SONGS OF MY PEOPLE

CANTOR JOSEF ROSENBLATT

With very few exceptions, the Yiddish songs sung by Cantor Rosenblatt were not his own compositions. They were used by him on occasions of non-ritual character—at weddings and other joyous celebrations, and at concerts in order to vary his programs and inject a lighter note.

He refused consistently to chant the sacred melodies of the synagogue in vaudeville appearances. When he consented to lend his voice for the soundtrack of the pioneer talkie, “The Jazz Singer,” he stipulated that the selections be of a non-liturgical nature.

Oh yahrein light, so pemise, so bright, Will you ever burn for me on a dark night? Magnified and sanctified be His great name! Some thousand years hence, just as now on this day, May your Kaddish ring forth, oh my people, away, May your Kaddish resound: Magnified and sanctified be His great name!

EHH, EHH! (My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?)

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? In the dust and flame our race did they burn, With shame’s imaginings our senses brand. Yet none was able our folk from Thee to turn, Not from Thee, my God, nor Thy sacred Torah. Thy own command, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Day and night, in my plight. I think but of Thee, my God. I keep, with awe, Thy sacred Law Though bearing oppression’s rod, I rise once more. As Thou didst my fathers in days of yore! Hear my petition and my plea! All my reliance is on Thee. Hear Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is one.

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LOMIR SICH IBREBETEN (Let Us Make Up)

Come let us make up again. Father in heaven above! Come let us make up and return to Thy ancient love. For miracles and marvels Thou once didst promise to work for us in days of yore. Enough of vexation for the hard-pressed nation! So delight, Thy beloved Israel! Come let us make up! Remember whence we came!

So the Jew will trade once more, As he did in days of yore With the fruits with which his hands abound, To make all this come true Is only up to you.

A home...

SOGZE REBENIH (Tell Me, Rabbi Dear)

Tell me, rabbi dear, what will happen when Messiah will come? When Messiah will come, we shall have a gala feast.

What will we eat at this gala feast? The meat of the wild ox and of the Leviathan. That’s what we shall eat at the Messiah’s feast.

What shall we drink at this Messiah’s feast? The wine kept from creation’s day. That’s what we shall drink. The meat of the wild ox and of Leviathan. That’s what we shall eat at...

Who will expound the Torah at this gala feast? Moses, our teacher, will expound the Torah. The prophet...

Who will make music for us at this gala feast? David, the king, will play the music. Moses...

Who will speak words of wisdom at this gala feast? Solomon, the king, will speak words of wisdom. David...

Who will dance for us at this gala feast? Miriam, the prophetess, will dance for us. Solomon...

SHOFAR SHEL MOSHIACH

(Clarion Call of the Messiah)

‘Neath a mountain steep, in a cave down deep There lies the grave of a hero brave. Full many a year he is resting there, Two of David and the king of Israel I sing. Oh David, David, arise from thy sleep! Most faithful of shepherds, from slumber awake! Regard how the birds have slaughtered thy sheep Because no one was willing their part to take. But when he’ll hear Messiah’s shofar blast, He’ll get up from his resting place at last, And seat himself upon his throne And on his violin a melody intone. And at a moment what all about will stir, Many will be singing, and all the palms with David’s palms they’ll set the welkin ringing. All the waters of the sea will be full of gleam And join in the singing. In the woods the trees, as though swept by a breeze, Will beat their leaves while prancing. And David on his fiddle playing Will strike the note to keep them swaying. Israel once called “the tempest tossed.” Israel reborn was never lost. Sing with me this melody to the ever living God. Yes, sing with me this melody to the ever living God.

SHIR HAMAALOS (Song of Ascents)

A song of ascents. Which the Lord brought back from the house returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the nations: “The Lord hath done great things with these.” The Lord hath done great things with us. We are rejoiced. Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the dry land. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Though he goeth on his way weeping that heareth the measure of the seed, he shall come home with joy, bearing his sheaves.

Other RCA Camden albums by Cantor Rosenblatt you will want to own:
Masterpieces of the Synagogue, Vol. 1 CAL-453, Vol. 2 CAL-507

The translations into English, when not otherwise indicated, were prepared by Dr. Samuel Rosenblatt, Rabbi of the Beth El and Beth Israel Congregations, Baltimore, Maryland, and son of Cantor Josef Rosenblatt.

Dr. Rosenblatt is the author of the only full-length biography of his father entitled Voskler Rosenblatt and published by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.

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SONGS OF MY PEOPLE

1. SHLOEF IN SISSE Ruh
   (Sleep in Sweet Repose)
   (S. Colub-J. Rosenblatt)

2. MY YIDDISHE Mome
   (A Jewish Mother) (Yellen-Pollack)

3. ELEGIIE (Massenet)

4. YOHRZEIT (Death’s Anniversary)
   (Rhea Silberta-H. B. Silberstein)

5. EILI, EILI (My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?)
   Cantor Josef Rosenblatt

LONG 33 1/3 PLAY
SONGS OF MY PEOPLE

1. LOMIR SICH IBERBETEN
   (Let Us Make Up)
   (Seltz-Rosenblatt-Portnoff)

2. AHEIM, AHEIM
   (Home, Sweet Home) (Wohl-Meyerowitz)

3. SOG ZE REBENJU (Tell Me, Rabbi Dear)

4. SHOFAR SHEL MOSHIACH
   (Clarion Call of the Messiah) (A. Goldfaden)

5. SHIR HAMAALOS (Song of Ascents)
   Cantor Josef Rosenblatt
   3. with Cantor Samuel Malavsky

LONG 33 1/3 PLAY