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# THE JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

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A. Abraham Idelsohn. *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Holt, 1932), 244.

B. Samuel Rosenbaum. "Congregational Singing," *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Convention* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary), February 22, 1949: 9-11.

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# The Journal of Synagogue Music

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### The Issue of Congregational Singing: a Question of Proportion

Communal song is nothing new to Jewish worship. At the shores of Yam Suf, Israel celebrated its deliverance in an emotional outpouring of song – the first time an entire people had sung unto God since the world’s creation, according to the Midrash.<sup>1</sup> And it was far from the last time. Throughout the Biblical, Classical and Exilic eras, whether in Baghdad or Berlin, Vienna or Vilna, Jews voiced their prayers to God through song.

They were led by a hazzan – because it is easier to lead a group than to sway the behavior of individuals. Their singing was sometimes in unison and sometimes in the form of call and response with the leader. But to characterize our people’s habitual participation in worship as anything other than congregational singing is to misconstrue its underlying dynamic: a hazzan cues the worshipers through song and is cued by their singing in turn.<sup>2</sup>

This characteristic back-and-forth may have been shunted aside in Eastern Europe by the musical subtlety of virtuoso hazzanic and choral singing, both of which reached their zenith during the late-nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> It may also have been supplanted in America by responsive readings in English throughout the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Yet, we have evidence of its persistence despite all odds. A medieval rabbinic responsum of *Warnings to Hazzanim*<sup>5</sup> cautions against “the undue proliferation of melodies, lest even a single worshiper seize upon *the general singing* as a pretext for conversing.” As the

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus Raba 15:1.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Heilman. *Synagogue Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 87-88.

<sup>3</sup> Sholom Kalib. *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 87, 174.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Idelsohn. *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Holt, 1932), 294; referring to the *Union Prayer Book* of 1894, whose bilingual-but-mostly-English format would be imitated, to greater or lesser degrees, by prayer books of every other national religious movement over the next hundred years.

<sup>5</sup> “Azharot le-Hazzanim” (MS in Strashun Library, Vilna), reprinted in *Die Shul Un Die Chazzonim Velt* (Warsaw: December, 1937: 1-3), cited in Akiva Zimmermann, *Sha’arei Ron* (Tel Aviv: self-published, 1992), 225.

twentieth century progressed, American Conservative cantors realized that prayers had to revolve around the congregation even when the prayer was sung solo, as a hazzanic recitative. Accordingly, the more progressive minded among them “would involve worshipers at the beginning, in a congregational melody, then develop the recitative; and end by bringing the congregation in to the conclusion of the prayer.”<sup>6</sup> At century’s end, an American Reform rabbi waxed nostalgic over the old-time cantors who “broke open the heart of the people ... by bringing the congregation into participation by a beloved and familiar melody.”<sup>7</sup>

Congregational singing in contemporary synagogues may actually be more restrained than its Middle Eastern and Eastern European antecedents in which individuals followed their own temperamental proclivities.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, this wild but wondrous expression of Jewish religiosity can still be heard – inter alia – as accompaniment to the waving of Lulav and Etrog during Hallel recitation and as reinforcement of the priestly *Duchan’n* (public blessing of the people from the synagogue Bimah) on Festivals, as musical “sighs” ushering in the conclusion of every High Holy Day blessing, as mood setters for the Kabbalat Shabbat and Havdalah services and as ululating counterpoint to the frenzied dancing that erupts when a bride is veiled just before the wedding ceremony.

What underscores all of these ritual moments is their rarity. Were the Lulav waved every Shabbat, its pointing in all directions including heaven and earth would no longer seem magical, and the tune that worshipers sang to accompany each of its movements would lose much of its mystery. Just so, if we assign too much communal song to the assemblage the service becomes a sing-along, and if worshipers have too little to do they quickly lose interest.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Julius Blackman. “The Hazzan – as Seen from a Seat in the Congregation,” *Journal of Synagogue Music* (July/December 1993; recounting a conversation with Hazzan Charles Sudock of New Haven, CT in the mid-1950s), 38-39.

<sup>7</sup>Herbert Bronstein. “The Elu V’Elu (both/and) of Synagogue Music,” *CCAR Journal*, Summer 1998: 78.

<sup>8</sup>Abraham Idelsohn. *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies: The Synagogue Songs of the Eastern European Jews*, Vol. XVIII (Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1932), vi.

<sup>9</sup>Virgil Funk. “Building a Relationship with God, while Enabling the Congregation to Pray through Music.” Academic Conference Commemorating the School of Sacred Music’s Fiftieth Anniversary New York: Hebrew Union College), November 24, 1998.



It's a question of how we delegate the singing. Responsive chanting, with the hazzan initiating and the congregation concluding every verse, might be one way to maintain the fragile balance between solo performance and group participation — at least part of the time.

In this sense, piyyutim — poetic additions to the liturgy — can be considered the aggadic portion of tefillah, and matbei'a — “coined;” i.e., statutory prayers — its halachic portion. Just as the rabbis looked down upon the Talmud's aggadic component for centuries while the masses were drawn to it, they habitually frowned upon linguistically imaginative prayers, the ones that people specifically craved. Not all piyyutim met with rabbinic disapproval. Certain of them gained universal favor because their short, pithy phrases presented opportunities for a chanted call and response between prayer leader and worshipers. The hazzan's call was typically broad and evocative in order to fire people's imaginations, so that their replies could be concise, to the point, and easy to remember. The Mishnah states this formula succinctly: *sho'eil k'inyan umeishiv kahalachah* (“pose the question according to subject; and give the answer according to rule”).<sup>10</sup> Goldfarb's responsive melody for Elazar ha-Kallir's *L'Eil Oreich Din* (“To God Who Judges;” High Holy Day Shacharit Amidah) offers a parade example, with congregation always responding to the same musical motif.<sup>11</sup>

The twenty-four symposium entries in this issue will shed more light on the matter, from various angles. The discussion opens with a reprint of former CA Executive Vice President Samuel Rosenbaum's statement of the case for congregational singing back in 1949, at the organization's Second Annual Convention.<sup>12</sup> In that brief talk he visited almost all of the arguments — pro and con — that still surround this vital issue over a half-century later.

Rosenbaum countered his contemporaries' prophecies of doom and gloom (“encouraging too much congregational singing may hurt eventually the status of the hazzan”<sup>13</sup>) with an insight that was amazingly prescient.

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<sup>10</sup> Pirke Avot, 5:9.

<sup>11</sup> Israel & Samuel Goldfarb. *Synagogue Melodies for the High Holy Days* (Brooklyn, NY: self-published, 1955), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Rosenbaum. “Congregational Singing.” *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Convention* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary), February 22, 1949: 9-11.

<sup>13</sup> Ephraim Rosenberg. “The Orthodox Approach to Hazzanut.” *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Convention* (1962: 10).

If the cantorate is to remain a vital force in the synagogue it must utilize another means of participation [than the hazzanic recitative] for the vast majority of our worshipers. Congregational singing is such a device...It automatically changes the function of the cantor from that of an occasional luxury to a daily religious necessity.

The fact is that every generation re-creates synagogue song in its own image, and Sam Rosenbaum was ahead of his generation in acknowledging that reality. His idea for an informal study group whose curriculum would include congregational singing is realized in the final entry of our Symposium on Congregational Singing: Beth Weiner's chronicle of a Chavurat Zemer that she initiated in Baltimore's Beth Am and continued in Jerusalem's Mevakeshei Derech. The intervening Symposium articles fall under four headings: Theoretical; Denominational; Observational; and Practical.

**Theoretical articles** – in addition to Sam Rosenbaum's — include a Talmud-based discussion of the liturgy's responsive forms by Max Wohlberg who taught two generations of cantorial students at JTS, an historical overview of congregational song in German synagogues by Geoffrey Goldberg, a summary of rabbinic responsa on the subject by Akiva Zimmermann, an essay on the meaning of "agency" in prayer by Benjie Ellen Schiller and a musicological analysis of congregational song's modal underpinning by Boaz Tarsi.

**Denominational articles** show how congregational singing varies among the different movements, in reports by Sam Weiss (on Chasidism), Judah Leon Magnes (on Orthodoxy), Joseph A. Levine (on the Western Sephardic rite), Neil Schwartz (on Conservatism and the influence of its Ramah summer camps), Morton Gold (an informed reaction to the Reconstructionist approach) and Benjamin Maissner (on how he revolutionized a Classical Reform rite).

**Observational articles** present five consumer views of congregational singing from widely disparate perspectives: Herbert Bronstein (a Reform rabbi who chaired the CCAR liturgy Committee); Ken Richmond (a recent JTS Miller School graduate); Philip Lachman (a layman active in the London Jewish community); Richard Berlin (Associate Editor of the Journal, who has garnered opinions from Hazzanet, the Cantors Assembly's internet server); and Yossi Zucker (a music publisher living in the Israeli city of Kfar Sava).

**Practical articles** offer six producers of congregational singing material who discuss not only how they've planted it in formerly barren areas and broadened its scope where it did exist, but in one case, created it from scratch. Solomon Mendelson spent a good part of his cantorial career raising funds to

commission it, while Michael Isaacson and Charles Davidson stood foremost among composers who received such commissions. Hazzan / Educational Director Jeffrey Myers quantifies and qualifies it in pedagogical terms, while Mark Biddleman adopts an accompanied form of it to usage in Conservative synagogues that do not permit the use of instruments on Shabbat. Iris Beth Weiner shows how Sam Rosenbaum's theoretical call for involving worshipers in the liturgy through an informal singing group can work in practice.

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A new section debuts with this issue: **Literary Glimpses of the Cantorate**. Sometimes verbal, at other times graphic, published references to the cantorial art in Jewish culture are always fleeting. This is true of Abraham Reisen's story, *The Man Who Destroyed the Temple*, which touches upon congregational singing in the heartland of early twentieth-century America.

Our **Reviews** section also adheres to the theme of this special issue. Robert Scherr evaluates the latest edition of *Zamru Lo*, formally introducing a new generation of congregational melodies for Shabbat (edited by Jeffrey Shiovitz, Cantors Assembly, 2004). Gershon Freidlin posits a reason of his own for the surrealistic portrait of contemporary synagogue practice painted by my *Rise and Be Seated: the Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship* (Jason Aronson, 2001). Laurence Loeb compares two recently released CDs that present the traditional sacred musical repertoire of British Jewry during its nineteenth-century heyday, harmonized and performed by hazzan and four-part male choir in the Spanish/Portuguese and Western Ashkenazic rites. The recordings of a Hungarian-born hazzan – Charles Lowy – who survived Auschwitz and emigrated to Glasgow in 1947, were considered lost after his death, until rediscovered by his children. Our late colleague Abraham Salkov reacts to the CD and memoir that Cantor Lowy's son and daughter produced in their father's memory, and Gershon Freidlin questions whether a newly released film documentary on the life and work of the CA's immediate past president, Jacob Ben-Zion Mendelson, might better be titled "The Last Hurrah."

Under **Music—Old and New** we publish congregationally oriented settings for Shabbat, Festivals and High Holidays, plus selections from an unfinished work and a celebration benediction for cantor and congregation. Abba Weisgal's chant for the second verse of *Y'did Nefesh* will nicely offset either of the congregational melodies on pages 10 and 12 of the new *Zamru Lo*, and Sholom Kalib's *Sim Shalom* reflects the composer's refined musical sensibility. A Mozartean *Adir Adireinu* for Festival Musaf Kedushah is attributed to Ahron Gruenzweig, cantor in the Reform temple of Arad,

Hungary (now Western Rumania) late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while an unattributed though equally rhythmic *VeKareiv Pezureinu* was recorded by Cantor Mordechai Hershman in the mid-1930s. Sholom Kalib crafted his High Holy Day *Mechalkeil Chayim* for ultimate singability in the gentle folk style of an earlier age, and the pastoral melody for *Havein Yakir Li* – for congregation with cantorial solo – is adapted from J. Spivak’s setting of Isaiah 52:7. The fresh and uplifting “Baruch Haba” and “Mi Adir” from recently deceased CA member Abraham Salkov’s unfinished *Wedding Service* appear under Life Cycle music along with a participatory *Birkat SheHecheyanu* by our Associate Editor, Richard Berlin.

Regular readers of the Journal will notice additional innovations. The **photograph** of a 1701 London synagogue’s interior accompanies an appreciation of its musical heritage. This issue is **perfect bound**, its spine squared off and imprinted for easy identification on a bookshelf. With the Journal’s return to a guaranteed annual schedule we were emboldened to try and attract a **wider readership base** by reaching out to members of the ACC (American Conference of Cantors) and GTM (Guild of Temple Musicians). Their positive response encouraged our Editorial Board to solicit **advertisements** of materials and services used regularly by our readers. The results appear in the back of this book, just before an outline of the 2006 issue’s theme and contents.

As this expanded Journal went to press, word arrived that Abraham Shapiro, the CA’s long-time Executive Administrator and hazzan of Beth David in Lynbrook, NY, had passed away suddenly. My generation had never known an Assembly without Abe’s radiant smile and unfailingly sound advice. His absence will take some getting used to, as we dedicate the current issue to

this beloved friend, teacher and exceptional kibitzer whose life was defined by his love for his family, by davening for his congregation and by the sensible, honest and extremely patient work he did with us and on behalf of us; which amounted to pastoral work with virtually the entire Assembly at one point or another in all of our lives.<sup>14</sup>

**Abraham B. Shapiro – Avraham Dov-Ber ben Yosef ve-Chinke – 1926-2005**

Joseph A. Levine

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<sup>14</sup> Lilly Kaufman, posting on Hazzanet, August 4, 2005.

# A Symposium: Congregational Singing

## Theoretical Articles

### The Cantor's Musical Needs

*by Samuel Rosenbaum*

Writing in the short lived *Jewish Music Journal* of June 1935, a well known cantor had this to say in the concluding paragraph of an article on "Congregational Singing":

It can be said that congregational singing will never entirely disappear from the Jewish American scene. But as soon as the economic depression has been passed and synagogues again begin hiring professional choirs, congregational singing will revert to its proper status, analogous to that of the English hymns in our Reform Temples.

For better or for worse our colleague's prophecy has not materialized. Almost 15 years have passed since it was made; we have seen the depression give way to recovery and then to war. We are now riding the crest of a fantastic financial boom and still there is no evidence of the demise of this practice. What may have started as a substitute for the professional choirs has grown into a popular practice in its own right. The demand for it has increased constantly.

The use of congregational singing has in turn had a pronounced effect on the form of our worship. The modern service can no longer be the rambling haphazard gossip session of old to be relieved by an occasional cantorial show piece or mumbled prayer. The modern average worshipper has little Jewish education or background. While he is thus retarded Jewishly, his aesthetic values have gone steadily higher. His interest cannot be held over a regular long time period with a weekly diet of vocal acrobatics and improvisation. But it can be held by permitting him to participate on his own level in at least part of the service through the medium of congregational singing.

It seems to me that the members of this Assembly must be willing and able to take a fresh view of our profession and the needs of our congregations. We must face the facts as they really are. Our whole synagogue structure is assuming a new look. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, but certainly we are evolving a new Jewish-American pattern. The synagogue is drawing to it a whole generation of Jews whose parents had almost given them up as lost to the Jewish community and synagogue.

The needs of this generation are therefore entirely different from the needs of their grandfathers. They do not want their cantor to entertain them with vocal histrionics in the synagogue. They can hear all the opera they want in other places. And who will deny that this is all to the good? Their Jewish education and background are meager and they have achieved a worldliness and sophistication that their grandfathers would have considered profane; they, therefore, get little inspiration or pleasure from the form of service that pleased their grandfathers.

We can all remember how the worshippers of years ago, roused to great heights by a particularly moving cantorial recitative, would indicate their appreciation by plunging ahead loudly into the next paragraph while the last notes of the cantor still hung on in the air. Today, we rarely, if ever, hear this appreciative hum of renewed prayer after a recitative. We are usually greeted by a loud and embarrassing silence broken only here and there by the prayer of a bearded oldster. The sad truth is that the great majority of our congregations cannot participate in the service on the oldster's level. They sit in silence impatiently awaiting the sermon.

It seems obvious that if the cantorate is to remain a vital force in the synagogue it must utilize another means of participation for the vast majority of our worshippers.

Congregational singing is such a device. It offers the opportunity to participate musically and in the original Hebrew under the leadership of the cantor. It automatically changes the function of the cantor from that of an occasional luxury to a daily religious necessity; from a star performer to a religious official ministering to the congregation in his chosen field of music. The cantor must become, as has the rabbi, a leader and a teacher. He is the one person in the synagogue picture best fitted by virtue of talent, training and background to select, teach and lead the music of the service.

There are those who will complain that because congregational singing must of necessity be of a simple nature it will bring with it a lowering of the cantor's art. I should remind them that simplicity is not necessarily a synonym for mediocrity. While the great cantorial recitatives of the past centuries are almost forgotten, the *skarhove* (sacred old) motifs remain alive and in use to this day. Certainly their endurance and vitality are eloquent testimony to their greatness. No one will debate the facts that the aforementioned recitatives were works of pure artistry in their time, but the shabby imitations that followed them, like mushrooms the rain, so cheapened this form that even the original gems have lost their lustre.

The cantor need not confine himself to simple nusach (the ongoing modal chant) alone, The recitative has its place, even in the modern synagogue. But it should be chosen and presented with care.

The cantor must be prepared to interpret and emphasize some of the liturgy in the form of soundly constructed, non-repetitive recitatives. He should also be prepared to allow the congregation to participate in the form of congregational singing to the full extent of its abilities.

The service must become a well planned, carefully timed and meaningful period of devotion with the cantor, rabbi and congregation participating to the utmost each in his own way, thus making or it a warm but impressive religious experience. We should remember that the refrain *Lishmoa el harinah v'el hat'fillah* is an exhortation to the Almighty and not to the congregation.

The first step in the introduction of congregational singing is a careful analysis of the structure of the service. This should be done in close conjunction and cooperation with the rabbi. The purpose of the analysis is to determine the overall length of the service; the approximate time to be devoted to the sermon; the selection of appropriate English and Hebrew readings and their placement at such places as will afford the cantor a respite at the most opportune point.

It should then be decided which sections can be adapted to congregational singing permanently (i.e., at all services). These sections should be introduced first.

Using the Sabbath Morning Service as an example, I think that those prayers having to do with the taking out and replacing the torah scrolls can be permanently assigned to the congregation. In addition to these sections the only others which are permanently assigned to the congregation are *Ein Kelohenu*, *Aleinu* and the closing hymn.

Once these permanent fixtures are established the cantor can then introduce as many or as few additional melodies as conditions will permit. These selections need not be permanently assigned to the congregation but can be alternated between them and the cantor at the latter's convenience and discretion. If the cantor will only adopt a standard introductory phrase the congregation will soon learn whether or not it is to sing.

Once a plan has been decided upon the cantor's next task is the choice of the actual melodies. Extreme care should be exercised here. The melodies should be in good taste – non-secular and within the bounds of the nusach. At first, the melodies should be lyric and rhythmic; afterward when the congregation has become accustomed to singing, the cantor can lead them into

more complex intervals and rhythms melodies should be in keeping with the meaning of the text. Above all, let us leave the arias and the folk tunes on the stage where they belong. Musically, the tunes should have a narrow range and be pitched low enough for the congregation to sing easily. As for sources – there are several good volumes available; those of Israel Goldfarb and of our own president, Max Wohlberg being my own particular favorites. A new collection by another esteemed colleague, Gershon Ephros and the late Jacob Beimel is another excellent source. Unless the cantor is particularly talented and especially trained, original compositions should be used only after careful and impartial soul searching.

It is a good idea not to throw out any melodies one finds upon arrival at a new congregation, even though they may not be of the highest quality. They give the cantor something to work with and the outright removal of such sections is likely to meet with a storm of protest from the congregation that may have become fond of these particular selections. After the cantor has added other new compositions and has gained the musical confidence of the congregation, he can begin to replace the undesirables. If a cantor is fortunate enough to find good selections in his congregation's repertoire he should not be too proud to continue to utilize them; gold is where you find it.

The next and perhaps greatest problem is, of course, teaching the melodies. There are several methods, none of which will work for more than 25% of the time. But all of them together help somewhat. The most obvious method is for the cantor to sing the melody – clearly, rhythmically and with no variations week after week. The rabbi can help by announcing a new melody before it is sung, and by urging the congregation to join in. He should, of course, set them a good example by joining in himself.

The learning process can be speeded up by supplying the congregation with mimeographed or printed music together with the transliterated texts. Although relatively few worshippers can read music, it is of some assistance to the few who can do so. When these few have learned the melody they will automatically become the leaders in the congregation and unconsciously help the others to learn.

The cantor can go a step further. He can organize a chorus and/or a study group. The chorus will attract the singers in the congregation who have a little musical ability. This group can add the synagogue melodies to its repertoire and sing them as a group at the service; thus strengthening the leadership of the cantor.



The study group, however, is even more practical. I have found that most people sing a little; but are not anxious to join a group that requires the discipline, rehearsal and time that a chorus does. Some are shy about singing in a choir in public. The study group makes no such requirements of its members. The group meets once a week under the direction of the cantor. The curriculum consists of musical and non-musical subjects. Part of the time is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the service, reading practice or another allied subject. This is alternated with the teaching and singing of the congregational melodies. Since the members are not asked to perform as a group (as in the case of the chorus) the cantor need do a minimum of drilling. He merely acquaints the students with the melodic line. If they so desire, they repeat a selection. If they do not, they go on to another. Some members don't even sing; they just listen. But it all serves a purpose. When these people get into the Temple at a service, each student sitting in his favorite place, each cloaked in the anonymity of the whole crowd and in the obscurity of numbers, they do sing. Since they are already familiar with the selections their contribution is important and helpful.

Of course, if the congregation is blessed with a more extroverted type of membership, *mah na'im u-mah tov*, then by all means, the training of an amateur chorus is indicated and should be encouraged.

Synagogue singing should also be organized on the children's level in the form of Junior Congregations; when the adults can be of no assistance the cantor should not hesitate to turn to the youngsters for help. Lots of the time they learn more quickly and more easily than their elders. If the Temple boasts of a volunteer or professional choir it can be of great assistance, too. The cantor must see to it, however, that they use simple, unison, or at most - two part arrangements of those selections that the congregation is to learn. The worshippers will be discouraged from singing by a choir that attempts to teach with elaborate, four part contrapuntal arrangements. Those cantors who have an organ at their disposal have the best answer to the educational problem, provided the organist observes the same cautions as have been suggested for the choir.

It should be remembered that a congregation can benefit from congregational singing though it have a professional choir, an organ or both. Somehow, group-singing gives a satisfaction to the participants which no finished performance by professionals can match.

One final thought on our proposed congregational songster. The Assembly's music committee should continue to examine all available compositions as well as all new ones, as they come along. If' the compositions meet the standards

set for congregational melodies, the Assembly should immediately publish them and provide copies to all members. The selections could be published on a regular monthly or bi-monthly basis without waiting for a large number to accumulate, in an inexpensive mimeograph or offset form. If these releases will be made in loose-leaf form, each cantor will automatically amass his own volume. At the end of a year or two the selected melodies can be published in more permanent form.

In conclusion may I voice the hope that my suggestions have given you some food for thought and consideration. They are made with the prayer that they will in some small way help raise to the highest, the art and the prestige of our sacred calling. This calling has faltered many times but has been revived each time by forward looking men. Let us be worthy of them.  
*L'chu n'rannenah la-Adonai.*

*Samuel Rosenbaum (1920-1997) was hazzan at Temple Beth El of Rochester, NY from 1946 until 1987. He served the Cantors Assembly as president, and then as executive vice-president for almost forty years. An outstanding poet, he excelled at writing texts for musical works presented on radio and television, and in translating Yiddish folk songs. This article is based on a talk given at the Second Annual Cantors Assembly Convention, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, February 22, 1949.*

# The Responsive Forms in Jewish Liturgy

by Max Wohlberg

In discussing congregational singing we ought to consider that many of our younger congregants belong to the so-called “me” generation. We are not to assume that these congregants are content to sit back and listen. They want to participate in the prayers, and I think we ought to give them every opportunity to do so.

Prayer, as was said by HaRav Kook, is a human need. Prayer is a great compulsion and at the same time a great pleasure that is afforded to us. Originally, prayer was free, unorganized. Joseph Karo writes in *Mechkarim B'Toldot T'fillah*:

In earlier times prayer was not fixed or ordered. If a man felt the need to pray, he prayed. And if not, he didn't pray. And the one who prayed, prayed what he felt in his heart. There was no definite formula whereby he prayed. It appears that this situation continued throughout the existence of the First temple. We have mention in the Book of Daniel that three times a day the prophet knelt down and prayed. What the content of the prayer was, we do not know.

