

Three Shout but Are Not Answered

TRANSLATION BY AVITAL D. VOVNOBOY

Introduction

This document, *Sheloshah tzo'akim v'ainan na'anin* (Three Shout but Are Not Answered),¹ appears in an anonymous text published in Amsterdam around the turn of the eighteenth century. It discusses the phenomenon of *meshorerim*, a group of three singers who led prayers in many Ashkenazic communities. The pamphlet uses a mocking tone to highlight the characteristics of the practice of the meshorerim, critiquing everything from their musical abilities to their immoral behavior and overall attitude toward prayer.

The original Hebrew text is composed of rhyming clusters, some as short as two sentences and others extending to over 20 rhymes in a single cluster. Each cluster has its own rhythm and pacing, contributing to the festive quality of the text when read aloud. While some rhymes are only visual, the majority can be sounded out. In this translation, the rhyme-based structure has been set aside in favor of coherent paragraphs. Preserving the original structure would have fragmented the author's points across multiple paragraphs, compromising clarity.

While the pamphlet is anonymous, several clues allow us to infer certain details about the author. First, there are instances where the rhyming relies on Ashkenazic pronunciation—for example, the word “בת” (pronounced “bat” in Sephardic Hebrew) is rhymed with “bass,” which suggests the use of Ashkenazic pronunciation. Second, the text is composed in Hebrew rather than Yiddish. Third, most references in the text are drawn from the Hebrew Bible, with additional allusions to the Mishnah and Talmud, and only a few to the Midrash. There are also references to Ashkenazic poems (*piyyutim*) for the sabbath or the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Many (though not all) of the citations from the biblical books of the Prophets are taken from Haftarot or Megillah readings—that is, those texts from the Prophets that are read liturgically in synagogue.

Based on these observations, I view it as likely that the text was written by a learned member of an Ashkenazic community, possibly a *ba'al koreh* (someone

¹ The title is a reference to Babylonian Talmud (hereafter BT), Tractate Bava Metzia 75b.

who chants from the Torah in synagogue services). In this view, I differ from Paul Feller-Simmons, who addresses this treatise in his article in the present issue of *Min-Ad*. In his understanding, the author is likely to have been a Sephardic Jew mocking Ashkenazic practice and pronunciation. Whatever the reality, *Sheloshah tzo'akim* offers a valuable insight into musical practices in the synagogue in Amsterdam around 1700.

Three Shout, but Are Not Answered

Hear, O Israel, holy children, and behold: new ones have come recently.² They intend to grow sweet grapes but produce spoiled ones.³ There is no essence, no roots. The customs are new, and they are distortions, creating new melodies for the Sabbath, holidays, and the new moon.

They confuse and make the people who dwell in the palaces of treasures⁴ into fools. Their mouths shout cruelly. Their shouts burst through the windows of upper and lower.⁵ Their voices are like the sound of roaring rivers.⁶ They are hunched over in posture. They hold their ears with their hands, and their arm on their hip, their head at their behind. They gird their loins with belts.⁷ If not for this, their intestines would have emerged. [Their voices are stronger] than the sounds of great waters, mighty like a torrent of water.⁸

Heroes of strength, as grinders at the mill. And indeed, their voices are pleasant to those without ears, and their appearance is beautiful to those without eyes.⁹ It is pleasant like vinegar to teeth:¹⁰ bent backward, till their faces turn black as a purely black man, and like a charbonnier who works with the fire of Nahor.¹¹

This is some praise of them;¹² now we will speak of their companions who harm with their voices. Their silence is better than their shouting.¹³ This is truly said about the wanderers from gate to gate. The cantors of Poland and Ashkenaz

² Deuteronomy 32:17.

³ Isaiah 5:2.

⁴ The people of Israel.

⁵ Reference to (not a quotation of) Joshua 15:19.

⁶ Ref. to Psalms 93:3. This psalm is recited during the Friday evening prayer, Kabbalat Shabbat.

⁷ Tying a belt during prayer is a Hasidic custom, as is mentioned in the Tosafot commentary to BT, Tractate Shabbat 10a.

⁸ Ref. to Psalms 93:4.

