

Land of Zion Reborn and Hebrew Revived

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SCENE I — IN THE FIELDS

Spring. The Palestine countryside begins to bloom. Plants begin to grow, and the leaves on the trees start to turn green again. In the fields the farmers begin to plow the dark, rich earth. The farm helpers sit behind the plows, or scatter the stones or spread the seeds. And as they work they sing together: "Shuru, habitu ur'u, ma gadol hayom hazeh, esh yokedet bachazeh, v'hamachraisha shuv polachat basadeh. Et, ma koosh tooriah v'kilshon, hit lakdu b's'arah, v'nadlika shuv, shuv et ha-adama, b'shalhevet y'ruka." ("How great is this day! The heart glows as the plow breaks the soil. Again shall we kindle the earth with a green flame.")

And then the chorus floats in the wind: "Plow ye, plow, plow, plow; sing ye, now, now, now; shout with joy, joy, joy, for the seeds are sprouting o'er all the land."

Times change. Spring grows into summer. Again the workers are in the fields, for harvest time is nigh. And again the air is filled with song: "We have come up to our land. There we have plowed and sown, but we still have not reaped."

Again the seasons change, as summer bows to autumn, and winter is just ahead. For the days of toil are over, but the singing does not cease: "With my plow I have gained all my wealth. The winter holds no fears for me. I have no want, not even a care. My granary is filled with corn, reaped by my own hands in this, my fruitful land."

And winter rains keep the workers in their homes, but singing can still be heard: "Night and silence, under the moon the memories arise in me. I have had pleasant

days, pleasant nights."

Four seasons go by, and on the strength of their labors, and their songs, the pioneers of Palestine continue to progress; to plow, to plant and then to harvest and enjoy the fruits. Zion is reborn and Hebrew, the language of the prophets is revived, as Israel arises to face a new day, a great future.

SCENE II — IN THE FACTORIES

Morning. The sun is peeking from the distant hills of Judea and from over the Jordan. Workers are streaming towards the factories. A new day is at hand. And as the workers steadily move towards their jobs, it is out of the joy in their hearts that they sing: "Beyn harim k'var hashemesh m'lahetet, u'va-emek od notzetz hatal; anu ohavim otach moledet, anu n'yapeh otach m'od." ("The sun glows between the hills, and the valley still glitters with dew. O, homeland, we love, we shall make you beautiful and fertile.")

Machines roar, and motors whir as production begins. The raw materials on the assembly lines become parts of a new motor or sections of new machinery. And as they work these workers, too, like their brothers in the fields, sing together: "Oh strengthen our brothers, whose efforts are redeeming our soul, soil of our land wherever it may lie; Do not give up, sons of freedom; come; let us fight together, together let us aid the nation."

And as the finished products roll off the lines, and their labors begin to bear fruits, the workers sing words of encouragement to one another: "Arise, brethren, to your labors! The world depends on work, and work is our life, our job."

Not even the scorching heat of late afternoon quells the spirits, as the melodies of the workers pour forth: "Who will save us from hunger and thirst? Who will provide shelter and light? Whom shall we thank for the bounty that is ours? Let us give thanks to labor and to our toil."

Evening falls and the workers depart for their homes, tired after a long day of work, but not too tired to sing: "Night. Fire lights up the hills, as the song of heroes bursts forth. Though the enemy seeks to destroy you, our camp, our home, we shall build walls around you, our strength that protects us, our homeland."

The workers' day has passed and night has fallen. The worker, on the strength of his songs and his labors, will live to see another day, a rebirth of Zion and a revival of Hebrew, as Israel arises to face a new day, a great future.

SCENE III — YOUTH

Youth. Youth on the march, on the march to the future. Youth with its many moods and plans — youth with its adolescents and its young loving couples; they too sing in Palestine. At times they are merry and sing while they dance: "Kruim anu, blu-im anu, lichvod yom tov, na-adeh t'la-yee al gabai t'la-yee, halleluyah ad b'li dai." ("We are ragged and our clothes are torn, but when the day comes we can patch these too, Hallelujah without an end.")

And maybe, if the spirits are high, the dancing frenzy grows, and the song tempo increases: "Spirits wildly roused like raging fires madly let the song proceed; singing that a solo dance inspires, but let

nothing impede our merriment."

But Palestine youth have their serious moments too, and sometimes they sing about their hopes and dreams. "Not for reward or praise have we come here, but to plow the air with song and to build — though not for ourselves, but for the beautiful land, kindling desire in us. Come, let us move on — and on."

And in the beautiful moonlight of the evenings when lovers meet, songs of their love and devotion penetrate the night: "Daughter of the hills of Galilee, your eyes are like those of a dove, and your cheeks as pretty as roses. Come, put your hands in mine, for I am yours, and you are mine."

Youth, children and adolescents and loving couples, face the new day with song, dreams and love, for Hebrew, language of the ancient prophets, is revived and Zion is reborn, as Israel arises to face a new day, a great future.

Three forces, workers in the fields, workers in the factories, and youth, all look to the future, all plan for the future. Workers in the fields are growing the food for the workers in the factories and for the growing youth, while workers in the factories are processing these foods, or are making machinery for the workers in the fields and tools for the youth. For one day, youth will replace these workers. In song, and in work, and in planning — in these things are the future of Palestine, of the land of Zion, and of the language of the ancient prophets, Hebrew, reborn.

The song translations are, for the most part, quoted from the book *Songs of Zion*.