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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC, *Volume XVI, Number 2*

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DIRECTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS:

- 1. All manuscripts must be double-spaced on 8½ by 11 inch paper, with ample margins on both sides.*
- 2. Try to absorb the footnote material within the text as much as possible.*
- 3. Musical examples, tables, etc., should be placed on separate sheets and identified with captions*
- 4. Carefully check spelling, punctuation, dates, page numbers, footnote numbers, titles, quotations and musical notations before submitting article.*

FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue we wish to express our profound gratitude to Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum for three and a half decades of literary contributions to this Journal. For several years in the early 50's he served as the editor of its forerunner, *The Cantors Voice* and for the last thirty years as the managing editor of the Journal of *Synagogue Music*. The readership together with the Cantors Assembly are eternally grateful for his unique contribution to Hazzanim and Hazzanut in America.

We welcome Hazzan Pinchas Spiro as the new managing editor and wish him vigor and fulfillment in his task.

Included in this issue is a progress report by Mark Slobin who is preparing a work on the history of the American Cantorate. Max Wohlberg in his article, and with the aid of reprinted materials, provides us with a perspective of the cantor during the last 33 years. Israel Adler who found a musical manuscript of "Zur *Mishelo Achalnu*" at the Bavarian National and University Library provides us with a fascinating look at a Sabbath table melody sung by Jews in Germany about 500 years ago. This leads well into Pinchas Spiro's article concerning the true source of the ever popular Sabbath melody of "*Shalom Alechem*." Charles Heller also reveals the source of yet another popular melody, "*Der Rebe Elimeylekh*." Hazzan Ronald Eichaker who has been involved in a most extensive project of commissioning new music for the synagogue, relates the pains and rewards of his efforts. Joshua Jacobson, director of Zamir Chorale of Boston shares with us his notes on a study of *The Jewish Choral Movement*. Finally, a review by Velvel Pastemak of a major publication, *Anthology of Hasidic Music*, recently issued by the Jewish Music Research Centre at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Abraham Lubin

A REPORT ON THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CANTORATE PROJECT

MARK SLOBIN

January 1, 1987 marks the end of three years of intensive research of the American cantorate under the National Endowment for the Humanities grant to the Cantors Assembly. It has been a great pleasure and a highly rewarding experience to have been involved in this much needed project, and I have certainly learned an enormous amount about the cantorate, thanks to the many researchers, consultants and, of course, first and foremost to the practicing, professional hazzanim of the Cantors Assembly and the American Conference of Cantors who gave unstintingly of their knowledge.

The project produced an immense database, unprecedented in Jewish music studies. Perhaps by way of summary I could outline the shape of that database, under various headings, then proceed to a brief description of the book that is currently shaping up which will summarize and interpret the findings.

1. Oral Histories. We have accumulated some 125 oral histories, almost all of full-time professionals, but also including some part-timers for the sake of comparison. These are very rich in biographical, musical, and professional data and form a very important component of the project.

2. Questionnaires. Members of the CA and the ACC responded to focused questionnaires about their working life. A separate mailing to synagogue presidents netted some 200 responses which complement the hazzan's point of view nicely. Other specific questionnaires about musical sources were also circulated.

3. Archival Sources. To research beyond living memory, one must rely on archival sources. Thanks to some line consultants, especially including Abraham J. Karp of the University of Rochester, himself a rabbi who has worked closely with cantors, and Douglas Kohn, in consultation with Jonathan Sarna and Jacob Rader Marcus at Hebrew Union College, a great variety of fascinating information about the early American cantorate has been assembled for the first time. We tapped a variety of other sources as well, such as combing the Yiddish press for advertisements and articles about hazzanim in the early twentieth century.

Mark Slobin is a member of the music faculty at Wesleyan University. He is the author of "Music in the Culture of Northern Afghanistan" and "Tenement Songs." He is the editor of "Old Jewish Folksongs and Fiddle Tunes: The Writings and Collections of Moshe Beregovski." He was commissioned by the Cantors Assembly to be project director for the writing of the History of the American Cantorate.

Another category of reports will be a discussion of the discography of the American cantorate in terms of what we know and do not know about the relationship between the hazzan and the recording industry, this commissioned from Henry Sapoznik, sound recording archivist at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, and, possibly, an account of what iconographic sources (film footage, photographs) we have for the cantorate.

4. Field Studies. Lionel Wolberger, graduate student at Wesleyan University, completed his M.A. degree in 1985 on a comparative study of over twenty Conservative Saturday morning services. This is the first such study ever, and of course it showed the extraordinary diversity of practice even within synagogues in one region (the Northeast) within one denomination in one year, even including internal diversity within the services of one synagogue between one point in the morning and another. Such data are extremely helpful in identifying what “really” goes on in synagogue life when combined with the testimony of oral history.

Another study was done of part-time hazzanim in the Greater Boston area as an M.A. in ethnomusicology at Tufts University by Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, the Hillel rabbi at Tufts and a fine musician and scholar. This helps serve as point of reference for the activity of the full-time professionals who form the basis of the project study, as the career aspirations, training, hiring practices, and point of view of part-timers is so different.

Other field reports came in on Sephardic hazzanim in Los Angeles and New York, the Women Cantors Network, etc.

5. Comparative Studies. This includes quite a spectrum of reports commissioned by the project, including the gathering of traditional folklore materials about the hazzan (jokes, tales, etc.) presented by Dov Noy of Hebrew University, a report on the chanters of the Koran in the Muslim tradition as a comparison to the role of the hazzan, and even some data on musical specialists in the Afro-American church. It is important to place Jewish materials in the context of world music and cultures to understand its distinctiveness as well as to find common features, as for example with Protestant practices which influenced Jewish developments.

6. Musicological Data. A large percentage of the members of the Cantors Assembly — 93 individuals — generously sent in the requested cassette with samples of the liturgical repertoire. This provides a database unique in Jewish music studies: never before have we had so deep a sample of the liturgical practice

of a moment in Jewish musical history. The results are extremely interesting and groundbreaking and will help form the musical section of the book, as well as providing material for future individual theoretical studies of the tradition. We tried to pick a set of items which would display both homogeneity (as in the “*Tsur Yisroel*” tune) as well as diversity (versions of “*Uvchen ten pachdecha*,” sections of the “*Kedusha*”) or show a breadth of choice (“your favorite ‘*Lechu Dodi*’ tunes”). We were very successful in this respect, although we had not quite known what to expect. Some musicological specialists (Hanoach Avenary, Judit Frigyesi) have looked at the material and have been delighted with the indications that the tradition that today’s hazzanim seek to safeguard is still so alive and still so rich in its improvisatory content. We have also asked Max Wohlberg and other specialists, e.g., Pinchas Spiro, to examine sections of the data.

Space does not allow for a complete listing of all the types of material which we have accumulated and which are still in progress, nor have I tried to mention everyone who has helped out in this project (though we will acknowledge everyone’s assistance in the book’s preface) and I have only touched upon major avenues of research in this brief survey. Let me turn to a short description of the projected volume, which is just beginning to be written as of this writing (October 1986). The book is essentially in two parts. The first is a chronological, largely documentary history of the American cantorate which is subdivided into major periods: colonial through early nineteenth century (German wave of immigration); late nineteenth through mid-twentieth (Eastern European wave through World War II) and the American cantorate since World War II (professionalization, legal status, entry of women, etc.).

The second section of the book will look closely at the job of the hazzan seen as a timeless and spaceless, what historians call synchronic, phenomenon. Here we can lay out the basic features of the job: dependence on lay leadership, nature of the hazzan as sole clergy or as co-clergyman/woman with other members of a clergy team, the hazzan as a musical/aesthetic leader only or as a multiple functionary with other community jobs (*shochet*, *mohel*, etc.), the issue of whether the hazzan is the guardian of the local musical *minhug* or its architect, how services are constructed, what the hazzan thinks of his/her work ... these and other issues will be taken up in terms of looking at: 1) the workplace in general; 2) the sanctuary as the focus of the hazzan’s contribution and relationship to the congregants; 3) the hazzan within him/herself in terms of self-analysis, 4) the relationship of musical style to the work of the hazzan, in terms of composed vs. improvised music, etc.

The entire book is prefaced by a chapter placing the cantorate in Jewish tradition, particularly the Ashkenazic world, the main focus of the study. Here we try to locate the hazzan within major cultural patterns and then isolate the particular European history of the nineteenth century that paralleled and impacted on the American development of the institution.

Of course, parts of this outline may have changed considerably by the time this survey is published, which is the nature of scholarly work and of the writing process. Throughout, confidentiality will be strictly kept, and no source materials from this project will ever be distributed, but will be archived in some permanent fashion to be decided upon, with continued assurance of confidentiality. The book is meant to be a preliminary study only, as there is so much to say about the cantorate and so much data to handle that there is no possibility of producing the definitive work on the subject at this point.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the exceptionally tactful and practical collaborator without whom the project would never have gotten off the ground: Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum, who has been a ***tzaddik*** in managing a complicated and far-ranging project.

MAJOR CONCEPTIONS AND MINOR DECEPTIONS

MAX WOHLBERG

On the 24th of February 1986 officers and members of the Cantors Assembly spent a pleasant and mutually satisfactory day with the officers and members of the American Conference of Cantors, our colleagues in the Reform movement.

In the papers read and in the discussions that followed subjects of common interest received emphasis. Instances where divergent views may appear were glossed over or remained unexpressed. It occurred to some that perhaps an amalgamation of the two organizations would prove advantageous.

This idea, in addition to some almost tangentially voiced cases of Rabbi-Cantor grievances reminded me of an article by the eminent scholar, Dr. Ira Eisenstein which appeared in *The Reconstructionist* magazine some 33 years ago. The appearance of that article — *Et Hata-ai Ani Mazkir Hayom* -led me to an act of deception which, frankly, I had almost forgotten.

The article *The Cantor In Modern Judaism* (Nov. 6, 1953) was, of course, well-planned and finely written. To at least two-thirds of it I could respond with a resounding Amen. Toward the end, however, I encountered some ideas with which I could not agree.

I promptly wrote a letter to the editor but before signing it I hesitated. In retrospect — my hesitancy was probably the result of two circumstances. Primarily, my rabbi, who had formerly been active in the Reconstruction & movement and with whom I had been serving Beth El in Philadelphia for eleven years was seriously ill. As I had to attend to many of his duties it was for me an inopportune time to partake in a Rabbi-Cantor dispute.

Secondly, having but recently concluded my three-year presidency of the Cantors Assembly I no doubt felt it proper to leave to my successors the involvement in a controversial issue.

Max Wohlberg is Professor of Hazzanut at the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America He served as President of the Cantors Assembly from 1948 to 1951. He is a leading scholar in synagogue music and lectures and writes on the subject extensively.

On the spur of the moment I telephoned my dear friend and colleague W. Belskin-Ginsburg who by this time had retired from the cantorate and practiced law. I read my letter to him and asked him if he would mind my placing his name instead of mine under the letter. Bill promptly agreed. Off went my (Bill's) letter and subsequently it appeared with Rabbi Eisenstein's response.

However, an unexpected delight arrived in the intervening Nov. 20 issue of *The Reconstructionist*. Rabbi Jack J. Cohen, a member of its Editorial Board in a letter to The Editor also took exception to an aspect of his colleague's article. His comments were truly a joy to read.

It should be noted that the mere appearance of the Cohen demurrer redounds creditably to the liberal spirit of *The Reconstructionist as* it also testifies to the genuine fairness of Rabbi Eisenstein. Rabbi Cohen's sensitivity and empathy are self evident.

I have great admiration and genuine fondness for both of these gentlemen. Should they by chance read these lines I hope they will accept my apology for hiding behind an assumed name.

Returning to our original theme, let me state that without doubt both of our cantorial groups are beset by some of the same problems. Co-operation between us should, of course, be cultivated.

In conclusion I can do no better than quote a sentence from Dr. Eisenstein's fine article. "We have so many common interests, common problems, common goals that we must not permit the established institutional barriers to prevent us from co-operating wherever possible."

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Following is a reprint (with **permission**) of the original article in The Reconstructionist, by Rabbi Ira Eisenstein (dated November 6, 1953), as well as the subsequent Letters to the Editor, to which Dr. Max Wohlberg referred in this article. As a final addendum to this episode, lending it the perspective of time, we also print a recent letter from Rabbi Eisenstein.*

THE CANTOR IN MODERN JUDAISM

By IRA EISENSTEIN

In spite of the long and honorable history of the cantorate in Jewish life, the American cantorate stands at the threshold of its career. Until now, it has been treated in a haphazard fashion. No training school existed for the education of cantors; no formal organizations of cantors, of any consequence, has existed-or at least, has earned the respect of large segments of the Jewish community. Certainly it is easy enough to account for this cultural lag; but the time has come not only to account for it, but to compensate for it.

The very problem of the place of the cantorate in American Judaism arises from the fact that heretofore no standards prevailed as to who should and who should not be considered a cantor. The chaos which characterized the American rabbinate fifty years ago still obtains in the cantorate today. In addition, the functions of the cantor have never been fully defined, or even clearly considered. While the age of the virtuoso cantor will probably never be over, the present situation calls for men who will do more than lead the congregation in worship. The average synagogue needs personalities who will be able to assume responsibility for the broad musical experience of the institution. The cantors' functions must be expanded to meet the expanding demands of the synagogue which has

become not merely a place of worship, but a second home for the members of the congregation and their families. As the major center of leisure activities, the synagogue must offer a variety of cultural and esthetic experiences; among them music must play a prominent role, and the cantor must help to make that role an enriching and exciting one.

As the cantor's functions expand, he will discover that they impinge more and more upon the established departments of the congregation; and when this occurs, problems of human relations will arise, which, unless approached with wisdom and patience, may serve only to vitiate the effectiveness of the cantor. The ethics of the cantorate, therefore, must be considered in the light of the growing awareness of the cantor as a musical personality, properly trained, adequately recognized as having a professional status, endowed with the capacity, and entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining a broad program of musical activity in the synagogue life of America.