⁹ Ref. to Song of Songs 2:14.

¹⁰ Proverbs 10:20.

¹¹ Targum Pseudo-Yonatan on Genesis 11:28 (ca. 150–250 CE) tells the story of Haran, brother of Abraham and Nahor, who was thrown into a pit of fire. The author may have assumed the reader would associate fire with this story, and for the sake of rhyming *shahor* (black) with Nahor, used Nahor instead of Haran.

¹² Ref. to BT, Eruvin 18b.

¹³ Ref. to BT, Pesahim 99a.

cause quarrels and disputes.¹⁴ Such prayer does not ascend to the heavens. And your sign¹⁵ [for knowing this] is: “three shout but are not answered.” There is no thought in the prayer—only an attempt to be clever and say “give, give.”¹⁶ Here, I will describe their manner of arrangement. In their eyes, their arrangement is according to the opinions of the sages. They come in three, like a Beit Din¹⁷ which annuls vows and prohibitions.

The greatest among them is called the ḥazzan; he stands in the middle and is the most distinguished. He does not perform with virtue. His shout is very mighty. But he endangers himself because his actions are exposed and disgraceful.

The second stands to his right, to be his inciter¹⁸ on the step [to the *bima*, the cantor’s platform] and in the aisle. He is the man who was taken [by the ḥazzan] as a daughter¹⁹ for himself,²⁰ shouting like one treading a winepress, his voice is thick and coarse. He does not feel pain in his throat, and his tongue babbles like a ladle in a pot or pan. And there is no ease or refreshment for the soul.²¹ He does not cease working on holiday or Sabbath, but indeed ceased to pray altogether.

And to his left stands the third, and he does not escape [scrutiny].²² I swear upon my soul and my head, he does not know the Friday night Kiddush [blessing over the wine]. And he is a boy,²³ a foolish man.²⁴ It cannot be imagined—mindless, ignorant, like a wild boar.

These are the ones who stand before the ark. A baby with a gray-haired man,²⁵ and the male is referred to in the feminine form.²⁶ The three shout together with

¹⁴ “Ribat ve-Togarma” (quarrels and disputes) is a wordplay on Genesis 10:3, “Rifat ve-Togarma,” originally referring to names of nations.

¹⁵ In the Talmud, a siman (sign) is a phrase or acronym that serves as reminder for a concept or idea. Often, the phrase is taken out of context.

¹⁶ Ref. to Exodus 1:10.

¹⁷ A Beit Din is a rabbinical court consisting of three rabbis, who can annul personal vows under certain conditions. Usually, a Beit Din of this kind is established every year before Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur.

¹⁸ Zachariah 3:1.

¹⁹ Esther 2:15.

²⁰ Regarding the Hebrew phrase “asher lakakh lo le-bat” (he took as a daughter), as noted in the introduction, the word “bat” is pronounced in Ashkenazic dialect as “bass,” as in the musical term. In my view, this and other rhymes suggest the author of this document is Ashkenazic.

²¹ Ref. to the Sabbath table song “Ma yedidut menuhatekh,” common in Ashkenazic communities.

²² Ref. to Exodus 21:5.

²³ Genesis 37:2.

²⁴ Psalms 82:2.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 32:25.

²⁶ As explained previously (see Introduction), the author is referring to the similar pronunciation of the words ‘bass’ and ‘daughter’.

their arms, cheeks, and belly,²⁷ tormenting a starving soul.²⁸ On Sabbath and holiday, they turn joy into sorrow.²⁹ With their mouths, they beg of those gathered in the square, “give, give.”³⁰ And if they do not receive donations, they become angry³¹ like a flaming fire,³² as though the contribution were mandatory.³³

And it is injustice and a disgrace to donate against one’s will to someone who yells and screams.³⁴ He commits the acts of Zimri and seeks reward like Pinehas the Messiah:³⁵ His mouth is open, as the place of the dung, called “Tappuah.”³⁶ And his intention is nonsense. He does not burden himself with the work of Hashem. He blows lies, and with the light of day, he will rise. His mind is on his meal, and he eats and drinks until he stinks. And anyone standing beside him will smell. In his mind, his prayer is accepted like a fragrance.³⁷ Every God-fearing person should be concerned by this, and not rest until such work which is presented in this world is abolished.