Gradually, prayer was participated in more and more by the public, not so much in Bayit Rishon. But in the Second Temple there were **refrains and responses that the congregation offered**:

*Hoshanah;*

*Aneinu;*

*Ki L'Olam Chasdo;*

*Halleluyah.*

Later came:

*Baruch sheim k'vod malchuto l'olam va'ed;*

*Y'heh sh'meh rabbah m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya;*

*Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed;*

and still later:

*Amein.*

Prayers expanded with establishment of the synagogue itself. I must tell you that the *beit hak'nesset* was not accepted immediately by everybody. We read further.

Many of the people had a feeling of indifference to the synagogue and did not go there to pray. Not only the common folk (*amei ha'arets*) but even many scholars

(*chachamim*) decided that where they studied they should also pray, and not in the *beit hak'nesset*. There were some sages who occasionally did pray in the synagogue, and some who did not. We are told that when Rabbi Akiva prayed with the people (*tsibbur*) he kept his *t'fillah* short. He did not want to burden the congregation. But after praying privately, his disciples would find him on the far side of the room from where he had begun.

So, obviously Akiva prayed either at home or in the *beit hak'nesset*.

As to the origin of the prayers, our greatest authority is Yosef Heinemann and in the volume *HaT'fillah BiT'kufot HaTana'im V'ha-Amora'im*, he shows, I think convincingly, that the the prayers have three sources: the *Beit HaMikdash*; the *Beit Midrash* (house of study); and the *Beit HaK'nesset*. Many of us speak of the *matbei'ah shel t'fillah* ("the coin that the sages minted in prayer") and we hold it holy and inviolable; we cannot change it, we cannot alter it. But we must remember that the *matbei'ah* was not always set as it is today. As a matter of fact, Josef Heinemann points out that the forms of the *t'fillah* were not composed by the great halachists, but were created by the people as they were praying. It was a sort of widespread improvisation, in different places and at different times. Only in a later period did the sages come to establish a fixed order and to decide which prayer formulas to accept from among the various ones that had arisen over time.

Unfortunately, the prayers were not written down. Dr. Moshe Zucker of the Seminary would quote you the page in the Talmud where it says: those who write down the *b'rachot*, it is as if they had burned the Torah. It was an oral tradition, and that had a great many consequences. The *sha"tz* (*sh'li'ach tsibbur*) was one who memorized the *b'rachot* and *t'fillot*, and our profession actually dates back to those days.

When they read the *Sh'ma* in the synagogue, one of the congregation read it out loud. [He didn't approach the pulpit, incidentally, but stood up in his place and read out loud.] He read the *b'rachot* and paragraphs preceding and following the *Sh'ma*, and thereby fulfilled the obligation [of reciting the *Sh'ma*] for those who could not read.

The people knew the *Sh'ma* / *V'hayah Im Shamo'ah* / *VaYomer* paragraphs because they were written in the Torah, but the two *b'rachot* that preceded *Sh'ma* and the one *b'rachah* that followed it [in *Ma'ariv* originally and in *Shacharit* to this day] they did not know.

We come to the *K'dushah* because within the *b'rachot* preceding *Sh'ma* we have the **essential verses with which the congregation responds in any *K'dushah*:**

*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai ts'va'ot, m'lo cho ha'arets k'vodo;*

and

*Baruch k'vod Adonai mimkomo.*

We read in the Talmud that in order to recite aloud any passage that contains the K'dushah we have to have at least ten people. A minyan was necessary, and here we have the origins of the kahal.

I now turn to the subject of music. The Talmud affirms the fact that the requirement for music during prayer was an ancient one, as old as the Bible.

Rabbi Judah said in the name of Samuel: How do we know that the principle of *shirah* (song) during prayer is from the Torah? The Torah commands us: "and he shall serve *b'sheim Adonai* ("in the name of God"); this means song." Rabbi Me'ir said that the song is so important that if there is no music, the *korban* (sacrificial offering) is cancelled.

The music served various purposes. Let me read from what a chasid wrote.

The importance of the song during *t'fillah* did not diminish even after the Temple's destruction. Although the *avodah* (priestly sacrificial rite) was eliminated, the practice of worship through song was not. With the spread of the *mikdash m'at* ("sanctuary in miniature") which the Talmud tells us were the synagogues and houses of study where the *t'fillot* became popular, so too, did the singing. With the *t'fillot*, the melodies were retained as well. Prayers were always recited with a melody that was pleasant. The sages taught: *T'fillah* is only heard in the *bet hak'nesset*, as it is written, *lishmo'ah el harinah vel hat'fillah* ("[May God] hear the song and the prayer"). The Midrash comments: what is the place of *rinah*? *Beit hak'nesset*, for that is where the congregation offers songs and praises in a pleasant voice. The [prayer through] song is led by an appropriate and knowledgeable *sha"tz*. And the Gemara [discussion on this Mishnah] adds: they only delegate a trustworthy individual to pray before the Ark, one who is musical and has a sweet voice. Rashi comments: "a voice that appeals to the heart."

There is one more item that contributed to the popularity of the music in later times and was also a requirement of the Mishnah: *al ta'as t'fillatcha keva* ("don't make your prayer routine"). How does one avoid monotony? I want to read to you again from Tractate B'rachot.

Rabbi Eliezer says, the one who makes his prayer fixed (*keva*), that person's prayer is not accepted. *Keva*, continues the Gemara, defines anyone who cannot add some *chidush*, something new into the service. Rabbi Zira said, this is very interesting. I could add some new ideas that I have, and yet, I'm afraid I'll

get confused [Rashi explains, I'm afraid I'll make a mistake], and won't be able to get back to where I started.

In other words, he was ready to improvise but was afraid he wouldn't be able to find his way back, musically.

To avoid this monotony the author of *Halachot V'Halichut BaChasidut* writes that the t'fillah itself became *davar shel keva*—a fixed thing—because people praying could no longer add anything new. But when the early Chasidim introduced the nigun into t'fillah, ample opportunity opened up for self-renewal, on a daily basis. Every prayer suddenly became different from its neighbor, by means of the nigun to which it was sung.

In addition to increasing in number, however, melodies also had to have some beauty. To document this I would like to turn to the Midrash Shir Hashirim.

The next to last verse in Shir Hashirim—*Hayoshevet baganim chaveirim makshivim l'koleich hashmi'ini*—translates as, “Thou who dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it.” The Midrash says: when Jews enter the synagogue and recite the Sh'ma in concerted union—with one voice, with one tune—the Holy One Blessed Be he answers them with this verse, “*Hayoshevet baganim...* I and My angels (companions) hearken to your voice.” But when Israel recites the Sh'ma heterophonically—with some individuals surging ahead and some lagging behind without kavvanah (intense devotion)—then the Holy Spirit screams at them and says, *B'rach Dodi* (“get lost, my friend”) *ud'meh l'cha litsvi* (“and liken yourself to the *tsava shel ma'alah*, the heavenly choir, who give honor to Me in one voice, with one sweet sound”).

The **diverse forms of responsive congregational singing** are:

- 1) **Textual and melodic repetition**—by the congregation—of the cantor's words and the cantor's tune—*ashamnu (ashamnu), chatati (chatati)*.
- 2) **Melody repeats—text changes** in succeeding verses—*ashrei yoshvei veitecha...* (*ashrei ha'am shekacha lo...*).
- 3) **Refrain recurs after every verse**—*Hodu l'Adonei Ha'Adonim (Ki L'Olam Chasdo)...**Hodu l'Eilohei HaShamayim (Ki L'Olam Chasdo)*.
- 4) **Cantor's “question”...congregation's “answer”...**in every changing verse—*Yigdal Elohim chai v'yishtabach, nimtsa v'ein eit el m'tsi'uto; (echad v'ein tachid k'yichdo, ne'elam v'gam ein sof l'achduto)*.

The Sephardim are much more ambitious than we are in congregational singing. They use this interplay between hazzan and kahal much more than

we do. I think we should get accustomed to hearing it and perhaps we can adopt some of this method.

In many of the old siddurim there is Perek Ha'shirah, a section devoted to song, whose origin we do not know. It concludes with two little verses:

*Rabi Eliezer omer, kol ha'oseik b'perek shirah ba'olam hazeh zocheh l'omro ba'olam habah. Amar Rabi, ha'oseik b'perek shirah b'chol yom mei'id ani alav shehu ben olam habah.*

Rabbi Eliezer says: one who occupies himself with creating song in this world earns the right to sing it in the next. Rabi replied: one who occupies himself with song every day attests to the fact that he is worthy of the World to Come.

Let me say that for this purpose *olam habah* is our future. Whether in this world or the next world, I believe that congregational song is a subject that merits our attention. And I believe the future of congregations and of Judaism in this country will be molded and influenced in great measure by what we do with this subject. I know many hazzanim feel that it diminishes their role as a hazzan. Let me assure you that it does not. There is room enough for you to be the sh'li'ach tsibbur and at the same time for the congregation to participate as much as possible and as beautifully as possible.

I know that many of us who were accustomed to singing long recitatives— one for Shahrarit, one for Musaf, etc.—have cut down. I never minded singing less, as long as my paycheck was the same. So you sing less. The hazzan who is loved and is successful is not necessarily the one who has a high C. I have no high C and no A and no B. I know I wouldn't sing an A unless I get a salary increase. One good G is enough. And even that's not what makes a hazzan needed and loved in the modern congregation.

You can sing *Shochein ad marom v'kadosh sh'mo*—with the kahal—and still make it beautiful. You can daven the simplest Kaddish Shaleim *parlando*-style, but with sensitivity. You don't need a tremendous sound. If God blessed you with it, fine. But every little paragraph ending that you sing, sing it beautifully and esthetically and you'll see how effective it can be. Much more effective than shouting *gevalt*, you don't need it. *Chalilah v'chas* that hazzanut should come to the point where the long recitative is altogether eliminated. But even then, I'd still have to support my family, and I love hazzanut. Those who do not love it are not in the profession. We didn't enter it to become millionaires. So, if worse came to worst, we would continue — despite the changed circumstances — in this Conservative movement which we joined because we didn't feel at home in Orthodoxy and we didn't feel at home in the Reform movement.

Here is where we felt at home.

*A native of Homonna, Hungary, Max Wohlberg emigrated to New York City in 1923. There he knew all the great cantors of hazzanut's Golden Age personally, and served as Yiddish recording secretary of the Chazzonim Farband (Jewish Ministers Cantors Association). He became a self-taught authority on the nusach hat'fillah of every region in Europe, and in 1947 co-founded the Cantors Assembly, which he later served as president. In 1952 he co-founded the Cantors Institute and College of Jewish Music at the Jewish Theological Seminary, heading its Department of Nusach from 1950 until his retirement in 1988. He was a prolific composer of recitatives and congregational melodies, and author of a regular column—"Pirkei Hazzanut"—for The Cantor's Voice newsletter from 1951 to 1963. This article is excerpted and edited from a talk he gave at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Cantors Assembly Convention (CA Proceedings, 1980), pages 148-157.*



# An Overview of Congregational Song in the German Synagogue up until the Shoah

by Geoffrey Goldberg

## Introduction

Writing as a musicologist and as a *hazzan* who migrated from his native Eastern Europe to Germany, Abraham Z. Idelsohn pointed out in his *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz* significant differences between the synagogue song of Eastern Europe and that of Germany. The controversial nature of the following first sentence notwithstanding, Idelsohn wrote,

In Eastern Europe the Ashkenazic song received back its oriental elements after they had been almost expunged from it in Germany. On the other hand, the congregational singing in unison and the responsive form greatly deteriorated (Idelsohn 1932:vi).

From this statement, Idelsohn clearly implied that congregational song, in particular responsorial chanting, was a significant feature of the German synagogue. Idelsohn's statement was all-encompassing, making no distinction between the two liturgical and musical rites, *Minhag Ashkenaz* and *Minhag Polin*, into which German Jews were divided. Some years earlier, a similar observation had been made by the Polish cantor, Abraham Baer Birnbaum, who regretted the deterioration of congregational song in the Eastern European synagogue:

In the Middle Ages the liturgical poets competed for the composition of texts for metrical responsorial chanting... The lack of responsive singing, of the active participation of the people during services, causes them to consider the *hazzan* as a concert performer... A reform of synagogue music is absolutely necessary (Birnbaum 1908, Introduction).

The responsorial form was ideally suited for congregational musical participation, however freely we define the term "musical." It had been an integral part of the German synagogue from at least the fifteenth century, if not earlier, as documented in literary sources (Goldberg 1990:204–205). Clearly defined sections of the liturgy were performed in this manner. Among them were: the *pesuke de-zimrah*, especially during the summer months, the chanting of *Tehillim* (Book of Psalms) prior to the start of the *shaharit* service, *Ha-Kol Yodukah* on Sabbaths during the summer, the *Kedushah De-Sidra* of *U-Va Le-Tziyyon*, the *selihot* prayers, some of the Psalms of *Hallel* and, with the introduction of *Kabbalat Shabbat* in the sixteenth century, the Psalms of this liturgy as well (ibid. 208–216). Bravura *hazzanim* like Aaron Beer of Berlin (1738–1821) might have tried to prevent the congregation from joining in

with their melodies and recitatives (Idelsohn 1929/1992:218), but despite such tensions, responsorial chanting between *hazzan* and *kahal* remained a constant element of the German synagogue.

### Ashkenazi Musical Rendition of Piyyutim

The *piyyutim* were a significant repository of many synagogue melodies. The early *piyyutim* were based upon the natural rhythms and syllabic meters of the Hebrew language; the later *piyyutim* were based upon Arabic and other metrical poetic meters. The free rhythms of the former were ideal for singing in simple chant patterns or psalmody; the regular stresses of the later for singing metrical melodies. But what actually developed was highly complex. In his general survey of Hebrew hymn tunes, Avenary stated, “The tunes very often reflect the tastes of a certain period and environment. They are simple and clear-cut when intended for congregational singing, or elaborate and brilliant when executed by the skilled precentor (*hazzan*)” (Avenary 1971:5).

In reality, Avenary’s last sentence is only partially true with respect to the Ashkenazi synagogue in general. The congregation might have joined the *hazzan* in singing various simple *piyyut* melodies, but this is often merely conjecture, and there is little confirmation for this from the various nineteenth-century cantorial compendia. There was no dearth of melodies, especially in Germany, as confirmed by the many tunes notated in Idelsohn’s *Thesaurus* (Idelsohn 1933, nos. 290–360), but for the most part we have no strong evidence that these were sung by the congregation. Some congregational tunes for popular medieval favorites like *Eli Tziyyon* and *An’im Zemiroth* proliferated, but surprisingly few melodies for *Adon Olam*—the twelfth-century laudation that now concludes every worship service—appear in Eastern European collections.

*Piyyutim* commonly sung as plain psalmody or to metrical melodies in Western Europe were often sung in Eastern Europe as an improvisatory cantorial recitative. A good example is *Az Bikshov Anav*, a *piyyut* relating to the death of Moses, recited on Simhat Torah. The author, Moses b. Samuel (12<sup>th</sup> century), eschewed fixed poetic meter as the basis of the poem’s structure, relying solely on the free rhythm of the Hebrew combined with an alphabetic acrostic and strophic rhyme. In Western Europe the text was rendered in psalmody, a musical genre ideally suited to the varying lengths of the lines, since extra syllables in either the antecedent or consequent half of a verse could be rapidly enunciated on reciting tones to achieve a balanced parallelism. With an ambitus of only an octave the congregation could easily have

joined in the chant, with its varying reciting tones and cadential motives. Transcriptions of this melody seem, however, to signify that it was chanted by the *hazzan* alone (Sulzer 1865, OPC Vol. 6, no. 265; **Example 1**).<sup>1</sup>

Example 1. Sulzer's solo version of *Az Bikshov Anav*.

In Frankfurt the *piyyut* was read by the congregation, but it is unclear if this was done in an undertone or chanted out loud (Geiger 1862:359). In more easterly territories, the simple rendition *Az Bikshov Anav* as psalmody was unknown. The recitative provided by the Lithuanian-born but Berlin-trained *hazzan*, Aron Friedmann, for example, is a piece of typical Eastern-European *hazzanut* in *Ahavah Rabbah* mode. By its very character it ruled out any congregational participation (Friedmann 1901, no. 298).

An indication of the contrast between the West European preference for the metrical and basically strophic rendition of *piyyutim* and the East European preference for a though-composed or improvisatory rendition in free or “flowing rhythm” can be seen by comparing the melodies of *Ya’aleh, Omnam Ken, Hinneh Ka-Homer* from Yom Kippur Eve.<sup>2</sup> The melodies found in Abraham Baer’s *Ba’al Tefillah* (representing largely Western Germany and the north-eastern German provinces) and those transcribed in Yehoshua Ne’eman’s *Nosah Lahazzan* (representing the Lithuanian musical tradition) demonstrate this difference.<sup>3</sup> The strophic character of the former invite

<sup>1</sup> Other cantorial compendia also signify solo performance. See Baer 1883, no. 917.

<sup>2</sup> While the text of *Omnam Ken* was only known in *Minhag Polin*, the traditional melody given in Baer and other Western and Central European sources was not known in Lithuania.

<sup>3</sup> Baer 1883, nos. 1306, 1319 (1 *Weise.*), 1321 (1–3 *Weise.*); Ne’eman 1972, nos. 254, 257, 192.

(metered) congregational participation while the improvisatory, free form of the latter invite, at most, individualistic imitations or approximations of the various motivic patterns sung by the cantor.

Some “simple and clear-cut” metrical *piyyut* melodies were only sung by the *hazzan*. It is as though the texts were exceptionally revered and considered too sacred to be recited by the congregation. Among such *piyyutim* were *Aapid Nezer Ayom*, attributed to R. Eleazar ha-Kallir and recited on Rosh Hashanah, and *Ha-Adderet Ve-Ha-Emunah*, recited on Yom Kippur. Salomon Geiger, in his work on Frankfurt liturgical-musical practices, referred to *Aapid Nezer Ayom* as “the great *piyyut*” and specifically mentioned that it was arranged for recitation by the *hazzan* alone (Geiger 1862:160).<sup>4</sup> The second *piyyut*, *Ha-Adderet Ve-Ha-Emunah*, was highly mystical in content and its text goes back (with some variations) to *Hekhalot Rabbati*, a mystical work of the sixth century (Baer 1883, no. 1404; Ogutsch 1930, no. 262). Rabbi Jacob Moellin of Mainz (ca. 1365–1427), known as the Maharil, stressed that “the *hazzan* recites *Ha-Adderet Ve-Ha-Emunah* with sweetness,<sup>5</sup> with awe and great *kavvanah* and with a lowered head, since many names [of God] and secrets are included in it” (Spitzer 1989:438).<sup>6</sup> Geiger described the melody as unique, which the *hazzan* sang with *hil ur’adah* (“trembling and shaking”) (Geiger 1862:249).

A number of *piyyutim* have a refrain or *pizmon*. In some cases the opening stanza served as the refrain and in others a line repeated at the end of each stanza served as the refrain (Elbogen 1993:182). Known collectively as *pizmonim*, these poems were ideal for congregational musical participation. Among the Sephardim and *edot ha-mizrah*, such indeed was the case, but in the Ashkenazi rite this did not fully develop, and if it ever did, there occurred a degeneration of the *pizmon* musical refrain.

The most remarkable example of congregational singing is that mentioned by the fifteenth-century German rabbi, R. Moses Mintz, who served in Mainz and Bamberg. In one of his *teshuvot* (halakhic responsa) he refers to the custom of extending the singing of the first blessing after the *Barekhu* at the Sabbath

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Fabian Ogutsch wrote, “Vorbeter ganz solo” (Ogutsch 1930, no. 178). For transcriptions of the melodies (which share elements in common), see Ogutsch, *ibid.*; Baer, 1883, no. 1099, 1 W. (Central European melody?) and 2 W. (West European melody).

<sup>5</sup> Or, “with melody”

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the Worms description of Jephtha Juspa Shammash (Hamburger 1988, Vol. 1:181).

Morning Service during the summer months. Much of this liturgical text, known as the *Yotzer*, is comprised of early *piyyut* additions to the statutory liturgy—the *matbe'a*—which, strictly speaking, are not obligatory parts of the liturgy (Elbogen, *ibid.*:96–97).<sup>7</sup> While in many locales it was customary to chant *Ha-Kol Yodukha* and *El Adon* (on the Sabbath) responsively, according to Mintz, the congregation alone sang these *piyyutim*. While the congregation was singing the *Yotzer piyyutim* the *hazzan* would review the Torah portion of the week, rejoining the congregation at the conclusion of the blessing (Mintz 1991, Vol. 2, section 91, p. 394).<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that Mintz specifically used the term *niggen*, which in this context, would appear to refer to more than chanting. We have no knowledge of how long this custom prevailed or the nature of the melody sung by the congregation.

### A Melodic Prototype: *Otekhah Edrosh*

One of the few Ashkenazi *piyyutim* for whose musical performance we have thorough historical documentation is *Otekhah Edrosh*, a *piyyut* written by R. Shimon bar Yitzhak of Mayence (b. ca. 950) and recited (in *Minhag Ashkenaz*) in the *selihot* section of the Yom Kippur Eve liturgy. Its poetic structure is built upon double stanzas, each stanza (*bayit*) having four lines (*turim*), with four words to each line:<sup>9</sup>

חטאנו צורנו, סלח לנו יוצרנו

אותך אדרוש ואליך אתודע / גדול ביהודה ובירושלים נודע  
 הן אתה חקרתנו ותדע / כי פשעי אני אדע

אדע אבל אשמים אנחנו / ומהמון רחמיך לא זנחנו

הן אליו כפים שטחנו / כי בשם קדשו בטחנו<sup>10</sup> חטאנו

<sup>7</sup> Elbogen discerned three main poetic additions in the *Yotzer*. According to Hammer there are six poetic sections (Hammer 2003:xxiii).

<sup>8</sup> For extending the melody of *Ha-Kol Yodukha* during the summer see Spitzer 1989, par 10, p. 53; Breuer 1972:21.

<sup>9</sup> The last word of line four is always the same as first word of line five. Line three always starts with *Hen*, line 4 always starts with *Ki*. Line 4 is always a biblical quotation. Each stanza has a different rhyme scheme.

<sup>10</sup> The form analysis and the text are taken from Goldschmidt 1970, Vol. 2:38.

R. Jacob Moellin described how the recitation of *Otekha Edrosh* was divided between the *hazzan* and the congregation: “The *sheliah tzibbur* (cantor) recites *Hatanu Tzurenu* in a loud voice, which the congregation repeats. The congregation recites the first two “verses” (*haruzot*) of *Otekha Edrosh* [i.e., the first stanza] and the cantor repeats the line beginning, *Hen attah*. The cantor repeats [that line following] every two verses [i.e., every stanza] recited by the congregation” (Spitzer 1989:329–330). The relevant point in this description is that the body of the *piyyut* was recited by the congregation.<sup>11</sup> A somewhat later description, but not substantially different, is that given in the prayer book commentary (published 1560) of R. Naftali Herz Treves of Frankfurt. According to Treves, the cantor repeated the entire double stanzas after the congregation had recited them, and then he continued with the *Hatanu* refrain (Spitzer, *ibid.*:330).

The descriptions of Moellin and Treves raise several issues of interpretation. First, since both use the word “*omer*” (“recites”) with respect to both the *hazzan* and the congregation it is difficult to know conclusively whether the congregation actually “sang” the melody. This problem is endemic to all the literary descriptions of synagogue praxis. Second, there is the possibility that the two descriptions reflect two distinct regional differences of musical performance. In Mainz the congregation either *davened* or sang each stanza, while in Frankfurt the *hazzan* unquestionably sang two consecutive stanzas after they had been *davened* or sung by the congregation. Third, there is every possibility that Treves’ description reflects the gradual process of the congregation ceding the singing of the *piyyut* to the cantor.

