

GENERATIONS: C- Shawn Zevit 2005

CD 1- Kabbalat Shabbat- A complete Friday evening spiritual experience in music- A Journey From Then to Now

CD 1, follows the traditional matbeah (deep structure) of the Friday night Sabbath service. Using traditional prayers and original words and melodies that I or my colleagues composed between 1994 and 2006, I have aspired to blend traditional melodies and words with contemporary versions of my own and other artists, some of whom do not have their own music recorded or widely known in the world. This CD has been recorded as a spiritual journey- one that one could focus on particular prayers for specific times or listen to in its entirety for a complete experiential entry into the Sabbath. You are encouraged to find a comfortable position in which to sit, stand or move as you are inspired to. You may also choose to play this in a group or community and sing along with the prayer book of your choice.

Due to the immense amount of material these recording covers, I have chosen to highlight the meaning and background of the musical prayers in this project. For fuller notes you can go to www.rabbizevit.com or consult any number of Sabbath Prayer books.

1. Beshem HaShem (8:15) (Words: traditional liturgy; Music- S. Zevit)

<https://youtu.be/OcA2zljzoVc?si=Fc7iMI6b2pUTYbkO>

Invoking the all-encompassing holographic presence of Divinity in the Universe and in our lives- right, left, front, back, above and beneath (thanks to Rabbi Arthur Waskow for the addition of the earth itself beneath our feet). I added the meditations to prepare our entry into a more expansiveness level of consciousness that accompanies this time. As the Kabbalists knew- we could not simply drop our busy minds and active hands and enter a deeper reality of pure Being and Becoming- we need entry points. The melody is in honor of my beloved godson Raffi Stein Klotz, for whom it was composed and played during the many hours of his mom Myriam's labor bringing him into the world, blessing that he is. The balance of male-female energies- a them of Kabbalat Shabbat is accentuated by Juliet's lovely accompaniment.

2. Shalom Aleykhem (3:48) (Words: traditional Liturgy; Music: Rabbi Steve Segar)

<https://youtu.be/bh9ty8nKMN8?si=-E4pTtHviTQn6oIq>

One of the most beloved Sabbath hymns, inviting God's presence through angelic accompaniment- from the beginning through the end of the Sabbath. It is an honor to get Steve's gender inclusive version out into the world.

3. Shiru L'Adonai (3:00) (Words: Psalm 96; music: Rabbi Gary Ellison)

<https://youtu.be/sMVYqsdXQ7O?si=a797dSHx-F LA4Ix>

One of the core Psalms that helps us enter the holiness of the Sabbath in the Kabbalat Shabbat service. The Psalm begins by inviting us to sing a new song- highlighted by Gary's beautiful, contemporary, and sweet new melody).

4. L'Cha Dodi (7:27) (Words: Hebrew- Sabbath Liturgy; composed by R. Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz, a member of the Kabbalists of 16th century Tsfat, whose name is reflected in the initial letters of the first eight stanzas.. English- Rabbi Marcia Prager's Siddur and S. Zevit; Music- S. Zevit)

<https://youtu.be/o-avToHr6xs?si=Q-ENZikwlvPYZyQH>

This favorite hymn for the Sabbath is the seventh in the traditional liturgy- itself a placeholder for the seventh day of creation. The imagery builds from the Talmudic images of rabbis Hanina and Yanay who would dress in white and go into the fields to “greet the Sabbath Queen or Bride”. We welcome God’s Presence into our very homes, the beloved sense of union and purity of being so often in exile during the rest of the week. In keeping with a more egalitarian theology, I have reinterpreted some of the stanzas in English and framed the kavannah (intention) of this prayer in a new way. I often invite people to think of the aspect of themselves they wish to welcome home to feel God’s presence more deeply in their lives. By seeing ourselves as inherently whole and all of existence as “of God”, we can focus on what blocks us from experience the inherent wholeness we embody, and not on what it is outside ourselves that we need to feel whole in this dance of cosmological unification.

Added English words (Shawn Zevit)

In ancient days, when the Sabbath came
Sages dressed in white, in the fields they prayed
Come let us greet, the Beloved One
And tonight we invite
Our Souls to come home.

Rise up and leave your saddened state
You’ve lived long enough in the valley of pain
Now the Holy One will shower mercy on you
Lift yourself up, O My people

Awake! Awake! Your light has come
Arise! Shine! Awake dear one
Eternity’s kiss has come to you
God’s embrace enfolding you

Coda: Rise up now, lift up your soul
Turn your eyes to the open door
Welcome the dearest part
Of yourself back home

Let the stress of the week, let it go
Enter my Beloved, enter my Beloved
Your Home

5. A Maariv Song (6:58) (Intro- Words: traditional liturgy and nusakh (melody); English- author unknown).

<https://youtu.be/TMvLH-atNCo?si=NRHolskirDXAR477>

With the ancient public call to prayer through the invocation of the sacred Name of Divinity, we bend our knee in acknowledgement of a Source or set of Values we direct our lives from, that gives direction to our lives.