And they do not understand the prayer which they pray, and what they sing.³⁸ They do not intend to praise the One who dwells on high,³⁹ just to innovate some tunes which they heard in circus houses where the jesters play. And through the melody, they split the phrase into multiple parts. And sometimes they skip and blend the words of the builders,⁴⁰ established by those learned and wise.⁴¹ And in reading from the Torah, they do not consult the cantillation markings. And even if they are scolded, they respond and say, “This is how we have always read it, and no one came against us to dispute or answer

²⁷ Deuteronomy 18:3.

²⁸ Ref. to Psalms 107:9.

²⁹ Ref. to Esther 9:22.

³⁰ “Hav, hav” (give, give) might be an onomatopoeic reference to dogs barking.

³¹ Ref. to Esther 1:12.

³² Ref. to Hosea 7:6.

³³ The author alludes to two types of sacrifices at the Temple: *nedava* (a voluntary offering) and *hova* (an obligatory offering).

³⁴ Isaiah 42:13.

³⁵ Ref. to BT Sota, 22b.

³⁶ The “Tapuah” (literally, apple) is the place on the altar where the cinders from the sacrifices are gathered.

³⁷ Ref. to Leviticus 1:9. A sacrifice is described as having a fragrance pleasing to God, and prayers are considered a substitute for sacrifices. There is much play on the words ריח (*re’ah*, meaning smell or fragrance) and רוח (*ru’ah*, meaning wind, or soul, or nonsense, depending on the context) throughout the text.

³⁸ The author uses the word *menagnim*, which is usually translated as “play,” but in this context there is no reference to musical instruments, so “sing” would be the more appropriate translation.

³⁹ Ref. to a piyyut (liturgical poem) recited before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur titled “Ben Adam, ma lekha nirdam.”

⁴⁰ According to BT Brachot 64a, rabbis are referred to as builders.

⁴¹ Ref. to a mix of verses from Song of Songs 5:15 and 3:8.

us.” Even in showing honor to the Torah,⁴² they are not wise. For when reading the Torah, they lie down, as though on cushions and covers they recite. And when they say the blessing for the [new] month⁴³ or mention the souls [of the dead]⁴⁴ with the book in their hands when they want to make music, then the book is a burden to them,⁴⁵ and they give it to another. They honor themselves to sit in the middle while the book is on the side like one of the lowly.⁴⁶ And from this, wise men and elders are not pleased. It is in their eyes like thorns and brambles.⁴⁷

It is unbelievable, to be told⁴⁸ in many ways. They deceive and lie and alter, saying that the change is a tradition received from the elders and the great ones, precious as pearls.⁴⁹ And a sin leads to [another] sin.⁵⁰ To the shields of the mighty⁵¹ they attribute their sins. And this has never come out of the mouths of the holy men who recite and teach.

Look and see the loud ones:

The cantor begins to sing: Not one word he says. And he stops in the middle and the one called Bass [a pun on the Hebrew word for “daughter”] finishes. And the third comes, a fortiori, who does not know what he will say. And suddenly, all three shout together as one, as though they are seized by a fever and their soul soars to the heavens. Their blood heats up like meat in a cauldron,⁵² and their bodies sweat like donkeys in labor of leisure until the sweat drips from the forehead down to the bottom. And such work leads to a pit of destruction.⁵³

And formerly, this foolishness did not exist among the wise. Only recently have the blind come.⁵⁴ Their eyes are shut and cannot see.⁵⁵

And this is your mark:⁵⁶ Elijah the prophet of the Lord of Hosts,⁵⁷ when gathering Israel to thousands of thousands, to sanctify the name of Heaven

42 Ref. to Psalms 115:1.

43 The blessing of the month occurs on the Shabbat before (almost) every new month.

44 Remembering the [deceased] souls, Hazkamat neshamot, is an Ashkenazic prayer (as opposed to the Sefardic “Hashcava”) said on the three holidays of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot, as well as on the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