Later Frankfurt sources appear to corroborate the third interpretation. The eighteenth-century collection of Frankfurt *minhagim* of R. Juspa Kosman described the *hazzan* singing *be-niggun* the body of the *piyyut*, while the congregation merely recited the *Hen* refrain passages, and only in every second stanza (Kosman 1719/1969:281, par. 5). Salomon Geiger, in his *Divrey Kehillot*, a detailed compilation of Frankfurt liturgical-musical customs in the early nineteenth-century, not only corroborated the description of Kosman, but pointed out that when the *hazzan* repeated the second *Hen*, he did so loudly and with an extended melody (Geiger 1862:243). Geiger was referring

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<sup>11</sup> At various places the congregation interrupted the *piyyut* to recite the liturgical unit opening with *El Melekh Yoshev*, which the *sheliah tzibbur* completed, and then the chanting of *Otekha Edrosh* continued. This interruption to allow for the inclusion of the *El Melekh Yoshev* passages was still customary in many communities in the nineteenth century as shown in annotations in the Heidenheim editions of the *mahzor*.

here to the melismatic performance of this word, a notable characteristic of all musical notations of *Otehkah Edrosh*.

When we compare these literary descriptions of *Otehkah Edrosh* with the nineteenth-century transcriptions of its oral musical transmission it becomes clear that the latter reveal a musical performance practice the opposite of that described by Moellin. According to these notations the *hazzan* sang the body of the *piyyut*, whereas the congregation only recited the second *Hen* refrain verse which was also repeated by the *hazzan* (David 1895, no. 183; **Example 2**).<sup>12</sup>

Solemnly  
Cantor

O - te-kha ed - rosh ve - ei - le - cha et va - da.  
Ga-dol bi - hu - dah u-vi-ru-sha-la-yim no - da. Hein a - tah ha-kar-ta -  
nu va-tei - da. Ki fe sha ay a-ni ei - da. Ei - da. Av-al  
a-shei-mim a nah- nu, u-mei-ha-mon ra-ha -me - cha lo zu nah - nu.

Congregation  
Andante (♩=84)

Hein ei - lav ka - pa - yim shi - tah - nu.  
Ki ve - sheim kod-she' - cha va - tah - nu.

Example 2. David's *Otekhah Edrosh* for cantor with congregational refrain.

These transcriptions lend support to our argument for the transference of the melody from the congregation to the *hazzan*. This transference probably did not affect the melody's basic musical structure. It merely resulted in a somewhat more elaborate setting of the melody, such as melismatic elements

<sup>12</sup> Other musical transcriptions include Baer 1883, no. 1327; Sulzer 1865/1954 (OPC 7, no. 411); Ogutsch, no. 245. Idelsohn 1933, Pt. 2, no. 188 (partial); Naumbourg 1852, no. 264; Heller 1914, no. 602. A reissue of Leon Algazi's pre-World War II recording of David's setting is now available on CD (Algazi, n. d.).

and octave leaps. Some transcriptions, in fact, do not have the octave leap on the first *Hen*, and so they possibly reflect the earlier congregational singing of the melody.<sup>13</sup> The strongly modal nature of the melody (especially the predominance of the subtonium), the borrowing or echoing of trop figurations, the mixture of flowing rhythm and short metrical passages, especially in the refrain, and the mostly syllabic setting of the text, all contribute to its archaic character.<sup>14</sup>

Support for the contention that the melody which Moellin described was the prototype of the melody notated in the nineteenth century comes from Moellin's statement that this melody was also used for the singing of *Adabberah Tahānunim*, a *piyyut* recited in *Minhag Ashkenaz* as part of the *seliḥot* of *shaharit* on Yom Kippur (Spitzer 1989:330).<sup>15</sup> Both *piyyutim* have the same poetic structure and rhyming scheme, and are introduced by the short *Hatanu Tzurenu* verse which also serves as a refrain. Hence these and similar *piyyutim* were known as *Hatanu piyyutim*.<sup>16</sup> More than three centuries after the time of the Moellin, Baer wrote in his *Ba'al T'fillah*, "according to this melody [of *Otekha Edrosh*] are sung all *Hatanu Tzurenu* [*piyyutim*]" (Baer 1883, no. 1327). This statement thus provides strong evidence of the contrafactum usage of the *Otekha Edrosh* as the melody for the text of *Adabberah Tahānunim*. All the literary and musical evidence provides convincing evidence of the strong roots of the *Otekha Edrosh* melody in *Minhag Ashkenaz* and its musical continuity of over several centuries, but also of its later decline as a congregational melody.

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<sup>13</sup> In the settings of Sulzer and Heller there is no octave leap at the first *hen*. In neither of these settings is there any reflection of congregational participation. In Sulzer's setting the *Hatanu Tzurenu* was sung by the choir.

<sup>14</sup> Idelsohn pointed out the incorporation of *trop* and psalmody motives, where the version of Ogutsch has the motives of *revia* of the Prophets, *zakef katon* of the Pentateuch for the High Holy Days and motives of the Psalm mode. See Idelsohn 1933: xxxvii; no. 215. The final line recalls *sof perek* of *ekkah trop*.

<sup>15</sup> In most of *Minhag Ashkenaz*, *Adabberah Tahānunim* was sung at the Morning Service of Yom Kippur, but in Worms this *piyyut* was recited on Yom Kippur Eve and *Otekha Edrosh* was recited in the morning. See Hamburger 1988, Vol. 1:178, section 154; Nulman 1996:4.

<sup>16</sup> Maharil wrote, "there are places that recite *Hatanu Adabberah Tahānunim* according to the order that I have explained [for *Otekha Edrosh*]," (Spitzer 1989:330, par. 10).



## A Second Melodic Prototype: *Shofet Kol ha-Aretz*

The musical performance of *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz*, a *piyyut* recited in *Minhag Ashkenaz* at the conclusion of the *selihot* prayers in *shaharit* on Yom Kippur is also documented in several historical sources.<sup>17</sup> Scholars are divided in the identification of the author, whose name שלמה is spelt out in the acrostic of the opening letter of each of the four stanzas.<sup>18</sup> This concluding *piyyut* is also referred to as the *pizmon* since, according to Goldschmidt, the opening stanza originally served as the refrain, but according to popular usage, the fourth line of the first stanza was also adopted as a recurring refrain.<sup>19</sup> The structure of the *pizmon* form, at least on a theoretical level, would appear ideally suited for musical interaction between *hazzan* and congregation.

שופט כל הארץ / ואתה במשפט יעמיד  
נא היים וחסד / על עם עני תצמיד  
ואת תפלת השחר / במקום עולה תעמיד  
עולת הבקר אשר לעולת התמיד

The performance of this *piyyut* was described in detail by Jephtha Juspa Shammash (1603–1673) in his collection of Worms liturgical customs (completed in 1648):

The *hazzan* recites aloud the stanza (*haruzah*) *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* up to *le'olat ha-tamid*. Similarly, the congregation repeats it aloud....and this is the practice (*minhag*) for all the *pizmonim* (but the ark is only opened for *Shofet*). The *hazzan* and the congregation recite *Lovesh Tzedakot* [the second stanza] together up to [the refrain] *le'olat ha-tamid*. The congregation repeats aloud the first stanza, *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz*. Following this the congregation and the *hazzan* recite together [the next stanza] *Mateh Kelapei Hased*, to its conclusion, after which the congregation and the *hazzan* recite the first stanza, *Shofet*, etc., to its conclusion (Hamburger 1988, 1:140).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This *piyyut* is also recited on the *selihot* on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. Moellin described the order of the *selihot* as three *selihot*, followed by the *pizmon* and *Hatanu* (Spitzer 1989:261).

<sup>18</sup> Elbogen (1993:179) attributes the author to Solomon ibn Gabirol, but according to Scheindlin the author is unidentifiable; Goldschmidt (1970:272) attributes the *piyyut* to Solomon b. Abun the Younger.

<sup>19</sup> The *pizmon* refrain of the fourth line appears to have been most thoroughly adopted in the Sephardic and oriental rites; in *Minhag Polin* the refrain line does not occur in the second and third stanzas.

<sup>20</sup> Strangely, the last stanza appears to have been omitted in the loud recitation.

According to this account, the congregation participated in the singing of the entire *piyyut*. Note that Shamash made the point of emphasizing that the *hazzan* and the congregation recited the *piyyut* together (*be-yahad*) (ibid.).<sup>21</sup> Shamash's account merely confirmed in more detail the slightly earlier description (written between 1625 and 1632) of his close contemporary, Judah Löw Kirchheim (d. 1632) of Worms (Peles 1987:94). Kirchheim made the telling point that the congregation repeated *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* aloud like the *hazzan*, implying that they repeated the strophe in the same melody. Additional confirmation was provided by Yair Hayyim Bacharach (1638–1702) in his annotations to the manuscript of Shamash (Hamburger 1998, Vol. 1:137). From these accounts we see that (1) the congregation sang the *piyyut*, at the very least when there was joint recitation with the *hazzan*, but in all probability during every stanza which they recited aloud; (2) the final-line *pizmon* refrain was ignored, since the congregation sang the stanzas in their entirety.

Later historical sources attest to either a different performance practice in other localities, or more likely, a substantive change in musical performance. This change is first indicated in the *Minhagbuch* of eighteenth-century Fürth (Gumpil 1767:6b), and is corroborated by Geiger's description of the practice in Frankfurt (Geiger 1862:271). According to these sources, the *hazzan* sang the entire *piyyut*, except that the congregation repeated the first stanza as a refrain after each stanza. These later descriptions would actually appear to reflect a performance practice in accordance with the (original?) literary form of the *piyyut* whereby the *pizmon* form was characterized by the repetition of the first stanza as a refrain. They also mirror the liturgical annotations provided in printed *mahzorim*.

Musical transcriptions of *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* located in cantorial compendia show little uniformity of practice concerning congregational participation (Avenary 1987).<sup>22</sup> None, however, reflect the very full "melodic" participation of the congregation as attested in the seventeenth-century sources. Where there is evidence of melodic congregational participation, there is always a good possibility that this was an attempt by "reformers" of the synagogue service to reconstruct an idealized past performance practice, especially when they provided rubrics for the choir to lead in sections recited by the congre-

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<sup>21</sup> Annotation in MS Worms.

<sup>22</sup> Avenary's article provides a thorough analysis of the musical development of *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz*, its geographical variants, and a full citation of the musical transcriptions.

gation. At the same time there is little uniformity of practice as to whether the entire first stanza served as the *pizmon* refrain or simply the fourth line of the first stanza (עולת הבקר אשר לעולת התמיד). The more melismatic the musical notation, especially with respect to the single refrain line, the more unlikely was the congregation's melodic involvement (Sulzer 1865, OPC Vol. 7, no. 441; **Example 3**).<sup>23</sup>

The image shows a musical score for the prayer 'Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz'. It is divided into two parts: 'Cantor' and 'Congregation'. The Cantor part consists of three staves of music. The lyrics are: Sho-fet kol ha-a-retz v' - o-tah ba-mish-pat ya - a-mid. Na\_ ha-yim va he - sed al am a - ni\_ tats- mid. v'et t' fi-lat ha-sha - har\_ bim- kom o - lah\_ ta - a - mid. The Congregation part is a single staff of music with the lyrics: o - lat ba-bo-ker a-sher l' - o - lat ha - ta- mid. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, notes, rests, and triplets (indicated by a '3' in a box).

Example 3. Sulzer's *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* for cantor with congregational refrain.

<sup>23</sup> In Sulzer's simple transcription of the Central European variant the refrain line is indicated "Chor." Other examples include (1) Friedmann 1902, no. 352 (Central European melody). Every stanza is indicated as "Recit.," with cantorial improvisations and extended ambitus in the second and third stanzas. Despite the same cadential pattern in the concluding lines there is no clear indication of congregational participation; (2) Ogutsch 1930, no. 268 (Western-European/Italian melody). Despite the uniform refrain pattern, the melismatic passages, runs, and the wide ambitus make congregational melodic participation doubtful. Ogutsch indicates that the congregation repeats *Shofet*, etc., after the first, second and fourth stanzas, but not after the third stanza since it concludes with *al mitzho tamid*; (3) Naumbourg 1852, no. 277 (Western-European melody). This is simple notation of only the first stanza, with indication "Récit." for the cantor. Two sound recordings of *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* are highly melismatic throughout: (1) The Tedescan (German) version, ed. Seroussi 2001, (2) and the Frankfurt-New York version of Benno Weis who was born in Frankfurt and a lay cantor of Congregation K'hal Adath Jeshurun, New York City (n.d.).

## Sephardic Melodies: Impact of the Hamburg Temple on Ashkenazi Synagogue Music at the Dawn of Modernity

Only in the modern period, and with it, increasing use of notated musical scores, do we have reliable evidence concerning congregational song in the German synagogue. Coordinated congregational singing rather than the hitherto spontaneous, individualistic and heterophonous acclamations, became a vital component of programs for reforming and westernizing the synagogue service. A model for this ideal was found to be near at hand namely, the music of the Hamburg Sephardim.

The Hamburg Reform Temple (founded in 1818), which had adopted many Sephardic elements, not only the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, Sephardic prayer texts and *piyyutim*, but also traditional Sephardic chants and metrical melodies, continued to exert its influence on German Ashkenazic synagogues well into the 1840s (Seroussi 1996). For example, an article on the subject of improving synagogue music published in 1849 in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* [AJZ] praised the simple congregational melodies of the Hamburg Temple service (AJZ 13/25 [1849:339]).

Some of the Hamburg Sephardic melodies, via the Hamburg Temple, were adopted by Ashkenazi synagogues. The main conduit for the diffusion of these melodies in the German Ashkenazi synagogue was the *Gesänge für Synagogen*, the songster of the Braunschweig cantor, Hirsch Goldberg (Goldberg 1843 and 1845). This songster appeared in several additions and the simplicity of its arrangements probably accounts for its widespread popularity. Goldberg fitted a number of the Hamburg melodies to Ashkenazi texts and *piyyutim*. For he adapted the *Adonay Melekh* refrain of the Sephardic *piyyut Adonay Be-Kol Shofar* to the Ashkenazi *Addirey Ayummah*, a *piyyut* with the same textual refrain (Seroussi 1996:78–83).

The Hamburg-derived melody for *Hallelu/ El Adon/ Adon Olam* was utilized by Louis Lewandowski for *Lekhu Nerannenh* and *Hallel* (ibid.; 48, 113–114).<sup>24</sup> It was also used for *Lekhu Nerannenh* by Baer where he described it as *N[eue] W[weise]* (BT, no. 320), but when used for *Hallel* he described it as *D[deutsche] W[eise]*. The latter ascription suggests that by Baer's time its Sephardic origin had been entirely forgotten. So popular was this melody, at least in Berlin, that it was also set to *Ashrey* for Sabbath afternoon youth services (Vorstand der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin, 1912:32).

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<sup>24</sup> Lewandowski, KR, nos. 4 and 78; TW, no. 5.

The first part of the melody especially popular in the United States for congregational singing of *Etz Hayyim Hi* had its origin in one of the Hamburg melodies (Goldberg 1843:26–27; **Example 4**).

Congregation

Eitz ha - yim hi la - ma - ha - zi - kim bah v'tom - che -  
 - ha - m' u - shar. D'ra - che - ha dar - chei no -  
 am v'chol n'ti - vo - te - ha sha - lom.

*Example 4. Hirsch Goldberg's Etz Hayyim Hi – a 19th-century precursor of current practice.*

Idelsohn had first intimated the possible Sephardic provenance of this melody (Idelsohn 1929/1992:239, 241), and now Edwin Seroussi has fully documented its Sephardic origin (Seroussi 1996:109–111).<sup>25</sup> Whether, however, the entire melody actually fully coalesced in Germany is unclear. The diffusion of this melody is indicative, not merely of the influence of the Hamburg Temple, but of European Sephardic music in general, on Western Ashkenazi synagogues in the nineteenth century (Goldberg 1998:224).

<sup>25</sup> The conclusion of the *Etz Hayyim Hi* melody appears to be rooted in the Sephardic tune for *be-Motza'ey Yom Menuhah*, a *piyyut* sung at the Close of the Sabbath, and included in Baer's *Baal T'fillah*, no. 425. Baer transcribed the melody from Emanuel Aguilar and David Aaron De Sola (Aguilar 1857: no. 23). The influence of Sephardic melodies of the Hamburg Temple reemerged in the late 1890s. Moritz Henle (1850–1925), the first Ashkenazi cantor of the Hamburg Temple, included an arrangement of *Ha-Yom Harat Olam*, the short liturgical text sung after the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, in his *Liturgische Synagogen-Gesänge* (Henle 189?. no. 13). The simple haunting melody, with an *ambitus* of only a minor sixth, was sung in unison by the choir and congregation, except that the choir repeated the last line, providing a western harmonic conclusion to an otherwise modal congregational tune. For a recording of this piece see Henle 1998. A somewhat simpler transcription was published in 1849 by Gerson Rosenstein in his songbook for the Reform-oriented Jewish school in Seesen, Westphalia (Seroussi 1996:47).

## German Hymnals and Hebrew Songsters

The impression has been given of the widespread adoption, in the nineteenth century, of German hymns. For example, Abraham Z. Idelsohn argued that, “The Progressive congregations adopted from Hamburg the singing of German chorales in Protestant style” (Idelsohn 1929: 243). Similarly, Eric Werner claimed, “The German songs of the Reform synagogues followed the style of the Lutheran chorale quite indiscriminately” (Werner 1976: 198). The reality is that the German hymn tunes were not too widely adopted and when introduced they sometimes met with fierce opposition, especially in traditional communities (Goldberg 2000: 81–83).<sup>26</sup> In addition, Idelsohn’s portrayal of the use of German hymns as being indicative of a “radical reform” (as opposed to “moderate reform”) that wished to eradicate traditional *hazzanut* is also misleading. In most cases, the German hymn was a supplement to, and not a replacement of, the traditional *hazzanut*.

In synagogues where a German song was introduced, it was limited to little more than a hymn before and after the sermon. This modest degree of congregational hymn singing (led, in many cases by the choir) did not necessarily signify any “radical reform.” Even the community Orthodox synagogue in Berlin, as part of the program of aesthetic improvements introduced by Rabbi Michael Sachs in 1845, countenanced the singing of German songs at the conclusion of the Torah service and the sermon (AZJ 9/42 1845:635).<sup>27</sup> To what extent this innovation was actually implemented is not clear. In Vienna, in the Seitenstettengasse Synagogue where Salomon Sulzer officiated, a *religiöses Lied* was introduced in 1870 (SZ OPC 8, *Anhang I*, no. 25).<sup>28</sup>

An important source that underlies the modest role of the German hymn in German liberal synagogues is a small work entitled *Gemeindelieder für die neue Synagoge in Berlin* underlies its limited use in the synagogue service (Vorstand... 1868). This booklet was published under the auspices of the Board of the New Synagogue. It contains the German texts and the melody line of eleven hymns.<sup>29</sup> Although the name of the musical editor of the booklet is

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<sup>26</sup> The reference here relates to the introduction of—and opposition to—the singing of German hymns in the State of Württemberg.

<sup>27</sup> AZJ 9/42 1845: 635.

<sup>28</sup> An annotation provides the instruction, “*die erste Strophe vor, die Zweite nacht der Predigt.*”

<sup>29</sup> The author of the texts has been identified as Aron Horowitz (1812–1881), director since 1859 of the Berlin Teachers’ Seminary. See *Jüdisches Lexikon*, Vol. 2 1928, col. 1673.

not given, it undoubtedly was Louis Lewandowski (1823–1894), especially since two of the melodies utilized themes of two new liturgical compositions that were later published in his *Todah W'simrah*.<sup>30</sup>

The distinguishing feature of this small work is that almost all its melodies are based on recognizable traditional synagogue melodies or freshly composed melodies that were part of the corpus of the choral pieces of the New Synagogue. From this perspective, almost all the pieces can, in a sense, be considered “traditional” Jewish melodies. The songs were arranged according to the cycle of the Jewish year.<sup>31</sup> The worshippers probably did not actually use the *Gemeindelieder* during synagogue services since the song texts were included in *Seder Tefillot Kol Ha-Shanah*, the prayer book of the New Synagogue (and other Berlin Liberal Synagogues).<sup>32</sup> The continuing popularity of these songs is proven by the inclusion of nine of them in the *Liturgisches Liederbuch*, a songster published in 1912 for use in Orthodox and Liberal synagogue religious schools and youth services (Vorstand... zu Berlin 1912).<sup>33</sup>

The *Gemeindelieder's* significance becomes clearer when we compare it with a work published in the State of Württemberg a few years earlier. In 1861

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<sup>30</sup> *Uvenukho Yomar* and *Vayehi Binso'a*

<sup>31</sup> Identification of the themes and motifs: (1) the opening theme reoccurs at the words *Ki Lekah Tov* in *Uvenukho Yomar* (TW 1, no. 178) and appears to have been influenced by a chorus from Mendelssohn's *Lobegesang* (Sabbath); (2) original composition? (Sabbath); (3) a borrowing from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Sabbath); (4) based on the traditional Passover *Al Ha-Rishonim* cantorial recitative melody (c.f., TW 2, no. 18 and the *Addir Hu* melody (Passover); (5) based on the *Akdamut* melody (Shavuot); (6) the theme occurs in *Vayehi Binso'a* in TW 1, no. 57 (Sukkot); (7) the pitches of the three descending notes in mm. 2 and 3 recall the 5-3-1 pitches of the High Holy Day *Alenu Leshabbeah* (Rosh Hashanah); (8) subtle use of *Kol Nidre* motives (Yom Kippur); (9) *Ma'oz Tzur* melody (Hanukkah); (10) original melody? (Purim); (11) *Eli Tziyyon* melody (Tisha B'Av).

<sup>32</sup> For example, *Seder Tefillot Kol Ha-Shanah: Gebetbuch für die neue Synagoge in Berlin, Theil I: Wochentage, Sabbath, und Festtage, nebst zwei Anhängen* (Berlin 1889). This volume contains nos. 1–6 and 9–11 of the *Gemeindelieder* songs. In most cases half the stanzas of the song were sung before the sermon and the remainder after it. The *Seder Tefillot* was also used in other Berlin liberal synagogues.

<sup>33</sup> The content of the *Liturgisches Liederbuch* also reflected musical usage in the Berlin community synagogues. Differences in musical usage between “Orgel Synagogen” and “Orgelfreien Synagogen” were few.

Rabbi Joseph Maier introduced his *Seder Tefillah*, a moderate Reform liturgy, which was adopted in other states. To replace the failed and often extremely unpopular *Gesangbuch*,<sup>34</sup> he included in the center of this otherwise moderately traditional prayer book both the texts and the melody line of forty two hymns for singing before and after the sermon (Maier 1861:218–245).

Most of the so-called hymnals were in fact songsters. This distinction has been insufficiently understood.<sup>35</sup> The texts were overwhelmingly those of the statutory services. The melodies were simple pieces for the statutory services, especially the responses, and sung in Hebrew. Many of the melodies were based upon pre-existing traditional Jewish melodies or modes, with the addition of new melodies as well.

Hirsch Goldberg's *Gesänge für Synagogen* should, therefore be considered as belonging to this genre of publication. Goldberg explained that his motivation in preparing this work was primarily to provide simplified rearrangements of Sulzer's four-part melodies, especially for small communities with limited musical resources (Goldberg 1845, vii). Although a casual glance might lead one to conclude that many of the arrangements were for singing by unison or two-part choir, the author explained that long term goal was that the "choir" would ultimately embrace the entire congregation (Goldberg, *ibid.*).

The *Gesänge für Synagogen* is best remembered for its inclusion of Julius Freudenthal's setting of *En Kelohenu*, which he composed in 1841 (Goldberg 1843:vii; Idelsohn 1929/1992: 238–239). A decisive factor in the dissemination of this tune (and doubtless others as well) was the Braunschweig Rabbinic Conference held between June 12 and 19, 1844 (Meyer 1988:134). On the Sabbath during the conference delegates attended the Braunschweig synagogue where the melodies were received with great approval, including, in all probability, Freudenthal's *En Kelohenu* (Goldberg 1853: viii–ix).

By 1880 the *Gesänge für Synagogen* had been superseded by *Schire beth Ja'acob*, the songster of the Leipzig cantors, Louis Liebling and Bernhard Jacobsohn.<sup>36</sup> Jacobsohn (1846–?) had been a pupil of Louis Lewandowski at the Berlin Teachers' Seminary (1862–1867) and had been appointed *hazzan*

<sup>34</sup> *Sefer Zemirot Yisra'el* (Stuttgart 1836). It contained 361 German hymns with four-part musical arrangements. The radical character of this work has recently been analyzed by Däschler-Seiler 1997. The source of a large number of the texts was the evangelical *Württembergische Gesangbuch* published in 1829.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 235.