Personal Qualifications

If the cantor is to meet these new responsibilities, he must become what the *hazzan* of old was: first and foremost, a literate Jew and musician. He must know and understand the Hebrew

language; and in a deeper sense, perceive the more profound meanings of the prayers which he chants. As the *shelilah tzibbur*, he must be a man of personal integrity in his human relationships and a man of faith in his religious outlook. There is no room for the cynic in the cantor's post. He must be a person of humility, who eschews the prima *donna's* role. However much he may revel in the performer's role, he must reserve this form of expression for the concert stage. In the synagogue, he must subordinate himself to the prayers and their musical settings. He must lead the congregation; he need not dazzle them. He must strive to make of his singing an impetus to congregational participation; and though, at times, the congregants will want to sit back and listen, they should, on all other occasions, be prompted to join in the musical rendition of the prayers, so that the service remains a service and does not deteriorate into a performance.

It undoubtedly takes greater musicianship to lead others in song than to be a soloist. The cantor must be a good musician in the sense that he loves the music more than his own voice; and the prayers more than the music.

The Functions of the Cantor

Continuing our discussion of the synagogue service as such, we should note that the cantor must be thoroughly familiar with the musical literature of our people. A saturation with the entire tradition is a prerequisite to

genuine creative effort; and the cantor should strive to be creative. He must not only arrange for the voices available to him the existing repertoire of synagogue chant and composition; he must attempt to continue the tradition in the idiom of our time. He should be endowed with sufficient imagination to recognize that Judaism, as a religious civilization, cannot grow unless its creativity remains undiminished; only a growing culture is a living culture.

He must, of course, be prepared to deal with professional singers; but he must, under no circumstances, despise the amateur singer. Indeed, choral singing—both at services and elsewhere—can and should become one of the vital activities of the congregation. Nothing is so calculated to establish bonds of warm friendship and emotional ties to the Jewish way of life as the experience of standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow Jews, translating into song the dreams, hopes and fears, the victories and sorrows of the Jewish people, and of the human spirit.

The cantor should know enough of the educational process to integrate music into the curriculum of the religious school. Here again, too much cannot be said for the lasting impression which music makes upon the child and adolescent. Long after many facts of history and Hebrew grammar are forgotten, the memory of a chant or a choral composition remains; and the

experience of having participated in even the most modest performance retains its flavor and its excitement for years.

All of this applies, of course, to teenage groups, youth groups, and adult groups. Programs for meetings, holiday celebrations, special events in the life of the congregation must be enhanced by music; and the cantor is the one who must both create the demand for it and satisfy that demand.

There is no doubt that we shall, from time to time, come upon gifted singers who possess the piety and the voice to become cantors of the old type, men who could walk in the steps of a Rosenblatt, a Katchko, a Roitman or a Kwartin. Men of this sort may not be qualified to serve in the varied roles which we have outlined here for the cantor of tomorrow. For men of this type, there must always be room in some synagogues. They have enriched our tradition, and brought profound satisfaction to thousands of Jews.

They would probably find a place for their talents in the larger synagogues which can afford to engage additional personnel to perform the other tasks assigned to the cantor in this presentation. But they will certainly be the exceptions. In speaking of the cantorate as a whole, I have tried to visualize the scope of work which will fall to the lot of the many, rather than the unusual few.

Personal Relations

The all-round musical personality-singer, conductor, teacher, group leader, composer, arranger and representative of Jewish music to the people-is perhaps an ideal rarely to be realized. (Perhaps the ideal rabbi, too, consists only in some Platonic realm of perfection.) But it seems to me that this ought to become the goal of the cantor. If it does, and it is realized even to a partial degree, he will find that he must come into more intimate relationships with other functionaries of the congregation than ever before. And this requires a measure of sensitivity to other people without which he and his work will suffer.

Perhaps I may be prejudiced in my approach to this problem, but it appears to me that, in any institution, one person must assume responsibility for the overall program; in the synagogue, that person is the rabbi. The cantor, together with all other members of a synagogue staff and faculty must accept this fact. This does not mean that the rabbi should be arbitrary and dictatorial. It does not necessarily imply that the cantor must merely obey instructions. On the contrary, he should be considered, and he should consider himself, the expert in the field of musical activity. But whatever his enthusiasm for his own area of interest, he must defer to the one who is responsible for coordinating and integrating all aspects of the synagogue program. Sometimes

the cantor will not be satisfied with the extent to which music is featured; on other occasions, he may find that he will be burdened beyond reason with the tasks assigned to him. But at all times he should remember that music is only a part—though a very significant part—of the whole; and the rabbi must make the ultimate decisions.

The details of his autonomy are by no means fully defined; nor can they be at this time. In some quarters, efforts are being made to codify the rights and the duties of the cantor, *vis-a-vis* the rabbi, the teachers, the group leaders, and so on. I do not share the optimism of those who believe this can be done *a priori*. We do not yet have enough experience with the fully qualified and trained musical personality to establish norms. The status of each cantor will vary with his own relationships to the rabbi and the laity; it will vary with his competence and his personal temperament. To freeze at this time any code of ethics would do a disservice to the cantorate. It took more than a generation to crystallize the position of the rabbi. It will take decades to accomplish the same for the cantor.

This applies equally to the problems of employment, tenure, salaries, etc. If I may say so, the present generation of cantors will have much to do to clear away inherited prejudices, and implant proper attitudes. A grave responsibility therefore rests with the men who today occupy the positions

of cantor. What they do or fail to do will affect the role and the status of cantors for years to come.

In this connection it is necessary to add that, as the years go on, the denominational differences between the various religious groupings in Jewish life gradually lose their earlier sharpness. In the rabbinate we have come to recognize that what divides us is as nothing compared to what unites us. We have so many common interests, common problems, common goals that we must not permit the established institutional barriers to prevent us from cooperating wherever possible. The cantors can and should do no less. Indeed, they must do more, for the cantorate has yet to win its spurs on the American scene; it has yet to gain the full respect and understanding of American Jews. It can, therefore, afford all the less to be splintered and fragmented.

In all the matters which have here been discussed all cantorial groups must work together. Professional standards cannot be established where there are rival and competing organizations. Rivalry and competition can only weaken the structure of the cantorate. Group interests, like personal interests, unless put into the proper perspective, can work hardship on all.

As I began, so I close: the cantorate stands today in America, at the threshold of its career. To advance itself, its

leaders must have the vision and the generosity to conceive of the profession as a whole. They must strive to produce personalities who will be a credit to their craft and a blessing to the institution in which they work.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On Cantor-Rabbi Relations

To the Editors of The *Reconstructionist*

I wish to demur from one aspect of the position taken by Dr. Ira Eisenstein in his article, "The Cantor in Modern Judaism," which appeared in the latest issue of the magazine.

Dr. Eisenstein gives an excellent outline of the qualifications that ought to be required of a cantor in the modern synagogue. He must be Jewishly literate, be a musician, possess a knowledge of Hebrew, and understand the deeper meanings of prayers. He must have personal integrity, humility and profound religious faith. He should strive to be creative and he should be sufficiently well versed in educational methods to be able to contribute heavily to the musical portion of the Hebrew school curriculum. With all this we can agree.

But Dr. Eisenstein, a bit apologetically to be sure, declares that whatever the qualifications of the cantor may be, he must still be subordinate to the rabbi. For "...the rabbi must make the ultimate decisions. It is he who must assume responsibility for the overall program" of the synagogue. Hence he determines, in the last analysis, the role and proportion of music in the synagogue program.

I should like to suggest that there is another route to effective leadership in a congregation than that offered by Dr. Eisenstein. Education, ritual, and other activities of the synagogue might well be planned democratically by the entire staff of educators, teachers, cantors and

rabbis, with execution of the decisions to be carried out by the best qualified staff members. If the congregational staff **cannot** plan cooperatively, chances are unlikely that they will wield the spiritual influence which is so essential to the synagogue. If we believe in democracy, we must employ the method that is most calculated to achieve its ideals, the method of cooperative planning. Dr. Eisenstein's assumption that the rabbi must have final authority, even over the ideal cantor, seems to me to perpetuate, at best, a tradition of noblesse oblige. The rabbi in such a setup "listens" to what the cantor says, but whether the rabbi is competent or not to decide on musical problems, his position as such is said to entitle him to final authority. Knowing Dr. Eisenstein as I do, I cannot see how his logic squares with his own democratic practice.

JACK J. COHEN

More on the Cantorate

Editors of the *Reconstructionist*:

Dr. Eisenstein's program for the training of cantors, "The Cantor in Modern Judaism," in the November 6, 1953 issue of The *Reconstructionist*, is deserving of commendation. Certain phases of the article, however, seem puzzling. Surely, humility, subordination to the prayers, sensitivity to other people, are qualities to be sought for not only in the cantor, but in every *Jew, rabbi and layman as well!* While it is true that the crystallization of the position of the cantor cannot be done *al regel ahat*, problems of tenure, salary, employment and pension, need not wait decades for solution; they have already been satisfactorily solved in many Conservative Congregations. If it is true that the American cantorate stands at the threshold of its career, is it fair to lay the entire burden of the raising of its standards on its own shoulders? Dr. Eisenstein is no doubt familiar with the Talmudic dictum (Berakot 5b) "A prisoner cannot free himself."

It also seems unfair to ask the budding

cantorate to forget all differences of attitude, approach and stress, and combine with their colleagues of different persuasions and different problems, while the older and wiser rabbinic and lay organizations have not yet amalgamated.

And here we come to the crux of the matter. While music may be only a part of the whole in the activities of the congregation, the role of the cantor in the conduct of the traditional service is both historically as well as functionally dominant. If we agree on that point and show a decent regard for our fellows, there need never arise the question of “Who’s the boss?” All good Jews look to their rabbis for guidance and instruction, but somehow it doesn’t sound quite democratic nor Jewish, nor (permit me) in the spirit of Reconstructionism to stress that the *rabbi must make ultimate decisions*. The rabbi’s authority is undisputed. His flaunting of it betrays, among other things, insecurity or inadequacy. The derekh y’sharah would be for the religious service committee (where the rabbi’s opinion would carry the greatest weight) to set down rules and principles to be followed. Within the limits of these rules both rabbi and cantor ought to be free agents, albeit remembering they are the servants of God and ministers of their people. Must the rabbi, who assumes responsibility for the overall program of the Congregation, insist that the president, cantor, educational director, gabbai, shames, book-keeper and janitor be denied initiative and liberty of action?

I can conclude with no better argument than the following, quoted verbatim from the same issue of *The Reconstructionist* (p. 6), except that the word, “cantor,” has been substituted for the word “laity.”

“It is often said in defense of the status quo that our cantors are not qualified for making responsible decisions: they lack the education to enable them to function effectively. That argument, however, betrays a deep-seated distrust of democracy. It implies the aristocratic and

authoritarian notion that rabbis and scholars invariably know better what is for the good of people than they do themselves. To be sure, the cantorate needs education, and it is the function of the rabbinic organization to provide the education that the cantorate needs. But we cannot educate people to discharge responsibilities by denying them the right or the opportunity to make responsible decisions.” *Hikhshilon pihem (Abodah Zarah IIb)*.

W. BELSKIN GINSBURG
Philadelphia, Pa.

Rabbi Eisenstein Replies

I am submitting the following as a brief reply to Mr. W. Belskin Ginsburg of Philadelphia; Mr. Ginsburg was kind enough to comment on my article, and I should like to add a word of clarification on some of the points which he raises:

1. I do not believe that the entire burden “of the raising of standards” should lie on the shoulders of the cantors. I do believe that all of us should help in this task, and it was for this very reason that I permitted myself the luxury of entering into the discussion. As Mr. Ginsburg knows, I am not a cantor myself.

2. I realize that as long as rabbinic and lay organizations refuse to cooperate with one another as they should, it is difficult to expect the cantors to lead the way. On the other hand, the rabbinic and lay organization have more than a generation of tradition to overcome, and the difficulties are great. The cantors, on the other hand, are just setting out now to establish a cantorate on a professional basis, and it would be too bad if the cantors merely followed blindly in the footsteps of their predecessors, and did not initiate a program of cooperation, particularly in view of the fact that they do not have the habit of 50 years to overcome.

3. What I had to say about the rabbi’s having the responsibility for making ultimate

decisions, was not intended by any means to deny to all other professional servants of the congregation "initiative and liberty of action." I am merely stating what seems to me to be a palpable truth, namely, that every institution must, in the final analysis, be directed by some one leader. I am reluctant to give to any committee of laymen the right to determine what goes on in the synagogue, and since decisions must be made by a spiritual leader, it seems to me that the rabbi is the logical person for that responsibility.

Mr. Ginsburg's paraphrase of The *Reconstructionist* editorial is very clever indeed, but it does not affect the validity of my viewpoint. As one of the editors of The *Reconstructionist*

naturally concur in the sentiments expressed in the original statement, but I reiterate that within the sanctuary itself, the rabbi must be responsible for the conduct of the service, and the laymen, while they should be encouraged to express their viewpoints on all matters and help in the determination of policy, must eventually recognize the leadership of the rabbi. This does not mean that the rabbi has a right to act in a dictatorial or arbitrary way. No rabbi with any sense would impose a personal decision upon the congregation which he knows the congregation is not prepared to accept. Nevertheless, if he is to be the leader, he must lead.

IRA EISENSTEIN

Sept 23, 1986
Elul 19, 5746

Dear Cantor Lubin,

I have your letter of Sept. 19 and I hasten to reply. I am gratified that you wish to use my article for the Journal of Synagogue Music.

I hope the cantors will understand that when I wrote as I did, most Cantors were expected to be only soloists. The idea of having a musical personality in charge of the entire musical life of the congregation was quite new.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the issue containing the piece.

With best wishes for a shanah tovah, I am,

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Ira Eisenstein

THE EARLIEST NOTATION OF A SABBATH
TABLE SONG (CA. 1505-1518)¹

* Israel Adler, Jerusalem

I. The Historical Background

Notations of Jewish chants earlier than the late eighteenth century are rare and research is forced to rely mainly on the oral traditions and on literary sources that speak of song and various aspects of musical culture.² Thus, the documentation of any fragment of notation preceding the eighteenth century represents a precious acquisition. Such was the discovery of an early and hitherto unknown notation of the melody of the *piyyûṭ* "Zûr miš-šellô akalnû" from the domestic Sabbath *zemîrôt* (Table Songs) as it was sung five hundred years ago in one of the Jewish communities of Southern Germany.

The notation was found in a manuscript in the Munich Universitätsbibliothek³ belonging to a group of German humanistic writings dealing with Hebrew language and grammar of the end of the fifteenth century onwards, and including the well-known earliest musical notations of Bible cantillation according to the Ashkenazi tradition, dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁴ The notation of the melody of *zûr*

I. Revised English version of the J. Schirmann memorial Lecture delivered at the Israel Academy of Sciences on 16 June 1985. I am grateful to Ms. Tova Be'eri who, on my request, undertook the study of the Hebrew literary aspects of the subject, summarized here in section II.1. A detailed account of her historical study and a critical edition of the *piyyûṭ* text will be published in a separate article (in Hebrew) in Tarbiz.