45 Ref. to Job 7:20.

46 Ref. to 2 Samuel 6:20.

47 Ref. to Judges 8:7.

48 Ref. to Habakkuk 1:5.

49 Ref. to Proverbs 3:15.

50 Ref. to Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 4:2.

51 Song of Songs 4:4.

52 Ref. to Micah 3:3.

53 Psalms 55:24.

54 Deuteronomy 32:17.

55 Isaiah 44:18.

56 Ref. to Jeremiah 44:29.

57 The author is referring to the story related in 1 Kings 18:16–46.

openly and not in hiding. To show the people wondrous deeds against the 400 prophets of Baal.

And Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice.” And when he himself prays, the voice ceases. As it is said, “Hashem,⁵⁸ God of Abraham,” etc. It does not say “he cried out,” but rather: “he said”—[that is,] calmly saying. He prayed with reverence and a full heart, in a quiet, hushed voice.⁵⁹ And it is a rule for those who present offerings in charity.⁶⁰

And the throat is not open to shout with force and to split the brain as a thorn and thistle would pierce. That is not a pleasing fragrance to Hashem.⁶¹ And there was no such shouting at the sacrifice on the altar—they would only sing to the tune of “Lamnatseah.”⁶² It is written in the Chronicles that the Levites would sing according to music,⁶³ and not the wine-pourers who mix and intoxicate.⁶⁴ Those who seize authority for themselves⁶⁵ are harmful.

And what shall we say, and what shall we speak,⁶⁶ and about this, what words shall we compose? A pleasant book is already written. Its name is the Two Tablets of the Covenant; it discusses this matter.

How can straw compare to the grain?⁶⁷ In their melodies, they separate the connected and connect the separated in speech. They slur and skip from place to place. And they do not serve wisely and purely.

And in ancient times, our rabbis admonished on this matter with strength of reproof in many lands. They turn prayers that are joyful into sorrow and sighs.⁶⁸ And the rabbis had no power to protest.⁶⁹ For this custom has spread and stretched in its madness, and already the pustules are growing among a

58 A euphemism for God, literally meaning “the Name.”

59 1 Kings 19:12.

60 Malachi 3:3. In the original context, the word מנחה refers to the sacrifice known as the “Minha.” It is also the name of the afternoon prayer and a general word for “offering.” The wordplay suggests a double meaning, referring both to people who act with virtue and people who pray Minha correctly.

61 Ref. to Leviticus 1:9.

62 “Lamnatseah” is the first word in many psalms sung in the Temple. Additionally, it can refer to the conductor of a musical performance.

63 Ezra 2:40-41.

64 The author employs assonance by linking the words “מוזיקא” (music) and “מוזיגא” (wine pourer), swapping one velar consonant for another. This play on words is not part of the general rhyming of this cluster.

65 The word “משררים” (seize authority for themselves) is a slight variation of the word “משוררים” (singers).

66 Ref. to Genesis 44:16.

67 Jeremiah 23:28.

68 Ref. to Isaiah 35:10. The reference might be to the Sabbath table song “Ma yedidut”; see n. 21.

69 Ref. to BT Shabbat, 55a.

multitude of people chasing the wind. And they do not know and will not understand in their hearts or in their kidneys.⁷⁰

And how much we should praise⁷¹ and open our eyes to see leaders of the fragrance,⁷² of the other children of Israel. Those sitting under the kings of Ishmael,⁷³ and the children of Italy, and the children of Barbary,⁷⁴ and other dwellers of the corners [of the world]. And the children of Spain who are scattered and dispersed,⁷⁵ and the dwellers of Babylon, and the rest of those who sit under wicked nations⁷⁶: the dwellers of Media and Persia and the dwellers of India, and the lands of Arabia up to the children of Ammon.

