

## TALMUD SUITE

The Talmud is a vast corpus of law, commentaries, legend, and philosophy, compiled more or less independently in Palestine and Babylonia between the third and eighth centuries. The arguments and dissenting opinions of the leading scholars and schools of the time are recorded in all their complexity and universality of reference. No other work has had a comparable influence on the theory and practice of Jewish life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct throughout the world.

Although the Talmud's main objective is to provide legal interpretation, it is, simultaneously, a work of art that goes beyond legislation and its practical application. It is a blend of subtle logic and unswerving pragmatism, of history and science, anecdote and humour. It also occasionally contains short poems — prayers designed for synagogue use, private devotions, elegies, and random snatches of popular verse. It is this kind of material which provides the texts for the accompanying set of choral pieces.

While there is an unmistakable reference in these pieces to earlier periods of musical expression for the purpose of underlining the ancient character of the texts, there has been no attempt at evoking an authentic impression of the setting in which the poems were written. The music is solely a response to an ancient and still very much living tradition through the heart and mind of a modern reader. If this music conjures up the past, that is all well and good. And if it touches upon more contemporary issues, that's fine too. And even if it does neither of these, and just happens to please the listener a little, then it will surely have achieved the composer's purpose.

*Note on Pronunciation*

In the transliteration of the Hebrew text, most of the sounds are to be pronounced as in English, while taking particular note of the following:

1. *ch* is always pronounced as in Scottish "loch," e.g. *v'chamas*.
2. The apostrophe (') is used to indicate a reduced vowel similar to the *e* in "courtesy," e.g. *n'shamah*.
3. Both *a* and *ah* are pronounced as the "a" in Italian "mano," e.g. *atah*.
4. *ai* is pronounced as the "y" in "sky," e.g. *Elohai*.
5. *e* is pronounced as in "met," e.g. *mimēni*.
6. *ei* is pronounced as the "ey" in "they," e.g. *seifer*.
7. *i* is pronounced as the "ee" in "feet," e.g. *b'kirbi*.
8. *o* is pronounced as in "for," e.g. *t'horah*.

This piece was commissioned by the Elmer Iseler Singers of Toronto through a grant from the Ontario Arts Council.

## VI PRAYER BEFORE SLEEP

Grouped among the prayers to be recited at home before retiring at night.

Exalted art Thou, O my Lord  
Who art God and King of the World,  
Who weighs down my eyes  
With gentle bonds of sleep,  
And refreshes my tired spirit with slumber.

May ever it be Thy will,  
Lord my God, and God of all my fathers,  
To lay me down in untroubled peace  
And raise me up in peace once more

Do not let dark imaginings disturb me  
With thoughts of sin and despair.  
O heal my fear and my suffering —  
May my bed be enclosed in Thy care.

Give light unto my eyes  
Lest the sleep of death o'ertake me.  
For 'tis Thou who breathes life  
Into man's slumbering soul.  
Exalted art Thou, O Lord,  
Who illuminates all the world  
With His Glory.

*Baruch atah Adonai  
Eloheinu melech ha-olam  
Hamapil chavlei sheina  
Al einai  
Ut'numah al afapai*

*V'hi ratson milfanecha  
Adonai Elohai Velohei Avotai  
Shetashkiveini l'shalom  
V'ta-amideini l'shalom*

*V'al y'vahaluni rayonai  
Vachalomot ra-im  
V'harhorim ra-im  
U-t'hi mitati shleima l'fanecha*

*V'ha-er einai  
Pen ishan hamavet  
Ki atah hame-ir  
L'ishon bat-ayin  
Baruch atah Adonai  
Hame-ir la-olam kulo  
Bichvodo*

# Prayer Before Sleep

Hebrew text:  
Babylonian Talmud

Music and English translation:  
Sid Robinovitch

Andante ♩ = ca.58

Bass

*p*

Ba - ruch a - tah — A - do - nai — E - lo - hei - nu —  
Ex - alt - ed art Thou O my Lord — who art God and —

Piano for Rehearsal only

*p*

B

6

me - lech ha - o - lam — ha - ma - pil chay - lei shei - na — al ei - nai —  
king - of the world — who weighs down my — eyes with gen - tle bonds of sleep —

T

12

*mp*  
Vi hi - ra -  
May ev - er it

B

— u - t'nu - mah — al af - a - pai — Vi - hi -  
— and re - fresh-es my tired spir - it with slumb - er. — May ev -

19

T  
 tson mil - fa - ne - cha A - do - nai E - lo - hai ve - lo - hei a - vo -  
 be Thy will Lord my God and God of all my

B  
 ra tson mil - fa - ne - cha A - do - nai E - lo  
 er it be Thy will O Lord my God and -

24

T  
 tai sh' - tash - ki - vei - ni sha - lom  
 fath - ers to lay me down in un - troub - led peace

B  
 hai ve - lo - hei a - vo - tai sh' - tash - ki - vei - ni l' -  
 God of all my fath - ers to lay me down in un -

29

T  
 v' - ta a - mi - dei - ni l' - sha - lom  
 and when morn - ing comes to raise me up once more.