2. I. Adler, "Problems in the study of Jewish Music," *Proceedings of the World Congress on Jewish Music, Jerusalem. 1978* (Tel-Aviv, 1982), pp. 20-21; Idem. "La musique juive," *Précis de musicologie*, ed. J. Chailley (Paris, 1984), pp. 85-88, 94-95.

3. Mub, Cod. ms. 757 (4^o) f. 95b. See H. Striedl, ed., *Hebräische Handschriften, Teil 2, unter Mitarbeit von L. Tetzner beschrieben von E. Röth* (Wiesbaden, 1965), No. 489, pp. 305-306. The item was uncovered during work on the RISM volume *Hebrew Notated Sources in Manuscripts up to 1840* (RISM BIX¹), in press.

4. See H. Avenary, *The Ashkenazi Tradition of Biblical Chant between 1500 and 1900. Documentation and Analysis* (Tel Aviv, 1978), pp. 10-16.

**Israel Adler is director of the Jewish Music Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of "La Pratique Musicale Savante dans quelques communautés Juives en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles." He is also the editor of the series: "Early Hebrew Art Music." This article is reprinted with permission from ORBIS MUSICAE, Vol. IX*

miš-šellô is of the same period. It is preceded in time only by the notation (in neums) of the chants recorded by Ovadiah the Norman Proselyte in the first half of the twelfth century in an eastern Mediterranean country.⁵ So far then, the melody of *zûr miš-šellô* in the Munich manuscript is second in the chronological hierarchy of surviving notations of melodies sung by Jews, and it is the first originating in Europe.

The Hebrew linguistic research undertaken by Christian humanists naturally included the fields of Massoreties and Bible cantillation, including the musical notation of the *te'amim*. The best known of these sources is Johannes Reuchlin's *De accenribus et orthographia linguae Hebraicae*, which was printed in Hagenau in 1518. The background of the notation of the *te'amim* in Reuchlin's *De accentibus* has been thoroughly discussed in H. Avenary's study of the notation of *te'amim* preserved in two manuscripts of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.⁶ As this background is also relevant to the study of the manuscript discussed here,⁷ we shall briefly indicate the data common to these sources.

Apart from Reuchlin, three other priestly German Hebraists appear in one way or another to be connected with the musical sources we are discussing: Johannes Boschenstein (1472-1540), Caspar Amman (1460-1524)⁸ and Magister Johannes Reinhart (Reinhart).⁹ The three Munich

5. 1. Adler, "Les chants synagogaux notés au XII^e siècle (ca. 1102-1150) par Abdias. le prosélyte normand." *Revue de Musicologie*, 51 (1965), pp. 19-51; H. Avenary, "Genizah Fragments of Hebrew Hymns and Prayers set to Music (early 12th Century)," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 16 (1966), pp. 87-104; I. Adler, *Hebrew Notated Sources in Manuscripts up to 1840*. Appendix A (München, in press).

6. Mbs, Cod. hebr. 426 and 427. See H. Avenary, "The Earliest Notation of Ashkenazi Bible Chant." *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 26 (1975), pp. 132-150.

7. Universitätsbibl. München (Mub). Cod. ms. 757 (40).

8. On Boschenstein and Amman see Avenary, "The Earliest Notation," pp. 133-137; Idem. *The Ashkenazi Tradition*, pp. 11-12; I. Adler, *Hebrew Notated Sources in Manuscripts up to 1840*. Appendix B; E. Werner, "Two Obscure Sources in Reuchlin's 'De accentibus linguae Hebraicae'," *Hisroria Judaica*, 16 (1954), pp. 39-54.

9. A priest, probably associated with the Augustinian monastery at Esslingen. He was acquainted with Caspar Amman, and most probably also with other members of the contemporary circle of German Christian humanists engaged in Hebrew studies. See O. Borst, *Buch und Presse in Esslingen am Neckar...* (Esslingen, 1975), p. 47; E. Zimmer, "Jewish and Christian Hebraist Collaboration in XVIth Century Germany," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 71 (1980), pp. 79-80. See also H. Striedl, ed. *Hebräische Handschriften*, No. 331: Mbs, Cod. hebr. 426. f. 186b, 191b, 192b, 198b, 199b, 200b; Idem, No. 489: Mub, Cod. ms. 759 (4^o), f. 1a; Idem, No. 492: Mub, Cod. ms. 827 (4^o), f. 45b, 48b, 49a. I am grateful to Dr. Striedl and to Dr. Dorf Müller for their assistance in retrieving these references.

manuscripts containing Hebrew music notations belonged to the rich library of Caspar Amman, who may have also been the compiler and editor of the two manuscripts Mbs. Cod. hebr. 426-427. The catalogue 10 attributes the third manuscript — Mub, Cod.ms. 757 (40), containing the notation of *zûr miš-šellô*, to Johannes Renhart.¹¹ According to Striedl,¹² only two dates are given in the manuscript: 1510 and 1511.¹³ The date limits of the compilation of the entire manuscript may be approximately the same as those of Mbs, Cod. hebr. 426-427, that is, between ca. 1505 and 1518.¹⁴ The *terminus post quem* is given by the date of the death of the owner of the manuscript, Caspar Amman (1524). In the present state of research the question of the authorship of the notation (Renhart, Boschenstein, Amman or an anonymous notator of the melody) remains open.¹⁵

If we accept the attribution of the entire manuscript to Renhart its provenance would be Esslingen-Renhart's residence. But even if we do not adopt this assumption, it nevertheless remains likely that the manuscript originated in South Germany, between Württemberg in the west and Lower Bavaria in the east.

II. The text and the notation in *Mub, Cod.ms. 757 (40)*

The manuscript, described in the catalogue as "*Miscellanea zur*

10. H. Striedl, *Hebräische Handschriften, No.489*.

11. The manuscript contains, among other items, an extensive work by Renhart, who may also have been the compiler and editor of the entire manuscript.

12. H. Striedl, *Hebräische Handschriften*, p 305.

13. Ff. 1a and 85b respectively. The date of 1511 also appears in connection with Johannes Renhart in Mbs, Cod. hebr. 426, f. 186b and Mub, Cod. ms. 827 (4^o), f. 45b.

14. See I. Adler, *Hebrew Notated Sources*, Appendix B.

15. The typical handwriting of the Hebrew texts (German Christian "*Humanistenschrift*") is very similar to that of the two other Munich manuscripts, Mbs. Cod. hebr. 426-427. The music notations there have been attributed to **Böschenstein** (see Adler, *Hebrew Notated Sources*, Appendix B, § 2-3.) The notations here look quitesimilar, but the different clefs — here C and there F (mainly the Hebrew letter *vet* for F), may imply that the notation here was made by another hand. However, the possibility that Boschenstein was the author of the notation-can not be entirely rejected. He taught Hebrew at the University of **Ingolstadt** from 1505 to 1513, Caspar Amman being one of his pupils (see Avenary, "The Earliest Notation," p. 134.) Were these lectures also attended by Johannes Renhart? Some connection between Boschenstein and Renhart may possibly be implied by the fact that the Renhart manuscript (Cod. ms. 757 [4^o]), previously owned by Caspar Amman, became at a later unknown date part of the holdings of the Bibliotheca **Acad. Ingolstadt (ex-libris** inscription on f. 1 a).

Einübung der hebräischen Sprache,"¹⁶ contains a collection of mainly Hebrew-Latin and Hebrew-German vocabularies, some glosses on grammar, accents and the Bible, terminology related to synagogal life, proverbs, text of the grace after meals, letters, etc. The musical notation on f.95b is preceded by the Hebrew text with Latin interlinear translation of the grace after meals (f.99b-96a) and the "Table Song" *zûr miš-šellô* (f.96a-95b).¹⁷

1. The text

Zûr miš-šellô aḳalnû in one of the most popular *zemirôt*, appearing in the printed *siddûrîm* (daily prayer books) of almost all Jewish rites. The *piyyûṭ* is sung at the Sabbath table (generally on Sabbath eve) before the grace after meals. According to the findings of Tova Be'eri (see note 1) its earliest appearance in literature is in an Ashkenazi manuscript of the French rite dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, followed by three fifteenth-century manuscripts (two from Italy and one from Provence).¹⁸

16. H. Striedl, *Hebräische Handschriften*, p. 305.

17. The manuscript, although comprising two parts (one running from left to right, the other from right to left) was most probably planned as a single unit, and was certainly written by the same hand. The original quire numbering (5 bi-folios each) was done separately for each of the two parts, in the correct order. A later hand foliated the entire ms. (f. 1-208. with a blank folio between f. 85 and f. 86): The first part, in the correct sequence of the ms. (from left to right: f. 1-85), and the second part, in reverse sequence (from right to left: f. 208-86). For detailed contents and collation of the later foliation (f. 1-208) see Striedl, *Hebräische Handschriften*, pp. 305-306. The size of the ms. is 22 × 15.5 cm.

18. Tova Be'eri has located approximately forty printed sources in I. Davidson, *אוצר השירה והפיוט*, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry* (New York, 1924-1933). and twenty manuscripts of Ashkenazic and Sefardic rites, from Italy, Corfu, Yemen, Provence and other places. She has also located translations of the *piyyûṭ* into Jewish languages such as Yiddish, Persian, Italian and Tatarian. From her detailed survey of modern research literature (relevant mainly to geographical provenance, date, function and relationship of the *piyyûṭ* to the grace after meals) it will suffice here to refer to L. Hirschfeld. *Die häuslichen Sabbathgesänge...* (Mainz. n.d. [1898]), p. 27; H.M.J. Loewe, *Mediaeval Hebrew Minstrelsy* (London, 1926), p. 75; Davidson, *Thesaurus*, *zadê* 215; A.Z. Idelsohn. *Jewish Liturgy and its Development* (New York, 1932). p. 153; M. Zobel, *Der Sabbat...* (Berlin, 1935), p. 184; N. Ben Menahem, *זמירות של שבת* (*Zemirôt šel Šabbat*) (Jerusalem, 1949), pp. 38, 146-148; E.D. Goldschmidt. "Zemiroth." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*² (Jerusalem, 1971), XVI, pp. 987-9; E. Werner, *A Voice Still Heard* (University Park and London, 1979), p. 139; N. Scherman, *זמירות ישראל*, *Zemiroth Sabbath Songs...* (New York. c. 1979), pp. 132-7; N. Levin with V. Pasternak, *Z'mirot Anthology...* (Cedarhurst, N.Y., c. 1981), p. 63.

The anonymous text (see Appendix) consists of an initial strophe of two verses acting as refrain (designated below I or IR), followed by four principal strophes of four verses each (designated below II-V), which are not strictly isosyllabic. The rhyme-pattern, designated in Hebrew poetics as a “*muwaššah* (=Girdle song)-like form,”¹⁹ is as follows: [I]ax/ax; [II] bc/bc/bc/cx (followed by I); [III] de/de/de/ex, etc.²⁰ Thus, in the last verse of each of the principal strophes (II-V), the first hemistich rhymes with the changing rhyme of the respective strophes, and the second hemistich rhymes with the fixed rhyme of the poem(x) established in the initial strophe (I).

The fixed rhyme at the end of the strophes has a “heralding” function, announcing the chanting of the refrain “as an integral part of each strophe, not only in view of its contents but also in view of its rhyme.”²¹ Anticipating the results of the musical analysis below, we may point out that the similarity of the poetic and musical structures is manifested chiefly in the parallels between the cadential formula of the refrain and that of the strophe ends. The absence of rigorous isosyllabism — most verses have from five to seven “phonetic syllables”** per hemistich — was probably the main cause for the numerous variants noticed by Tova Be’eri in her critical edition of the text, generally resulting in the addition or deletion of a syllable. She is certainly right in her assumption that this kind of variant is probably due to the adaptation of the text to different syllabic melodies. In her study of the text Ms. Be’eri substantiates her findings that the *piyyûṭ* was composed not later than the end of the fourteenth century, by an Ashkenazi poet, perhaps in Northern France. Thence it reached Germany, Provence and Italy, as well as Constantinople and other communities in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa.

19. E. Fleischer, שירת הקודש העברית בימי הביניים, (*Širat haq-qodeš ha-ivrit...*) (Jerusalem, 1975). pp. 350-355.

20. With a divergence in strophe IV (*rahembe-ḥasdeka*): fe (instead of: fg).

21. Fleischer. *Širat haq-qodeš*, p. 352.

22. According to the so-called “phonetic-syllabic” system, counting syllables with *sewā mobile* and *sewā compositum* (*ḥaṭaf*) in the same way as syllables with other vowels.

2. The Notation (see Fig. 1)

The melody is notated, according to the usage of the Christian Hebraists of the time, from right to left.²³ There are no visible staff-lines, but the diastematic rigor of the notation leaves no doubt as to the pitch of the notes on intended staves of four lines each. The shape of the notes is typical of the German ductus of the period. The scribe systematically used the two letters C and F to indicate the clefs of Do and Fa. There are no mensuration signs. The notes are all white, of two values: minim (**d**) and semi-breve (**o**); breve (**□**) and longa (**q**) appear only at the end of the strophes, and, as far as can be seen, with no rhythmic significance differentiating between these two long values. The notation comprises five staves, one for each strophe. Only the initial words of

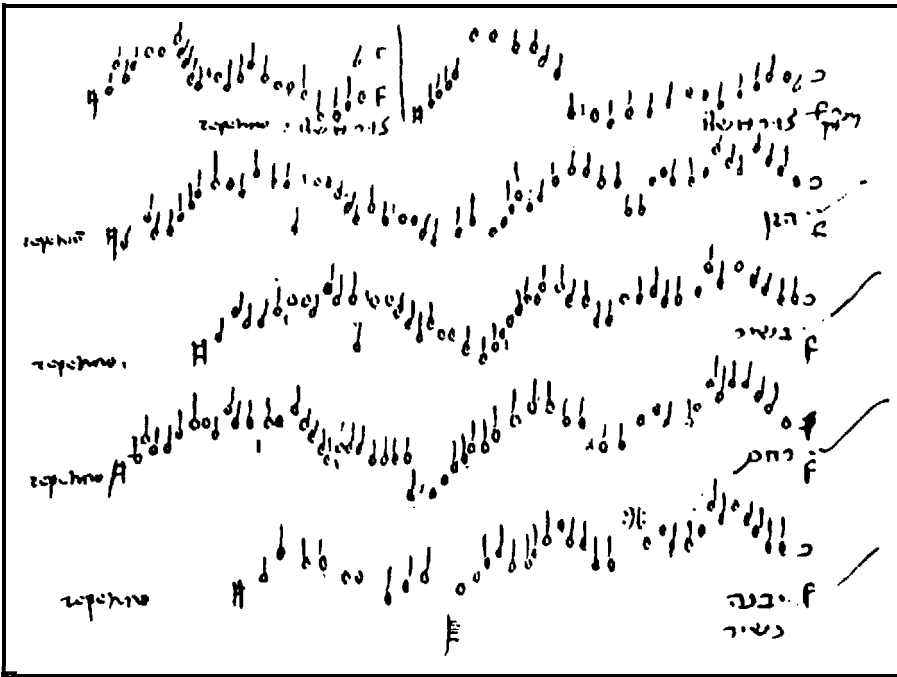


Figure 1: *Zur miš-šellô akalnû*, Mub, Cod. ms. 757 (4^o), f. 95b.

