

# Esheth Chayil

Proverbs 31:10-31

Melody by Ben Zion Shenker

arr. Joel Nothman

**A**

*Adagio* *Andante, accel. poco a poco*

Soprano  
Ey-shes cha-yil mi yim tsə? Ey - shes cha - yil mi yim - tsə;

Alto

Tenor  
Ey-shes cha-yil mi yim tsə? Ey-shes cha-yil mi yim tsə, v<sup>e</sup> - rə-choyk mip-ni - nim mich-rəh;

Bass

7

S  
Bə - tach bəh lev ba - ləh; Toyv v<sup>e</sup> - loy rə, kol cha-

A

T  
Bə-tach bəh lev ba-a-ləh, v<sup>e</sup> - shə-ləl loy yech-sə; G<sup>e</sup>mə-las-hu toyv v<sup>e</sup> - loy rə, kol y<sup>e</sup>-mei

B

**B**

*Allegro*

14

S  
- ye - hə; Dər - shə chey - fets ka - pe - - hə; Ai ai

A  
ka - pe - hə;

T  
cha - ye - hə; Dər-shə tse-mer u - fish - tim, va - ta - as b<sup>e</sup>cheyfets ka pe - hə; Həy-sə kə-o-ni yoys

B

20

S  
ai ai nai nai nai nai nai Aa \_\_\_\_\_ Va - titeyn te-ref l<sup>e</sup>-veisəh

A  
Va aah

T  
soy cher, mi - merchək tə - vi lach məh; Va - tə - kom b<sup>e</sup>oyd lay - lə, va-titeyn te - ref l<sup>e</sup>-vei - səh v<sup>e</sup> -

B  
Va - tə - kom lay - lə, l<sup>e</sup> -

26

S  
ve.choyk le-na.roy.se.ho; Zo - me - mo va-ti.ko.chey.hu, mi - pri cha-pe.ho no-to ko-rem;

A

T  
choyk le.nay.roy.se - ho; Zo.me.mo so.de va-ti.ko.chey - hu, mip - ri cha-pe.ho no - to ko - rem;

B  
vei - soh; Zo - me - mo ti-ko - chey - hu, mip-ri cha-pe - ho ko - rem;

31

S  
Oyz te - a - meyts zroy - oy - se - ho; To - mo toyv, yich -

A

T  
Chog.ro bo.oyz moysne - ho, vat - a - meyts zroyoyse - ho; To-mo ki toyv sach-ro, loy yich-be ba -

B  
loy yich-be ba -

38

S  
be ney - roh; Yo - de - - ho po - - lech; Ka - poh le - o -

A

T  
lay-lo ney - roh; Yo-de-ho shilcho ba - ki-shoyr, vecha-pe-ho tomchu fo - lech; Kapoh por-so le - o - ni,

B  
lay - lo neyroh;

45

S  
- ni, lo - ev - yon; Loy si - ro le.veisoh, ki lovush shonim; Mar-

A  
lo - vush

T  
ve-yo-de-ho shilcho loev-yon; Loy si - ro le.veisoh mi - sho-leg, ki choyl beisoh lovush sho - nim; Mar-

B  
lo - ev - yon; Loysi - ro mi - sho-leg,

51 **D**

S - ba-dim օս<sup>e</sup> - սօ ֬օհ, sheysh varg - մօն Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ; Noy-da bash - օ-rim ba - ֬օհ, b<sup>e</sup> -

A - ba-dim օս<sup>e</sup> - սօ ֬օհ, sheysh v<sup>e</sup>-ar-gօմօն Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ; Noy-da bash - օ-rim ba - ֬օհ, b<sup>e</sup> -

T - ba-dim օս<sup>e</sup> - սօ ֬օհ, sheysh v<sup>e</sup>-ar-gօմօն Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ; Noy-da bash - օ-rim ba - ֬օհ, b<sup>e</sup> -

B - ba-dim օս<sup>e</sup> - սօ ֬օհ, sheysh v<sup>e</sup>-ar-gօմօն Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ; Noy-da bash - օ-rim ba - ֬օհ,

57

S shiv-to im zik-nei օ-rets; Sօ-din օս<sup>e</sup>-սօ va - tim - koyr, va - cha-gor ոս-ոս Լակ-na - a-ni;