B  
 sha lom v' - ta a - mi - dei - ni l' - sha -  
 troub - led peace and raise me up in peace once

34

*mf*

S V' - al y' - va - ha - lu - ni ra - yo - nai va -  
Do not let dark im - a - gin - ings dis - turb me with

A *mf*  
V' - al y' - va - ha - lu - ni ra - yo - nai va -  
Do not let dark im - a - gin - ings dis - turb me with

T *mf*  
v' - al not y' - va - ha lu - ni ra - yo - nai va  
Do not let dark im - a - gin - ings dis -

B *mf*  
lom sha lom  
more. Peace gen

*mf*

(*mf*)

39

S cha - lo - mot ra im v' - har - ho -  
thoughts of sin and des pair O heal my

A cha lo - mot ra im v' - har - ho -  
thoughts of sin and des pair O heal my

T cha - lo mot me with ra thoughts of des - pair v' - har - ho -  
turb me with thoughts of des - pair O heal my

B l' sha lom l'  
tle Peace O gen

44

S  
rim ra - im u - l' - hi mi - ta - ti shlei - mah  
fears and my suf - fer - ing May my bed be en - closed

A  
rim ra - im u - l' - hi mi - ta - ti shlei - mah  
fears and my suf - fer - ing May my bed be en - closed

T  
rim ra - im u - l' - hi mi - ta - ti  
fears and my suf - fer - ing May my bed may my bed

B  
sha lom sha  
tle Peace gen - tle

49

S  
l' - fa - ne cha v' - ha er ei -  
in Thy care. Give light un - to my

A  
l' - fa - ne cha v' - ha er ei -  
in Thy care. Give light un - to my

T  
shlei - mah - fa - ne - cha v' - ha - er ei -  
be en closed in Thy care. Give light un - to my

B  
lom v' - ha  
Peace Give light un - to my

54

S  
nai \_\_\_\_\_ pen i - shan ha - ma - vet \_\_\_\_\_  
eyes \_\_\_\_\_ lest the sleep of death o'er - take me. \_\_\_\_\_

A  
nai \_\_\_\_\_ pen i - shan ha - ma - vet \_\_\_\_\_  
eyes \_\_\_\_\_ lest death o'er - take me. \_\_\_\_\_

T  
nai \_\_\_\_\_ pen i - shan ha - ma take vet \_\_\_\_\_  
eyes \_\_\_\_\_ lest death o'er - take me. \_\_\_\_\_

B  
er \_\_\_\_\_ ei nai pen i shan ha \_\_\_\_\_  
eyes, give light un - to my eyes \_\_\_\_\_ lest death o'er -

59

S  
\_\_\_\_\_ ki a - tah ha - me - ir l' - i - shon bat - a - yin Ba -  
For 'tis Thou who breathes life in - to man's slumb-'ring soul Ex -

A  
\_\_\_\_\_ ki a - tah ha - me - ir l' - i - shon bat - a - yin Ba -  
For 'tis Thou who breathes life in - to man's slumb-'ring soul Ex -

T  
\_\_\_\_\_ ki a - tah ha - me - ir l' - i - shon bat - a - yin  
For 'tis Thou who breathes life in-to man's slumb-'ring soul \_\_\_\_\_

B  
ma vet ki a - tah ha - me - ir l' - i - shon bat - a - yin  
take me. For 'tis Thou who breathes life in-to man's slumb-'ring soul \_\_\_\_\_



Rit. - - - - - Slowly rit.

64 *mp* *p*

S *ruch a - tah A - do - nai ha - me - ir la - o - lam ku -*  
*alt - ed art Thou O Lord who il - lu - min - ates all the*

A *ruch a - tah A - do - nai ha - me - ir la - o - lam ku -*  
*alt - ed art Thou O Lord who il - lu - min - ates all the*

T *Ba - ruch a - tah A - do - nai ha - me - ir la - o - lam ku -*  
*Ex - alt - ed art Thou O Lord who il - lu - min - ates all the*

B *Ba - ruch a - tah A - do - nai ha - me - ir la - o - lam ku -*  
*Ex - alt - ed art Thou O Lord who il - lu - min - ates all the*

*mp* *p*

Rit. - - - - - Slowly rit.

68

S *lo bich vo do*  
*world with His Glor - y.*

A *lo bich vo do*  
*world with His Glor - y.*

T *lo bich vo do*  
*world with His Glor - y.*

B *lo bich vo do*  
*wörl with His Glor - y.*