23. Jewish scribes usually notated music in the conventional way from left to right, even when the Hebrew text-underlay was not transcribed in Latin characters (cf. I. Adler, *La pratique musicale savante dans quelques communautés juives en Europe aux XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, La Haye, 1966). I, p. 64).

the strophes are given at the beginnings of the staves but the melody is rigorously syllabic and thus one has little difficulty in fitting the text of the entire piyyut to the tune.

The opening words of strophe I appear twice under the first staff, once at the beginning and again in the middle, after a dividing line separating the two parts of the melody notated on the first staff. Both parts of the notation are intended to carry the entire text of the refrain (comprising only two verses, while the principal strophes II-V have four verses each). The second part of the first staff has the indication *repetitio*, which appears also at the end of the staves of II-V. Thus it is clear that only the **second** part (designated IR in the transcription) acts as refrain. The indication of **B^b** at the key signature appears only in the two parts of the first staff; but the melody of the other strophes also belongs to the Fa mode.

Transcription I is a reproduction of the piyyut and its melody in the original form (original note values; musical script from right to left) including an attempt to reconstruct the entire text-underlay, according to the version preceding the notation in the manuscript (see Appendix).²⁴ Roman numerals I to V are used to indicate the melody of the five strophes; the symbol I R and the word *repetitio* refer to the melody of the refrain; Arabic numerals 1 to 4 indicate the melodic sentences which correspond to the lines of verse in each strophe.

III. The Melody

Even a superficial glance at the melody shows that we have here an early illustration of the process widely known in all countries of the Jewish dispersion, and in Germany in particular, of adopting the musical language of the surrounding culture. Strict adherence to ancient musical traditions was prescribed chiefly as regards the basic elements of synagogal chant, such as the liturgical cantillation of Bible readings, psalmody, and certain prayers where the musical element is limited mainly to the role of regulator of the textual declamation, the repertory of the liturgical recitative sung according to specific “modes” or “*shtayger*” and — in the Ashkenazic sphere — the corpus called

²⁴ Only divergences from the widespread version in S.I. Baer סדר עבודת ישראל (Rödelheim, 1868), p. 205 have been indicated in the notes; the transcription adonay (for Y H W H) and the correction of obvious scribal errors have been incorporated in the text with references to the Mub manuscript version in the notes (see Appendix).

Transcription I

I 1-2

צור מ-ש-לוי-א-כל-נו בר-כו א-מו-ני-ש-בע-נו ו-ה-ש-אר-נו כד-בר-א-דו-ני [8

IR

צור מ-ש-לוי-א-כל-נו בר-כו א-מו-ני-ש-בע-נו ו-ה-ש-אר-נו כד-בר-א-דו-ני [8

Repetitio

II 1-2

ה-זו-את-עו-ל-מו-ר-עי-נו א-בי-נו א-כל-נו א-ת-ל-ה-מו-ו-י-י-ש-חל-נו [8

II 3-4

על-כן-נו-דה-לש-מו-ונה-ל-נו-פי-נו א-וא-מר-נו ו-ע-ני-נו כ-י-א-ין-ק-דו-ש-כ-א-דו-ני [8

Repetitio

III 1-2

ו-ב-ש-יר-ו-ב-קו-ל-חו-דה-נ-ב-ר-ל-ה-ל-ה-י-נו א-על-ר-ח-ח-מ-ד-ה-ש-ה-נ-ח-יל-ל-א-ב-ו-ח-י-נו [8

III 3-4

מ-א מת א-דו-ני [8] מ-זוון ו-צ - דה הש-ני-ע נפ-ש-נו חס-דו ג-בר ע-ליי נו ו-אמת א-דו-ני [8]

Repetitio

IV 1-2

ר-חם-ג חס-ד-ר על עמ-ר צו-רינו-על צ-יון מש-כו כבוד-ר זבול בית חפ-אר-חי-נו [8]

IV 3-4

ו-בו ד-וד ע-ב-ד-ר י-בא ו-יג-א-לי-נו ו-רו-ח א-פי-נו מ-ש-י-ח א-דו-ני [8]

Repetitio

V 1-3

י-י-נה [ה-מק-דש עיר צ-יון ח-מ-לא] ה-רה-מן ה-נק-דש יח-ב-ר ו-יח-ע-לה [8]
נ-שיר [שיר ח-דש ב-ר-נה נה-נ-ע-לה] [2]

V 4

על כוס י-י-ן מ-לא [8]

Repetitio

כבר-כת א-דו-ני [8]

niggûnim mis-sinav.²⁵ But apart from these, singing in the synagogue and during para-liturgical religious and domestic occasions was open to innovations and exterior influences. A striking manifestation of this attitude, leaving the choice of the tunes of religious songs to the personal taste of the celebrant, can be found in a well-known saying in the *sefer hasidim* (Book of the Just): “Search for tunes, and when you pray speak in the tune that is pleasant and sweet in your eyes.”²⁶ This kind of permissible freedom in certain prayers could reach surprising dimensions, even including the use of local folk-tunes in the prayers for the High Holidays. A repertoire such as *zemirot* for the Sabbath, in its nature local and family-centered, was even more permeable to outside influences.²⁷

It might have been expected, therefore, that it would be possible to identify the type and melodic structure, if not the tune itself, of *zûr mis-šellô* in the rich corpus of pious and popular song current in Germany at the dawn of the Reformation. This body of music has attracted special interest because of its importance for research in the musical sources of the Protestant church, which drew copiously on contemporary German folk and religious melodies, especially from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, and which included *Geistliche Lieder*, *Gesellschafts-Lieder* and *Tisch-Lieder*, as well as Latin canzones and songs originating in the Meistersinger repertory. As a result of the widespread use of the *contrafacta* technique, secular melodies were also taken into the religious repertory, with the encouragement of Luther himself, in accordance with his famous remark “*Der Teufel brauche nicht alle schonen Melodien für sich allein zu besitzen*” (The Devil should not keep all the good tunes for himself).²⁸

25. See I. Adler, “La musique juive,” *Précis de Musicologie*, pp. 96, 97, 99, 100.

26. *Sefer hasidim*, ed. Wistinetzki-Freimann (Frankfurt am Main, 1924). paragraph 11.

27. Among recent collections and studies of the musical and historical aspects of *zemirôt* for Sabbath, later than those listed in A. Sendrey. *Bibliography of Jewish Music* (New York, 1951), nos. 7388-7416a (see in particular no. 7400 [Nadel]; see also no. 1440 [H.M.J. Loeve, *Medieval Hebrew minstrelsy*... London. 1926], and no. 9408 [Bernstein]), attention should be drawn to E. Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, pp. 136-141, 276-280 and in particular to Levin and Pasternak, *Z'mirot anthology*..., introduced by an extensive and up-to-date discussion of the subject, with detailed references to previous studies and collections.

28. F. Blume, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchenmusik* (2nd ed., Kassel, Basel, Paris, London, New York, 1965). I: *Das Zeitalter der Reformation*... ed. L. Finscher, pp. I I-12. The quotation is on p. 18.

However, my initial assumption that it would be possible to identify the origin of the melody, and to assign it to one of the types of the contemporary repertory, proved over-optimistic. Specialists in the field have so far been unable to locate formal contemporary models with which our melody can be associated.²⁹ While awaiting further research we must content ourselves with a presentation of the principal features that emerge from an analysis of the melodic structure of **our tune**,

It seems then that we may most reasonably discard a **contrafactum** hypothesis, and posit that the melody was composed especially for the text of *zûr miš-šellô* by an anonymous Jewish composer, perhaps in the second half of the fifteenth century, or at the latest, at the beginning of the sixteenth. The notion that a preexisting melody from the popular repertoire of the period was fitted to the words of the piyyut may be rejected on the grounds of our inability to identify an existing model in contemporary chant, as well as on the basis of several conclusions suggested by analysis of the tune, such as the extended ambitus of an octave and fourth, which is rare in the popular monodic repertory of the **Geistliche Lieder** and similar chants of the period; a significant interrelationship between the text and the tune; and the use of variation technique in the melody of the different strophes, especially in IV, as we shall see below.

We have already pointed out (section 11,l) the similarity between the poetic and musical structures which may be observed in the parallels between the cadential formula of the refrain and that of the ends of the strophes. This, and other aspects of the melodic analysis, may be made clear with the help of a paradigmatic transcription of the melody of the five strophes (see Transcription II).

29. My heartfelt thanks are due to Prof. Ludwig Finscher of Heidelberg and Dr. Karl-Gunther Hartmann of Kassel to whom I appealed in this matter. The beginning of the melody seems to Finscher "like a French chanson melody from the Janequin generation or slightly later; such melodies were frequently borrowed for Protestant church songs. The continuation, however, looks strange, and I cannot fit it into any repertoire known to me" (letter dated 17.12.1984). On Finscher's advice I applied to Dr. Hartmann, from whose reply, dated 29.1.85, I quote the following extracts: "...Die Form des Stuckes gibt Ratsel auf... Aus der Zeit um 1520 ist mir nichts vergleichbares bekannt... Ihre Melodie fangt an wie ein Tanzlied. besonders die Kadenz von A istrophe I. See Transcription III weckt diese Assoziation... [es]erhartet sich mir der Verdacht, dass auch die Form des Ganzen aus der gleichen Spure stammen konnte... Einige Merkmale... lassen an Spatformen der Estampe denken... Ich werde das Stucke weiter im Auge behalten und bitte um Kachsicht fur meine noch sehr vagen Vermutungen."

Transcription II

In this transcription (notes running from left to right) the rhythmic values are reduced by half. The symbols (Roman numerals, Arabic numerals, etc.) are used in the same sense as in Transcription I above. Latin characters are used to indicate elements of the melodic structure: capitals (A - l.) show melodic sentences corresponding to a full line of verse, and small letters (a - j) indicate components corresponding to a hemistich. The melodic sentence corresponding to a full line of verse is divided into two parts by means of small letters only in cases where the melodic section corresponding to one of the hemistichs appears also in another part of the melody (thus this division is not used in the melodic sentences marked by capital A and E).

The musical score consists of the following staves and annotations:

- Staff I:** Melodic line with annotations A (1) and B (2).
- Repetitio I R:** A second melodic line for the first system, with annotations C and D.
- Staff II 1-2:** Melodic line with annotations E (1) and F (2).
- Staff III 1-2:** Melodic line with annotations E and J.
- Staff IV 1-2:** Melodic line with annotations E and J.
- Staff V 1:** Melodic line with annotation E (1).
- Staff V 2-3:** Melodic line with annotations E (2) and F (3).
- Staff II 3-4:** Melodic line with annotations G (3) and H (4). Includes a "Repetitio" label.
- Staff III 3-4:** Melodic line with annotations G and H. Includes a "Repetitio" label.
- Staff IV 3-4:** Melodic line with annotations K and H. Includes a "Repetitio" label.
- Staff V 4:** Melodic line with annotations L and H. Includes a "Repetitio" label.

Small lowercase letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j) are placed below the notes to indicate hemistich divisions. Roman numerals (1, 2, 3, 4) are placed above the lines to indicate larger structural units.

Let us first examine the parallels between poetic and melodic structures as regards caesuras. The poetic structure dictates the placing of caesuras at the ends of the verses, and at the division of the verses into hemistichs, by means of the *muwassah*-like rhyming. From the musical point of view the caesura is expressed by the use of the long rhythmic value of a semi-breve at the end of every verse, sometimes with the addition of a pause,³⁰ and of a breve or *longa* at the end of each strophe;³¹ but there is no systematic attempt to express the internal poetic caesura that divides the verses into hemistichs.³²

We have already mentioned that the similarity of the poetic and musical structures is chiefly displayed in the parallels between the cadential formula of the refrain and of the endings of the principal strophes II-V. The poetic “heralding” function of the fixed rhyme (x) — which, according to the *muwassah-like* rhyming system is common to the end of the refrain and the end of the principal strophes — also announces the chanting of the refrain “as an integral part of the strophes”³³ and is systematically reflected in the melodic structure of the tune by the cadential formula “b”. Indeed, this formula appears regularly, with slight variations, at the end of each strophe; its special status in the melodic texture of the *piyyut* is also stressed by its use in several other places: the second hemistich of verse I 2 and II 2, and the second hemistich of verse V 3. This melodic formula also acts as the sole connecting link between the melody of I and that of the other strophes of the *piyyut*.

A further demonstration of a significant relationship between the poetic and melodic structures can be seen in comparing strophes II to IV with strophe V, paying special attention to the difference in the poetic pattern of verses 1 to 3 (changing rhyme) as against verse 4 (fixed rhyme), according to the *muwassah*-like rhyme pattern, illustrated in Fig. 2.

30. See the ends of I. IR I. 11 3, III 3, IV 3.

31. Notation of *longa* appears at the end of strophes IR. II, IV, and V. but (as stated above) probably without differentiated rhythmic significance.

32. Clear examples of lack of musical caesura at the dividing point of the hemistichs of a verse (either by recourse to a longer rhythmic value or by a pause) can be seen in verses 1 and 2 of strophes II-IV.