Most of them, they all sing with peace and with a clear language.⁷⁷ They speak words as intended, not once extended and another time shortened.⁷⁸ And it is a straight path,⁷⁹ acceptable before the Creator of all,⁸⁰ and clear as the sun.⁸¹

The *hazzan* is on his stand, and he does not lie on the ark as on his bed. And he does not shout in his pride as one shouting over his loss, or as one whose ship has sunk. He only prays in his simple voice. For as a man, so is his strength.⁸² And he does not hold his ears. Nor does he lay his head on his back. He only stands upright before the dweller on high,⁸³ his eyes towards the heavens. So is their custom from time immemorial.⁸⁴ Their cantors diligently study the Midrash, and they abstain from intoxicating beverages. And to the synagogue they hurry and hasten⁸⁵ for the morning and evening prayers. Such is the duty of all cantors to fulfill.

The Place,⁸⁶ blessed be He, who led Israel for 40 years in the desert—for His honor, I, the author, have come. Far be it for me to speak and to cast a blemish and a stain—only to speak upright words of truth, as is entrusted to

⁷⁰ Ref. to Job 38:36. The word “שכוי” is translated according to Rashi’s commentary on this verse.

⁷¹ Ref. to a section recited at the end of prayer *Aleynu leshabe’ah*.

⁷² According to the commentator Rada”k (Rabbi David Kimhi) on Psalms 119:1, the sense of smell is associated with wisdom.

⁷³ Muslim lands.

⁷⁴ The coast of north Africa.

⁷⁵ Esther 3:8.

⁷⁶ Deuteronomy 32:6.

⁷⁷ Ref. to the prayer “Yotzer or,” the first blessing recited each morning before *Shema*.

⁷⁸ Ref. to Mishnah, Brachot 1:4

⁷⁹ Ref to Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 2:1.

⁸⁰ Ref. to “Yotzer or.”

⁸¹ Ref. to Song of Songs 6:10.

⁸² Ref. to Judges 8:21.

⁸³ Ref. to the prayer *Av harahamim*, a prayer for martyrs.

⁸⁴ Ref. to 1 Samuel 1:3.

⁸⁵ Ref. to Isaiah 5:19.

⁸⁶ *Ha-makom*, literally “the place,” is one of the titles of God.

every leader, and speak up. To abolish the sound of shouting and sorrow.⁸⁷ For there is no hope for them to understand that such prayer should be accepted before the hearer of broken-hearted prayers. And my name is hidden, and I will not mention it because of the multitude of people over whom a spirit of folly and madness has passed. And my prayer to God is to give us a wise and understanding heart and to serve Him as one,⁸⁸ as discussed.

Amen.

⁸⁷ Wordplay on the sounds “Sehvarim” and “Teru’a,” both notes produced on the shofar and meant to imitate weeping.

⁸⁸ Genesis 48:22.