<sup>36</sup> Louis Libeling and Bernhard Jacobsohn, *Schire beth Ja'acob: Israelitisches Schul-*



in Lepizig in 1874.<sup>37</sup> He worked tirelessly for the cultivation of congregational song, both in theory and practice. He cultivated group singing in the religious school as a means of furthering congregational singing in the synagogue (Liebling 1880:vi). While the congregational melodies for the Sabbath were divided almost equally between “old melodies” and “more recent melodies,” almost all those for the Three Festivals and the High Holy Days carried the ascription *alte Weise*.<sup>38</sup> Among the latter we might mention the restoration of the congregational singing of the refrain line, *Ke-’olat ha-boker* of *Shofet Kol Ha-Aretz* (SBJ, no. 205).

The most radical feature of the Liebling and Jacobsohn songster was the encroachment of the congregation in the singing of several texts that had formerly been the sole preserve of the *hazzan*. These were now set for responsive singing between *hazzan* and congregation. Examples include: (1) the reworking of *Al Ha-Rishonim*, a cantorial recitative sung on Passover which, in former times, had often been performed as a “Cantorial Fantasia” (Avenary 1968:69). Here, more elaborate cantorial sections contrasted with simpler sections incorporating the Passover *Addir Hu* melody sung by the congregation (SBJ, no. 103); (2) the adaptation of *Heyeh Im Pifiyyot*, a High Holy Day *reshut*, using a widely-known South-German melody for *Avinu Malkenu* to replace the solo recitative (SBJ, no. 176); (3) the setting of *Ana Tavo*, in which the text was divided up into short musical phrases sung between *hazzan* and the congregation and which introduced motives that reoccurred in the ensuing *Ashamnu* confessional (SBJ, no. 198; **Example 5**);<sup>39</sup>

(4) the provision of greater congregational participation in *Ya’aleh*, the opening *piyyut* for Kol Nidre Eve, by assigning to the congregation the singing of the entire third line of each stanza rather than just the closing short refrain, *ad arev* (SBJ, no. 187); (5) the unique arrangement of *Kol Sitrey [Ra’ayanot]*, a Hebrew substitute for the Aramaic *Kol Nidre*, based on the

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*und Gemeinde-Gesangbuch* (Altona, 1880). A fourth edition of *Gesänge für Synagogen* was published in 1888.

<sup>37</sup> Jacobsohn was a significant figure in German-Jewish communal affairs. He was a president of the *Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund*. He was author of an autobiography, *Fünfig Jahre: Erinnerungen aus Amt und Leben* (Berlin, 1912).

<sup>38</sup> *Schire beth Ja’acob* also included an appendix of twenty-eight German hymns, but many of these were also based on traditional synagogue themes.

<sup>39</sup> In the nineteenth century the text of *Ana Tavo* became a favorite for choral settings.

Cantor Congregation

A - na ta - vo le - fa - ne - cha te - fi - la - tei - nu

Cantor Congregation

ve - al - tit - a - lam - mi - te - hi - na - tei - nu

Cantor Congregation

she - ein - a nah - nu a - ze i fa - nim u - ke - shei o - ref.

Example 5. Bernhard Jacobsohn's *Ana Tavo* - a responsive introduction to *Ashamnu*.

traditional melody).<sup>40</sup> The congregation repeated each word or phase of the text after the *hazzan*, except that where the *hazzan* extended a word melodically, the congregation sang it more simply and syllabically (SBJ, no. 184; **Example 6**).

Cantor Congregation

Kol sit - rey ra' a - yo - not kol sit - rey ra' a yo -

Cantor Congregation Cantor

not v'ta - a - lu - mot v'ta - a - lu - mot l' - va - vei - nu

Example 6. *Kol Sitrey* - Bernhard Jacobsohn's responsive substitute for *Kol Nidre*.

## The Contribution of Louis Lewandowski

The enrichment of Ashkenazi synagogue services by choral and congregational melodies, especially in the Torah service, was a comparatively recent phenomenon. Prior to the innovations of Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890) and his contemporaries, the elaborate ritual for the removal and return of the Torah scrolls on the Sabbath and Festivals was merely chanted in *nusah*. This is confirmed by the settings of these texts in compendia of traditional *hazzanut*, such as those of Abraham Baer and Moritz Deutsch.<sup>41</sup> The new

<sup>40</sup> This text was included in Vol. 2 of the Leipzig prayer book edited by A. M. Goldschmidt. See Petuchowski 1968:343.

<sup>41</sup> Baer's notations of *Ein Kamokha* and *Av Ha-Rahamim* for the Sabbath merely

compositions introduced in the 1830s and later to beautify the Torah service were essentially choral, and not congregational.<sup>42</sup>

In the introduction to his *Kol Rinnah u'T'fillah* (1871) Louis Lewandowski reflected upon the consequences of the new choral melodies composed by Sulzer and others:

With the introduction of choral music, congregations were prevented *a priori* from direct participation in services, because of the artistic nature of the choral singing. Congregations were now condemned to silence, whereas they had previously been accustomed to shouting (Goldberg 1989–1990:41).

The contrapuntal character of some of the pieces in Sulzer's *Schir Zion* (Part 1, 1840) and the problems of range and tessitura prevented easy congregational participation. Indeed, the whole idea of congregational participation had not really been taken into consideration by Sulzer. Even so, congregants began to sing and to corrupt the new melodies, and a number of them became “congregational” even if this had not been the composer's original intent (*ibid.*).

Lewandowski seems to have been one of the first who attempted to provide for the equal participation of all three elements: cantor, congregation and choir (*ibid.*). Consequently, to satisfy the needs of the congregation, Lewandowski composed and arranged a number of unison melodies, while many of the simple two-part pieces could easily be sung by the congregation as well. Strongly deploring the introduction into the synagogue of “trivial melodies” lacking musical worth, Lewandowski did not take on this task lightly. Since unison pieces lacked the elements of harmony and modulation, creating pieces of effective and lasting value was no easy assignment. For the unison congregational melodies and response he sought “flowing melodies,” and a “very limited range,” and for the simple two-part pieces, “simple voice leading” (*ibid.*:42). A modest number of pieces in *Kol Rinnah u'T'fillah* were consequently designated *Gemeinde* (congregation) or *Chor und Gemeinde*

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continue in the *nusah* of the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode of the *shaharit 'amidah* and the *Kaddish Shalem* (Baer 1883: nos. 578 and 579). At *Vayehi Binso'a Ha-Aron* onwards the *nusah* is the same as that for Weekdays, based upon High Holy Day cantillation (*ibid.*, nos. 101–102; 581–588). For confirmation of this cantorial practice see Deutsch 1871, nos. 97–103. On the other hand, all the alternative melodies that Baer added underneath the traditional *nusah*, Baer marked *N[eue] W[eise]*. On the Three Festivals the cantorial melody for *Vayehi Binso'a Ha-Aron* was derived from the melody for *Ha-El Be-Ta'atzumot*.

<sup>42</sup> It is important to bear in mind that the publication of *Schir Zion* (Sulzer 1840) was preceded by the Munich collection of Maier Kohn (Kohn 1839).

(choir and congregation). Some of these were entirely new compositions that soon became beloved congregational pieces.<sup>43</sup>

A particularly noteworthy aspect of Lewandowski's endeavor was his metrical arrangement for congregational singing of passages formerly chanted to *nusah* by the *hazzan*. Most of the texts selected for such musical settings were those passages that traditionally were recited by the congregation before, after, or with the *hazzan*. In addition Lewandowski arranged for the congregational singing of the obligatory congregational responses. With respect to the first body of texts, Lewandowski strove to overcome the fundamental dichotomy between the qualified melodic improvisation and free or "flowing rhythm" *nusah* chanted by the *hazzan*, and regulated and metrically-based musical participation by the congregation. He achieved this by (a) providing a more metrical quality to the *nusah*, and (b) simplifying the motivic structure of the *nusah* and reducing or eliminating modulations, or (c) creating newly composed metrical melodies based upon the *nusah*.

Lewandowski's setting of *Vaykhullu* incorporates (a) and (b) above. According to Seligman Baer, the normative practice was for the *hazzan* to recite *vaykhullu* aloud together with the congregation (Baer 1868/1937:190).<sup>44</sup> Comparison between Sulzer's setting *Vaykhullu* and Lewandowski's is striking. Sulzer's setting for *hazzan* alone, the congregation possibly reciting it along with him in an undertone. It is rhythmically completely free (no bar lines), has passages of melisma, and melodic leaps. Lewandowski's setting, on the other hand, is for unison congregational chanting. It has a fixed meter (at least theoretically), a comfortable range and tessitura, no ornamentation and has a syllabic setting of the text. So popular was Lewandowski's *Vaykhullu* that many have regarded it as the actual *nusah*, but it is more plausible to regard it as a reworking of the *nusah* for congregational singing (Sulzer 1865, OPC Vol. 6, no. 43, Lewandowski KR, no. 26; **Example 7**).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Among these were *Mah Tovv* (KR, no. 1 and TW, Pt. 1, no. 1); *Lekha Dodi* (KR, no. 7), *Tzadik Ka-Tamar* (Ps. 92) (KR, no. 13), *Lekha Adonay* (KR, no. 43), *Hashivenu* (no. 51), *Adon Olam* (KR, no. 78) and *Untanneh Tokef* (KR, no. 180). Equally popular were the metrical settings of the obligatory congregational responses, such as those of the *Barekhu* (KR, no. 16) and the *Kedushah* (KR, nos. 36 and 54).

<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, *Magen Avot* was recited by the congregation alone.

<sup>45</sup> Baer's setting of *Vaykhullu* appears to be situated between the improvisational setting of Sulzer and the restrained and simple setting of Lewandowski. The first system of Baer's setting is close to the elaborate style of Sulzer. On the other hand, the close melodic similarity between systems 2–4 of Baer and systems 2–4 of Lewandowski can

*mezza voce*  
Cantor

*pp* Va - y' khul - lu ha-sha - ma - - - - -  
 yim v'ha - a - retz v' - khol - - - - - tz' - va - - am  
 va - y' khal E-lo-him ba-yom ha - sh' vi - i m' lakh-to a sher - a - sah,  
 va - yish - bot ba - yom ha - sh' - vi - i

Congregation

vay' - khu - lu ha sha-ma - yim v'ha - a - retz v' khol tz'va-am, vay' -  
 khal E-lo-him ba-yom hash-vi - i m'lakh to a - sher a - sah, va-yish-  
 bot ba-yom hash-vi - i mi-kol m'lakh - to a-sher a - sah...

Example 7. — Sulzer's and Lewandowsky's reworkings of the *Vaykhullu nusah* for: cantor solo; and for congregational singing.

Another example of Lewandowski's metrical arrangement of *nusah* for congregational singing was his setting of *Darkekha Eloheinu*.<sup>46</sup> Traditionally it was chanted by the *hazzan* according to a somewhat fluid melody pattern

be explained either by the fact that they both represent the same geographical area (Posen) or by Baer's borrowing from Lewandowski. See BT, no. 407. In a similar style to Lewandowski's *Vaykhullu* was Baer's congregational setting of *Magen Avot* characterized by a simple syllabic setting of the text and artful use of descending melodic sequences.

<sup>46</sup> The text of *Darkekha Eloheinu* was only recited in *Minhag Polin*.

and then repeated by the congregation.<sup>47</sup> The manner of the repetition depended on the musical skills of the individual worshipper. Baer provided two *nusah* settings for *Darkekha Elohenu* although, in fact, both shared melodic elements in common.<sup>48</sup> In Eastern Europe *Darkekha Elohenu* was sometimes transformed into relatively elaborate *hazzanut* (Neswizshki 1903:117–118; Katchko 1952:119).<sup>49</sup> But even the more restrained setting of Baer (possibly reflecting the north-western Polish tradition) was strictly for solo cantorial performance.

When Lewandowski arranged his metrical setting of *Darkekha Elohenu* he pared down the melody to its absolute basics, with a strict meter and a largely syllabic setting of the text, except in the final cadence.<sup>50</sup> He also avoided the chromatic alterations characteristic of Baer's setting. Furthermore, he only included three musical phrases (unlike that of Baer) for the four phrases of the text, so that the third textual phrase repeated the first musical phrase. Sung first by the *hazzan*, this simplified melody was repeated note for note by the choir and the congregation (KR, no. 123; TW, Pt. 2, no. 97; Baer 1883, no. 1311; **Examples 8 and 9**).

Cantor, then Congregation

1.W. Dar - ke - kha E - lo - hei - nu l' - ha - a - rikh a - pe - kha la - ra -

2.W.

im v'la to - vim v'hi t'hi - la - te - kha.

im v'la - to - vim v'hi t'hi - la - te - kha.

Example 8. Baer's two versions of *Darkekha Eloheinu* — elaborate *hazzanut* for worshippers to repeat as best they can.

<sup>47</sup> Similarly the related verses, *Le-Ma'ankha Elohenu*, *Ta'aleh Arukha* and *Tashlikh Hata'enu*.

<sup>48</sup> Baer 1883, no. 1311, 1 *W[eise]* and 2 *W[eise]*.

<sup>49</sup> Deutsch utilized both of the melodies that were later notated also by Baer. See Deutsch 1871, nos. 385–387.

<sup>50</sup> Lewandowski's arrangement paralleled Baer's second version.

Cantor, then Congregation  
**Moderato**

*f* Dar - ke-kha E - lo - hei - nu, l' - ha - a-rikh a - pe - kha, la -  
 - ra - im v' la - to - vim. v' - hi t'hil-la - te - - - kha.

Example 9. Lewandowsky's *Darkekha Eloheinu* — dignified simplification of *nusah* for unison singing.

Such reworking of the *nusah*, dictated in part by the needs of the congregation, led to a loss of its richness, inventiveness and improvisatory character. On the other hand, this was partially compensated for by the dignified and melodious unison singing of the congregation.

When we turn to Lewandowski's composition of metrical melodies based upon or incorporating elements of *nusah*, an excellent example is his setting of *Shema Yisra'el* for the Sabbath *Ma'ariv* service. Whereas Sulzer had the choir lead the congregation in a newly-composed melody in major (SZ 1, OPC, Vol. 6, no. 28),<sup>51</sup> Lewandowski created a congregational melody that was fully integrated into the *nusah* of the *Adonay Malakh* mode in which *Shema* and its blessings were chanted.<sup>52</sup> The structural tones of the first part of *Shema Yisra'el* paralleled those of *U-Ma'avir yom u-mevi laylah*, while the structural tones of the second part of *Shema Yisra'el* paralleled those of *ha-ma'ariv aravim* (KR, no. 18 and 16; **Example 10**).

Cantor *mf*

U-ma-a-vir yom u-mei-vi lay-lah... ha-ma-a-riv a-ra-vim.

Cantor, then Congregation  
 Largo, but with Spirit

*mf* Sh'ma Yis-ra-el, A-do-nay E-lo-hei-nu, A-do-nay e-had...  
*f* *ff*

Example 10. Lewandowsky's *Sh'ma* for Friday Evening — a metrical melody based on *nusah*.

<sup>51</sup> The melody in use in the United States today and attributed to Sulzer does not appear in *Schir Zion*.

<sup>52</sup> This *nusah* pattern was used in Western and Central Europe, and large portions of more westerly regions of Eastern Europe.

Lewandowski's third setting of *Veshameru* for Sabbath Eve is another congregational melody that incorporated elements of *nusah*. This metrical piece was rooted in the *Adonay Malakh* mode, with its characteristic lowered seventh degree. Although Lewandowski, in both the *Kol Rinnah* and the *Todah W'simrah*, divided up the melody into sections sung respectively by the congregation and the choir, it would appear that it was later often sung exclusively by the congregation (KR, no. 24; **Example 11**).<sup>53</sup>

**Moderato**  
Congregation

V' sham' - ru v' nei Yis - ra - el et ha - sha - bat, la - a - sot et ha - shab - bat l' -  
do - ro - tam b' - rit o - lam, bei - ni u - ven b' - nei Yis -  
ra - eil, ot hi l' - o - lam...

Example 11. Lewandowski's congregational *V'shameru*  
— rooted in *Adonay Malakh* mode.

*Kol Rinnah* and *Todah W'simrah* present many further examples of Lewandowski's sensitivity towards the *nusah* and his ability to arrange it for congregational use.<sup>54</sup>

### Aron Friedmann and Emanuel Kirschner

Provision for a modest degree of congregational singing is noticeable in the works of Aron Friedmann (1855–1936) and Emanuel Kirschner (1857–1938). Both had been cantorial students of Lewandowski at Berlin's Jewish Teachers' Seminary (Goldberg 2002:317), and served for varying lengths of time at Berlin's Liberal Oranienburgerstrasse [the "New"] Synagogue where Lewan-

<sup>53</sup> See, for example *Liturgisches Liederbuch* (Berlin, 1912), no. 11.

<sup>54</sup> Examples are *Ve-Nislah* (KR, no. 108); *Adonay Adonay* (KR, nos. 83 and 127); *Shema Kolenu* (KR, no. 134); *Ve-Al Hata'im* (KR, no. 141); *Ashrei HaAm Yode'ey Teru'ah* (KR, no. 171); *Yah Shimkha* response (TW, Pt. 2), no. 229); Neilah responses (TW, Pt. 2), nos. 237–239, 244–247.



dowski served as music director. From him they gained practical experience in the integration of the three elements of cantor, choir and congregation.

Friedmann first began officiating at the New Synagogue in 1882 while still completing his studies at the *Lehrer-Bildungsanstalt* (Friedmann 1929:10). He also officiated for many years at other Berlin synagogues in a system of rotation of cantors,<sup>55</sup> but from around 1906 he served exclusively in the Orthodox Heidereutergasse [the “Old”] Synagogue (Friedmann 1929:14, 28). His major publication, *Schir Lisch’laumau* (1901), was devoted exclusively to *hazzanut*, of a predominantly Eastern European character, for the entire liturgical year.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to the beautiful and fully-developed lyrical melodies that Lewandowski provided for the congregation, Friedmann concentrated on providing short and simple responses in the appropriate *nusah*. Worthy of mention are the chants for *Mi Khamokha* and the *Barukh Hu U-Varukh Shemo* responses according to the cycle of the liturgical year. In the latter responses the congregation repeated the melody pattern of the opening of the *hatimah* chanted by the *hazzan* (SL, no. 240; **Example 12**).

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is divided into two sections: 'Cantor' and 'Congregation'. The Cantor part has the lyrics 'Ba - ruch a - tah A - do - nay,' and the Congregation part has 'ba - ruch hu u - va ruch sh' -'. The second staff also has two sections: 'Cantor' and 'Congregation'. The Cantor part has the lyrics 'mo;' and the Congregation part has 'o - hev a - mo Yis - ra - el A - men.' There is a triplet of eighth notes in the Congregation part of the second staff.

*Example 12. Friedmann's Barukh Hu U-Varukh Shemo and Amen responses in appropriate nusah.*

Friedmann exploited the simple repetition of melodic phrases, especially in the chants for the High Holy Days. In *Melekh Elyon*, for example, the congregation repeated the same refrain throughout (SL, no. 361). By way of contrast, in the two settings of *Attah Hu Elohenu*, the congregation repeated each varying metrical phrase sung by the *hazzan* with the words of the following phrase of the *piyyut* (SL, no. 344; **Example 13**).

<sup>55</sup> This rotation system was most certainly under the supervision of Lewandowski who functioned as the Berlin community's chief music director.

<sup>56</sup> The portions to be sung in unison, according to *Schir Lisch'laumau*, often assume the support of a choir, typical of Berlin synagogues at the time, including Orthodox ones.

**a tempo**

Cantor Congregation

A - tah hu E-lo hei - nu Ba-sha - ma-yim u - va - a - retz  
 Zich-ro\_\_ la - ne - tzah Hay\_\_ o - la - mim...

Cantor Congregation

Gi - bor v' - na - a - ratz Da - gul mer' - va - vah

Cantor Congregation

Hu\_\_ sach va - ye - hi V' - tzi - va v' niv - ra - u.

Example 13. Friedmann's congregational responses repeat cantor's melodic phrase, but with words of next phrase in piyyut.

In *Ve-Khol Ma'aminim*, whereas the *hazzan* sang each half verse in a series of unending variations, a musical skill in which Friedmann excelled, the congregation sang each *Ve-Khol Ma'aminim* refrain in groups of four varying melodic patterns (SL, no. 369). In the *Adonay Melekh* refrain to *Addirey Ayyumah* the congregation sang a simplified setting of the refrain first sung by the *hazzan*, omitting melismatic elements and narrowing the *ambitus*, but it concluded each phrase with the same structural tones of the *Mi-Sinai* melody (SL, no. 323; **Example 14**).

**Andante**

Cantor Congregation

A-do - nay\_\_ me-lekh, A-do - nay\_\_ ma-lakh, A-do - nay yim  
 loch l' - o - lam\_\_ va - ed. A-do - nay\_\_ me-lekh, A-do -  
 nay\_\_ ma-lakh, A-do - nay\_\_ yim-loch l' - o - lam\_\_ va - ed.

Example 14. Friedmann's simplified *Mi-Sinai* melody as a congregational "repetition" of cantor's statement.

When he introduced new congregational melodies Friedmann strove to attain a degree of thematic continuity within sections of the liturgy. Examples include *Barukh She-Natan Torah* and *Ve-Zot Ha-Torah* in the Sabbath Torah service (SL, nos. 186 and 193) and the *Mi Khamokhah* and *Va-Yeddaber Moshe* in the Evening Service for the Three Festivals (SL, nos. 241 [a] and 242; **Example 15**).

**Maestoso**  
Congregation

Mi cha-mo-chaba-ei - lim\_ A-do- nay, mi ka- mo- chane - dar ba- ko - desh, no - ra t' hi-

Cantor

lot o - seh\_ fe - leh. Mal- chu- t' - cha ra- u va- ne- cha bo - kei- a yom lif' - nei mo- she\_

**Recitando**  
Cantor

Vay' da - ber mo- she et mo - a- dei A- do- nay el b' - nei Yis- ra- el

Congregation

Vay' da - ber Mo- she et mo - a- dei A- do- nay el b' - nei Yis- ra- el.

Example 15. Friedman's thematic continuity in congregational refrains for Festival Maariv.

Throughout *Schir Lisch'laumau* subtle influences of Lewandowski can be detected. Thus, following Lewandowski, Friedmann composed two congregational settings of the opening of *Un'tanneh Tokef* (SL, no. 363; **Example 16**).

**Moderato**  
Congregation

U- n' - ta - neh to - kef k' - du - shat ha- yom ki hu no- ra v' - a-

yom, u - vo ti - na - sei mal' - chu - te - cha v' - yi -

kon b' he - sed kis - e - cha, v' - tei- shev a - lav be - e - met.

Example 16. Friedman's Lewandowsky-style congregational opening for *Un'tanneh Tokef*.

He arranged a fully-metrical setting of *Darkekha Elohenu*, sung first by the *hazzan* and then by the congregation (SL, no. 407; **Example 17**);

**a tempo**  
Cantor, then Congregation

Dar - ke-kha e - lo - hei - nu l' - ha - a-rikh a - pe - kha, la - ra -  
ma - an' kha E - lo - hei - nu a - seh v' - lo - la - nu, r' -  
im v' - la - to - vim v' - hi - t' hi - la - te - kha. L' -  
-eh ami-da-tei nu da - lim v' - rei - kim.

*Example 17. Friedman's fully metrical Darkekha Elohenu — for cantor followed by congregation.*

he also arranged a congregational setting of the *Shelosh Esreh Middot* (SL, no. 408).

Emanuel Kirschner had functioned briefly as Second Cantor in Berlin's New Synagogue from 1879–1881. In 1881 he was appointed Chief Cantor in Munich where he officiated in the Great Synagogue (Liberal) until his retirement (Friedmann 1918:226–227). His four-volume *Tehilloth Le-El Elyon: Synagogen Gesänge* (1897–1926) is important not only for its utilization of South-German *nusah* but also for its implementation of Lewandowski's ideal: integration of cantor, choir and congregation in the musical performance of the synagogue service. It was not always an easy endeavor, and the level of congregational singing did not always meet with the success Kirschner hoped for (Kirschner 1937: 65–68). Volume I of *Tehilloth Le-El Elyon* (1896) only provided for a very small role for the congregation, but the subsequent volumes rectified this omission. In the Preface to Volume 2 (1898) Kirschner wrote the following:

I have attempted to meet the justifiable demand of giving to the congregants the opportunity, even in synagogues with a reformed liturgy, an active participation in the service, so that I have assigned to unison congregational singing a broader part in my work. In this connection I have nevertheless striven, with respect to the largest part of the pieces for congregational singing, to provide melodies which are formed in the spirit and character of the traditional old or newer synagogue modes [*Synagogenweisen*] (Kirschner 1898: *Vorwort*).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> It would be interesting to know what Kirschner meant with respect to this distinction between the “old” and “newer” synagogue modes. Among the latter, did he have the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode in mind?

