lord, unto Thy resting place; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Thy saints sing for joy. For the sake of David, Thy servant, turn not away the face of Thine anointed. For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My Law, it is a tree of life to them that grasp it, and of them that uphold it every one is rendered happy. Its ways are ways of peaceableness, and all its paths are peace. Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall return; renew our days as of old.

—a collection of verses, culled from various parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, recited while placing the Scrolls of the Torah in the Holy Ark after the reading of the Scriptural lesson.

This classic composition has won the acclaim of some of the foremost composers. Its dignity and grandeur afford the singer a unique opportunity to exhibit the range, power and quality of his voice.

TAL

Dew, precious dew, unto Thy land befall! Pour out our blessing in Thy exaltation. To strengthen us with ample wine and corn. And give Thy chosen city safe foundation. In dew.

Dew, precious dew, the good year's crown, we will receive. That earth in pride and glory may be fruited. And that the city now so desolate. Into a gleaming city be resolved. Dew.

Dew, precious dew, let fall upon the land. From heaven is this accorded. So shall the darkness by a beam be spanned. The faithful of Thy vineyard be rewarded. With dew.

Dew, precious dew, to make the mountains sweet. The savour of Thy excellence recalling! Deliver us from exile we entreat. So we may sing Thy praises, softly falling. As dew!

Dew, precious dew, our granaries to fill. And us with youthful freshness to harden! Beloved God, uplift us at Thy will. And make us as a richly watered garden. With dew.

—prayer recited in the cantor's repetition of the fundamental prayer of the additional service on the first day of Passover.

This melody is based on the traditional motif used in the Askenazic synagogue for the Kaddish as well as in the Passover service noted above.

UMPINE CHATOENU

But because of our sins we have been exiled from our land and removed far away from our country, and we are unable to go up and appear and worship before Thee, or to perform our duties in the house of Thy holy name, the holy house of the holy temple, the holy house of the holy temple. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast redeemed Israel.

—from the fundamental prayer of the additional service of the major holidays.

"When Yossele sang 'We were exiled from our land,' we were able to envisage Israel's exile with our very eyes. Then, when he exclaimed in a robusto tone: 'Reveal the glory of Thy kingdom upon us speedily,' it was as though Israel's sovereignty had been restored in all its brilliance and splendor." (Yossele Rosenblatt, p. 345)

KOL NIDREI

All vows, bonds, obligations, promises, engagements, pledges and oaths, which we have vowed, sworn to, assumed or bound ourselves with from this Day of Atonement unto the next Day of Atonement—may it come unto us for good; io, of all these do we repent. They shall all be absolved, released, annulled, made void and of none effect; they shall not be binding nor shall they have any power. Our vows shall not be vows; nor shall our bonds be bonds; nor shall our oaths be oaths. Abolition of all personal vows to God, recited on the eve of the Day of Atonement immediately before the evening service.

Few cantors have sung this best known of all Jewish traditional chants more movingly than Josef Rosenblatt.

Notes by Dr. Samuel Rosenblatt

Dr. Rosenblatt, Rabbi of the Boise Tidah Congregation and Associate Professor at the Jewish Religious College, is the son of Cantor Burton Rosenblatt, noted author of the full-length biography of his father, Yossele Rosenblatt, published by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.

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Cantor Josef Rosenblatt, Tenor
2. Assisted by Cantor Meilech Kaufman
K3WP-1807

LONG 33 1/3 PLAY