The Hebrew Source

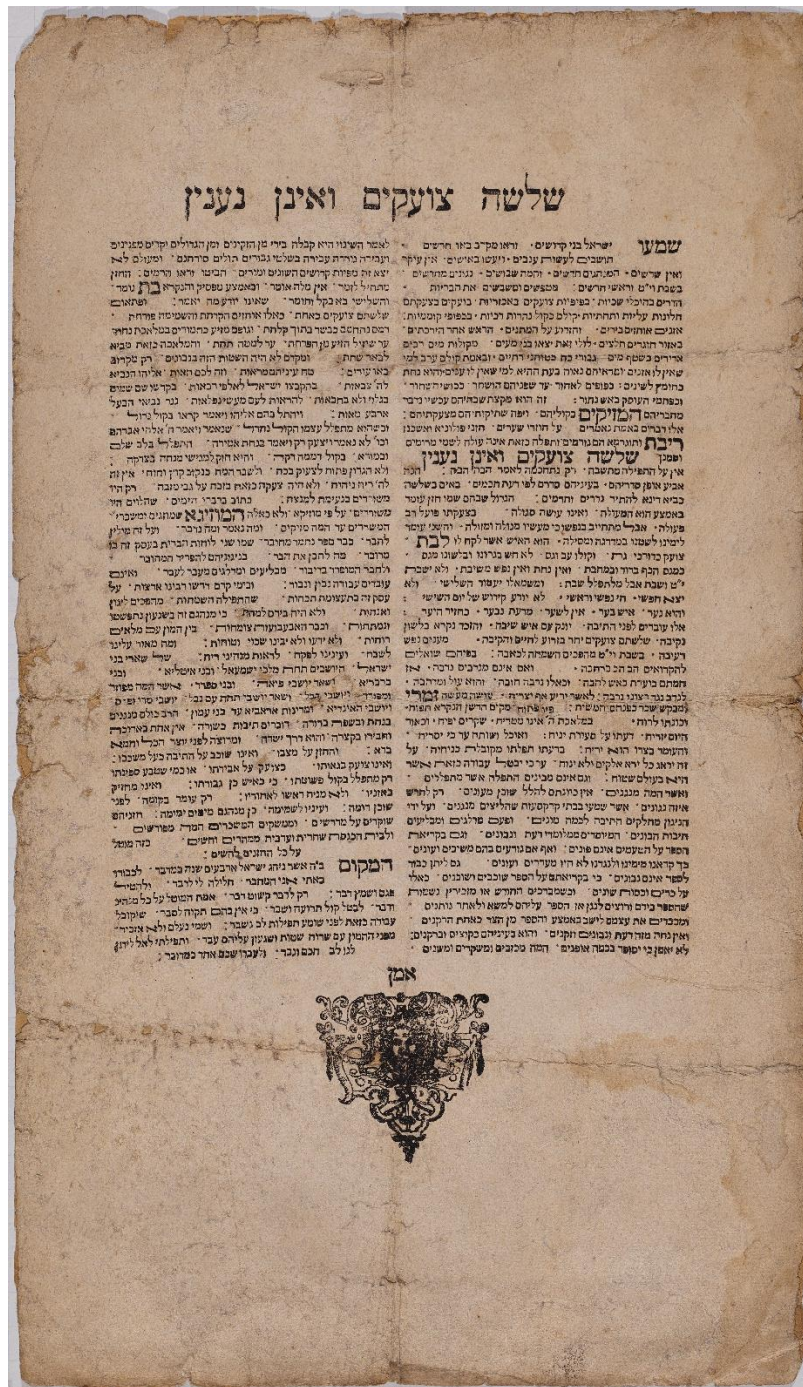


Figure 1 Anonymous treatise, *Sheloshah tzo'akim v'ainan na'anin*. Amsterdam, ca. 1700. Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Call number B (NS)Ch21 DR3-L36. Courtesy of The Jewish Theological Seminary

שלושה צועקים ואינן נענין

שמעו ישראל בני קדושים. וראו מקרב באו חדשים.
 חושבים לעשות ענבים. ויעשו באושים. אין עיקר
 ואין שרשים. המנהגים חדשים. והמה שבושים. נגונים מחדשים.
 בשבת וי"ט וראשי חדשים: מטפשים ומשבשים את הבריות.
 הדרים בהיכלי שכיות. בפיות צועקים באכזריות. בוקעים בצעקתם
 חלונות עליות ותחתיות. קולם כקול נהרות דכיות. בכפופי קוממיות:
 אזנים אוזנים בידים. והזרוע על המתנים. הראש אחר הירכתים.
 באזור חוגרים חלצים. לולי זאת יצאו בני מעים. מקולות מים רבים
 אדירים כשטף מים. גבורי כח כטוחני רחיים. ובאמת קולם ערב למי
 שאין לו אזנים. ומראיהם נאווה בעת ההיא למי שאין לו ענים. והוא נחת
 כחומץ לשינים: כפופים לאחור. עד שפניהם הושחר. ככושי השחור.
 וכפחמי העוסק באש נחור: זה הוא מקצת שבחיהם עכשיו נדבר
 מחבריהם המזיקים בקוליהם. ויפה שתיקותיהם מצעקתיהם:
 אלו דברים באמת נאמרים על חוזרי שערים. חזני פולוניא ואשכנז
 ריבת ותוגרמא הם גורמים. ותפלה כזאת אינה עולה לשמי מרומים.
 וסמנך שלשה צועקים ואינן נענין
 אין על התפלה מחשבה. רק נתחכמה לאמר הבה הבה: הנה
 אביע אופן סדריהם. בעיניהם סדרם לפי דעת חכמים. באים בשלשה
 כביא דינא להתיר נדרים וחרמים: הגדול שבהם שמו חזן עומד
 באמצע הוא המעולה. ואינו עושה סגולה. בצעקתו פועל רב
 פעולה. אבל מתחייב בנפשו כי מעשיו מגולה ומזולה. והשני עומד
 לימינו לשטנו במדרגה ומסילה. הוא האיש אשר לקח לו לבת.
 צועק כדורכי גת. וקולו עב וגס. לא חש בגרונו ובלשונו מגס.
 כמגס הכף בדוד ובמחבת. ואין נחת ואין נפש משיבת. ולא ישבת
 י"ט ושבת אבל מלתפלל שבת: ומשמאלו יעמוד השלישי. ולא
 יצא חפשי. חי נפשי וראשי. לא יודע קידוש של יום השישי:
 והוא נער. איש בער. אין לשער. מדעת נבער. כחזיר היער:
 אלו עוברים לפני התיבה. יונק עם איש שיבה. והזכר נקרא בלשון
 נקיבה. שלשתם צועקים יחד בזרוע לחיים והקיבה. מענים נפש
 רעיבה. בשבת וי"ט מהפכים השמחה לכאבה. בפיהם שואלים