Worthy of mention in Volume 2 is: (1) the responsive singing between hazzan and congregation of *Ha-Kol Yodukha*, whose historical precedent we documented earlier (TE2:8–9);<sup>58</sup> (2) the unified group of metrical congregational responses for the *Kedushah De-Yotzer* section (*Et Shem Ha-El, Kadosh, Barukh Kevod*) based upon a melody pattern in major but with a final cadence in minor, according to South-German usage (pp. 9–10);<sup>59</sup> (3) the fully responsive psalmodic rendition of Ps. 113, the opening psalm of *Hallel* (TE2:14–15);<sup>60</sup> (4) the setting for the congregation of *Ve-Zot Ha-Torah* based upon South-German Torah cantillation (TE2:24; **Example 18**);

Congregation

V'-zot ha - to - rah a - sher sam Mo - she lif - nei v' - nei Yis - ra -  
eil al pi A - do - nay b' - yad Mo - she.

Example 18. Kirschner's congregational *Ve-Zot Ha-Torah* based on South-German Torah cantillation.

(5) The newly-composed melody of *Hodo Al Eretz*, a melody which later became popular in some American synagogues (TE2:31; Nathanson 1960:98);

<sup>58</sup> Similar to Idelsohn 1933, no. 48a (Fabian Ogutsch) and 48b (Maier Kohn).

<sup>59</sup> For parallels see Scheuermann 1912, Pt. 1/B, p. 12, no. 7; Naumbourg 1847, p. 57, no. 44.

<sup>60</sup> For a similar melody pattern see Lachmann 1900, p. 90, no. 154 (Ps. 1). This chant for *Hallel* would appear to be a basic pattern for chanting all the psalms since Lachmann provides an annotation: *Auf diese Weise alle Kapitel und so abswechselnd alle Psalmen.*

(6) the rather remarkable setting of *Le-David Barukh* (Ps. 144) for the Close of the Sabbath (TE2:41–49), most of which is sung responsively, but also incorporating sections for choir as well.<sup>61</sup>

The portions for congregational singing in Volume 3 (1911), written mainly for the Three Festivals, were largely limited to the obligatory responses (based upon the appropriate *nusah*), seasonal melodies in the *Hallel* and the Priestly Blessing, and some rather effective responses for the *Kedushah* of *Musaf* (TE3, no. 51). Of the two settings of *Veshameru* involving the congregation, the first—designed for Sabbath Evening—is most noteworthy. It was constructed out of the *nusah* in *Adonay Malakh* mode for the *Shema U-Virkhoteha* as sung in Western and Central Europe.<sup>62</sup> Except for a short, central passage for the *hazzan* (extending above the octave), the entire piece was sung by the congregation. The second congregational section drew upon the internal “modulatory” phrase common to the *nusah* of both Eastern and Western Europe. In this manner the melody was fully integrated into the chant pattern of the preceding prayer texts (TE3, no. 18); **Example 19**.

The most interesting section of Volume 3 is the supplement, entitled *Jugendgottesdienst*. Many German communities arranged a special service for the youth at *minhah* on Shabbat to accommodate the considerable number of schoolchildren who attended school on Shabbat (the observant would refrain from writing) (Breuer 1992:120). Sometimes the entire weekly Torah portion was read at this service (Sinason, 1966:123). In addition to the simple Sabbath Afternoon *nusah* chanted by the *hazzan*, Kirschner provided a number of simple, yet effective unison melodies, with organ accompaniment. Among those constructed from the *nusah* are the opening of *U-Va Le-Tziyyon* and its conclusion at *Adonay Hafetz* (TE3, no. 61; **Example 20**);<sup>63</sup> the response in the *Hatzi Kaddish* with its poignant Phrygian cadence (TE3, no. 62; **Example 21**); *Va'ani Tefillati* (TE3, no. 63);<sup>64</sup> *Barukh She-Natan Torah* in the

<sup>61</sup> This piece starts as a simple responsive folk-like melody. The customary South-German melody is later momentarily introduced, but is broken off by a new choral section; only towards the end does the well-known melody finally gain a foothold, chanted between *hazzan* and the congregation (pp. 41–49). Among the many notations of the traditional South-German melody for *le-David Barukh* are Idelson 1933, no. 299a and b; Scheuermann 1912, Pt. II/D, p. 17, no. 1.

<sup>62</sup> This mode was also sung in more westerly regions of Eastern Europe.

<sup>63</sup> For parallels to *U-Va Le-Tziyyon* see Scheuermann 1912, Part 1/C no. 1 and Idelson 1933, no. 76.

<sup>64</sup> The opening phrase of Kirschner's setting, with its descent to the subtonium,

Slow and Measured  
Congregation

*mf*  
V' - sha - m' ru v' - nei Yis-ra-el et ha- shab - - bat

*mf*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a congregational section. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is 'Slow and Measured'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase in the treble clef, followed by the lyrics 'V' - sha - m' ru v' - nei Yis-ra-el et ha- shab - - bat'. The piano accompaniment is in the grand staff, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a steady bass line. There are trill ornaments (marked with a '3') on the final notes of the vocal line and the piano accompaniment.

Congregation

*mf*  
Ki shei-shet ya - mim\_\_ a - sah A - do - nay et ha-sha- ma - yim\_\_

*mf*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a congregational section. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is 'Congregation'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase in the treble clef, followed by the lyrics 'Ki shei-shet ya - mim\_\_ a - sah A - do - nay et ha-sha- ma - yim\_\_'. The piano accompaniment is in the grand staff, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a steady bass line. There are trill ornaments (marked with a '3') on the final notes of the vocal line and the piano accompaniment.

Example 19. Congregational sections in Kirschner's *Veshameru* constructed out of Western European nusach for Maariv Le-Shabbat.

Students

*mf*  
Ha - l' - lu - jah. U - va\_\_ l'-tzi-yon go - el ul' sha-vey

*mf*

fe-sha b' ya - a-kov n' - um A-do - nay... v' yiv-t' - chu v' - cha...

Detailed description: This musical score is for a congregational section. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is 'Students'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase in the treble clef, followed by the lyrics 'Ha - l' - lu - jah. U - va\_\_ l'-tzi-yon go - el ul' sha-vey'. The piano accompaniment is in the grand staff, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a steady bass line. The score concludes with a change in time signature to 3/4, followed by the lyrics 'fe-sha b' ya - a-kov n' - um A-do - nay... v' yiv-t' - chu v' - cha...'. The piano accompaniment continues in 3/4 time.

Example 20. Congregational conclusion of *Ashrei* and opening of *U-va LeTziyyon* in Kirschner's *Youth Service for Minhah Le-Shabbat*.

Students  
*mf*

A - men. Y' - heh sh' meh ra - ba m' - va - rach l' - a - lam ul - al - mey al - ma - ya...

Example 21. Phrygian cadence in congregational *Hatzi Kaddish* response, *Minhah LsShabbat*.

mode of the Weekday Torah service (TE3, no. 64);<sup>65</sup> the *Kedushah* responses in the pentatonic scale (TE3, no. 71). In addition, Kirschner provided several new melodies, such as for *Vayehi Binso'a* and *Lekha Adonay*, which appear to be simplifications of choral settings of the Torah service from the body

Moderato  
 Congregation  
*mf*

V' - zot ha - to - rah a - sher sam Mo - sheh lif - ney b' - nei Yis - ra -  
 eil al pi A - do - nay b' - yad mo - sheh.

Example 22. Kirschner's congregational *Ve-Zot Ha-Torah* based upon High Holy Day *te'amim*.

differs somewhat from Scheuermann 1912, no. 3 and Idelsohn 1933, no. 78a (Kohn), but is close to Idelsohn 1933, no. 78b (Ogutsch). All these sources agree on the placement of the finalis.

<sup>65</sup> See Baer 1883, no. 695.



of this volume. This *Minhah* service, with its large degree of congregational singing (and deceptively “simple” *nusah*) must have been quite a novelty at the time.

Volume 4 of *Tehilloth Le-El Elyon* (1926), comprising music for the High Holy Days, provided fewer opportunities for unison congregational singing. Yet the following are worthy of mention: (1) the congregational setting of *Ve-Zot Ha-Torah*, based on the *te’amim* of the High Holy Day (TE4, no. 9; **Example 22**);

(2) the setting for congregational singing of the *Shelosh Esreh Midot* in the *selihot* of the High Holy Days and the larger liturgical unit of which it is part (*El Melech*). Here, Kirschner effectively exploited the pentatonic core of the simple South-German *nusah* for this section of the *selihot* (TE4, no. 38); **Example 23**);<sup>66</sup>

(3) of the five settings of *Ki Anu Amekha*, two were arranged as responsive singing, the congregation repeating each melodic phrase sung by the *hazzan*

*p* Cantor  
V' sa lah - ta... la-a-vo-nei-nu ul- ha- to - tein-nu un' hal - ta - nu,

Congregation, parlando  
*mf* s' lach la-nu a-vi-nu ki ha - ta - nu, m' hal la-nu mal-ke-nu ki fa-sha - nu, ki a-

*mf*

ta A-do-nay tov v' - sa- lah v' rav he-sed l' chol kor - e - cha.

Example 23. Kirschner's responsive *Selihot* in accompanied South German *nusah*.

<sup>66</sup> See Idelsohn 1933, no. 240 and Baer 1883, no. 1302. Kirschner's three settings of the *Shelosh Esreh Midot* in the Torah service were entirely for *hazzan* or choir (TE4, nos. 3–5).

with the text of the following verse of the *piyyut* (TE4, nos. 50 and 52);<sup>67</sup> (4) the two settings of *Avinu Malkenu*, in which the congregation repeats each line sung by the *hazzan* (TE4, nos. 58 and 59). The second of these is an arrangement of a well-known South-German melody for this text.<sup>68</sup>

The cantor-composer Hermann Zivi (1867–1942), a rising figure in the German cantorate in the early years of the twentieth century, should also be included among those concerned with promoting congregational song (Frühauf 2003–2004). A graduate of the Teachers' Seminary in Karlsruhe, Baden, Zivi served as *hazzan* in Dusseldorf (1893) and Elberfeld (1898). The role of the congregation in synagogue services was a constant element in his musical thought and his synagogue compositions (ibid.:96). Unfortunately Zivi was less gifted in composing effective congregational melodies. They tend to suffer from an excessive range and an overabundance of awkward skips and leaps. Furthermore, Zivi did not exploit the possibilities for creating melodies out of the *nusah*, relying too heavily on the major scale. For example, unlike Kirschner, he did not utilize the Sabbath Afternoon *nusah* in his *Gebete und Gesänge für Jugend-Gottesdienst* (Zivi 1895), and the congregational *Veshameru* in his *Freitag-Abend Gottesdienst* (Zivi 1906:31) was set purely in major.

### Forging a New Sense of Community: the Role of Congregational Song

Notwithstanding the contribution of the aforesaid cantors and composers in furthering congregational musical participation, in the post- World War I years of the Weimar period, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the type of services held in the big synagogues of the big urban centers. As one layperson in Berlin put it, “As magnificent as our large community synagogues are in many respects, and although much that is beautiful is offered in the services, they fail to produce any real living effect...One arrives, one listens to the service more or less passively, one departs” (Meyer 1998: 20). The problem was seen as a symptom of a wider malaise, in which the *Gemeinde* (the Jewish “congregation”) had ceased to be a community in any meaningful sense. It was merely a *Gesellschaft*, an association of tax-paying individuals. Increasingly there were voices speaking of the need for true *Gemeinschaft* (community) rather than mere *Gesellschaft*.

<sup>67</sup> TE4, no. 50, has a particularly lyrical, yet simple, melody line.

<sup>68</sup> Idelsohn 1933, Pt. 2, no. 194; Sulzer 1840/1954 (OPC, Vol. 7) no. 462a (set for *hazzan* and choir, but only for the first three verses).

Voices were raised to make the synagogue once more a center of social interaction rather than solely a sacred place for divine worship, on the Christian model. *Gemeinschaft* was sought through more community-centered forms of synagogue architecture, such as the seating in the round of the Prinzregentstrasse Synagogue in Berlin, dedicated in 1930 (ibid.:23). Inevitably, *Gemeinschaft* was also sought through liturgy and music. When, for example, the new Hamburg Temple was built in 1931, its chief cantor, Leon Kornitzer, expressed that the time had come to introduce more community singing based on traditional motifs, instead of relying so heavily on the music of the choir (ibid.). One young Berlin rabbi called for a *Gebetgemeinschaft*, a community of prayer where everyone was a full participant, not merely “a pious listener” (ibid.:24). Beginning in 1923, a group of Berlin Liberal Jews started to organize alternative services, and soon several such groups sprang up in different parts of the city (ibid.:29–30).<sup>69</sup>

Congregational song was a vital component of the new alternative services. The participation of all was encouraged. Anything that smacked of a performance was scrupulously avoided. Services were led by a *hazzan* (lay or professional), but he was to see himself as *sheliah tzibbur*, and not a performer. Even within the context of Liberal services, prayer was to be more like the old simple *davenen* (ibid.:26). In 1927 a liturgy for the Friday Night Service, entitled *Das Freitagabend-Gebet*, was published (ibid.:27). The prayers and responses sung by the congregation were indicated “*Gemeindegesang*,” and notation of the melodies was provided in an appendix.<sup>70</sup>

The congregational melodies of *Das Freitagabend-Gebet* were merely those of Lewandowski, simplified where considered necessary. Increasingly, however, the nineteenth-century musical style of Lewandowski and like composers was beginning to be considered passé. A new musical idiom was sought, one considered more authentically Jewish, more modal and rhythmically free.

The ground-breaking work in this direction was Heinrich Schalit’s *Eine Freitagabend-Liturgie*, first performed in Berlin’s Lützowstrasse Synagogue in September 1932 (Schalit 1933). Although set for cantor, choir and organ, Schalit did not consider this service to be only art music. As he explained in the Preface, the active participation of the congregation played an integral part in the work’s performance, since all the responses and unison sections of the

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<sup>69</sup> One of them later merged with the new Prinzregentstrasse Synagogue, which in turn absorbed elements of the former group (ibid.).

<sup>70</sup> The liturgy, entitled *Das Freitagabend-Gebet*, was printed as issue no. 10 of the *Die Gemeinschaft* (December 18, 1927).

choral pieces were intended to be sung by the congregation. That Schalit used the term *Gemeinschaftsgesang* (community song) rather than the customary *Gemeindegesang* (congregational song), is no coincidence (ibid., Preface). The *Eine Freitagabend-Liturgie* was greatly acclaimed, but the spiritual renewal of German Liberal Judaism, to which Schalit hoped this work would contribute, was cut short by the cruel tide of history.

## Conclusion

Some form of congregational musical participation always played a role in the German synagogue, in which responsorial singing constituted its most constant element, and the one most receptive to renewal in the modern period. Melodies of a more metrical nature were also popular, but as we have seen, while some of them invited congregational participation, this was not necessarily always the case. In the modern period, new choral pieces soon became congregational, and composers like Lewandowski consciously furthered the advancement of congregational song, a trend also encouraged by the publication of various songsters. A significant limitation, however, always remained to the extension of congregational singing, for as far as can be ascertained, German congregations never participated (except for the *Kedushah* responses) in the repetition of the *amidah* by the *hazzan*. This remained the preserve and responsibility of the cantor alone, unlike the trend in contemporary America (Tarsi 2002:64–65).

Whether German congregational singing would have ever developed to the extent that it did in the United States in the later twentieth century cannot, of course, be answered. Connection between the growth of congregational song in the German synagogue and that in the American synagogue, a topic beyond the limits of the present study, remains an area that invites further research.

## Abbreviations Utilized in the Text

HOM = *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*

OPC = Out of Print Classics Series of Synagogue Music

KR = *Kol Rinnah U'T'fillah*

SBJ = *Schire Beth Ja'acob*

SL = *Schir Lisch'laumau*

TE = *Tehillot Le-El Elyon*

TW = *Todah W'simrah*

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## Emissary in Prayer or Song Leader? What the Rabbinic Responsa Have to Say

By Akiva Zimmermann (translated by Joseph Levine)

The term “congregational singing” does not occur in any halachic discussion of synagogue prayer or practice. The Daily Sabbath, Festival and High Holy Day services stand in place of sacrificial rites that were ministered by kohanim (Priests) in the Second Temple and supported by the singing and playing of leviyim (Levites).<sup>1</sup> Since the Temple’s destruction,

we no longer have the kohen at his service,  
nor the levi on his platform,  
nor the Israelites at their station.<sup>2</sup>

The leviyim, on their platform, accompanied the kohanim at their sacrificial service. The hazzan (cantor) of today, the congregation’s delegated emissary in prayer (also known as *sheli’ach tsibbur*), stands in place of the Levite. Nowhere does rabbinic literature record that worshipers who entered the courtyards of the Great and Holy House became “singers” who helped the leviyim to fulfill their sacred task.

In describing the order of the Temple service during Festivals, the Talmud does mention the people answering “Halleluyah” after every verse of the Hallel Psalms that were sung over the Paschal offering.<sup>3</sup> During longer prayers, congregational participation took the more limited form of responding “Amein” at a blessing’s conclusion. The privilege of singing during public worship wasn’t—and still isn’t—up for grabs, for the simple reason that not every worshiper is meant to be a singer. So-called “congregational” singing is the enemy of hazzanut (the cantor’s art) and the antithesis of traditional prayer. That is why prayerbooks have taken pains to designate what is to be said by the kahal (congregation) and what is to be recited by the hazzan.

In the “Laws of Prayer” section of an old Festival prayerbook I once found specific prohibition against the congregation’s “helping” their *sheli’ach tsibbur*.

It is necessary to warn worshipers who, thinking they are performing a mitzvah in singing aloud passages that are the hazzan’s obligation to recite, that they

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<sup>1</sup> Babylonian Talmud (henceforth: BT), B’rachot 26b (*t’fillot k’neged t’midim tiknum*).

<sup>2</sup> Daily Birkot HaShachar, *ArtScroll Siddur*, 1984: 42.

<sup>3</sup> BT, Sukkah 36b.

are unknowingly violating another commandment: the prohibition against mentioning God's name in vain. Let them better keep silent, and listen to the hazzan with intense devotion.

The great halachic authority Rabbi Ephrayim Zalman Margolies (1760-1828) who lived in Brody, Galicia, compiled the book *Mateh Efrayim* as a source for all the laws of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to be observed by Ashkenazic Jewry. In it he wrote, "The hazzan alone recites the prayer *Ochilah La'El* ("I Beseech God"), for it is his obligation, and therefore the kahal should not recite it with him."<sup>4</sup>

Two other examples of prayers that are offlimits to worshipers: *MiSod Chachamim* ("...I Open My Mouth in Prayer"); and *Yareti Biftsoti* ("Frightened, I Pray"), since these were assigned exclusively to the hazzan and are not to be said communally. The Talmud elsewhere<sup>5</sup> relates the manner in which *Shirat HaYam* (Song at the Sea)<sup>6</sup> was recited.

Moses said, 'I sing to Adonai,'  
and the people said, 'I sing to Adonai,'  
Moses said, 'For He has triumphed,'  
and the people said, 'I sing to Adonai.'

Here we see one type of alternation between prayer leader and congregation: a constantly varying call with a constantly repeating response; but that is as close as hazzan and kahal ever come to singing the same text at the same time.

Much more worthy of our consideration is the intrusion of congregational singing upon the hazzan's repetition of the Amidah. The halachah specifies that the kahal must hear the hazzan's repetition and answer "Amen" at the conclusion of every Amidah blessing.<sup>7</sup> The one thing it must not do is "assist" the hazzan in any way. This principle remains intact even when time is a factor. The ruling is that the hazzan recites aloud the opening three blessings of the Amidah—including the Kedushah responsively with the kahal—after which everyone continues in silence to the end of the Amidah. Among Ashkenazic Jewry this solution for getting people to work—or home to supper—on time became known as a *hoicheh kedusheh* ("audible Kedushah").

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<sup>4</sup> *Mateh Efrayim*, Section 592.

<sup>5</sup> BT, Sotah 30b.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 15: 1-21.

<sup>7</sup> Rabbi Isaac Alfasi on BT, Rosh Hashanah 35a.

Professor Ezra Fleisher's research into the history of prayer reveals that the entire Kedushah originally lay within the hazzan's domain, and the blessing ending *Ha'El HaKadosh* took the following form.

*Atah kadosh v'shimcha kadosh uk'doshim b'chol yom y'hal'lucha sela, kakatuv, "V'kara zeh el zeh v'amar: 'Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai ts'vaot m'lo chol haarets k'vodo;" v'ne'emar, "Baruch k'vod Adonai mimkomo." Baruch Atah, Adonai, ha'El haKadosh.*

All of the Amidah's third blessing—Birkat HaShem—was originally recited by the hazzan alone. Only in later centuries was what came to be called the Kedushah—or Sanctification—divided among hazzan and kahal.

In his book, *The Emergence and Development of Yotsrot*, Professor Fleisher states,

In early times, piyyutim (non-statutory poetic portions of the liturgy) were recited aloud only by the hazzan. He selected them according to the holy day and chose the order in which he would recite them...Very early, the piyyanim (composers of piyyut) specified passages in their works for the kahal to recite as well. This depended...on the genre of piyyut, on local custom and on the intellectual level of the worshippers.<sup>8</sup>

I believe the same standard should be applied to congregational singing which, generally speaking, is introduced indiscriminately.

The late-thirteenth-century codifier of Ashkenazic law, Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (known as the *Rosh*),<sup>9</sup> is very emphatic on this point.

Anyone who sings along with the hazzan shows himself as irresponsible... It is proper to reproach those who raise their voices and 'assist' the hazzan in repeating the Shmoneh Esreh (Amidah of eighteen benedictions)...it is the worshippers' duty to concentrate in silence upon the hazzan's recitation of the blessings and the Kaddish (Doxology), and to respond with 'amein' or 'y'hei shmeh raba mevarach...' ("May God's Great Name be Blessed...") afterwards. So, too, in the Kedushah must they wait for the hazzan to recite 'Nakdishach V'naaritsach'...("We Sanctify and Extol You...;" wording of the Sephardic rite) until he reaches 've'amar' ("and he said:"), whereupon they respond, *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh*...("Holy, Holy, Holy...").

According to the *Rosh* there exists a division of labor between hazzan and kahal, and neither one should presume to perform the other's work. Rather

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<sup>8</sup> Ezra Fleisher. *HaYotsrot B'Hit'havutam Uv'Hitpatchutam* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Responsa*, 4:19.

should each carry out their assigned task. The hazzan represents worshipers in prayer; let them, therefore, rely upon his representation and not interfere with it.

In his collection of responsa, *Chavot Ya'ir*, Rabbi Hayyim Ya'ir sets forth the manner in which piyyutim are to be recited. He concludes, "The payy'tanim composed their lyric works specifically for the hazzan to recite." In our own day the chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, — Hayyim David HaLevi<sup>10</sup> — has ruled on the issue.

It is clearly spelled out in the halachah that worshipers cannot sing the Kad-dish or the Kedushah with the hazzan. I say this, knowing that in almost all Sephardic communities the kahal participate in singing Kedushah with the hazzan. Yet, I am aware of no rabbinic precedent on which they can base this practice.

The subject merits a detailed investigation. Unfortunately, the status of prayer today has dropped considerably, and the boundary between hazzan and kahal has blurred altogether. Wherever congregational singing has undermined the hazzan's function as sheliach tsibbur, the nusach—or modal chant in which prayer was offered for generations—has disappeared.

Let me cite an example. Removal of the Torah scrolls from the Holy Ark on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was always done to a special nusach. I recently attended High Holy Day services in a synagogue where the hazzan removed the scroll and sang Sh'ma Yisrael (Hear, O Israel) to a melody used every Shabbat of the year. Later, when I mentioned it to him, he told me, "The congregation is not used to the High Holy Day chant for Sh'ma, and wouldn't have been able to repeat it. That's why I didn't sing Sh'ma to the proper nusach." Here, in microcosm, we see how congregational singing affects not only what the hazzan does, but also what the kahal is expected to do.

Over a hundred years ago the Yiddish writer Mendele Mocher Sforim sounded an alarm over the phenomenon of congregational singing and its disruption of cantorial function. His short story, *Emek HaBochoh* ("Vale of Tears") satirically depicts the effects of this upheaval upon the hazzan, Leizer Yankl.