A shiv-to im zik-nei օ-rets; Sօ-din օս<sup>e</sup>-սօ va - tim - koyr, va - cha-gor ոս-ոս Լակ-na - a-ni;

T shiv-to im zik-nei օ-rets; Sօ-din օս<sup>e</sup>-սօ va - tim - koyr, va - cha-gor ոս-ոս Լակ-na - a-ni;

B shiv-to im zik-nei օ-rets; Sօ-din օս<sup>e</sup>-սօ va - tim - koyr, va - cha-gor ոս-ոս Լակ-na - a - ni;

63 **E**

S Oyz v<sup>e</sup>-հօճօր Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ, va - tischak Լ<sup>e</sup>yoyմ acha-royn; Pi - հօ փօշօ

A Oyz v<sup>e</sup>-հօճօր Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ, va - tischak Լ<sup>e</sup>yoyմ acha-royn; Pi - հօ փօշօ

T Oyz v<sup>e</sup>-հօճօր Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ, va - tischak Լ<sup>e</sup>yoyմ acha-royn; Pi - հօ փօշօ b<sup>e</sup> - chochմօ, v<sup>e</sup>-

B Oyz v<sup>e</sup> - հօճօր Լ<sup>e</sup> - vu - shօհ, va - tis-chak Լ<sup>e</sup> - yoyմ a - cha-royn;

69

S b<sup>e</sup>-choch-mօ, al Լ<sup>e</sup> - shoy-nօհ; ha - li-choys bei - սօհ;

A b<sup>e</sup>-choch-mօ, al Լ<sup>e</sup> - shoy-nօհ; ha - li-choys bei - սօհ, v<sup>e</sup> - le-chem ats-lus loy soy-

T b<sup>e</sup>-choch-mօ, al Լ<sup>e</sup> - shoy-nօհ; Tsoy-fi - Կօ ha - li-choys bei - սօհ, v<sup>e</sup> - le-chem ats-lus loy soy-

B b<sup>e</sup>-choch-mօ, al Լ<sup>e</sup> - shoy-nօհ; Tsoy-fi - Կօ ha - li-choys bei - սօհ, v<sup>e</sup> - le - chem ats - lus

74

S Kọ - mu vọ-ne - họ va - ya - a - shru-họ;

A

T cheyl; Kọ-mu vọ-nehọ vaya - shru-họ, ba - a - lọh va - y<sup>e</sup> - ha<sup>l</sup>lọh; Ra-boys bọnoys ọ-su

B loy soy-cheyl; Kọ-mu va - ya - shru - họ, ba - a - lọh vay-ha - l<sup>e</sup> - lọh;

80

S Chọ - yil, as ọ - lis Aa She-ker ha - cheyn, He - vel

A

T *solo* chọ - yil, v<sup>e</sup> - as ọ - lis *rubato* al kulọ - nọ; *tutti* She-ker ha - cheyn v<sup>e</sup> - he - vel ha -

B Aa She-ker ha - cheyn v<sup>e</sup> - he - vel

87

S yoy - fi, i - shọ yiras a - doy - nọ hi T<sup>e</sup> - nu

A hi sis - ha - lọ;

T yoy - fi, i - shọ yiras a - doy - nọ hi sis - ha - lọ; T<sup>e</sup> - nu

B ha - yoy-fi, i - shọ a - doy-nọ hi sis - ha - lọ; T<sup>e</sup> - nu

93

S lọh mi - p<sup>e</sup> - ri yọ-de-họ, ha - l<sup>e</sup> - lu - họ ba - shọ-rim maa-se - họ.

A

T lọh mi - pri yọ - de-họ, vi - ha - l<sup>e</sup> - lu - họ bash<sup>e</sup> - ọ - rim maa-se - họ.

B lọh mi-p<sup>e</sup>-ri yọ - de - họ,

## About Esheth Chayil

The Book of Proverbs concludes with an alphabetic acrostic poem describing the woman of valour; originally brought to the Sabbath dinner table by 16th-century kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria and his students, who stressed the Zohar's description of both the Divine Presence (*shekhina*) and the Sabbath (*malkat shabbat*) in feminine terms. More popularly, it is adopted as a praise for the mother of the house, sung at the Sabbath dinner table over which she has laboured! This popular melody by Ben Zion Shenker (1941-) derives from the Modzhitz chasidic tradition.