Words: (S. Zevit and Unknown)

Evening has come

Shabbat is here

Hand in hand

We move into the night

Thread by thread

We weave the web

Powerful sun full of radiant light

Weave us the web that spins the night

Web of stars that holds the dark

Weave us the earth that feeds the spark

Strand by strand, hand over hand

Thread by thread, we weave the web

6. Ahavat Olam (3:48) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy; English words- Rabbi Rami Shapiro; Music- S. Zevit).

<https://youtu.be/zZIPv-50sro?si=6vcvtB1TobaTSjA>

The second blessing before the Shema (the declaration of the Oneness of God and Unity of All Being) balances the first blessing that focuses on the Power of Creation with the Unending Love that is open to everyone and the inherent gift all beings can claim as theirs.

“Calling on the Presence of Love”

English words (Rami Shapiro)

We are loved by an Unending Love (2x)

We are embraced by arms that find us

Even when we are hidden from ourselves

We are touched by fingers that soothe us

Even when we are too proud for soothing

We are counseled by voices that guide us

Even when we are too embittered to hear

We are loved by an Unending Love

We are supported by hands that uplift us

Even in the midst of a fall

We are urged on by eyes that meet us

Even when we are too weak for meeting

We are loved by an Unending Love

Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled
Ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices
Ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles
We are loved by an Unending Love

Barukh Atah YHVH, Love of the World (SZ)

7. Shma (4:12) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy; Music; S. Zevit)

https://youtu.be/r5-S0rCYo_E?si=nyjaAA_2SXjvxGPG

Listen! On the deepest level All is One and the One is All. How could we treat the world and those in it in a divisive manner if we truly allowed the Unity of All Life to be our guiding principle? The melody for this came as a gift from my grandmother Rose immediately after her passing in 1994, being released from a decade of decline due to Alzheimer's- it was a gift to remember her strong-willed and faith-filled spirit by.

Listen, you who reach for God
The Breath of Life is One- all there is!
One, each and every one
Each one joined and united in the one

8. Mi Khamokha (3:52) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy; English- S. Zevit; Music- S. Zevit).

<https://youtu.be/iwnOubcIe5g?si=w5jAa9ktU8DZ8MUj>

The Shma blends seamlessly into the blessing of redemption- of fulfilling our individual and collective potentials and destiny- however we understand and experience this in our lives. The melody is derived from my 1990's melody that is the first line "YAH Eloheykhem Emet"- "God is Truth Itself". Liberation from any form of oppression is not only a collective memory, but a requirement for living a Godly life.

9. Hashkiveynu (2:47) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy; English- S. Zevit from Marcia Prager's siddur; Music- S. Zevit).

<https://youtu.be/wgTKBVaTwos?si=6UUZ1tSPA2ieW2oW>

In the evening, when we are feeling more vulnerable and the shadows of night mirror our own uncertainties, we call upon God's protection- the Canopy of Peace and Wholeness that every person and people long to live into, and to lay down at night embraced by.

Hashkiveynu Adonai Eloheynu l'shalom
V'ha'amideynu Malkeynu l'khaim
Dear God, let us lie down in peace
And rise up again, Living Source into life
Spread over us Your canopy of peace
Shelter us in Your protecting love

Barukh Atah Holy One
Spreading Your sukkah of peace
Over us and over Yerushalayim
Unite us all in peace...

10. V'Shamru (5:28) (Words: traditional liturgy, Music- S. Zevit).

https://youtu.be/A6XpOJggCxo?si=AFq_X1tS9tXjkKw0

The special addition to the Friday night Sabbath service- we are reminded to be guardians, keepers of the Sabbath and commitment to God and community on this seventh day. I entered the studio not having a melody for this prayer or knowing how I would fit it in. This recording is a true gift of God's grace. The shruti is often used to accompany Indian wind instruments, especially flute. A gift from Talia, I brought the shruti box into the studio for inspiration, we hit record, and this one take is what followed. The harmonies were added later. The words and melody invoke for me the internal spaciousness the Sabbath offers- nothing to do, nowhere to rush to- the purity of being, of celebrating existence, God in every breath!