Leizer Yankl is, after all, the congregation's sheli'ach tsibbur, who stands and pleads for them on the Day of Judgement each year. But—as is their habit—the Children of Israel always mix into everyone else's business. And even if their representative before God is one in ten-thousand, an advocate whose equal cannot easily be found, they butt into his presentation of their case and add their

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<sup>10</sup> *Aseh L'cha Rav*, Vol. 7, responsum 10.

own two cents' worth, all the while thinking: 'I also know a thing or two, and certainly as much as he does. True, he's acting as my agent before the Ribono shel Olom (Master of the Universe). But even so, one cannot rely completely on him. Since I don't depend on him for my livelihood, it's best that I speak on my own behalf!' And a din rises on high, a yelling and a screaming that only God in heaven can sort out and fathom exactly what it is that His poor Jews are asking from Him.<sup>11</sup>

As a result of today's congregational yelling, our younger generation no longer recognizes—or reacts to—the synagogue chants that form the basis of Jewish worship. The hazzan has gone from congregational emissary in prayer to congregational song leader. And the songs he (or she) leads hold nothing in common with the purity and devotion of traditional nusach.

How I long for the sound—the heady atmosphere—of simple daven'n (chanted prayer). That's reason enough to continue petitioning the One Who Hears Prayer for return of the hazzan to his amud (prayer stand, facing the Ark) and the return of hazzanut to its former glory as in days of old.

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<sup>11</sup> *Kol Kitvei Mendele Mocher Sforim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1951), p. 169.

## The Cantor's Spiritual Challenge: Defining "Agency" In Prayer

by Benjie Ellen Schiller

It is not proving easy, in a spiritual sense, for *sh'lichei tsibbur* to lead congregational singing in today's synagogue. The problem lies not in the lack of enthusiasm or interest of the congregation. In fact, our congregants appreciate the importance of music in prayer more than ever before. They are actively involved in the service and singing enthusiastically. There is, however, a lack of inspiration coming from *us*, the cantorial leaders. We are finding ourselves singing/chanting the same pieces, week in and week out, with the same expression for every service.

We come to our profession with hopes of bringing *kavvanah*, spiritual intention to prayer. We come to our congregations knowing that the music and texts of our tradition, when sung from the heart, have the power to bring holiness and wholeness to a broken world. But in the midst of today's liturgical styles we cantors seem to have only limited opportunities to bring that expression to the service. So much of today's synagogue music is sung by the entire congregation. The cantor of today functions, to a great extent, as a leader of community singing. The prayers are largely a group rendering, necessitating particular styles of repertoire, a diminished solo role for the cantor, and limited avenues for particular kinds of cantorial expression.

Clearly, our congregants need to hear and to sing the familiar music they know and love. We *sh'lichei tsibbur* understand and appreciate the idea that singing the familiar tunes and chants is *prayer itself* for those who regularly come to our services. Contrary to our own experience as leaders, the congregation finds the routine of the musical liturgy renewing and spiritually sustaining. (And so it has been for as long as prayer has existed.)

The problem, as I see it, is that we professionals are becoming spiritually disenfranchised from the congregations we lead. What congregants see as an ambiance of stability, rootedness and comfort, cantors view as a limited venue for expressivity and prayerfulness. Sameness, we are finding, can lead to dullness. We risk our own prayers becoming rote and devoid of inspiration. Our language of prayer has consisted of a musical repertoire rich in an array of cantorial styles. We yearn for the inspiration such a complex repertoire provides us. Yet the congregation's need to sing the familiar tunes limits our possibilities for varying the repertoire and developing a balance of expression

and style in the music. We lose our interest musically, and in the process, lose our interest spiritually.

Perhaps some of the challenge resides within us, the leaders. When we lead the congregation in the same music for the hundredth time it is hard for us not to become set in our ways of expression. Whether it be a folk song, a simple chant, or Sulzer and Lewandowski, one should render the prayer with conviction. The focus should be *how* one sings to God. We understand the language of interpretation and expressivity in our solo or choral repertoire. In contrast, to be quite honest, a hundred people singing the same unison melody every week is about as graceful and heartfelt as a herd of elephants marching all at once. How can we leaders prevent the deadening of a prayer when its musical rendition bores us to tears? How can one derive meaning from music that becomes tiresome?

I know what you're thinking. It's that same old tired tune. How can I find meaning or inspiration when the music simply becomes *too* familiar? How about spontaneity in prayer, some sense of the unexpected? We long for subtlety and fluidity in the music, a variation of tempi and dynamics. Is such expression possible when all sing together?

The truth is that we all desire genuine, heart-filled expression. It is a misconception that the people we serve want to sing the liturgy exactly the same way, every time they pray. They might think that's what they want, but I beg to differ. They know dullness and monotony when they hear it. They feel as unmoved as their leaders when prayer has no spark of life.

Perhaps the sameness or the routine need not necessarily lead to dullness. I propose we not go into cruise control the minute we hear/play the introduction of a familiar piece and begin to sing the first notes. Our expression need not be identical to what it was the week before. Each day is new; each prayer offers a new opportunity for reaching further. The innate capacity for expressivity lies within each of us, from the professional musician to those who cannot carry a tune. It takes compassionate, sensitive leadership to enable the entire congregation to sing with tenderness, intensity, or playfulness. Such emotion can be modeled and taught. The challenge lies mostly in our attitude, both musically and psychologically. Consider the following:

1. **We must re-examine the way we measure excellence in the music of our service.** In the performance world, musical excellence involves the rehearsed performance of a solo or ensemble performed by professionals and usually involving complex music. The goals are technical proficiency, artistic mastery and interpretive expressivity. In the prayer world, musical excellence requires



sincerity in one's expression, a clear connection to the text, musical mastery and communication that moves others to pray.

2. **To take the simple and make it holy requires compassion and patience.** The singing of music that invites participation is a prayerful and sometimes cathartic experience for others. Our job is to find ways to create such moments within each musical style we offer.
3. **The usage of participatory music in the synagogue need not negate the usage of all other cantorial music.** Since when has the singing of one musical style preempted the singing of other styles?
4. **Many creative possibilities exist for growth and change in your service.** The key is balance. Think holistically about the flow of the service in its entirety. When changes are presented sensitively, miracles are possible.
5. **Artistry in prayer comes from one's intention as much as from one's performance.** When a leader merely "gets through" a prayer, saving the real expression for other pieces, what is the message that is conveyed? Our goal is to uncover the prayer within *all* of the music, whatever the musical style.
6. **Spontaneity is not a lost art.** Variation is a given in the interpretation of both cantorial and folk music. Why not enliven and vary the ways we render such pieces? Is there only one accompaniment and one tempo for *Oseh Shalom*? Try to experiment with tempi, dynamics, etc., so as to render more expressively those works with no set arrangement. Prepare the accompanist — or choir, in a traditional synagogue — with several arrangements of a given piece. Trust your instincts. Respond to the mood of the congregation in the service. Be ready to choose the arrangement of the piece that best expresses that prayer, at that moment. Your accompanist or choir leader needs only a cue and a page turn to follow you.
7. **Remember that the piece is still meant for the congregation to sing.** Strive for expression that enriches the piece without overwhelming the inherent character and shape of the melody. The goal is not to confuse the congregation.
8. **Use the choir as plants.** Teach the melody of a new piece to the choir at a rehearsal before the service. Spread out the choir members among the congregation. Empower them to be leaders to support the congregation's learning of new repertoire. (Merri Arian, on the faculty at HUC, suggests the choir not sing a full arrangement with harmony until the congregation has mastered the piece. When the congregation can comfortably carry the melody on its own, the choir may add the new harmony.)
9. **Be present and attuned.** Strive for *tsimtsum* to empower the congregation to sing with confidence. (Hold back and listen at every possible opportunity.) Try to receive as well as give. Our congregants can become a heavenly choir if we let them.

The sacred enterprise in which we are engaged demands our attention to prayerfulness, whatever its musical language. We will continue to strive for a healthy balance of musical styles; this is our mandate. But let us remember that God's presence resides not only in the music we love but also in the melodies we struggle with. May we bring openness and understanding to these challenges, ever striving to sing the songs of our people with renewed vigor and sacred intention.

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# Congregational Singing as a Norm of Performance within the Modal Framework of Ashkenazi Liturgical Music

by Boaz Tarsi

## The Modal Framework

Discussions of theory of Ashkenazi liturgical music are scarce. Not only few and far between, these discussions are usually interspersed, or incorporated within, or can only be extracted from narratives that are primarily historical- or comparative-musicology or as occurs more often in the latter part of the twentieth century, within context-oriented ethnomusicological discourse. Other topics that are related to the prayer music of the Ashkenazi tradition and its affiliated customs are also found lodged within a variety of non-musical discussions or contexts whose underlying paradigm is not a musical one. In my explorations of synagogue music I have come to discover that most topics can be better explicated and allow room for emergence of a much clearer picture when we examine this discipline as a “modal framework.”

Coined by Daliah Cohen, the term “modal framework” served her as a paradigm in which to examine and explicate various repertoires outside of the Western common practice.<sup>1</sup> The modal framework paradigm suits these repertoires well because it can organize systematically their constituent musical variables and incorporate interrelationships among them as well as a mixture of extra-musical factors, whose function in these musics is an integral part of and inseparable from the musical variables. In very broad-brush strokes such modal framework would be defined as the aggregate synthesis of its distinct musical and extra-musical components, but more importantly, as the total arrangement of the particular connections and interrelationships among them.

The musical and extra-musical factors that are controlled by the modal framework vary from one body of repertoire to another. By “control” I am referring to those factors that within the given modal framework are not left entirely up to the performer but rather dictated by a variety of considerations, almost always as a result of some interconnections among some of its constituent factors. Thus the “controlled” factors that comprise the modal framework are also those that maintain a variety of interrelationships among them.

We may gain a better understanding of this concept as we examine the primary considerations involved in classifying the liturgical music of Ashkenazi tradition as one such case of modal framework.

<sup>1</sup> Cohen 1971a, 1986.

The musical factors in the Ashkenazi liturgical tradition that are clearly controlled (and therefore interrelated) are scales, motifs and musical characteristics,<sup>2</sup> *Steigers*,<sup>3</sup> intervals, free tetrachords and pentachords (those that are separate from a complete scale), melodies, range, and ambitus. In addition, there may be a certain degree of control over meter<sup>4</sup> and at this stage

<sup>2</sup> The detailed explanation of what I mean by “musical characteristics” and how they are different from motifs is beyond the scope of this discussion. In short, “musical characteristic” is here used to mean a constituent member of the set of the minimal variables that each of the motivic variants from which it is extracted should have. Thus a musical characteristic is a blue-print of sorts, a code for a spectrum of derivative motifs and their variants. The closest concept to this model is the idea of “meme” as introduced in Dawkins 1976. For an illustration of what these musical characteristics comprise in two specific cases (*Adonai Malach* and *Magen Avot*) see Tarsi 2001-2002: 61-63 and Tarsi 2001: 10-14.

<sup>3</sup> Although much discussion, research and clear explication is still to be pursued regarding the definition and meaning of *Steiger*, I use this traditional term in reference to the scale system of this modal framework. By definition, the *Steiger* system does not consist of scales only, but rather constitutes a scalar framework for improvisation on given motifs and other musical characteristics within an intricate network of inter-relationships with other musical and extra-musical factors. The study of *Steiger* is not within the scope of this article. For a clearer, although initial and partial discussions of this term and an exploration of the phenomena it represents, see Avenary 1960: 190-191, 194 (primarily an attempt to “translate” the term from its insider’s usage), Avenary 1971, Levine 1980-81: 13-15, and Tarsi 2002a: 178-179 and 2001-2002. For other discussions, which can only be read critically and understood within context and era, see primarily Cohon 1950, Idelsohn 1933: xx-xxvi, Levine 1989: 79-106 (discussed as “the principal prayer modes”), and Werner 1976: 46-64. Indeed one of the most significant outcomes of the modal framework model is that it bypasses the dead-end previous discussions have encountered when attempting to use “scales, motifs, typical phrases,” etc, in the definition of *Steiger*. Within the modal framework paradigm, *Steiger* is one component in a larger structure and as such it expresses itself, depending on the specific case, as a particular aggregate of relationships among various musical variables, as well as among these musical variables and a variety of extra musical components. For two case studies in this matter see Tarsi 2001 and 2001-2002.

<sup>4</sup> To what extent meter is a factor in this modal framework is yet to be fully examined. At the present stage of inquiry, it seems that meter is mostly a free, uncontrolled variable that most of the time is not interrelated to other factors. Nevertheless, it seems to play some role, and thus, connected to some other factors when it comes to metrical texts (such as *Piyyut*), certain musical characteristics whose constituents may include a distinction between accented and non-accented notes, and of course, metrical tunes and the occasion and text considerations in distinguishing between

of my exploration, I would leave rhythm as uncontrolled.<sup>5</sup> To what degree form is controlled, and even what constitutes “form” in this repertoire is to be explored, and it seems that dynamics, timbre, intonation, melisma versus non-melisma, texture, and vocal production, are not controlled. The extra-musical factors involved are primarily text, time of day, calendar (day of the week, day of the month, week of the year, month) holiday, season, occasion, and ritual. The question of ethos as an extra-musical factor, to what degree it is involved in this modal framework and what its function is, if any, is the topic of an article currently under preparation.<sup>6</sup>

The variety of musical and extra-musical factors and their interrelationships is reflected across all of the various constituents of the repertoire. Each given repertoire sample can thus be examined as one case of such interrelationships. As such, these connections may be reflected in macro connections as large as for example, Kabbalat Shabbat → *Adonai Malach*; Shabbat Shacharit *K’dushat HaYom* → *Ahavah Rabbah*; or “*Mein Sheva* paragraphs” on Friday night → *Magen Avot*. Granted, each one of these large categories contains other, more detailed levels of interrelationships. Within *Magen Avot* for example, we can “zoom-in” onto one subset of micro-connections. One such example may involve a very high level of control, specifically as the text, motif, and function are very specifically defined:

day of the week	Friday
time of day	evening
ritual	cantor’s repetition substitute
<i>Steiger</i>	<i>Magen Avot</i>
scale	minor
text	one specific word — <i>Vaychulu</i>
motif	1-(3)-5
function	opener

usage of metrical tunes and non-metrical material.

<sup>5</sup> The notion of rhythm (as well as meter) in this repertoire, calls for a different paradigm from that of the Western common practice, because it has no clear beat (see Frigyesi 1993). Granted, there certainly are characteristic rhythmic traits to this repertoire. Nevertheless, at the moment rhythm does not seem to be controlled by the modal framework, thus there is no set, prescribed way by which it is interconnected with other factors.

<sup>6</sup> In Avenary 1971: 18-19 the author takes an initial step toward tackling the issue of ethos in connection to the *Adonai Malach Steiger*. The starting point for his attempt is the title *Adonai Malach* (The Lord Reigns) itself. Avenary thus examines a few liturgical references to the subject of kingship and finds little evidence to sup-

The foregoing paradigm presents a high degree of specificity in these connections and a low degree of freedom for variants or textual connection or other functions. Yet another “micro level,” one with a lower level of specificity both in defining the motivic material, as well as making connection to extra-musical components, would be:

day of the week	Saturday
time of day	before midday
ritual	cantor's repetition
<i>Steiger</i>	<i>Ahavah Rabbah</i>
text	any within <i>K'dushat HaYom</i> for both Musaf and Shacharit
motif	any free combination of notes selected from a major pentachord based on lower 7 of the <i>Ahavah Rabbah</i> scale <sup>7</sup>
function	pre-concluding phrase

Within this concept we can also incorporate any observations, discussions, or explications of congregational singing as parts of the paradigm. *The premise would be that congregational singing, itself, also bears a characteristic relation to the modal framework, because it is one aspect of yet another factor that this framework seems to control or dictate, a factor that I call “norm of performance.”*

It is worth noting at this point that currently among modern cantorial, rabbinical, and educational circles, the word “performance” in the context of the synagogue service has taken on a pejorative sense. The evident apprehension over use of this word is primarily a reaction to the affectation of, over-involvement in, and a high priority assigned to the concern for the cantor's own presentation rather than the primary objective of serving the community in delivering its prayer to God. Nevertheless, use of the word “performance” as the expression for an undesirable occurrence, and attributing to the word a derogatory connotation in this field is not only unjustifiable but is also in the way of a clear view of the reality.

To begin with, as is the case in all circumstances in which an activity is done by an individual in the presence of what is technically an audience, there would by default bound to be an element deemed undesirable (in the circles mentioned) owing to the very fact of the performance's existence. But more important, the original meaning of the word as simply the execution of an action as in performing a task needs not be lost because of *de rigueur* notions of propriety. Moreover, this ordinary usage of the word is necessary

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port a connection between the mode and this idea, and therefore the notion of ethos altogether.

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 14.

and crucial to any serious discussion and genuine observation of the paradigmatic material under review.

So far as the phenomena this term legitimately represents within the modular paradigmatic discipline discussed here, “norm of performance” refers to the variety of manners by which the prayer and ritual find their respective vocal expressions. These include cantorial recitation (with a variety of levels of embellishments),<sup>8</sup> responsive chant, *b'rachot* responsorial, other responsorials, cantor's framing,<sup>9</sup> cantorial fantasia,<sup>10</sup> “dry” semi-spoken declamation (such as done in *Kaddish Shalem* or *Mi Sheberach* for individuals) speaking, whispering, mumbling, silence, congregational chanting, heterophonic chant mumbling,<sup>11</sup> and unison congregational signing of metrical tunes.

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<sup>8</sup> In insider parlance this is known as “*davenin*,” or “straight *davenin*.”

<sup>9</sup> This term refers to the norm in which the cantor chants the first and last few lines of given paragraphs or designated sections. In between the opening and closing lines the cantor chants, the norm may be any combinations of, or moving in and out of silence, whispering, semi-chant, mumbling, or heterophonic chant mumbling. If the text calls for it, this norm may include a *b'rachot* responsorial (typically at the closing of the section.)

<sup>10</sup> I use the term “cantorial fantasia” in the spirit (although not exactly the same meaning) of Avenary 1968. Although not used very often, and almost never within this context, Avenary's term is by far more appropriate than the insider's term “recitative.” The nature and characteristics of this genre (which sounds rather like an elaborate aria, including cadenza-like sections, coloratura gestures, and much embellishment) are the exact opposite of the definition and traits of the recitative in the general Western music literature. See also Wohlberg 1982, 1987-88, and Ephros 1976. The cantorial fantasia is probably the least common norm of performance in modern and post modern America, where it has been replaced by English or Hebrew reading (either by the Rabbi, the congregation, or responsively), with possible cantor's recitation and possibly interspersed with an occasional congregational tune, various combinations of these norms of performance, or omitting a part or all of the related text. This, in essence, constitutes one of the cases in which the music, specifically the norm of performance, has a significant effect on the textual aspect of the liturgy. Specifically, certain textual sections are slowly disappearing, or at least, are not read or expressed, because of the original norm of performance that was assigned to them (cantorial fantasia). Thus the original norm of performance (or more accurately, the attitude toward it) becomes the cause for the loss of certain textual parts of the liturgy.

<sup>11</sup> What I here call heterophonic chant-mumbling is one of the most typical characteristics of the authentic synagogue sound. It occurs when each member of the

The various norms of performance can be combined or interspersed in different combinations. For example, *K'dushah* combines responsorials, cantorial recitation, congregational singing, and heterophonic chant mumbling, and *Sh'ma uVirchoteha* combines cantor's framing, cantorial recitation with (at times) congregational singing, heterophonic chant mumbling, silence, and *b'rachot* responsorial.

From the examination of the various factors within the modal framework of Ashkenazi liturgical music, it is clear that norm of performance is treated with varying degrees of freedom and is interconnected to musical and extra-musical variables. These primarily concern tonality and scale or *Steiger* but also given melodies (for example, the various "*MiSinai* tunes"), metric and rhythmical considerations, and to some degree, as I demonstrate later, motivic considerations.<sup>12</sup> The extra musical factors include given texts, occasion, season, and ritual. To sum up briefly, norm of performance is yet another constituent of the modal framework, and as such, a "zoom in" to one particular connection such as the one I presented above, may look like the following, when norm of performance is added:

day of week	Friday
times of day	evening
mode	"Friday Night mode" (applicable motifs in major or minor, depending on version)
ritual	<i>b'rachot</i> before the Amidah
text	<i>Sh'ma uVirchoteha</i>
norm of performance	cantor's framing with congregational heterophonic chant-mumbling, and <i>b'rachot</i> responsorials.

congregation quietly (almost to himself) mumbles chant-like patterns, approximating the same musical gesture on the same text (although not clearly enunciating it) but not on the same absolute pitch, speed, rhythm, or the exact musical pattern. Seroussi 1997 explores the various functions and liturgical aspects associated with the same phenomenon, which he labels as "sound." I offer that there may be a connection between the various "sound" phenomena and norms of performance and as such, this connection constitutes another component within the modal framework.

<sup>12</sup> See discussion of Wohlberg's "*Kad'shenu B'Mitsvotcha*" and example 1 below.



Or:

time of year/occasion	High Holidays
time of day	evening
scale	major
ritual	<i>b'rachot</i> before the Amidah
text	<i>l'ela ul'ela mikol birchata; Mi Chamocha; Adonai yimloch le'olam va'ed; hapores sukkat shalom</i>
norm of performance	congregational singing, metrical tune.

In a similar manner we can connect the liturgical complex: occasion → Yom Kippur; time of day → any; ritual → *S'lichot*; text → *Sh'ma Kolenu*; *Steiger*/mode → "*S'lich*a mode,"<sup>13</sup> scale **g** minor + Ukrainian Dorian; textual structure → quasi-psalm symmetrical strophic lines; norm of performance → responsorial with heterophonic chant mumbling.

Other examples may include responsorial with heterophonic chant mumbling and metrical tunes during *K'dusha*, congregational singing for *Halleluya* in the *Shofarot* section of Rosh Hashanah or a cantorial fantasia for *Ata Nigleta* in the same section. Although I am not accounting for them here, in each of these liturgical sections the norm of performance is one factor among several (scale, tonality, *Steiger*, motifs, musical characteristics, texts, ritual, occasion, calendar, etc.) Thus, just as the modal framework prescribes the various musical factors and their interrelationships with the extra-musical factors, so does it dictate which norm of performance is applicable in each case, and also, as a subset of this, when congregational singing is an organic part of the system, and what musical and extra-musical factors are involved in each instance where it is performed.

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<sup>13</sup> Commendable work on the subject in Levine 1989 and 2001 notwithstanding, "*S'lich*a mode" is yet to be thoroughly explored and systematically defined. An especially illuminating demonstration of the need for a clear definition, and the possible misleading consequences of the current deficiency can be observed in Slobin's attempt to unpack the "*nusach*" for *Ashrey* in the *S'lichot* service, with significantly limited conclusions (Slobin 1989: 260-264). For the objectives undertaken in this article, I am using "*S'lich*a mode" in its insider's meaning associated with the chant for texts such as *Sh'ma Kolenu*, *Avinu Malkenu*, and *L'El Orech Din* among many others.

A case in point: in a chance opportunity a few years ago, I happened to hear *S'lichah* mode performed with a norm different from the one prescribed for it by the modal framework. It was in a memorial Mincha service at JTS (though I am not sure if it was for Yom Hasho'a, Yom Hazikaron, or some other similar occasion.) The cantor leading that service performed a few psalms in the traditional "*S'lichah* mode" manner, and indeed effected a responsorial. Nevertheless, the congregation, comprised primarily of rabbinical and cantorial students, who are clearly invested in being good students but who were unfamiliar with the constitutional norm of performance (heterophonic chant mumbling responsorial), responded by singing the basic *S'lichah* mode line in exact unison, with the same notes, same tempo, same rhythm—all very well articulated, even with the same dynamics—clearly and cleanly sounding, perfectly as one. Yet, the result, musically speaking, was markedly different from the sound expected for this liturgy, and it sounded like an artificially produced, almost surreal morph of what this music is supposed to be. Indeed, should a complete outsider (and not one conditioned by Western music) were to witness this rendition, they would in all likelihood, consider this a completely different species of music from the one expressed in the traditional rendering of *S'lichah* mode. This realization of *S'lichah* mode was just as "off" as it would have been had this congregation used the wrong motivic material, because the norm of performance was not the one associated with this mode.

