

# Hishki, Hizki

This poem<sup>1</sup>, in the style of some of the great Jewish piyutim from centuries earlier, was written in honour of the inauguration of the new Spanish and Portuguese “Snoge” (synagogue) in Amsterdam by Rabbi Isaac Aboab de Fonseca, “Chagam” of the kahal, in 1675. It was set to music by Abraham de Casseres in the early 18th century.

*My beloved, strengthen me each day,  
Speedily light my darkness<sup>2</sup>, my king.  
O evening, my sun shall not yet be extinguished;  
Light me with the light of your sun, my king.*

חֲשָׁקִי, חֲזָקִי מִיְדֵי יוֹם יוֹם,  
מֵהָר הָאָר מְלֹכֵי חוֹשְׁכֵי.  
רְמָשִׁי, שְׁמָשִׁי עוֹד לֹא יִכָּבֵה,  
יֵאִיר לִי אֹר שְׁמָשִׁיד מְלֹכֵי.

*Arise, Arise!, play the stringed harp,  
Sing with a pleasant voice!  
Your moon will rise come no more,  
For the light has come, rise and shine!*

עוֹרִי, עוֹרִי, נְבֹל עֲשׂוֹר,  
בְּקוֹל זְמָרֵי שִׁירִים שִׁירֵי.  
יִרְחֵד, זְרִיחֵד לֹא יָבֹא עוֹד,  
כִּי בָא אֹרֵךְ, קוֹמֵי אֹרֵי.



*Left: Interior of the “Snoge” (opened 1675).*

*Right: Portrait of Rabbi de Fonseca from his Paraphrasis comentado sobre el Pentateuco (Amsterdam, 1661), a translation of the Pentateuch into Spanish, with commentary.*

1. The simple meter: u\_u\_u\_u\_ (alternate short and long syllables, four pairs to a line) matches Adon Olam and Lecha Dodi, making many of the tunes traditionally used for these poems suitable for Hishki too.

2. I have recreated the Hebrew text based on an English transliteration. However, in that version the last word in the second line is “boshki” (my beloved). I have changed it to “boshchi” (my darkness) which I feel sure must be the original.