להקרואים הב הב ברחבה. ואם אינם מנדבים נדבה. אז חמתם בוערת כאש להבה. וכאלו נדבה חובה. והוא עול ומרהבה. לנדב נגד רצונו נדבה: לאשר יריע אף יצרית. עושה מעשה זמרי ומבקש שכר כפנחס המשיח: פיו פתוח מקום הדשן הנקרא תפוח. וכונתו לרות. במלאכת ה' אינו מטריח. שקרים יפית. וכאור היום יזריח. דעתו על סעודת יניח. ואוכל ושותה עד כי יסריח. והעומד בצדו הוא יריח: בדעתו תפלתו מקובלת כניחות. על זה ידאג כל ירא אלקים ולא ינוח. עד כי יבטל עבודה כזאת אשר היא בעולם שטוח: וגם אינם מבינים התפלה אשר מתפללים. ואשר המה מנגנים. אין כוונתם להלל שוכן מעונים. רק לחדש איזה נגונים. אשר שמעו בבתי קרקסעות שהליצים מנגנים. ועל ידי הניגון מחלקים התיבה לכמה מונים. ופעם מדלגים ומבליעים תיבות הבונים. המיוסדים ממלומדי דעת ונבונים. וגם בקריאת הספר על הטעמים אינם פונים. ואף אם גורעים בהם משיבים ועונים כך קראנו מימינו ולנגדנו לא היו מעררים ועונים. גם ליתן כבוד לספר אינם נבונים. כי בקריאתם על הספר שוכבים ושוכנים. כאלו על כרים וכסות שונים. וכשמברכים החודש או מזכירין נשמות שהספר בידם ורוצים לנגן אז הספר עליהם למשא ולאחר נותנים. ומכבדים את עצמם לישוב באמצע והספר מן הצד כאחד הרקנים. ואין נחה מזה דעת ונבונים וזקנים. והוא בעיניהם כקוצים וברקנים: לא יאמן כי יסופר בכמה אופנים. המה מכזבים ומשקרים ומשנים.

לאמר השינוי היא קבלה בידי מן הזקנים ומן הגדולים יקרים מפנינים. ועבירה גוררת עבירה בשלטי גבורים תולים סורחנם. ומעולם לא יצא זה מפיות קדושים השונים ומורים. הביטו וראו הרמים: החזן מתחיל לזמר: אין מלה אומר. ובאמצע מפסיק והנקרא בת גומר. והשלישי בא בקל וחומר. שאינו יודע מה יאמר: ופתאום שלשתם צועקים כאחת. כאלו אוחזים הקדחת והשמימה פורחת. דמם נתחמם כבשר בתוך קלחת. וגופם מזיע כחמורים במלאכת נחת. עד שיזיל הזיע מן הפדחת. עד למטה תחת. והמלאכה כזאת מביא לבאר שחת: ומקדם לא היה השטות הזה בנבונים. רק מקרוב