33. See section II. I above, especially the passage related to note 21.

	Poetic Pattern				Melodic Pattern			
Verse	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Strophe								
II	bc	bc	bc	cx	E	$\overbrace{f \quad b''}$	$\overbrace{c' \quad e'}$	$\overbrace{g \quad b'}$
III	de	de	de	ex	E	$\overbrace{f \quad h}$	$\overbrace{c' \quad e'}$	$\overbrace{g \quad b'}$
IV	fe^{34}	fe	fe	ex	E	$\overbrace{f \quad i}$	$\overbrace{J \quad e}$	$\overbrace{g' \quad b'}$
V	gh	gh	gh	hx	E	E	$\overbrace{f \quad b'}$	$\overbrace{c' \quad b''}$

Figure 2: Tabulation of the poetic and melodic patterns of strophes II-V.

How does the melody reflect the difference between the poetic pattern of verse 4 as compared with that of 1 to 3? It seems that this is achieved by means of a melodic formula announcing the end of the first pattern (changing rhyme) and proclaiming that the second pattern (fixed rhyme) is beginning. This task is assumed by the melodic component “e,” taken from the refrain (IR), and systematically inserted in every principal strophe, except V, at the end of the third verse, and only there (see Transcription 11).

34. Divergence from the regular rhyme-pattern, as indicated above. note 20.

The exclusion of the melodic component "e" from strophe V may also be explained by the adherence of the melodic to the poetic structure. Tova Be'eri's study (see note I) has drawn attention to a mannerist aspect of the rhyming pattern of this piyyut the syllable "-nu" is repeated at the end of verses 1 to 3 in all the principal strophes, except V. Thus, at the end of verse 3, the melodic component "e" not only announces the transition from the changing rhyme to the fixed rhyme-pattern, but it also seems to be associated with the "*-nū*" rhyming hemistichs in verses 3 of the principal strophes (in II: *û-nehallelô be-finû*; in III: *hîsbi a nafsenu*; in IV *yavô we-yig'alenû*). Therefore the melodic component "e" is not repeated in strophe V where this rhyming syllable does not exist.

The melodic structure of strophe V as a whole is unusual. The sentence E, in strophes II, III and IV used for the first verse only, is adopted in strophe V for the second verse as well. This is indicated in the manuscript by repetition signs in the notation, and the addition of the opening word of the second verse (*našîr*) under the first word of the first verse (*yibbaneh*). The repetition calls for the displacement of the ensuing melodic sentences from the position they hold in the preceding strophes, with the necessary adaptations and short-cuts (see Transcription II).

The third verse of strophe V follows the melodic pattern of the second verse in II, III and IV: that is "f," common to all the strophes, and the adjacent component "b," which is common to strophes II and V; the sentence I. in the fourth verse of strophe V, consists of the component "c," corresponding to the first hemistich of the third verse in II and III, and the component "b," corresponding to the second hemistich of the fourth verse in II, III and IV. This combination, complicated in description, results in a quite smoothly flowing melody, where the juxtapositions that our analysis has exposed are not felt.

This coincidence of the divergence of strophe V from the preceding principal strophes, which we have observed as regards both the poetic and the melodic patterns, does not seem to be fortuitous, but intentional and significant. It seems to be a further illustration of the modelling of the tune in close accord with the poetic structure of the piyyut.

Strophe IV presents another kind of deviation from the melodic pattern of the other principal strophes. Verse 1 and the first hemistich of verse 2 have the same melodic components as their parallels in the

preceding strophes; the change begins at the second hemistich of verse 2 (melodic component “i”), where the descending melody breaks through the barrier of the *Finalis* Fa and is carried on to a cadential caesura on Re; afterwards, at the first hemistich of verse 3, it comes to rest on La (component “j”), thus reinforcing our sense of a temporary touch of the mode of Re. From the beginning of the second hemistich of verse 3 and to the end of the strophe the melody returns to the usual form. The two components “i” and “j” appear only once, that is, in strophe IV, in the *whole piyyut*. Here one cannot connect the melodic modification to the **poetic pattern. Perhaps it illustrates the quest for melodic variation** technique used in settings of strophic poems, a technique considered to be a widespread practice among Jews, and already encountered in the oldest documents of Jewish music notated by Ovadiah the Norman Proselyte (see note 5).³⁵ Another possibility is that the anonymous composer of the melody wanted to express himself lyrically precisely in this strophe (an ornamental version of the blessing for Jerusalem in the grace after meals) which is entirely devoted to supplications for the mercy of God on the people of Israel, Zion and the Temple, and for salvation and the coming of the Messiah. In contrast to the other strophes it does not contain any reference to the material matters (such as bread, wine and food in general) associated with the Sabbath meal.

We shall now sum up our main findings with the help of the summary tabulation of Transcription II (Fig. 3). The only component common to all the parts of the melody, including strophe I, is the cadential formula “b,” which figures at the end of every strophe. An examination of the location of other common melodic components revealed an interesting phenomenon: the formal striving towards a unified structure is especially concentrated in the outer structural units, and becomes weaker as we turn to the inner units. This can be seen on all levels of the analysis: At the top of the scale of identities are the outer verses 1 and 4; the melodic sentence E of verse 1 is common to all the principal strophes, as is the melodic sentence H of verse 4, except of course for strophe V. On a lower grade of the scale of identities we find the outer hemistichs of the internal verses, that is, the first hemistich of

35. Avenary’s insistence on the “principle of varied repetition” apparently holds good in Jewish music of all periods and countries. H. Avenary, *Hebrew Hymn runes: Rise and Development of a Musical Tradition* (Tel-Aviv, 1971) p. 15. See also pp. 24.3 f., 33.

Verse Strophe	1	2	3	4	IR	
I	A	B a b				
IR					¹ C c d	² D e b'
II	E	F f b''		G c' e'	H g b ³	} CD
III	E	I f h		G	H' g b'	
IV	E	J f i		K j e	H'' g' b'	
V	E		E	F	L c' b ⁴	

Figure 3: Summary Tabulation of Transcription II

verse 2 and the second hemistich of verse 3; here we can see the similarity of the melodic components “f” (of verse 2) and “e” (of verse 3). in all the principal strophes, except V. The main melodic variations (apart from the structural change in V) are found in the internal hemistichs of verses 2 and 3; here there is melodic identity only in verse 3 of II and III.

From all this emerges a successful blending of a melody eager to be moulded to its poetic text, but at the same time preserving a non

negligible degree of freedom from slavish subjection to the formal structure of the *piyyut*. The non-congruence of the musical and poetic forms is a phenomenon already well-known in earlier periods, as in the Spanish *villancico*, the French *virelai* and the Italian *ballata*. H. Avenary has pointed out similar phenomena in the repertoire of *piyyutim* preserved in the Jewish oral tradition.³⁶ But in the present case, the effect is not one of setting one structure — the poetic — against a different one — the musical — but that of a melody acting in an improvisatory way within its own structure.

IV. Conclusion

In summing up the historical aspects of our study we may say that the melody was composed, to all appearances, by a German Jew, some time before it was recorded in writing by a Christian humanist scholar, from the mouth of an anonymous Jewish informant, at the beginning of the sixteenth century in South Germany.

The special importance of the document is that it represents one of the earliest known notations of the music sung by Jews in the Diaspora, and the first of its kind in Europe. It is a concrete illustration, comparatively early, of the adoption of the musical language of the surrounding culture for religious Jewish songs, a phenomenon known from earlier and later literary sources, but lacking comprehensive musical documentation before the second half of the eighteenth century.

Sabbath *zemirot* were not written down in notation, as far as is known, before the nineteenth century.³⁷ This diversified body of songs is in fact the most wide spread musical repertoire known in Jewish homes

36. *Hebrew Hymn Tunes*, p. 30.

37. Prof. Avenary drew my attention to the notation of *šalôm'alêkem*, published by Issac Nathan in his *Musurgia vocalis* (London. 1823; 2nd ed.. 1836). pp. 102-103. No earlier notation of any of the *zemirot* for Sabbath, whether in manuscript (including those of the Birnbaum collection) or in print is known to me; the melodies for Sabbath in E.H. Kirshhan's *simhar han-nefes* (Fürth, 1726-1727) are printed without text-underlay and are associated with Yiddish poems. I tend to agree with Neil Levin's statement (*Z'mirof Anthology*, p. xix) that "it was not until the publication of Baer's monumental collection, *Baal T'fillah* (1873), that there was any systematic inclusion of *z'misor*... Only much later, when an interest in collecting Jewish folksongs developed, were some *z'misor* collections published — such as those quoted throughout this study. This scarcity of *z'misor* in manuscripts and [printed?] collections further underscores the fact of their oral transmission..."

throughout the Diaspora. Dozens of notations of melodies of “*zûr miš-šellô akalnû*” have been collected in recent years. The National Sound Archives in Jerusalem possess an impressive range of recordings of this *piyyut* as it is sung by Oriental and Western Jewish communities, more extensive even than the already rich representation in print and manuscript. Thanks to the curiosity and the lively mind of Johannes Renhart, or another scholar of his circle, this document has safeguarded for Jewish musical tradition a historical perspective that we had not hoped to see illustrated in concrete form.

Appendix

The text given below follows the version in Mub, Cod. ms. 757(40), with notes referring to divergences as indicated above in note 24 (variants due to *plene* and defective script are disregarded). The Hebrew text is studded with biblical locations, especially in the last verses of the strophes; wherever possible these have been rendered in the English translation with recourse to the Authorised version of the Bible.

I א צור משלו אכלנו / ברכו אמוני
2 שבענו והשארנו¹ / כדבר אדוני²

- I 1 Rock, whose food we ate / bless Him my friends
2 We ate our fill and left over / according to the word of the Lord

II הוהן את עולמו / רעינו אבינו
2 אכלנו את לחמו / ויינו שתינו
3 על כן נודה לשמו¹ ונהללו בפינו
4 ואמרנו³ וענינו / כי⁴ אין קדוש כאדוני²

- II 1 He feeds His world / our Shepherd our Father
2 We ate His bread/ His wine we drank
3 Therefore we shall laud His name / and praise Him with our mouth
4 We shall say and respond / that there is none holy like our Lord

III בשיר ובקול⁵ תודה / נברך לאלהינו⁶
2 על ארץ חמדה / שהנחיל לאבותינו
3 מזון וצדה / השביע נפשנו⁷
4 חסדו גבר עלינו / ואמת אדוני²

- 111 1 With song and voice of thanksgiving / we shall bless our God
2 For the pleasant land / he gave to our fathers
3 Food and provision / he bestowed upon us
4 His merciful kindness is great toward us / true is the Lord

Notes:

(1) <והשארנו> והותרנו
(2) <כי אין קדוש> אין קדוש
(3) <נפשנו> לנפשנו

(4) אדוני YHWH
(5) <ובקול> וקול

(6) <ואמרנו> אמרנו
(7) <לאלהינו> אלהינו

- IV 1 רחם בחסדך⁸ / על עמך צורינו
 2 על ציון משכן כבודך / זבול בית תפארתינו
 3 ובן⁹ דוד עבדך / יבא ויגאלינו
 4 ורוח¹⁰ אפינו / משיח אדוני²

- IV 1 Bestow mercy and kindness / on Your people, our Rock
 2 On Zion Your shrine / the habitation. house of our glory
 3 May the son of David Your servant / come and redeem us
 4 The breath of our nostrils | the anointed of the Lord

- V 1 יבנה המקדש / עיר ציון תמלא¹¹
 2 נשיר¹² שיר חודש / ברננה¹³ נעלה
 3 הרחמן הנקדש / יתברך ויתעלה
 4 על כוס יין מלא¹⁴ כברכת אדוני²

- V 1 May the Temple be rebuilt | the city of Zion be refilled
 2 We shall sing a new song / with jubilation we shall ascend
 3 The Merciful and Holy One / be blessed and exalted
 4 Over a full cup of wine / according to the blessing of the Lord

Notes:

(8) MS : כחסדך

(11) MS : <תמלא> תמלה:

(14) MS : <מלא> מלה:

(9) <ובן> בן

(12) <ושם נשיר> נשיר

(10) nil <ורוח>

(13) <ברננה> וברננה

ISRAEL GOLDFARB'S "SHALOM ALECHEM"

PINCHAS SPIRO

The terms "traditional" and "folk-song" are frequently abused in musical anthologies and song collections. In a great many instances, the use of these terms merely indicates that the names of the composers were unknown to the compiler or editor. A classic case in point is Rabbi Israel Goldfarb's "Shalom *Alechem*" which most song collections list as "traditional."

I have in my possession a hand-written letter from Rabbi Goldfarb in which he tells in great detail how and when he composed that melody. Following is a brief account of my correspondence with Rabbi Goldfarb.

During the years 1961-66, I served as cantor of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles. Soon after arriving there, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to study with the great Max Helfman whom I had long admired. One day, during 1963, he showed me his "*Sabbath Chants and Zmirot*," a collection he had compiled and harmonized for Brandeis Camp Institute of Santa Susanna. I was surprised to see Goldfarb's "Shalom *Alechem*" described there as "Melody of Chassidic origin." I told him that I was fairly certain that the composer was Israel Goldfarb. Max Helfman challenged me to prove it, and that prompted my letter of inquiry to Rabbi Goldfarb. I was surprised and pleased by Rabbi Goldfarb's detailed and unequivocal reply which I think can be regarded as an historical document. It is dated May 10, 1963, Unfortunately, I never had the chance to show it to Max Helfman. He died, rather suddenly, on August 9, 1963.

I am enclosing the following: A copy of Rabbi Goldfarb's hand-written letter; a typewritten transcription of it; the music of his "Shalom *Alechem*" as it appears in his "*Friday Evening Melodies*" and a copy of Max Helfman's arrangement (see pp. 40-46).

The melody of Goldfarb's "Shalom *Alechem*" consists of two parts: The first part is calm; the second part is somewhat more intense. Since there are four verses in the text of "*Shalom Alechem*," Goldfarb assigned the first part of the melody to verses One and Four, and the second part of the melody to verses Two and Three. The musical form is, then, A-B-B-A, with the last verse ("*Tsetchem l' shalom*" - Depart in Peace) concluding on a calm and serene note, the same way it started.

Pinchas Spiro is the hazzan of Tifreth Israel Synagogue in Des Moines, Iowa. He is the author of a number of volumes of original and creative texts on the study of Nusah and cantillation. Just off the press is his "Minchah Service for Shabbat (and Havdalah) the latest in his series of Musical Siddurim published by the Cantors Assembly.