### Notes on the score

For most of the score, there is a shared lyric line between soprano / alto and tenor / bass parts. Where they differ, the alto or bass lyric line appears below their part.

The tenor soloist may ornament the glissandos in bar 83.

Pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs:

- 'a' like the vowel in *father*; IPA [a]
- 'i' like the vowel in *tree*; IPA [i]
- 'e' like the vowel in *bed*; IPA [ɛ]
- 'e' like the second vowel in *roses*; IPA [ɜ] to [ɪ]
- 'o' like the vowel in *caught* (Australian) or *so* (American); IPA [o]
- 'ɔ' like the vowel in *pod*; IPA [ɒ] to [ɔ]
- 'u' like the vowel in *book*; IPA [ʊ]
- 'ey' or 'ei' like the diphthong in *may*; IPA [ei]
- 'oy' like the diphthong in *boy*; IPA [ɔ]

Pronunciation of some consonants:

- 'ch' always like in *Bach*; IPA [x]
- 'r' as a tap; like *tt* in *better* (Australian, NZ, American English); IPA [ɾ]
- 's' always like in *see*; IPA [s]
- 'sh' like in *she*; IPA [ʃ]
- 'z' always like in *zoo*; IPA [z]

(Sorry for any mistakes in the transcription; I am not a native speaker of Ashkenazi or Chasidic Hebrew.)

### Text (Proverbs 31:10-31)

What a rare find is a woman of valour? Her worth is far beyond that of rubies.  
 Her husband puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing.  
 She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life.  
 She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will.  
 She is like a merchant fleet, Bringing her food from afar.  
 She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fair of her maids.  
 She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labours.  
 She girds herself with strength, And performs her tasks with vigour.  
 She sees that her business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night.  
 She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle.  
 She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy.  
 She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson.  
 She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple.  
 Her husband is prominent in the gate, As he sits among the elders of the land.  
 She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant.  
 She is clothed with strength and splendour; She looks to the future cheerfully.  
 Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching.  
 She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness.  
 Her children declare her happy; Her husband praises her,  
 'Many women have done well, But you surpass them all.'  
 Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory;  
 It is for her fear of the Lord That a woman is to be praised.  
 Extol her for the fruit of her hand, And let her works praise her in the gates.

אשת חיל, מי ימצא; ורחק מפנינים מכרה.  
 בטח בה, לב בעלה; ושלל, לא יחסר.  
 גמלתהו טוב ולא רע כל, ימי חייה.  
 דרשה, צמר ופשתים; ותעש, בחפץ כפיה.  
 היתה, כאניות סוחר; ממרחק, תביא לחמה.  
 ותקם, בעוד לילה  
 ותתן טרף לביתה; וחק, לנערתייה.  
 זממה שדה, ותקחה; מפרי כפיה, נטעה כרם.  
 חגרה בעוז מתניה; ותאמץ, זרועתייה.  
 טעמה, כי טוב סחורה; לא יכבה בלילה נרה.  
 ידיה, שלחה בכישור; וכפיה, תמכו פלך.  
 כפה, פרשה לעני; וידיה, שלחה לאביון.  
 לא תירא לביתה משלג; כי כל ביתה, לבש שנים.  
 מרבדים עשתה לה; שש וארגמן לבושה.  
 נודע בשערים בעלה; בשבתו, עם זקני ארץ.  
 סדין עשתה, ותמכר; וחגור, נתנה לכנעני.  
 עז והדר לבושה; ותשחק, ליום אחרון.  
 פיה, פתחה בחכמה; ותורת חסד, על לשונה.  
 צופיה, הליכות ביתה; ולחם עצלות, לא תאכל.  
 קמו בניה, ויאשרוה; בעלה, ויהללה.  
 רבות בנות, עשו חיל; ואת, עלית על כלנה.  
 שקר החן, והבל היפי: אשה יראת יי, היא תתהלל.  
 תנו לה, מפרי ידיה; ויהללוה בשערים מעשייה.

(New JPS translation)