באו עורים: טח עיניהם מראות. וזה לכם האות. אליהו הנביא
 לה' צבאות. בהקבצו ישראל לאלפי רבאות. בקדשו שם שמים
 בגלוי ולא בחבאות. להראות לעם מעשי נפלאות. נגד נביאי הבעל
 ארבע מאות: ויהתל בהם אליהו ויאמר קראו בקול גדול.
 וכשהוא מתפלל עצמו הקול נחדל. שנאמר ויאמר ה' אלהי אברהם
 וכו' לא נאמר ויצעק רק ויאמר בנחת אמירה. התפלל בלב שלם
 ובמורא. בקול דממה דקה. והיא חוק למגישי מנחה בצדקה:
 ולא הגרון פתוח לצעוק בכח. ולשבר המזח כנקוב קוץ וחות. אין זה
 לה' ריח ניחות. ולא היה צעקה כזאת בזבח על גבי מזבח. רק היו
 משוררים בנעימת למנצח: כתוב בדברי הימים. שהלויים היו
 משוררים. על פי מוזיקא. ולא כאלה המוזיגא שמוזגים ומשכרים.
 המשוררים עד המה מזיקים. ומה נאמר ומה נדבר. ועל זה מילין
 לחבר. כבר ספר נחמד מחובר. שמו שני לוחות הברית בעסק זה בו
 מדובר. מה לתבן את הבר. בניגוניהם להפריד המחובר.
 ולחבר המופרד בדיבור. מבליעים ומדלגים מעבר לעבר. ואינם
 עובדים עבודה נכון ונבור: ובימי קדם דרשו רבינו ארצות. על
 עסק זה בתעצומת תכחות. שהתפילה השמחות. מהפכים ליגון
 ואנחות. ולא היה בידם למחות. כי מנהגם זה בשגעון נתפשטו
 ונמתחות. וכבר האבעבועות צומחות. בין המון עם מלאים
 רוחות. ולא ידעו ולא יבינו שכוי וטוחות: ומה מאוד עלינו
 לשבת. ועינינו לפקת. לראות מנהיגי ריח: של שארי בני
 ישראל. היושבים תחת מלכי ישמעאל. ובני איטליא. ובני
 ברבריא. ושאר יושבי פיאה. ובני ספרד. אשר המה מפוזר
 ומפורד. ויושבי בבל. ושאר יושבי תחת עם נבל. יושבי מדי ופרס
 ויושבי האינדיא. ומדינות אראביא עד בני עמון. הרב כולם מנגנים
 בנחת ובשפה ברורה. דוברים תיבות כשורה. אין אחת בארוכה
 ותבירו בקצרה. והוא דרך ישרה. ומרוצה לפני יוצר הכל וחמא
 ברא: והחזן על מצבו. ואינו שוכב על התיבה כעל משכבו:
 ואינו צועק בגאותו כצועק על אבידתו. או כמי שטבע ספינתו
 רק מתפלל בקול פשוטתו. כי כאיש כן גבורתו: ואינו מחזיק
 באזניו. ולא מניח ראשו לאחוריו: רק עומד בקומה. לפני

שוכן רומה: ועיניו לשמימה. כן מנהגם מימים ימימה: חזניהם
שוקדים על מדרשים. וממשקים המשכרים המה מפורשים.
ולבית הכנסת שחרית וערבית ממהרים וחשים. כזה מוטל
על כל החזנים להשים:
המקום ב"ה אשר ניהג ישראל ארבעים שנה במדבר. לכבודו באתי
אני המתבר. חלילה לי לדבר. ולהטיל
פגם ושמץ דבר: רק לדבר קשויט דבר. אמת המוטל על כל מנהיג
ודבר. לבטל קול תרועה ושבר. כי אין בהם תקוה לסבר. שיקובל
עבודה כזאת לפני שומע תפילות לב נשבר: ושמי נעלם ולא אזכיר.
מפני ההמון עם שרוח שטות ושגעון עליהם עבר. ותפילתי לאל ליתן
לנו לב חכם ונבר. ולעבדו שכמ אחד כמדובר:

אמן.