I have found that this “*Shalom Alechem*” is very often sung, mistakenly, in the simpler and less sophisticated A-B-A-B form. Max Helfman’s arrangement of it, to my surprise, is in this form, too. It happens to be an excellent arrangement, written in a lower, more comfortable key than the original, and it contains a more accurate Hebrew accentuation.

In his introduction to his “Friday Evening *Melodies*” (which he produced together with Samuel Eliezer Goldfarb) Rabbi Israel Goldfarb writes: “It is our sincere hope that this humble contribution may help, though it be in the smallest measure, to restore to the synagogue, school and home the inspiring and edifying influence of music. . . which is one of the greatest aids in stimulating public and private devotion. . .”

Considering the fact that the name Israel Goldfarb has become practically synonymous with Congregational Singing, one can state with certainty that his modestly expressed hope has come true in a very big way.

As to Goldfarb’s “*Shalom Alechem*,” I should like to quote the conclusion of his letter to me: “I went to this length in writing you in order to silence once and for all the many claims to the contrary.” I hope that the publication of this historic document will indeed lay to rest all doubts about the authorship of the melody of “*Shalom Alechem*.” May the memory of Rabbi Israel Goldfarb and the influence of his music continue to serve as a blessing and an inspiration to us all.

RABBI ISRAEL QOLDFAR - D.H.L.

200 No. VILLAGE AVENUE
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N. Y.

RO 6.7053

RABBI EMERITUS
CONGREGATION BAITH ISRAEL ANSHEI EMES
MOTHER SYNAGOGUE OF BROOKLYN
KANE & COURT STREETS
BROOKLYN 31, N. Y.

May 10, 1963

Dear Hazzan Pinchas Spiro:-

I have your inquiry about the origin of the melody of עֲשֵׂה עִלְּךָ.

Please be assured that the melody originated with me and me alone.

I composed the melody forty-five years ago this month. While sitting on a bench near the Alma Mater statue, in front of the Library at Columbia University in N. Y. I began to hum to myself. I fished out a sheet of music-paper from my brief case and jotted it down. It was on a Friday, which may be the reason why the melody and the words came to my mind simultaneously. Besides, I was working at that time on my "Friday Evening Melodies" which was published in 1918, in which it was printed for the first time. The popularity of the melody traveled not only throughout this Country but throughout the world, so that many people came to believe that the Song was handed down from Mt Sinai by Moses.

I have received innumerable requests from Rabbis, Cantors and Composers to give them permission to use the melody in their musical collections, and I

was liberal enough to grant such permission. Some were generous enough to acknowledge the authorship. A great many publishers, some in Israel, not knowing the origin of the melody, simply wrote "Traditional" or "Hassidic." But the fact remains that I am the composer, and the melody has been copyrighted by me and recorded at the Library of Congress in 1918.

I went to this length in writing to you in order to silence once and for all the many claims to the contrary.

With all good wishes in your sacred work, believe me to be

very sincerely yours

Israel Goldfarb

Rev. Pinchas Spiro,
 Hazyan Temple Beth Am
 Los Angeles, Calif

P.S. Rabbi Morris Kertzer wrote in his book that while visiting in India he heard an Indian Jew singing my Sholem Aleichem. When he asked the Jew where he learned that melody, the Indian told him that it came down by tradition from his ancestors. This merely proves that the strains of this melody truly express the soul of the Jew in the true Sabbath spirit.

May 10, 1983

Dear Hazzan Pinchas Spiro:-

I have YOUR inquiry about the origin of the melody of **שלוש עליכם**. Please be assured that the melody originated with me and me alone.

I composed the melody forty-five years ago this month (1918). While sitting on a bench near the alma mater statue, in front of the library of Columbia University in N.Y., I began to hum to myself. I fished out a sheet of music-paper from my briefcase and jotted it down. It was on a Friday, which may be the reason why the apology and the words came to my mind simultaneously. Besides, I was working at that time on my "Friday Evening melodies" which was published in 1918, in which it was printed for the first time. The popularity of the melody traveled not only throughout this country but throughout the world, so **that many people came to believe that the song was handed down from M't Sinai by Moses.**

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I went to this length in writing to you in order to silence once and for all the many ~~claims~~ to the contrary.

With all good wishes in your sacred work, believe me to be

Very Sincerely Yours

(signed)
Israel Goldfarb

P.S.

Rabbi Morris Kertzer wrote in his book that while visiting in India he heard an Indian Jew singing my Sholom Aleichem. When he asked the Jew where he learned that melody, the Indian told him that it came down by tradition from his ancestors. **This merely proves that the strains of this melody truly express the soul of the Jews in the true Sabbath spirit.**

FRIDAY EVENING MELODIES

שְׁלוֹם אֲלֵיכֶם - Sholom Alechem

Moderato.

Sho-lom il-le-chem mal-a-che bash-sbo-res mal-a-che el - -

mf Moderato.

yon Ale - lech mal'-che barn-mlo-cbim bak-ko-dosh bo-mch

bu; Bo-a-chem I'-sho-lommala-che hash-sho-lom, mala-che el -

שירי ישראל לליל שבת

yon Me - lech mal'-che ham-m'lo-chim hak-ko-dosh bo-ruch

hu; Bor'-chu - ni I' - sho - lom mal - a-che hash sho-lom

mal-a - che el - yon Me - lech mal-che ham-m'lo-chim,

FRIDAY EVENING MELODIES

hak-ko - dosh bo - ruch hu; Tsee' - chem l' - sho - lom

mala - che hash - sho - lom mala - che el - - yon

Me - lech mal' - che ham - m'lo - chim hak - ko - dosh bo - ruch hu.

SHALOM ALEYCHEM

MELODY OF CHASSIDE ORIGIN
HARMONIZED BY MAX HELFMAN

Moderato

SHA - LOM A - LE - CHEM MAL - A - CHE HA - SHA -- RET MAL - A - CHE EL - - - YON
BOE - CHU - NI - L' - SHA - LOM MAL - A - CHEI HA - SHA -- LOM MAL - A - CHEI EL - - - YON

MI - - - ME - LECH MAL - CHE HAM - LA -- CHIM HA - KA - DOSH BA - RUCH HU.
MI - - - ME - LECH MAL - A - CHEI HAM - LA -- CHIM HA - KO - DOSH BA - RUCH HU.

More Moderato

BO - A - CHEM L' - SHA - LOM MAL - A - CHE HA - SHA - LOM MAL - A - CHE EL - - - YON
RET - CHEM L' - SHA - LOM MAL - A - CHEI HA - SHA - LOM MAL - A - CHEI EL - - - YON

MI - - - ME - LECH MAL - CHE HAM - LA -- CHIM HA - KA - DOSH BA - RUCH HU.
MI - - - ME - LECH MAL - A - CHEI HAM - LA -- CHIM HA - KO - DOSH BA - RUCH HU.

**“DER REBE ELIMEYLEKH” —
A CASE OF PRE-ADAPTATION OR METEMPSYCHOSIS?**

CHARLES HELLER

Everyone has heard of Rebe Elimeylekh. The jovial, bespectacled and above all music-loving Rebe, with the shadowy figure of his shammes Reb Naftole hovering in the background, is the subject of one of the most popular of all Yiddish folk songs:¹

Ex. 1

As der Re - be E - li - mey - lekh (etc.)

So popular has he become, that this song is known in many versions, ranging from the witty English of Samuel Rosenbaum (“The Merry Rebbe Elie,” choral arrangement by Charles Davidson) to Hebrew (“*Ksheharabi Elimelech*”). Even in this Hebrew disguise he has retained enough jollity to be included in an anthology still used in Canadian public schools.² (The song is described as a Jewish folk melody from Israel.) Where did Rebe Elimeylekh come from? Was he a legendary character, or was he a real historical figure who is now only remembered in a nursery rhyme, rather like Rabbi David of Talna (1808- 1882) about whom we still sing:

Ex. 2

Reb Do - vi - di Reb Do - vi - di der Vas - sil - ko - ver voint shoyn yetst in... Tal - na

In this article I shall attempt to trace the roots of Rebe Elimeylekh, which, as we shall see, far from being found in some imagined chasidic shtetl, lie in the most unexpected areas. More to the point, we shall uncover during this exploration some important evidence about the process by which folk song itself is transmitted.

Charles Heller is Choir Director at Beth Emeth Yehuda Synagogue, Toronto. His original research on diverse aspects of Jewish Music has been published in the Canadian Folk Music Journal and the Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute. He also taught a course in Jewish Music at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. His most recent set of musical arrangements is “Encore!” (duets published by the Toronto Council of Hazzanim, 1983).

To begin with, the verse "*Der Rebe Elimeylekh*" was composed by the Yiddish writer Moshe Nadir (1885-1943) as a deliberate imitation of the English nursery rhyme "Old King Cole", but with the addition of extra verses and with the innovative use of tongue-twisters (to add the feeling of drunkenness).

It is in the melody, however, that we can hear how "Rebe Elimeylekh" has been deliberately modelled on "Old King Cole":

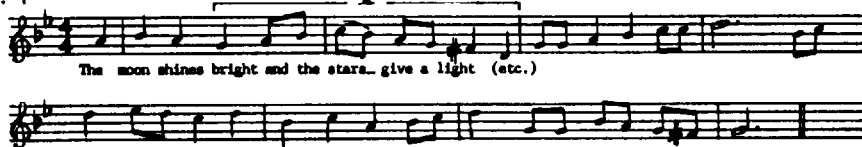
Ex. 3



This melody is the one given in a volume entitled *The Baby's Opera* that originally appeared in 1877. This volume, reissued in facsimile,³ is a treasure house of traditional English tunes. The popularity of this volume is undoubtedly due to its beautiful design and illustrations by Walter Crane, one of the foremost artists of the English Art Nouveau movement, and it is no surprise that the versions of the tunes printed were the ones to become widely known.⁴

But we can take this history one step further back in time. There is an English folk song known as "The Bellman's Song" which was first published by Bramley and Stainer in 1871. This song, having a religious message, is included in *The Oxford Book Of Carols* under the heading "Traditional Carols with the tunes proper to them". Although there are several versions of the melody, this is the one that is identical with "Old King Cole".⁵

Ex. 4



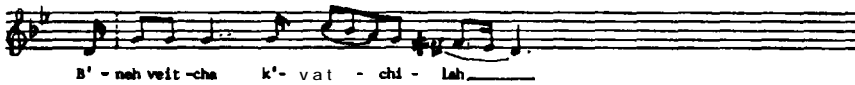
Although we cannot prove it, it seems then as though at some point the melody of "The Bellman's Song" became associated with the words of "Old King Cole."

To someone who has never heard the English original, it usually comes as a surmise to learn that the melody of "Der Rebe Elimeylekh" is not Jewish in origin. No one can doubt its Jewish feel, Yet how could such a melody emerge from such an unJewish source as English traditional music? But this is precisely why it has become successful — why it has survived — as a Yiddish song. The

melody moves in exactly the way other familiar Jewish melodies move. The point is, however, that it did not need a Jew to create it in the first place; it was the English who shaped the melody. But it was a Jew who heard it and added Yiddish words. In this way the song became ‘Jewish’.

We can look at this in a more scientific way. Let us start with “The Bellman’s Song”. This melody has certain features, such as its rhythm and meter, which connect it to the broad mass of English folk melody. But it has other features that make it stand out from typical English music, and which were seized on by Jewish musicians. For example, the ‘harmonic minor’ scale used in this melody is very un-English (most English folk songs are in the major or in a mode with a flattened seventh); but the bulk of traditional East European Jewish music is written either in this ‘harmonic minor’ scale or in the freigish scale (which is based on the same sequence of intervals). The characteristic phrase (marked x in Ex. 4) is reminiscent of a characteristic phrase of chazzanut:⁶

Ex. 5



We can suppose that from the basic vocabulary of English folk music was created the tune of “The Bellman’s Song”; but in so doing, certain odd notes and progressions were incorporated that did not sound very English. These features must have been acceptable to the English or else they would have been rejected. So the tune survived (but only just — I have never heard it sung, in contrast to most of the other numbers in *The Oxford Book of Carols*) and eventually became associated with “Old King Cole”. In this form it was heard by Moshe Nadir, to whom the un-English features would have sounded extremely familiar. In short, the tune would have sounded Jewish. When he fitted it with Yiddish words, the Jewish people immediately found a place for it in their tradition, and so it has survived to this day. It has now become accepted as an authentic folk song, being transmitted orally by people unaware of who wrote it. So it appears that unusual elements in an English environment became very successful in a Jewish environment. I should like to suggest that this is the same process known to biologists *as pre-adaptation*. In order to understand why this is an appropriate term to use, we shall have to make a short excursion into the theory of evolution by natural selection.

The term pre-adaptation was coined by the French biologist Cuenot, and has

been well summarized by Gavin de Beer as follows: an organism is said to be pre-adapted when an organ allowing that organism to live in a new and different environment is already present in the old environment and therefore has not depended on selection in the new environment for its evolution.⁷ A classic case is the evolution of air-breathing vertebrates from fish. It is difficult at first to visualise how a fish, designed to breathe water, could emerge onto land and breathe air. It would die long before it could evolve lungs. The point is, however, that primitive fish, which lived in swamps liable to periodic drought, already had organs that could breathe air, the pharyngeal pouches. Thus we can say that these primitive fish *were pre-adapted* to terrestrial life.* Now let us apply this principle to “Old King Cole”. We can imagine this song surviving moderately well in an English culture. But it has strange features (it is non-modal, etc.); it is only when placed in a Jewish environment that these features fit perfectly. “Old King Cole” was pre-adapted to survival as “Der Rebe Elimeylekh”.

There is another, more poetic way of looking at this, I.L. Peretz wrote a story called “The Reincarnation of a Melody”⁹ about the way in which melodies change as they pass from person to person. This story skillfully takes the kabbalistic idea of gilgul (metempsychosis, or reincarnation), in which a lost soul waits to be redeemed (i.e., to realize its potential) and links it with the drama of a kidnapped child trying to return home. In the course of the story, Peretz describes how the lost Jewish soul of the child was hidden in a melody which had to migrate from town to town until its true nature was revealed, when its most appreciative audience was found. Only then was the melody (as well as the kidnapped child) elevated and redeemed. Who knows? Maybe for centuries a hidden Jewish spark has lurked in “The Bellman’s Song”, waiting for Moshe Nadir to redeem it and restore it to life as Jewish melody.

NOTES

*E.G. Mlotek, ed., *Mir Trogn a Gezang!* (N.Y.: Workmen’s Circle Education Dept., 1977), pp. 168-9. There are many other printed versions, but this version includes historical background.