We can test the high degree to which norm of performance is an organic variable in the modal framework and is interconnected just as tightly as other factors, in cases where the same text appears but the occasion, ritual, and time are different. We can observe that the norm of performance is specifically prescribed, and it changes according to these factors just as much as motifs, modes, or tonalities do. For example, while on Friday evening the *Veshamru* paragraph at the tail-end of *Sh'ma u'Virchoteha* is sung in either minor or major and is otherwise free of modal or motivic considerations, it often takes on a regular metrical and rhythmic character, and is very conducive to congregational singing. Yet the same paragraph on Saturday morning is part of the cantor's repetition, sung in *Ahavah Rabbah*, including its related motifs, and is actually even more tightly connected to motivic material because of one motif that is more likely to appear at that juncture.<sup>14</sup> It is done in flow-

<sup>14</sup> What is colloquially referred to, primarily in JTS-related circles, as the "Rumania motif" (the term was coined by Charles Davidson) in *Ahavah Rabbah*, is connected more specifically to the text between after the *K'dusha* and the end of the cantor's repetition, in both Shacharit and Musaf on Saturday. For further discussion of this motif see Tarsi 2002a: 186-188.

ing rhythm and the norm of performance here is a solo cantorial recitation. Another example of change in norm of performance connected to change in occasion, time, and ritual (while keeping the same text) is the treatment of the paragraph of *Retseh ViMnuchatenu*. On Friday evening it is in *Magen Avot* and done as a cantorial fantasia, while on Saturday morning it is in *Ahavah Rabbah* and may take on the character of a congregational tune. *Thus, as one particular norm of performance, congregational singing too is an organic part of the modal framework, inseparable from all its other constituent variables.*

### Evidence from the Cantorial Manuscripts

A thorough examination of most of the available cantorial manuscripts of the last two centuries reveals a clear picture of the musical character of the *Vaychulu* paragraph chanted by the cantor on Friday night. As such, a general description of its character would be a mosaic of sorts, of a variety of motifs, many times combined into typical phrases, non metrical, and in a simple-to-mildly ornamented cantorial recitation. These traits, among others, and the various settings examined, point out that it would be unlikely that this was to be chanted by anyone except the *sh'liach tsibur*. It is just as unlikely that these settings would easily lend themselves to congregational singing, especially in comparison with the third paragraph discussed immediately below. Thus, in all likelihood, the traditional norm of performance of this paragraph has been a simple-to-moderate ornamented cantor recitation.

In the third paragraph, however, (the one that begins with the words *Magen Avot*), a distinct and characteristic change occurs. In one way or another, the overwhelming majority of the sources manifest a change in the third paragraph that suggests or represents organized, non-solo, and in all likelihood, congregational singing, which by nature involves a more regulated, often metered tune. In some sources this is where the texture changes from a solo line to a four-part choral setting (Heller, Kornitzer, Sulzer), and/or from a free rhythm to a metrical or rhythmically regulated setting or containing symmetrical period phrases (Baer, Friedmann, Heller, Kavetzky, Lewandowski, Semiatin, Scheuermann, Shnipelisky, Sulzer, Weisser). This may manifest itself by the introduction of time signature in the third paragraph where none exists in the first two. Other manuscripts include time signatures throughout the entire four paragraphs. In those cases however, the time signature in the first two paragraphs appears to be superimposed on “flowing rhythm” (see Frigyesi 1993), whereas in the third paragraph it reflects a genuine metrical character. In Kwartin’s manuscript this change is accompanied by a tempo indication

(*Andante*.) Weintraub's setting is also illuminating: the entire paragraph is notated as a four-part recitation tone similar to the congregational responses on *baruch hu uvaruch sh'mo* throughout the service, thus rendering it musically equivalent to a congregational response.<sup>15</sup>

Wodak's setting features a recitation tone on 5, which is marked: *Chor* whereas the other paragraphs are marked: *Cantor*. Baer writes: *Die Gemeinde betet מגן אבות leise allein oder mit dem Vorbeter* (the congregation says the *Magen Avot* prayer quietly by itself or with the cantor), and Lewandowski's setting includes the instructions: *Chor u.G.* Other sources verbally indicate changes from *Vorbeter* to *Gemeinde*, *Chasan* to *Choeur*, *Cantor* or *Kantor* to *Chor* or *Coro*, *Cantor* to *Cong.*, or קהל to חזן. In Semiatin's manuscript the *Vaychulu* paragraph is marked: *recit.*, and the *Magen Avot* paragraph indicates: *congregation*. In addition to the verbal instructions, some sources provide music only for the beginning of the paragraph (Semiatin), the beginning and ending (Wodak), omit a significant part of it (Alter, Katchko, Ogutsch), or omit it all together (Kohn, Naumbourg), all of which are idiomatic conventions to indicate congregation participation, normally the singing of a familiar melody.

Another interesting illustration of this phenomenon is provided in the manuscripts of Gerovitsch, Nowakowsky, and Zemachson, all of which comprise choral settings exclusively. These manuscripts do not provide music for the Friday evening service except for this paragraph.<sup>16</sup>

By similar methodologies I also ascertained that the fourth paragraph (*Retseh ViMnuchatenu*) is a cantorial fantasia, and the second paragraph (*Birkat Sheva*) is a *b'racha* responsorial. Granted, these norms of performance dictate a higher degree of freedom than in the *Vaychulu* paragraph so far as motivic content is concerned. Nevertheless, the core sources reflect a substantial level of adherence to *Steiger* in the cantorial fantasias.<sup>17</sup> Naturally, cases of motivic content in congregational singing of the *Retseh* paragraph do not exist in the canon because the modal framework does not prescribe it. The American practice of singing this paragraph congregationally is part of a general trend

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<sup>15</sup> Weintraub, 1901/1859: 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> Gerovitsch (1897: 141) also provides music for the *Vaychulu* paragraph, in all likelihood a reflection of the *halachic* implications discussed below.

<sup>17</sup> See for example my examination of the motivic content of Sulzer's Friday night *Retseh* in Tarsi 2001-2002: 70-71.

that I discuss below.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, a setting by Max Wohlberg does include a few motifs found in the *Magen Avot* mode:<sup>19</sup>

Similar indications for such organized, metrical, and congregational singing is found in various sources, in connection with certain liturgical units. Select few examples among many are found in the cantorial manuscripts: beginning with the words *ki vanu vacharta* in the Friday Night *Kiddush* (e.g., Lewandowski, Weintraub); *Halleluyah, hallelu el bekodsho* after *Ata Nigleta* (Shofarot) on Rosh Hashanah (e.g., Lewandowski, Weisser); *Veshamru* on Friday evening – while the preceding *Hashkivenu* is rendered a cantorial fantasia (e.g., Sulzer).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In addition to a deviation from the norm of performance, the most common tune for this is in *Ahavah Rabbah*, clearly borrowed from the Saturday morning services. The origins of this tune are not entirely clear to me. In *The Cantors Voice* (April 1953:6) Max Wohlberg wrote: “In the twenties and the thirties [this tune], in great vogue in our traditional Synagogues... was simultaneously attributed to Binder, Idelsohn and Goldfarb.” The use of *Ahavah Rabbah* here renders this practice further removed from and particularly dissonant with the modal framework, because it goes against the grain of occasion sensitivity, which is one of this modal framework’s primary defining traits.

<sup>19</sup> Nathanson 1974 (vol. 1): 108. The marked motifs in this example correspond with the *Magen Avot* motivic description in Tarsi 2001-2002:61. A – Opening motif of ascending 1-3-5. B – Recitation tone. The first one in this setting may be a borderline case because it is so short. Nevertheless, within a metrical tune, this may be considered at least a reference to a recitation. In addition, it does fulfill the requirements as I outlined them in Tarsi 2001-2002:61, as well as those set out by Avenary 1987:99. E – Transposition of motif A into the relative major as an opening motif for a continuing phrase. G – a skip from 5 to 8, 5 being an unaccented beat and 8 is accented; 5 shorter than 8; opener of a later or concluding phrase. I – descending stepwise motion to the tonic as an ending cadence.

<sup>20</sup> These observations notwithstanding, it is important to realize that using these musical manuscripts as informants for the norm of performance is a complicated issue not free of its limitations, and more important, it calls for informed skill in reading them. Two among many of the considerations involved in such reading are first, the purpose of writing the manuscript (for example, it may be pedagogical, creative, preservation, archival, documentation, research, academic, and perhaps others. For a partial list of these manuscripts that includes some biographical information and the objective behind writing them, see Avenary 1978: 78-84). Second, the degree to which it is free as a composition, that is, which part of it represents free composition and from which parts if any can we still extract evidence of traditional material in this

Max Wohlberg

Kad' - she - nu b' -mitz - vo - se - cho v' -sen chel -

ke - nu b' -so - ro - se - cho sab' - e - nu mi - tu - ve - cho v' -sam -

che - nu bi -shu - o - se - cho v' -ta - her - li - be - nu l' -ov - d' -

cho - be - e - mes v' - han - chi - le - nu A - do -

noy - E - lo - he - nu b' a - ha -voh uv' -ro - tzon - sha - bas kod' -

-she -cho v' -yo -nu -chu - vo - Yis -ro - el m' -ka - d -shey sh' -me - cho.

*Example 1. — Magen Avot motifs in Wohlberg's setting for  
Friday night's Retseh ViMnuchatenu*

context. Other affecting considerations are the norms and habits of the community in which the transcriber served as a cantor, his own agenda, the role of the choir in the transcriber's community, and what the choir's part in the manuscript represents — whether consciously or not. Granted, though differing as to its set of limitations, material derived from interviews of living informants too has to be interpreted and processed with certain influencing constraints in mind. In this respect, Avenary's approach to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cantorial manuscripts as informants is very applicable to this undertaking (Avenary 1978 *passim*, and 1968: 66.) In fact, in almost all cases in which Avenary mentions these manuscripts he refers to them as "informants."

## Evidence from Code, Customs, and Commentary

While there is very little documentation for specific musical practices in the canon, and practically no musical transcription for the Ashkenazi liturgical tradition before the nineteenth century,<sup>21</sup> we can, in fact, find textual references from which we can infer the considerations that affected the norm of performance in general and congregational participation specifically.

The first paragraph of the liturgical section we examined in the cantorial manuscripts above (*Vaychulu*) is also the topic of some textual discussions. In Yitschak Ben Arie 1868:190, a reference is made (from *P'sachim* page 106) asserting that the section should be said out loud by the congregation while standing up. The reason provided for standing is that the evocation called for by the section constitutes a testimony to the fact that God is the creator of heaven and earth. It further argues that this act is equivalent to testifying in court, which should be given while standing up and which requires at least two people, (and therefore, presumably, the cantor alone is not sufficient.)

ויכולו כתבו התוספות בפסחים דף ק"ו מה שרגילין לאמר ויכולו אחר התפילה בקול רם...  
וכן כתב אבן ירחי והוסיף שיש לאמרו בקול רם ומועמד לפי שהוא עדות להקב"ה שברא  
שמים וארץ ועדות מועמד דכתיב ועמדו שני האנשים...  
...

This paragraph (*Vaychulu*), however, does not contain the musical indications for such congregational or non-solo singing, nor does it present the metric tune or otherwise regulated material as found in the settings for the third paragraph. Though explanations for this discrepancy between the textual indications for congregational participation and the evidence of the actual musical practice, which precludes it, are necessarily speculative at this time, several possible reasons may be at play. Of foremost importance to note in this case is that the verbal indications for congregational singing of *Vaychulu* derive from the Tosafot. In communities that did not follow the indications in the Tosafot (or whose leadership clergy did not comply with them), these instructions became superfluous. It may also be that the congregants and clergy were aware of the Tosafot but because the music is not conducive to congregational singing, the Tosafot were ignored. Another possibility is that "lip service" of sorts was offered (as indicated in many prayer books) in which, officially at least, the *Vaychulu* paragraph was formally considered a

<sup>21</sup> I am referring here to evidence for prayer music and not for the musical interpretation of cantillations for which we do have some documentation from the early sixteenth century (see Avenary 1975). For a complete account of Jewish music sources of earlier periods (mostly not of Ashkenazi origins) see Adler 1989. For textual references to music, see Adler 1975.

place for congregational singing but the congregation might not have joined the cantor in musical material that is de facto, not suitable for congregational singing. No matter what the explanation may be, the musical tradition subrogates the conventional opinion of the Tosafot.<sup>22</sup> A possible solution for this conundrum may be gleaned from Jehoshua Ne'eman's instructions which may be interpreted either as an indication for the congregation to only begin the paragraph, or to begin it with the cantor and then later complete it by themselves, but in both cases the cantor continues alone from the second phrase onwards (Ne'eman 1968/69:38).

Consider now the distinction between the part of the cantor and that of the congregation during the *K'dushah*. The prescribed dialogue between the cantor and the congregation is bound to be affected by musical choices. This dialogue is indicated in the prayer book, but more important, this indication reflects an instruction from the code. *Shulchan Aruch* indicates the following:

אין הציבור אומרים עם ש"ץ נקדישך אלא שותקין ומכוונים למה שש"ץ אומר עד שמגיע לקדושה ואז עונים הציבור קדוש.<sup>23</sup>

This translates to “The congregation does not say *Nakdish'cha* with the *sh'liach tsibbur* but rather, stays quiet and directs its concentration towards

<sup>22</sup> There is also the obvious temptation to conclude that, contrary to the conventional assumptions, this discrepancy stems from the fact that the musical tradition for *Vaychulu* that we find in the nineteenth-century manuscripts had already been in place by the time Even Yarchi made this observation. This notion, therefore, would presume that the *Vaychulu* music preceded the Tosafot, which would place it before the middle of the twelfth century (Even Yarchi lived c. 1155-1215.) As seductive as this speculation may be, I only begrudgingly acknowledge it at all, and this I do with great trepidation. The study of the Ashkenazi musical tradition is plagued with blurry speculations, weak arguments, unsupported statements, and bad theory, most of which stem from a historical-musicology narrative that is beset on the one hand by a paucity of early documentation fomenting an allure of attaining historical perspective, and on the other, an agenda that strives to show the antiquity of this material and its precedence to other traditional disciplines. This kind of narrative — highly speculative historical musicology, supported neither by a valid matrix of documentation nor by a sound field of music theory and predisposed toward various agendas — has only contributed to misunderstanding and lack of clarity. I therefore see nothing to gain from such questionable historical conclusions but the danger of falling into one or more of the various traps along this route.

<sup>23</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Hilchot T'fillah, siman 125, Dinei K'dushah.*



what the *sh'liach tsibbur* is saying until he comes to *K'dushah* at which point the congregation should enter with the response *Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*." Significantly, this is an example in which a musical choice would affect the synagogue ritual in aspects that are beyond the musical realm by way of the norm of performance. By definition, any musical setting for the *K'dushah* section would dictate whether the responsorial would be retained. Specifically, if texts customarily chanted by the cantor alone are set to regularized and metrical tunes, such occurrences would effect congregational singing at a time in which according to *Shulchan Aruch* they should be silent.

Substituting the responsorial with congregational singing in the entire *K'dushah* section is more likely to occur during the Shabbat Musaf service. A different kind of distortion occurs in the *K'dushah* for Shabbat Shacharit. A sense of dialogue is more likely to be retained during the Shacharit service; nevertheless, not in the way intended by *Shulchan Aruch*. In many American synagogues both the cantor and the congregation chant the entire *K'dushah* section. What retains the sense of a responsive reading is that the congregation does not sing simultaneously with the cantor. Thus the cantor waits for the congregation to chant the first paragraph (*Nekadesh et shimcha ba'olam*) before singing it himself, then the congregation sings the first response (*Kadosh kadosh kadosh*), to be repeated by the cantor, and so on. In all likelihood, this is because here, as opposed to the Musaf service, the use of congregational tunes is often very limited. Instead, the congregation's participation is in a form of a heterophonic chant-mumbling. Typically, but not always, this responsive chanting by the congregation subsides, even stops at times, and then surges anew. For example, on *Ve'Eynenu Tir'ena*, a congregational tune often in effect drives members of the congregation to join the singing instead of waiting for the cantor to finish the entire paragraph before repeating it by themselves.

This practice, apparently, is not new and did not originate in America. Indeed the custom of having the congregation say the rest of the *K'dushah* text beyond the designated responses is mentioned in *Mishnah B'rurah* (*perek kof kaf heh, diney k'dushah se'if alef*) where it is also argued that this leniency is inappropriate because the original instruction in *Shulchan Aruch* should prevail. Granted, even this mode of participation retains a sense of dialogue with the cantor because the congregation does not say this simultaneously with the *sh'liach tsibbur* ( ולכן המנהג כהיום שאומרים זה קודם החזן ). This practice is the prevailing mode during most of the *K'dushah* section on the Shacharit service. Nevertheless, regardless of the various interpretations and modes of execution of this section, all of them denote a dialogue between the cantor

and the congregation, which is lost if metrical congregational tunes are introduced. It should be noted that some of the practices prescribed in *Shulchan Aruch* were subject to reevaluation and change even within orthodoxy. The point at issue, however, is that the norm of performance is rooted in and can affect a *halachic* choice.

### American Congregational Singing as a Bearer of Change in Norms of Performance

Possibly the most significant characteristic trait of the American synagogue is in the form of congregational participation. This difference manifests itself in the extensive use of congregational metrical tunes that takes over other norms of performance prescribed by the modal framework. Whether as their cause or the effect, this trait is inseparable from other changes such as the distinction between the cantor's role and that of the congregation as well as that of the Rabbi, in terms of musical practice, ritual, and religious customs and observance. The origins of this practice and the causes for its development may be numerous and their exploration verges into the realm of speculation.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of the various factors that contributed to this shift, it seems safe to conclude that this feature came to be in order to serve as a tool to fulfill unmet needs that stemmed from a lack in the American synagogue.

At the core of this phenomenon is the fact that until the twentieth century in America, Jews throughout the diaspora were familiar with the prayers, their language, their content and meaning. They were fully conversant in the synagogue rituals and customs with which they were acquainted from early childhood and which constituted an organic part of everyday life of the individual and the community. The authentic spiritual flavor of the Jewish prayer service was attained through a tapestry of the various norms of performance as they unfold within a given service. An example of such organization is examined later below (see discussion of liturgical space.) Nevertheless, comprehending, let alone feeling and internalizing this liturgical space crucially depends on being completely conversant with synagogue rituals and customs, the liturgy and its structure, the prayers, their language and their meaning, as well as total ownership of the multiplicities of echoes and connotations which the texts evoke. In such a scenario the deliberate inducing of congregational participation is not a consideration because such activity is a natural and organic part of the service. In fact the very existence of a special term to describe

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<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon as well as a partial explanation and historical review see Wohlberg, 1968:58-66.

this phenomenon indicates alienation from the authentic tradition in which *congregational participation was not merely an aspect of the service but in itself was the service. And as such, congregational participation included the entire spectrum of all the norms of performance, not only the unison singing of metrical tunes. Even silence in this setting does not indicate passiveness or alienation but constitutes yet another norm of performance, which may mark a variety of modes of conduct reflecting understanding, recognition, and anticipation of the next moment.*

Modern and postmodern America reveals a scenario in which most Jews do not possess an understanding of Hebrew. Their comprehension of any other aspects of the service and ritual is also very limited. Nevertheless, for reasons that are not our concern in this discussion, the need for synagogue life has still remained. Yet a community that cannot comprehend its religious practice undoubtedly will feel estrangement from the service, from its content, and from what it represents. The need to solve such a problem is obvious and self-evident. Clearly the solution that seems to have begun in the early part of the twentieth century was not attempted by setting a trend of education and familiarizing people with their authentic tradition. Thus replacing numerous aspects of the prayer service and the various norms of performance, by extensive congregational singing was one of the devices by which to bring people in who had no solid Hebrew/Jewish background or education. Throughout this adaptive process, new tunes were composed, and some were borrowed from other contexts and made to fit the liturgical texts.

Delineating the main markers of this process in the 1920s through the 1940s and into the 1950s would include the prevailing approach of Samuel-Eliezer and Israel Goldfarb, with additional influence felt from the work of Idelsohn, followed by that of Abraham Binder, Gershon Ephros and Asher Goldenberg.<sup>25</sup> The last named also worked actively with Max Wohlberg who, with his contemporaries, continued this trend through the 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s. The publication of the *Zamru Lo* series (Nathanson 1955, 1960, 1974), and the current new edition (Shiovitz 2004) is yet another signpost in this process.

We may also note the spiritual quest for meaning and new spirituality that engulfed America in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, this trend expressed itself also with the introduction of electrical guitars and other pop and rock musical elements into some American churches. Naturally this musical trend did not

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<sup>25</sup> See Goldenberg, 1944.

pass the American synagogue by.<sup>26</sup> The musical and liturgical foundations had already been laid during the previous decades. Its deep imprinting on the synagogue and Jewish education systems, which welcomed it with open arms, came from the numerous musical settings and songs by Jeff Klepper and Debbie Friedman. The fact that the latter kept strong ties with the general American pop scene is especially illuminating. Interestingly enough, some years ago at an interfaith candle-lighting ceremony in New York City, whose main musical host was the group, Peter Paul and Mary, the Jewish element was not represented by a traditional Hanukkah song either musically or in its textual content, but by Paul Yarrow's *Light One Candle*.

The result of this sustained decades-long process has been a new kind of involvement in the synagogue – a congregational mode of conduct in which most members of the community can participate by merely grafting foreign words onto simple melodies they can recognize and almost instantly reproduce.

### Mannerism

The application of melodies from outside of the Synagogue repertoire, such as folk songs, popular music, and opera tunes to the prayer text is not new and not characteristically American. Nevertheless, a particular brand of this practice has developed in the United States, especially during the second half of the twentieth century. This involves the use of Israeli songs in designated sections of the liturgy. More than merely a departure from tradition, the deliberate superimposition of tunes from the new Jewish state transforms this practice into a separate genre. The tunes selected are songs that are familiar to the Jewish community and are recognized (or at least were so originally) as Israeli songs. Their inclusion in the service, therefore, inevitably implies added significance, which is not part of the prayer itself. Regardless of how they may interpret this, the participants can be presumed to notice that the cantor deliberately departs from the tradition in order to include the Israeli tune.<sup>27</sup> Naturally some points regarding this custom are at issue: the quality of the tune, the connection or lack thereof to the traditionally prescribed mu-

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<sup>26</sup> Interesting comments regarding this experience within American churches as well as suggestions for applying its lessons to the present and future synagogue experience were made by Donald Sloan at the 52<sup>nd</sup> annual convention of the Cantors Assembly in Monticello, NY, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> The repeated use of such tunes at a certain point of the service creates a tradition which, especially to younger congregants, paradoxically, may be perceived and eventually identified as *nusach*.

sic, the connection of the tune to the settings preceding and following it, and the content and text of the original setting from which the tune is borrowed. Regardless of one's position on these issues, what comes into focus here is the gesture itself, hence an underlying sense of Mannerism.<sup>28</sup> One example is the singing of a line from the *K'dusha* to the tune of the Israeli song *Erev Shel Shoshanim* (music by Yossef Hadar, text by Moshe Dor).<sup>29</sup>

In some instances an additional dimension is added to this practice: a tune is selected because of some connection between its original text or function and the liturgical setting to which it is applied. Beyond the questions of taste involved in this practice (especially the use of the Israeli national anthem), this external connection becomes an entity in itself, which adds a superfluous (possibly shallow and certainly manneristic) layer on top of the original liturgy. Two cases illustrate this phenomenon. The first is the use of the Israeli national anthem to accompany the passage "*vahavi'enu leshalom me'arba kanfot ha'arets ve'tolichenu komemiut le'artsenu*" ("Oh gather us in peace from the four corners of the earth, and restore us triumphantly to our homeland.") The second is the singing of texts connected with Jerusalem to the tune of Naomi Shemer's *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*, a practice that may in fact have originated in the cantorial schools where it is still, at times, suggested to students as a viable choice (such as using this tune on the words *viliyrushalayim ircha berachamim tashuv* ("Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city"), or offering it in various points in the service on special events such as Yom Yerushalayim.)

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<sup>28</sup> I consider this custom as similar to other affectations to which cantorial performance has always been susceptible: hand gestures, body movement, facial expressions, affected voice coloring, superfluous expressivity, exaggerated interpretation, and the like. All of these traits are manneristic in the sense that they constitute an affectation that is not called for by the material, the text, or the situation, and stem primarily from the performer's sense of show ("performance" in its negative connotation as discussed above.) Thus the noticeable move at designated junctures into material borrowed from another repertoire, which as such, carries modern Israeli connotations, superimposed on the material, recognized as such, and motivated by the performer's sense of crude pseudo-sophistication, is yet another aspect of the same manneristic stance. This is even more pronounced when in addition, the extra-affectation of connecting the meaning of the text to the content of the borrowed tune (*Yerushalayim Shel Zahav* or the Israeli national anthem) is superimposed.

<sup>29</sup> This particular case begs the question whether Yosef Hadar's North American tour in the 1950s may have been at the root of this practice.