11. Amidah (10:24) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy, English- S. Zevit; Music- S.Zevit, inspired by the melody to Adonai S'Fatai by S. Zevit and Juliet I. Spitzer c-'98)

<https://youtu.be/ndY5-R1PIU0?si=ZWoTajZV1OD9sXPc>

The pinnacle of the Sabbath evening service is entering the Seven Gates of the Amidah- the great standing prayer. The 19 blessings of the weekday Amidah are reduced to seven essentials, by replacing 13 petitionary prayers with a prayer and blessing for the gift of the Sabbath. This is the realm of atizlut, of pure spirit without form, and the seven blessings (Ancestors, Divine Power, Sacredness of Life, the Holiness of the Sabbath, Prayerful Consciousness in our Life, Gratitude) are gateways that culminate in Shalom (peace, wholeness). I first did a version of this meditation prayer in the Galilee in Israel in the summer of 1997 at a retreat that Gabi Meyer and the band Sheva organized for Tu B'Av, exploring love in the Jewish tradition. I added an additional musical element to each of the seven gates/blessings to help enhance the journey. I pray you enter and leave this realm with a Sabbath gift meant especially for your understanding.

1. gate of our ancestors: who came before you and who left a legacy. Those who gave your loving blessings, those who left you challenges, all who came before.
2. gate of enlivening power -- sometimes -- we feel deadened this week. we feel as if sleepwalking through life. Draw in the source of all renew your soul, reawaken your whole being. God's enlivening power. Draw it in.
3. gate of holiness -- turning everyday to the potential it is. Live the life you long for. See beauty in all things.

4. gate of shabbat -- what will you do differently today. What will you do that is special. A day of pure being. Let go of your "doing". {{{{On this day of the New Year we celebrate the holy day of renewal. }}}}

5. gate of return -- of divine immanence and renewal. Where have we felt distant in life and uninvolved: emotionally, physically, spiritually, intellectually. Return to a full life.

6. gate of thankfulness -- is there a "thank you" or "I love you" you have kept inside or withheld? Can you commit this day to say what you mean to say --to those close to you how loved they really are?

7. gate of shalom -- the gate of wholeness and peace. Let us feel whole again. Wholeness is who we are, when we drift and go far. We lose our "peace" of mind.

12. Kaddish (2:27) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy; Music- S. Zevit).

https://youtu.be/kSIktDCPmGc?si=ljwQPOaBF5_PJK5

The kaddish is the traditional prayer of remembering our loved ones who have moved beyond this plane of existence. Originally an Aramaic prayer extolling profound teaching and teachers- there is no mention of death in it. Rather it is a re-affirmation of Life itself. By remembering our dead with the praise of life, we invoke and seal in the memory of what their lives meant in our hearts and memories. The last line includes the pluralistic contemporary addition of "all who dwell on earth".

13. Aleinu: It's Upon Us (3:00) (Words: Hebrew: traditional liturgy, English- Shayndel Kahn; Music- Shayndel Kahn)

https://youtu.be/-Wz1HnM94Mg?si=74zbMesIqo8ue_4X

Shayndel, a graduate of the Davening Leader's Training Institute that I co-founded and have been co-leading since 2000, offered this during the two-year program and recorded it herself as part of the trio Ashira (Matia Rania Angelou, Shayndel Kahn, and Sharon Teitelbaum) on "The Indwelling Presence."

Music and Words by Shayndel Kahn

May we feel Your holy power,
May we feel Your holy strength,
May we feel Your holy presence,
Surround us in this holy place.
May we feel the earth beneath our feet,
As we bend and bow to You,
May our bodies rise to greet you,
As we feel your presence forging through.

It's upon us, it's upon us, to feel Your holy ground,

It's upon us, it's upon us, to hear Your holy sound,
It's upon us, it's upon us, to feel the love inside,
It's upon us, it's upon us, to face You and not hide.
It's upon us, it's upon us, to think, to act, to do,
It's upon us, it's upon us, to do what's right and true,
It's upon us, it's upon us, to reach up to the sky,
It's upon us, it's upon us, to take our wings and fly.
Aleinu l'shabeach ladon hakol (4x)

May we feel Your holy power,
May we feel Your holy strength,
May we feel Your holy presence,
Surround us in this holy place.

14. Hashkiveynu Reprise (2:17) (Words: S. Zevit, based on traditional liturgy; Music-S. Zevit)

<https://youtu.be/f70M2rbGe4s?si=-lo62DPezJfnCK9->

Spread over us Your canopy of Peace
Dear One let us rise again with ease
Enfold us 'neath Your wings of love
U'fros aleynu sukkat Sh'lomekha

15. Shabbat Niggun (2:42) (S. Zevit)

<https://youtu.be/xWERcDzlGjI?si=Qd55K3hT5RVmZRaa>

Building on the melody I wrote that I overlaid the Kaddish on, I was moved to record a more embellished version with Micah's wonderful mandolin (and with Daoud's support my own percussion) to bring the Kabbalat Shabbat experience to a landing place.