2K.I. Bray et al., eds., *Music For Young Canada* 5 (Toronto: W.J. Gage Ltd., 1969), pp., 36-7.

3Walter Crane, *The Baby’s Opem* (London: Pan, 1974).

4It is not clear where the tunes were collected from, other than that they were certainly traditional (Crane quaintly describes them as being ‘by the earliest masters’), and they remain in popular use today. They were notated and arranged by Crane’s sister Lucy. For details about the genesis and importance of this book see: B.E. Mahony et al., *Illustrators of Children’s Books 1744-1945* (Boston: The Horn Book Inc., 1947). pp. 63-4; Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: The ‘Queen Anne’ Movement 1860-1900* (Yale University Press, 1984), p. 145. See also: Walter Crane, *An Artist’s Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1907).

5Percy Dearmer. Ralph Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw, eds., *The Oxford Book of Carols* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 89-9 I.

6cf. M. Nathanson, ed., *Zamru Lo* 3 (N.Y.: Cantors Assembly, 1974), p. 95 (melody by S.P. Kirshner); A. Katchko, Services *For Sabbath Eve and Morning and Three Festivals* (N.Y.: Hebrew Union School of Education and Sacred Music, 1952), p. 156.

7L. Cuenot, *L'Adaptation* (Paris: Gaston Doin, 1925). pp. 135 ff. Gavin de Beer, *Adaptation*, Oxford Biological Readers No. 22 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

8This concept of pre-adaptation does not seem to be as popular as it used to be, to judge by the fact that no standard modern textbook uses it. This may be because it apparently negates the role of natural selection (how could an adaptation evolve if there were no environmental pressures favouring it?); or because it can be included under the regular term 'adaptation'. However, it seems to me to provide a vivid mental picture of one of the stages of natural selection, and because of this has some usefulness. The term 'pre-adaptation' is one of many expressions used in everyday speech ('survival of the fittest' is another) which can be objected to as being meaningless or self-contradictory; but as long as we accept such terms as linguistic shorthand, such term do have value in making an argument easier to present.

This story is included in: Mosbe Spiegel, trans., In *This World and the Next: Selected Writings by I.L. Peretz* (N.Y.: Thomas Yoseloff, 1958) pp. 90-103.

THE 1984-1985 AMERICAN JEWISH COMPOSERS FORUM AND FESTIVAL

RONALD D. EICHAKER

Of all the musical programs and projects I have had or participated in during my tenure as Hazzan at Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun, none has been as challenging and rewarding as the American Jewish Composers Forum/Festival.

The two-year project uncovered a hidden commodity deep in the bosom of our Jewish community. That commodity is our contemporary composers of Jewish heritage who have never written for the synagogue. It would have been enough to introduce one composer to the world of liturgical music but ten composers at once has never been attempted, much less achieved.

Now that the Forum and concert are behind us, we can only recapitulate the moments that were integral to the success or failure of the project. Professor Yehuda Yannay (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Music Department) and I engaged in casual conversations regarding Jewish music and its creation. In the course of those conversations, it was revealed that there are many contemporary Jewish composers who have never written for synagogues simply because they were never asked. The question that arose was, "Why not ask them?" With that in mind Professor Yannay forwarded the names of ten composers that had never written for the synagogue and were of Jewish heritage. And so began the challenge of holding a symposium on Jewish liturgical music where the participating composers knew little or nothing about the aforementioned subject.

Rather than just sending invitations to the prospective participants of the symposium, I wanted to measure the level of interest the participants would have, and tailor the agenda to appeal to the general interest of all of the participants. My first letter (dated February 8, 1984) asked the prospective participants their personal views on Jewish liturgical music and whether they would be interested in attending a symposium to be held in Milwaukee.

Ronald D. Eichaker, a graduate of the Cantors Institute serves as the hazzan of the renowned Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee.

From February 8 to November 2, 1984, I experienced the thrill of receiving mostly positive responses and support from the prospective participants and the congregation. The congregation's support came in the form of a \$7,100.00 grant from the Program/Service Development Trust, and a volunteer force that would be the envy of any congregation. Aside from the financial support, members of the congregation volunteered to host the out-of-town participants for the three day symposium, while other members were part of the hospitality committee that served meals and refreshments during the sessions.

Through Professor Yannay's participation, our symposium received co-sponsorship from the University's School of Fine Arts, Center for Twentieth Century Studies, and the Department of Hebrew Studies. The opening session of the newly formed American Jewish Composers Forum was held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where Dr. Gerard McKenna (Acting Dean of the School of Fine Arts) welcomed the participants. This opening session brought hazzanim and composers together for what would prove to be a most interesting weekend.

I should add at this point that most of the weekend proved to be restrictive to the participating hazzanim due to their congregational obligations. They were unable to hear Professor Max Wohlberg's (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) talk about the "Elements To Consider When Composing Synagogue Worship Music." The hazzanim were able, however, to hear Professor Bonia Shur (Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion) discuss the "Worship Service as a Total Religious Experience." Both of these talks were presented at the synagogue as the final session. It was at that final session that I presented the primary focus of the Forum. Having heard two lectures covering Jewish liturgical music and being musically and formally introduced to one another at the university, the participants were ready to hear my proposal.

My wish was to commission each composer to compose a setting for a section of the Shabbat liturgy with the guidance of ahazzan serving a congregation within that region. This would be a year-long collaboration in the hopes that the composers would be encouraged by the hazzanim to do more extensive writing for their own congregations.

The response was unanimous. The composers accepted the terms of the commission and the participants left Milwaukee with a commitment to return the following year in order to present the first collaborative commission of its kind in Jewish liturgical music history.

Financing The Festival

The next task was to acquire the funds necessary to bring about the second

phase of the project.

Armed with news articles and the support of the participants I presented a grant proposal to the Program/Service Development Trust of our congregation and it was passed. The Trust granted us \$7,100.00 for the 1984 Forum and promised an additional \$8200.00 for the 1985 Festival, if the previous year's Forum proved successful. Having sufficiently proven the success of the 1984 Forum, the Trust approved the appropriation of the additional \$8,200.00 for the 1985 Festival.

I was fortunate to have a funding organization like the Trust within the confines of my own congregation. This prepared me for the next two proposals. The Wisconsin Arts Board and the Affiliated Arts Agency for the Upper Midwest were my two targeted agencies. With the assistance of Professor Yannay, the completed requests were sent off with an estimated budget of approximately \$25,000.00 from 1984 to 1985. Within six months the Affiliated Arts Agencies awarded us the highest grant available, that being \$750.00.

Waiting for the response from the Wisconsin Arts Board was an exercise in patience and persistence. The Arts Board was in the throes of reorganization when the grant application was received by their office. This placed a three month delay on their decision making process. On April 27, 1985 the Music Organization's sub-panel met in Madison, and I drove to Madison to attend that meeting. Approximately one-fourth to one-third of all the grant applications received by the Arts Board are awarded any grants, so the competition was quite fierce. The sub-panel rated the festival second to the top of their list. Having cleared that hurdle, my next stop would be Beloit, WI on May 24, for the general meeting. The result was very favorable and we received \$3,000.00 toward the 1985 Festival. Though I was pleased with the award, it was less than what I had applied for, so an amended budget had to be drafted in order to receive the grant. In order to adjust my budget, I asked the participating hazzanim if it would be possible for them to accept a more modest honorarium. They all agreed. Including other budget cuts, I was able to bring the operating budget to just under \$20,000. I realized at this point the program was walking a financial tightrope.

With the summer upon me, there was little else that I could do because many of the participants were either pursuing other interests or on vacation, thus making communications inconsistent at best. The rest of my work had to be accomplished either just before the High Holy Days or soon after.

In Preparation For The Event

My first task in August was to plan my publicity strategy. The previous year's publicity provided me with a firm base to build on, so I arranged a series of interviews with the local newspapers and staggered the desired dates hoping the newspapers would run the articles. My first feature article appeared on Sunday, September 8 in the Entertainment Section of the Milwaukee Journal. I chose to start my publicity campaign before the High Holy Days so the community would become sensitized along with the obligatory coverage of the Holy Days in the media. I felt that if the initial article was to be released after the Holy Days, the non-Jewish community would look upon the program as an afterthought to the Holy Days. The real reason for having the Festival in early November was due to the academic schedules of the hazzanim and composers, not to mention the possibly severe weather the area experiences, often times up to Passover. While the feature articles were being written and released, our Music Committee worked with the university to produce a press release. This press release was sent to all forms of the media along with a note calling a press conference the day of the concert (Tuesday, November 5, 1985). A follow-up reminder of the press conference was sent to the news media ten days prior to the conference date.

Finding instrumentalists and vocalists to present the works proved to be easier than I thought. For special occasions our congregation employs a vocal octet. They were contracted for the Festival several months prior to the concert. Professor Paul Kramer (oboist) of UW-M is also a member of our Music Committee. He proved quite helpful in securing the instrumentalists necessary to present the pieces.

Cooperation on the part of the university included printing part of the program, printing of the tickets, and the recording of the concert. While the university printed the program, our congregation printed the participants' biographies and text translations. When I arrived at the synagogue I was met by a corps of Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Music Committee members, as well as university students who were ready to help. It was a thrill to see the thirty or so people working together with the precision of veterans.

Participants Agenda

As in the 1984 Forum, the 1985 Festival agenda was a very busy one for all involved. Members of our congregation, once again, provided the backbone of hospitality for the hazzanim and composers. Unlike the 1984 Forum, I felt it was more efficient for a centralization of transportation for the participants living out

of Milwaukee. As a result, I personally arranged for the purchase and distribution of airline tickets for the 1985 Festival participants. By doing this, I was able to closely monitor my expenses, while keeping the travel itineraries at my fingertips at all times. Copies of these travel itineraries were forwarded to the host families allowing them to plan their individual agendas more accurately. I was also able to plan our work schedule and meeting agenda more efficiently since the economization of time was tantamount to the success of the Festival.

Sunday, November 3 was the first day of rehearsals. Although each composer conducted their own pieces and each collaborating hazzan sang the solo sections, Professor Yannay and I had to understudy each piece to insure the premiere of every work on November 5.

It was indeed very fortunate that every piece was arranged differently, from hazzan and organ, hazzan and string quintet, to a cappella quartet (one composer's hazzan could not work for personal reasons so he simply wrote a piece with no solo section at all). The various ensemble arrangements allowed me to schedule the rehearsal of all the groups simultaneously. Our synagogue was able to accommodate all activities very comfortably and with absolutely no complications.

At the conclusion of the rehearsal the participants moved to the Community Hall for a dinner reception.

Tuesday's noon press conference went rather smoothly and at its conclusion, I distributed the proceedings of the 1984 Forum which contained the lectures of Professor Max Wohlberg, Professor Bonia Shur, and Dr. Gerard McKenna, with remarks by Professor Yannay, myself, and an introduction by Rabbi Francis Barry Silberg of our congregation.

After giving the participants a few moments to review the proceedings, I opened the floor for any discussion concerning the year's work and its completion. The participants had the remainder of the afternoon to relax and prepare for the evening's concert.

The concert began at exactly 8:00 p.m. when Rabbi Silberg welcomed approximately five hundred fifty people in the audience. He then introduced the first piece, *Mah Tov* by Bonia Shur for choir, piano, and solo voice. I was the soloist for this piece. Next came, Psalm 93 by Shulamit Ran (University of Chicago) for piccolo, clarinet, oboe, horn and solo voice (Hazzan Abraham Lubin), *Mi Chamocha* by Robert Appellebaum (Niles Township High School) piano, choir, solo voice (Hazzan Shlomo Shuster). *Hashkiveinu* by Edwin

London (Cleveland State University) for string quintet and solo voice (Hazzan Norton Siegel), *V'shamru* by Daniel Asia (Oberlin College) for string quintet, woodwinds, horn, harp, choir and solo voice (Hazzan Jack Chomsky), *M'ein Sheva* by Alex Lubet (University of Minnesota) for optional drone (strings and harp) and solo voice (Hazzan Barry Abelson), *Torat Adonai* by Paul Schoenfield (University of Minnesota) for a cappella choir, *Ki Lekach Tov* by M. William Karlins (Northwestern University) for organ and solo voice (myself), and *Yigdal* by Yehuda Yannay (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) for choir, organ, and solo voice (myself).

Epilogue

The American Jewish Composer Forum/Festival was unmistakably a learning experience. Many of the organizational procedures were gleaned from other programs. However, when these procedures were applied to this totally new focus, the results were quite different. For instance, coordinating one conductor and ensemble can be a big responsibility, but I was faced with the task of coordinating nine different conductors through ten different arrangements in two two-hour rehearsals. When one is the primary architect of an original activity, one becomes a slave to one's own creativity thus complicating the concept of delegation. Therefore, it is my opinion that anyone would be ill advised to coordinate such a project and attempt to take a role as a performer. While it is true that I understudied each solo section, I did so under the assumption that I would be pressed into performance only under the most adverse of conditions. Unfortunately two hazzanim had to leave the project for personal reasons and I found myself in the dubious position of having to perform three pieces. This provided the (only temporarily intolerable) tension during the entire Forum/Festival.

I must acknowledge the presence of Professor Max Wohlberg, who advised Professor Edwin London in his setting of the Hashkiveinu and was my inspiration for attempting this project. His life has been dedicated to the perpetuation of Hazzanut and he, along with my friend and mentor Hazzan Shlomo Shuster, have been my models in the cantorate. I would also be amiss if I didn't thank my beloved wife Heidi. I am indeed fortunate to have had her support through the project.

At the suggestion of the hazzanim and composers, Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun will become the center of an association of new American Jewish composers. Its members (comprised of the participants of the Forum/Festival)

will inform me of their activities concerning the creation of new Jewish music and I will disseminate the information throughout the association in the form of a newsletter.

This experience revealed a multitude of Jewish composers who would be willing to explore the realm of sacred music if they were asked. I would encourage every hazzan to seek out and commission a “new” Jewish composer in order to enlighten our congregants, broaden our own scope, and enrich our treasured sacred texts.

SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES ON A STUDY OF THE JEWISH CHORAL MOVEMENT

JOSHUA R. JACOBSON

At the end of the nineteenth century the European Jewish community was divided into several factions. For some Jews, life would continue exactly as it had for countless centuries. They had no use for the secular world; the spiritual realm guided their every move. For others, a more liberal attitude on the part of civil authorities signalled an opportunity for them to end their age-old isolation. While the assimilation&s attempted to abandon as much of the Jewish way of life as was possible, others attempted to adapt Jewish practices to modern times. Inspired by the dreams and efforts of such men as Theodore Herzl and Eliezer Ben-Yehudah, Jews began to assert their identity in national as well as religious terms, and to reestablish their connection with the ancient homeland and its language. Seeking new modes of expression, Jews began to experiment with new forms of cultural nationalism.

In 1899 a Polish attorney, N. Shapiro, petitioned the governor of Lodz for permission to establish a Jewish choral organization. Anticipating the hostile reaction with which governmental officials greeted any gathering that smacked of political sedition, Shapiro asserted that his organization would serve patriotic aims by keeping the young people of Lodz away from the revolutionary and anti-government assemblies that were poisoning their minds. He ended his petition with the words, "Let these young kids amuse themselves with choral singing, then there will be none of that revolutionary foolishness on their minds."¹ Not only did the governor grant the petition, he instructed the police not to interfere with the choir's rehearsals or to interrupt them in any way from their patriotic work.

A certain Mr. Hartenstein was appointed the choir's conductor, but after a few rehearsals it became apparent that someone with more professional expertise would be needed. It was at this point that the 18-year old Joseph Rumshinsky was engaged to become the first permanent conductor of the chorus. Rumshinsky later recalled of that first rehearsal in his autobiography, "When we stood up and started to sing, a holy musical fire was kindled by the first Jewish choral ensemble in the world."²

Joshua R. Jacobson is the founder and director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston. He holds a B.M. from the New England Conservatory and a D.M.A. from the University of Cincinnati

But all was not smooth sailing for the fledgling chorus; hostility was encountered on many fronts. The Zionist activists couldn't understand the purpose of choral singing as a form of nationalistic expression. The assimilated Jews derided the "Zhidn" who wanted to waste time singing their "Mah Yufis" (a derogatory term for Jewish songs). And the Chassidim were outraged that young men and women would be meeting together in the same room.

But after the first concert, the opposition seemed to melt away. Here is how Rumshinsky described that event in his autobiography.

About a year had passed by. Although the rehearsals were going well, people were still making fun of the chorus. At that time we decided two things: first of all to name our chorus "Hazomir," and secondly to give a concert in a major concert hall. After the concert was announced, within three days the tickets were sold out, eagerly snatched up by those Zionists and assimilationists who were ready to come and laugh at us.

I will never forget the feelings we had coming into the concert. We knew that this was the Day of Judgement for the Lodz Hazomir, and that our judges would be unforgiving beyond pity. I felt like a general just before leading his soldiers into battle.

After we sang our first number, "Al Mishmar Hayarden," the hall was silent. We were surprised and frightened. What was going on? Could it have been such a flop that no one would applaud? When I turned around to face the audience I saw an unbelievable sight: hundreds of people sitting as if mystified, jaws hanging down and glassy-eyed as if, G-d forbid, they were paralyzed. After what seemed like an eternity the audience awakened from its lethargy and thunderous applause broke out. There were cries of "bravo!" and "encore!" We had to repeat the opening song three times. Then with each succeeding number the enthusiasm grew and grew. At the conclusion of the concert hundreds of young people, including the assimilationists, the Chassidim and Zionists, became one great crowd and danced in front of the theatre. The victory had come. Jewish society now began to respect Hazomir and regard it as a serious factor in Jewish cultural life.³

Hazomir soon had branches in major cities of Russia and Poland. The flame even spread to the West. As Zari Gottfried points out in his article, "Yiddish Folk Choruses in America,"

The Jewish people were not alone among the many ethnic groups making their home in these United States to transplant their native culture to a new

soil. As part of their living cultural heritage the Scandinavian and Central European immigrants established choral societies in all major metropolitan centers. But while [these] immigrants were able to draw on well-established sources and traditions, the Jewish immigrants could claim no such sources or patterns. They were thirsting for all sorts of cultural expression [often] denied them in the countries of their origin. Despite the pangs of adjustment to the new land, the new immigrants in search of fulfilling their cultural drives began to organize amateur theatrical and musical groups and other media of cultural expression.⁴

In 1914 the first Jewish choirs in the United States were founded, the Chicago Jewish Folk Chorus, directed by Jacob Schaefer, and the Paterson (New Jersey) Jewish Folk Chorus, directed by Jacob Beigel. As immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe increased, Yiddish choruses began to appear all across the United States. Among them were the Boston Jewish Folk Chorus (1924) directed by Misha Celkin, The New Haven Jewish Folk Chorus, the Philadelphia Jewish Folk Chorus (1923) and the Detroit Jewish Folk Chorus (1924), both directed by Harvey Schreibman, The Los Angeles Jewish Folk Chorus directed by Arthur Atkins, The American-Jewish Choral Society of Los Angeles directed by Miriam Brada, the New York 92nd St. Y Choral Society (1917) directed by A. W. Binder, the New York Workmen's Circle Choir (1925) directed by Lazar Weiner, The New York Jewish Philharmonic Chorus directed by Max Helfman, the Miami Jewish Folk Chorus (1943) directed by Bernard Briskin, The Newark Jewish Folk Chorus (1928) directed by Samuel Goldman, and The San Francisco Jewish Folk Chorus (1933) directed by Zari Gottfried.

In 1921 Jacob Beigel called a conference of Jewish singing societies for the purpose of establishing a central organization. Meeting at the YMHA in Paterson, New Jersey on May 29 and 30, the conference passed the following resolutions:

1. To create a federation named "The United Jewish Choral Societies of America and Canada."
2. To improve existing choral societies and establish new ones.
3. To publish choral compositions in Yiddish, Hebrew and English with Jewish textual content.

The list of elected officers was a veritable Who's Who of Jewish music: Jacob Beigel was President, Leo Low and A. W. Binder Vice-Presidents, Cantor Yosseleh Rosenblatt Treasurer, and Solomon Golub Secretary.

Alas, the United Jewish Choral Societies had a brief history, dissolving after but three years of existence. But in its final days it organized the largest Jewish Chorus ever seen in America. On April 15, 1923 a concert was given at the Hippodrome in New York City featuring nine singing societies, totalling over six hundred singers!

With the slackening of immigration and the assimilation of most Jews into the cultural fabric of American life, one by one the Yiddish Folk Choruses began to die out. By the late 1950s only one such organization remained, the Workmen's Circle Chorus of New York.

But in 1960 a new chapter in the history of the Jewish choral movement began with the founding of the Zamir Chorale in New York City. Under the direction of Stanley Sperber, this choir grew from a modest group of folksingers who had met at a Jewish summer camp to an impressive, disciplined ensemble of over one hundred voices. To a new generation of Americans growing up in the 1960s, searching for their roots and finding pride in the image of the new state of Israel, the Jewish chorus provided an attractive outlet for their cultural, social and religious sentiments.

Today the movement is once again fully alive. Through the medium of the choral art, men and women in cities from Boston to Los Angeles are proudly raising a cultural banner for the Jewish people.

NOTES

1Joseph Rumshinsky, *Klangen Fun Main Leben*, New York, 1944, P. 187. In all of the citations I have taken the liberty to paraphrase the authors. Translations are my own.

2Rumshinsky, p. 189.

3Rumshiosky, pp. 193-195.

4Zari Gottfried, "Yiddish Folk Choruses in America" in Mordecai Yardeini, ed., *Fifty Years Of Yiddish Song in America*, New York, 1964, p. 49.

MUSIC REVIEW

VELVEL PASTERNAK

ANTHOLOGY OF HASSIDIC MUSIC by Chemjo Vinaver, edited by Dr. Eliyahu Schleifer, 1985, The Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

After a delay of several years this publication has come off press. It is a handsome volume of 475 pages with large, easy to read music graphics, Hebrew typography and English texts. Annotations, introductory remarks and translations are given both in Hebrew and English. Little money seems to have been spared in the publication of this volume.

Chemjo Vinaver 1895-1973 was a grandson of the Hassidic Rebbe, Isaac of Worka. A thoroughly trained musician, Vinaver founded the male choir Hanigun in Berlin. After emigrating to the United States in 1938 he established the Vinaver Choir, a mixed chorus which performed regularly from 1939-1950. His Anthology of *Jewish Music was* published in 1955. In 1970 he completed the first draft of the Hassidic Anthology but declining health forced him to discontinue work on it. He passed away in Jerusalem in 1973.

In 1978 Dr. Schleifer was given the task of editing a file that was part of the Chemjo Vinaver Archives at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. When he had gathered all the material he was able to reconstruct a draft which amounted to more than 100 compositions, all related to Hassidic music. This material together with the roughly sketched annotations by Vinaver form the core of the *Hassidic Anthology*.

The Anthology is divided into four major categories: A. Sacred Songs (nusach) B. Z'mirot and Nigunim C. Hassidic Cantorial compositions D. Choral compositions on Hassidic motives.

Velvel Pasternak is a noted scholar of Hasidic music. The publisher of Tara Publications, he authored arranged and produced dozens of books, song collections and recordings of Jewish music.

In his introductory remarks Dr. Schleifer is careful to note that this Anthology “will not give you a complete picture of Hassidic music. It lacks the darker sides of Hassidic music such as its ‘Napoleon Marches’ and cheap dance tunes, especially of later generations. To recreate a complete picture of Hassidic music, you have to supplement these from other sources.” It is perhaps this statement which best points out the major criticism of this volume. Had this publication been titled *Selections of Hassidic Music* by Chemjo Vinaver little fault could be found in one musician’s likes or dislikes in the repertoire of Hassidic music. The dictionary meaning of the word anthology is a “representative” collection. While it is true that many Hassidic melodies are musically trite and often pedestrian it is quite incomprehensible to come upon a volume titled *Hassidic Anthology* and discover that such large Hassidic dynasties as Bobov, Ger, Satmar and Vishnitz are not represented by a single tune. *Modzitz* which Vinaver himself proclaimed to have sublime melodies albeit mixed with tunes that resemble street ditties is afforded one nignun. Habad seems to be favored with the inclusion of four melodies. The title *Hassidic Anthology* therefore is a misnomer and the collection does not contain a representation of mainstream Hassidic nigunim. This writer was hard pressed to discover more than a half dozen recognizable melodies.

The first section of this volume comprising 69 pages is devoted to the nusach of the Karlin Hassidim. Written in great detail with literally hundreds of unbeamed 32nd notes (which sometimes can be visually hazardous), this section could be fascinating to the musicologist interested in the davening patterns of one Hassidic group. It is quite difficult, however, to understand the purpose of making this the opening section of the Anthology. Perhaps functionality and practical use would have been better served had an audio tape performed by an expert *Baal T'fila* of Karlin been included and only the skeletal outlines of the nusach been given in an appendix section of the volume.

With regard to the non-texted aspects of the nigunim Dr. Schleifer informs us that even though Hassidic syllables such as ya ba barn, oi yoi yoi and the like are no more than nonsense syllables without any semantic meaning, Vinaver treated these syllables as if they were a meaningful text. How Vinaver arrived at this notion is not explained. “He believed that in Hassidic nigunim every musical motive has a syllable or group of syllables which fit it, and that one must sing the nignun with these syllables.” Documentation to support this idea is not given. Dr. Schleifer in his introduction admits that there are problems with this notion but goes on to state that “in spite of these reservations, one would do well to treat Vinaver’s transcription and performance suggestions seriously; for they derive from the mind and heart of an excellent musician who knew the world of the

Hassidic niggun inside out.” This writer, having been involved with Hassidim in the recording of twelve phonograph discs knows this to be an extreme and unwarranted position and one that can do nothing more than make the singing of this very natural folk material into a static body of music. Syllables were created by Hassidim as a functional vehicle with which to carry a melody along. According to the Hassidic masters words are finite and not enough to express complete emotion. In essence one should sing melody alone unencumbered by words. Songs without words but full of religious ecstasy, were created on the premise that a song without words is much better than one with words. “Melody is the outpouring of the soul”, said the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, “words interrupt the stream of emotions. For the songs of the souls, at the time they are swaying in the high regions to drink from the well of the Almighty King, consist of tones dismantled of words.” A melody with text, according to him, is limited in time, for with the conclusion of the words the melody, too comes to an end. But a tune without words can be repeated endlessly. A Hassidic singer then was given the liberty to vocalize as he felt the mood of the music itself. It was common practice for various Hassidic groups to accept a specific body of vocalized syllables such as: yadi dada bim barn, nana nana, tidi ya ya, etc. Ger, Bobov, Modzitz, Lubavitch and others each employed different syllables and these varying vocalized sounds became a hallmark of their particular group. To suggest to any of them that Hassidic melodies be sung with exact syllables such as Vinaver dictates is to suggest the unthinkable.

The last two sections of the volume comprising 170 pages are devoted to twelve compositions both cantorial and choral based on Hassidic motives. One must wonder, after studying this section, whether these were included merely as a filler in order to expand the volume. A Nisi Belzer SATB setting of Ato V'chartonu runs a full 37 pages. With due respect to Nisi Belzer one must ask why it was included in a Hassidic Anthology. In addition, given the state of Jewish choral music worldwide, it makes it highly unlikely that these SATB arrangement of music based on Hassidic motives will be used with any great frequency. Certainly they will not find a place within the Orthodox synagogue where mixed choruses are not to be found. Even within the Conservative movement SATB choruses do not proliferate. From the practical rather than the artistic point of view could there not have been more material included in these 170 pages that would be used with much more regularity. One must also ask the basic question whether or not one can obtain a true feeling of Hassidic music from a mixed chorus arrangement. In 1970, in the presence of dozens of Jewish musicians in Jerusalem, Mr. Vinaver stated, most emphatically, that this music “must not be

arranged. It must be left raw in its original Hassidic state.” 170 pages of SATB music certainly cannot seem “raw” by any standards.

With so little being done in the field of Jewish music publishing, one would hate to see any work become a mere curio on some library shelf. If this anthology was more broad based it could be used by lay people as well as the professional musicians interested in Jewish music. One cannot fault Dr. Schleifer for a laborious task carried to fruition in a handsomely designed volume. One must fault Mr. Vinaver, however, for leaving us his legacy of Hassidic music which, unfortunately, will be meaningful to only a very few.



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ANTHOLOGY

OF HASSIDIC MUSIC

אנתולוגיה

של מוסיקה חסידית

By Chemjo Vinaver
Edited by Dr. Eliyahu Schleifer

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