The remarkable effect of the youth camps on congregational singing in the US is so prevalently discussed that I choose not to address it here. The few chosen reflections of this include the most used tune for *Mechalkel Chayim* by Max Wohlberg (Wohlberg 1947:18). In private conversation Wohlberg explained that indeed he had written this tune as an educational artifact for the teaching of the prayer to children. In fact Wohlberg composed an alternative tune (Wohlberg 1971:29), which he considered more appropriate for adults. Two other popular tunes that exemplify the perceived infantilization of synagogue music in America are *She-Hu Noteh Shamayim* in the middle of *Aleinu* and *Vene'emar* through– *bayom hahu* at the end of the section. In Rothstein 1980:8 the author points out the connection between (among others) the second phrase in the second tune and *Farmer in the Dell*. Interestingly, Rothstein did not appear to note the obvious similarity of the first tune (*She-Hu Noteh Shamayim*) with the preschool-level rhyme, *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

A forthright criticism of the Conservative Ramah Camps' role in infantilizing the American synagogue music is also found in Spiro 1996. I would add here that at times the musical practices in the youth camps do fall within the traditional modal framework but they present a significantly simplified version of it. One case in point is the version used for the Psalms of Kabbalat Shabbat. In this particular case, as well as, perhaps, other such cases, the “infantile” version seems justified – teaching this music in a manner more accessible to children. The process in the American experience, however, is reversed: instead of bringing a simplified rendition of the adult version from the synagogue to the camp, the children's music from camp becomes the standard practice at the synagogue.

### Hassidic Influence

One particular aspect of American synagogue practice, which is expressed in congregational singing is hassidic influence. By this, I do not mean the obvious surface-effect of replacing various norms of performance with hassidic or pseudo-hassidic tunes. Although the insertion of extra textless vocalises within the liturgical text is also a Hassidic effect, it too constitutes only the surface reflection of the phenomenon of creeping Hassidism. Two notable examples of this practice include the vocalise before the *Vidduy* confessional in the Selichot section of Yom Kippur services and the one inserted between the lines of *Birkat Kohanim* when performed on the *duchan* (*Bimah*.) But in addition to these surface effects, there is a deeper level of hassidic influence

that I consider to be mostly subconscious, and certainly an un-conceptualized undercurrent. This affecting force has to do with the basic philosophical stance that derives from the discernable sense of freedom in regards to liturgical structure and the hassidic perception of the prayer qualities of the *niggun*.

The role of *niggun* as a spiritual concept is central to the hassidic worldview, starting with the fact that at the core of the hassidic faith is the belief that all is equal before God and thus study or prayer are of equal importance with song and dance. In addition, joy and ecstasy are central to the religious experience and their attainment is to be regarded by an individual as religious obligation. Initially expressed by the founder of Hassidism, Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov (ca. 1700-1760), these ideas, especially pertaining to the role of music, were perpetuated and developed by Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (1771-1811). Rabbi Nachman considered *niggun* to be the most significant factor and of paramount value in inducing ecstasy and a deep spiritual connection with God and the universe. In his view *niggun*, relying on song and/or dance, could replace prayer—including its textual component—and be considered equal with or superior to prayer or any other formal structure of worship or ritual. Obviously any such *niggun* is not bound by musical considerations of tonality, motivic content, or form, and does not connect to a particular text. Thus, if one were to take such freedom to mean that an original, personal tune could be assigned the same value as the content (and even the very text) of prayer, then a consideration of a lower priority such as the traditional musical structure for the prayer, as indicated by the modal framework would by extension be rendered negligible.

It is nevertheless not unreasonable to assume that free use of *niggunim* as a form of prayer may indeed function as a liturgical expression for authentic Hassidim, that is, for people who truly dedicate themselves to hassidic practices as a religious path. Interestingly, however, it seems that more and more American Jews unconsciously adopt hassidic philosophy and practice only in the context of the liturgy and synagogue ritual. Needless to say, for those individuals, such synagogue practices are far removed from their original organic function: to become part of an all encompassing lifestyle whose primary goal is the achievement of spiritual ecstasy as a means to and an outcome of a connection to God. Thus, these practices as reflected in the American trend cannot really be considered a normal hassidic expression of prayer. They too constitute a manneristic simulation of “pseudo-Hassidism” that falls into the trap of the seductive illusionary reproduction of a hassidic experience for about one hour a week in lieu of a liturgical experience.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> I witnessed one of the more illuminating manifestations of this trend during

Possible hassidic influence on American Jewry can be traced back to the emigration of entire hassidic courts to America.<sup>31</sup> Also evident is the rapidly growing number of communities and synagogues whose prayer services follow the style, form, and musical practices of the late Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, following the model of the Carlebach Synagogue in New York City.<sup>32</sup> Indeed during the last decade or two this has become so prevalent and has established itself as one of the most popular standards of prayer services to the extent that I believe that “Carlebach services” are the predominant hallmark of the post-modern American (and perhaps worldwide) synagogue.<sup>33</sup> This is particularly evident in the Carlebach Kabbalat Shabbat, in which the service is in essence a reproduced exact replica of Carlebach’s CD.<sup>34</sup> Thus the musical and in fact the entire liturgical experience of this service can be rendered through performing the CD in its entirety and order, by the congregation.

### The Function of Norm of Performance in the Shaping of Liturgical Space: the Friday Evening Services as a Case Study

As summed up earlier, norm of performance is a crucial component in the modal framework for shaping the manner by which the liturgy unfolds

a workshop with cantorial students at The Jewish Theological Seminary, in which, before delving into some tunes, the guest speaker instructed the students to imagine themselves (and in the future, their congregations) to be, at least for that moment, a community of Hassidim.

<sup>31</sup> Shaul Magid of Indiana University mentioned to me the immigration of the court of Modzitz to America and the tradition of composing *niggunim* in that court, as well as the immigration of the Lubavitch community, which produced recordings of their own *niggunim*.

<sup>32</sup> According to Magid (personal communication), Shlomo Carlebach himself was close to the Rabbi of Modzitz whose *niggunim* he also disseminated.

<sup>33</sup> Several years ago during a walk in Kfar Saba, Israel, I saw a notice on the wall of the local B’ney Akiva branch announcing that a Kabbalat Shabbat *benusach haRav Carlebach* (“a preliminary Friday night service in the style of Rabbi Carlebach”) takes place every two weeks. The note also included a reference to a special website link dedicated to related *Reb Shlomo* information. A quick look at the link revealed over a hundred locations around the world (but mostly in Israel and North America) in which the Carlebach services in Carlebach communities are announced.

<sup>34</sup> Shlomo Carlebach, *Shabbos in Shomayim*, Zale Newman and Steve Bill, producers, Ontario: Jerusalem Star, 1995. The music in this CD covers Kabbalat Shabbat and the Ma’ariv section before the Amidah (thus, it does not provide music for the *Mein Sheva* paragraphs.)



during the synagogue service. Moreover, traditional use of the word “liturgy” encompasses the entire experience as a whole.<sup>35</sup> Outside of some Jewish circles, and especially in churches, this refers to the text, ritual, music, artifacts, the clergy’s vestments and even the colors thereof.<sup>36</sup> It is not unusual, in fact, among practitioners in church to use the term in reference to music alone. This kind of usage reflects a more common perception that the liturgical experience involves music inseparably from the text; moreover, music is essential in order for the participant to, in some sense, incorporate the liturgical experience. This phenomenon and the shape of the experience it comprises for the individual is what I call “liturgical space.”

Although much of the genesis and evolution of the Ashkenazi liturgical music is practically unknown to us, it would seem reasonable to assume that throughout the centuries it underwent a process of selection and refining that has crystallized it into a formulation that is particularly effective in shaping this liturgical space.

The larger issue here is how music affects our experiences, how we incorporate the information it provides into our perception and how we process it. This realm of inquiry belongs in the areas of psychology of music, music cognition, and interestingly enough, computer science, and artificial intelligence. Substantial research and work has been and is being done in these various fields. Needless to say, these realms are beyond the scope of our discussion. Nonetheless, they concern the factors that shape our perceptions of whether we “get” the music, find any meaning in it, differentiate between good music and not so good within different musical styles, etc.<sup>37</sup> *I offer that the factors involved in this process are the same ones that affect our experience of liturgical music in creating a liturgical space. In general, broad-brush strokes, the primary variables have to do with abstractions such as sameness and difference, repetition and variety, timing, organic development of the musical material, tension and release, directivity (the perception that the music moves in a certain direction such as the feeling we get in the standard tonal progressions in the classical and romantic*

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<sup>35</sup> From the Greek *leitourgia* or the Latin *liturgia*, the original meaning of the word is public service; in its English usage “liturgy” has always referred to all aspects of the public worship service.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed the expression that is used in church is “liturgical colors.”

<sup>37</sup> An interesting case-study that illustrates how Beethoven’s fifth symphony is structured to be processed, incorporated, and understood as making sense by our brains is provided in Minsky 1981.

*styles), variety and directivity of the level of excitation*,<sup>38</sup> and the concurrence or lack thereof between the various musical variables (for example, between dynamics and tempo, tonality and thematic material, phrasing and chord progression, melisma or no melisma and both tempo and dynamics, and many others).<sup>39</sup>

If we examine for example, how the entire Friday evening (including Kabbalat Shabbat) liturgical space is shaped, we can observe how these factors are integrated within the traditional modal framework, including the prescribed norm of performance. Analytically speaking, the definition of the basic scheme for this service may begin with its macro-structure, which, proceeds first through three main liturgical sections. Divided thus, the service is initiated by the Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by *Bar'chu-Sh'ma uVirchoteha*, and capped by the cantor's repetition substitute (the four *M'ein Sheva* paragraphs). Arranged in this manner, the traditional musical complement for these main divisions establishes a sense of three movements of sorts, in which each liturgical section receives a mode: the mode *Adonai Malach* is assigned to Kabbalat Shabbat; the specific motifs collection (in minor for the American, Polish-Lithuanian version and major for the European version) are allocated to *Sh'ma uVirchoteha*; and the mode *Magen Avot* accompanies the *M'ein Sheva* paragraphs.

The norms of performance for this modular triptych, as it were, provide further multi-dimensionality *within* the modes and *Steigers*. As in the macrostructure (the three modal movements assigned to the three main liturgical sections), the array of musical factors and norms of performance at this higher level of complexity above the simple base macrostructure is correlated and co-occurs with certain liturgical units, but here one finds smaller, more finely textured correspondences with the elements of the textual and ritualistic structure.

In addition, the norm of performance further shapes each of the three main sections and the nature of their directivity<sup>40</sup> by prescribing, in a very well

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<sup>38</sup> Cohen, 1971b.

<sup>39</sup> An example of how some of these factors come to play (in this case to create a dramatic affect) can be observed in Shamgar 1980, see also Cohen 1999, Cohen and Wagner 2000, and Eitan 1999.

<sup>40</sup> The term directivity refers generally to how the manner in which the music unfolds creates a sense of a forward motion in time or lack thereof and to what degree. In the tonal music of the Western common practice, harmonic progression is a good example of directivity.

defined part of the section (which also translates into a timing regimen), one cantorial fantasia and one congregational melody per each section. With the other norms of performance in place, this sequencing not only creates variety within the unity and a clear sense of direction, all in concurrence with the liturgical text, it also creates three arches in the level of excitation,<sup>41</sup> each one concurrent with one of the three primary liturgical sections and each one having a peak that predictably occurs during the last third of the section, usually closer to its ending. When performed properly, this aggregate of movement, ordering and climax impose a focal center of gravity by which the contours of the rest of the liturgical material of the section may be recognized.

The concept of liturgical space also sheds a new light on the function of the *Kaddish*. So far as the excitation level is concerned, the final *Kaddish* after *mekadesh hashabbat* marks a notable drop in the level of excitation, hence, a significant release of the tension accumulated by the cantorial fantasia that precedes it. To that end, the other *Kaddishim* in this service, and in fact, all *Kaddishim*, to one degree or another, (depending on their perspective norms of performance) exhibit the same trait.<sup>42</sup> This, therefore, points to another aspect of the relationship between liturgical text and function (*Kaddish*) and the norm of performance (semi-spoken declamation), which in turn may suggest that beyond the textual function of the *Kaddish* as a sealer of a liturgical section, it also serves as a release and a calming down of sorts within the liturgical space. This is yet another expression of the liturgical space as the total sum of text, textual structure, ritual, meaning, and music. As such it introduces the idea that the course of evolution of the liturgy has likely been shaped by considerations that stem from all of these facets.

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<sup>41</sup> I am using the term level of excitation here in its musicological sense. That is, although introducing some elements of psychology of music and music cognition, the term here refers to a musical quality and not necessarily (although possibly related) to a human reaction. For some demonstration of this concept and related discussion see Cohen 1971b and 1999.

<sup>42</sup> This is most notable in the case of *Kaddish Shalem* (which is not occasion/ritual/time sensitive and only affected by weekday vs. holy day variables, and takes on a semi-spoken declamation.) *Chatsi Kaddish* at times may serve this sense of release to a lesser degree, as well as mark a preparatory low-medium level of excitation at the beginning of a section or before the silent Amidah.

In summary, the interrelationship in these services can be portrayed in the following table:<sup>43</sup>

Primary unit	Sub-unit	Mode/Steiger/ tonality	Norm of performance
<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT</b>	intro- ductory psalms	<i>Adonai</i> <i>Malach</i>	cantor's framing com- bined with silence, whispering, mumbling, or heterophonic chant- mumbling
	Lecha Dodi	<i>Adonai</i> <i>Malach</i> /major	metrical congregational singing (sometimes responsive metrical congregational singing)
	final two psalms	<i>Adonai</i> <i>Malach</i> /major or minor	cantor's framing for the first psalm and canto- rial fantasia for the second. <sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> In order to concentrate on the role of the norm of performance, this description hovers around the middle-ground level of interrelationships. Specifically, on the liturgical and textual level it does not get into the level of specific words or even phrases, but remains more or less on the paragraph level. In musical terms it remains on the mode, scale, tonality or *Steiger* level, and does not get into the details of musical form, phrases, motifs, individual musical characteristics, or even secondary changes in tonality (such as the minority variant of singing two selected verses in *Lecha Dodi* in minor, or the various tonal options in the last two psalms of Kabbalat Shabbat.)

<sup>44</sup> I realize that for all intents and purposes the cantorial fantasia for this psalm is all but obsolete. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that traditionally this would be a likely unit to take on this norm of performance. See also footnote 10.

SH'MA UVIRCHOTEHA	<i>Bar'chu</i> until <i>ga'al</i> <i>yisrael</i>	Friday Night mode (designated motifs in minor or major depending on sub- tradition)	cantor's framing, combined with silence, whispering, mumbling or heterophonic chant- mumbling, and <i>b'rachot</i> responsorials.
	Hashkive- nu	minor/ <i>Ahavah</i> <i>Rabbah</i> , some tonal variants	cantorial fantasia
	Veshamru	minor or major (free, at times some foreshadowing of <i>Magen Avot</i> motifs)	congregational melody
	Chatsi Kaddish	minor (designated Friday Night ver- sion.) <sup>45</sup>	cantorial recitation and responsorials.
CANTOR'S REPETITION SUBSTITUTE	Vaychulu	<i>Magen Avot</i>	cantorial recitation
	B'racha	<i>Magen Avot</i>	cantorial recitation and <i>b'rachot</i> responsorial
	Magen Avot	<i>Magen Avot</i>	congregational melody
	Retseh ViMnucha- tenu	<i>Magen Avot</i>	cantorial fantasia
	Kaddish Shalem	major	semi-spoken declama- tion

In relation to the appropriate and timely shaping of the liturgical space, it can be observed in the American practice discussed above, that the aforementioned replacement of various aspects of the norms of performance with

<sup>45</sup> This is not simply free minor tonality but a chant pattern in minor that is designated specifically for this *Chatsi Kaddish*. This is primarily a reflection of the fact that within the modal framework the *Chatsi Kaddish* is time/occasion/calendar sensitive.

metrical congregational singing, and with different modal and tonal changes in the standard modern American version (pre-Carlebach), three primary effects result: flattening, discombobulation, and loss of directivity.

The flattening is a reflection of the loss of the multi-dimensional design originally provided by the interplay among the various norms of performance which have now been replaced with congregational singing. The discombobulation occurs because in the modern American version there is no particular scheme to the norms of performance, and also because the congregational tunes bring with them a random variety of tonalities and perhaps modes (usually without particular motivic content), thereby introducing a significant random element that diminishes or cancels the built-in concordant coordination among the liturgical units, the musical factors, and the norms of performance.<sup>46</sup> We note that discombobulation also results in flattening because at some point too many random ingredients with no particular design result in a perception of lack of distinctness of articulation and therefore as one monochrome mass. The loss of directivity results from the preempting of the flow of the cyclical wave-like motion directivity, and loss of the three arch forms at the excitation level.

Grant that the foregoing arguments and justification for a cogent modal structure with appropriate norms of performance for the Friday Night service are properly motivated by an adequate theoretical foundation based on a correct assessment of musical forms, preferred current cantorial conduct and congregational practice, all within the delimited liturgical space of the service. Thus without the cogency and appropriateness of the shapes available within that space being afforded through the (now missing) concordance among those structures and norms, the result is a significant rupture in the liturgical space.

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<sup>46</sup> This is primarily the result of inserting or introducing: either *Ahavah Rabbah* or minor elements when unprescribed during Kabbalat Shabbat; different motivic material in the congregational singing of *Ahavat Olam* during *Sh'ma uVirchoteha*; a major tonality and cantillation motifs in the communal chanting of the entire paragraph beginning with *Ve'ahavta*; at least a cadence (if not more elements) in an *Ahavah Rabbah* at the end of *Mi Chamocho*; a major in the second paragraph after the Amidah (*Baruch ata Adonai..... koneh shamayim va'arets*); and *Ahavah Rabbah* in the fourth paragraph (*Retseh*). The latter is especially jarring, if not dissonant because not only it is a misplaced norm of performance (flattening), an incorrect *Steiger* (discombobulating) but also it takes something that does belong in the modal framework but rather is interconnected with a different time and ritual (cantor's repetition, Saturday morning), thus foisting further dissonance upon the time/ritual sensitivity of the modal framework.

The post-modern practice of following Carlebach's CD as the formula for Kabbalat Shabbat and the sections of the Friday night service for which it provides music (in these settings the missing parts revert to the pre-Carlebach modern American version) is a further ruptured version of the pre-Carlebach modern American service.<sup>47</sup> But unlike the pre-Carlebach practice, in which, although severely ruptured, traces of the liturgical space can still be noticed, here the quantity of rupture creates a qualitative difference and results in a complete disintegration of the liturgical space.<sup>48</sup>

The clear advantage of music as the predominant factor for shaping the liturgical space is its ability to be communicated directly to that part of our perception that does not require thoughts or the conceptualization of sound on a symbolic level. *Music's impact on human emotions and its power to induce a sense of atmosphere or evoke sensation are common knowledge,*

<sup>47</sup> The main factors are the complete flattening that results from using only one norm of performance (congregational singing, almost all of which is metrical tunes), thus nullifying the structure provided by the level of excitation, and the ultimate discombobulation that comes with the flood of many different and random thematic, motivic, and rhythmic materials, and several modes and tonalities (but primarily either free major or minor, and also *Ahavah Rabbah*, Ukrainian Dorian and a sort of Aeolian.) Additional aspects of this disintegration is the heavily extensive use of textless vocalises (using filler syllables such as yah yai yai, hai-dai-dai, oy-yoy-yoy and the like) before and after almost each section (some of which consist only of two text sentences), or even adding independent, unrelated *niggunim*, as well as breaking the textual phrases by the insertions of such syllables or breaking certain words by repeating their constituent syllables in order to use them as filler syllables. In addition, because almost all of the material is metric, tempo becomes a more affecting factor unlike in the traditional version. As such, tempo would be crucial in the shaping of some kind of structure or directivity, but the music in the Carlebach service in essence, consists of only two types of tempo: moderate slow, and "up," primarily the latter.

<sup>48</sup> This does not mean that the Carlebach service cannot be enjoyable, inspiring, uplifting, and even super-spiritual, which is probably one of the components of its seductive allure. It does mean, however, that as such, it does not constitute the liturgy as it is designed to be experienced. Furthermore, because text is only one variable of liturgy, and because music is such a dominant and inseparable variable, the disintegration of the musical structure in essence, renders this kind of service an apostasizing from the liturgy itself. The reasons that such poorly integrative services seem nonetheless to gain increasing popularity and help draw people that otherwise perhaps would stay away from the synagogue, are not reasons essentially different from those motivations that engendered the formation of the pre-Carlebach American version as discussed above.

*as well as a well researched phenomenon. Yet music's ability to by-pass our cerebral process and deliver a message directly to our sensory-experiential realm (perhaps our limbic brain) is also a remarkable tool in transmitting, internalizing, and integrating liturgical structure, content, and even meaning in the same manner.* Thus even if participants in a service have no conscious awareness of these aspects of the liturgy, a well-structured liturgical space is effective in delivering these contributions directly into their human experience. Thus music, in the form of congregational singing, in its original function within the modal framework, plays a significant role, along with the other norms of performance and all other components of the modal framework, in inducing a specific and unique flavor of spirituality. It is this particular species of spirituality which is at the root of how Jewish people – at least those of Ashkenazi origins – consummate their experience of evocative and resonant prayer.

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# Denominational Articles

## Congregational Singing in Chasidic Congregations

by Sam Weiss

Considering the extent to which *neginah* pervades the lives of Chasidim, one would think that congregational singing is commonplace in their worship services. And this is indeed the case — but only if one defines congregational singing so broadly as to comprise all manner of resounding, spirited, and nusach-filled liturgical chanting emanating from the pews. Defined conventionally, however, as a group singing a uniform prayer-text in unison, congregational singing is rarely heard in the typical chasidic minyan — whether in a small *shtibl* or in a large synagogue. While the musical culture of Chasidism has shaped congregational singing in synagogues all over the globe, Chasidim themselves rarely sing the equivalent of a V'Taheir Libeinu or a Yism'chu in the course of a Sabbath service.

This paradox is not as strange as it might seem at first blush. A primary function of unison synagogue song is to promote active involvement on the part of an otherwise passive congregation. Since the Chasid typically engages the act of divine worship in high gear, fully focused on the meaning of the prayers and carried along by the force of their nusach, this function is largely unnecessary. Congregational singing, in such a context, could even become counter-productive, impeding the natural flow of davening. Consequently, texts like V'Taheir Libeinu or Yism'chu might figure prominently among the hundreds of para-liturgical songs in the Chasid's musical repertoire, but they are not accorded any special treatment in the service proper.

Another function of congregational singing is to accentuate a particular text and highlight it within the surrounding nusach chant through the novelty of rhythm, tempo change, or other ingratiating musical characteristics. The effect of such musical stimulation, however, is not as striking for chasidic congregants, who live and breathe music every day of the year in a variety of sacred and secular contexts. Indeed, there is ample opportunity for communal religious song on a Sabbath or Festival, but only outside the prayer service per se — inasmuch as congregational singing in unison or close harmony characterizes the *zemiroth* and *nigunim* sung at home meals, at S'udah Sh'lishit, and at the Rebbe's Friday night or M'laveh Malkah table. True, musical inspiration also abounds at Shacharit, Mincha and Ma'ariv; in a typical chasidic minyan,

nevertheless, it is the fervor of fulfilling the Mitzvah of prayer that drives the musical inspiration, and not vice versa.

Having twice made mention of the “typical chasidic minyan,” we should hasten to add that there really is no such thing. Chasidic congregations are probably the most heterogeneous of all the groups covered in this symposium. Despite their unvarying black garb, Chasidim have a multiplicity of customs and prayer styles that each sect treasures as hallmarks of its identity. We will note some of these variations even as we delineate the characteristics common to the bulk of chasidic congregational singing.

Perhaps the most important feature that distinguishes general chasidic singing from the singing that takes place during a prayer service is that the latter is almost always without actual words. That is, whenever a *ba'al-t'fillah*<sup>1</sup> sets a particular prayer or *piyyut* to a congregational melody, he alone sings the text; the other worshipers experience the words vicariously, by supporting his melody with vocables or hummed tones. This kind of congregational accompaniment typically drowns out the voice of the *ba'al t'fillah*, with the result that his lone singing of the prayer-text functions as a kind of *semantic* accompaniment to the lusty wordless singing of the congregation. Alternatively, one might conceive of the *ba'al-t'fillah's* role in this context as that of a conductor who cues the entrance of his chorus by singing the first few notes of their part. The chorus here is the entire congregation, which performs the song quasi-instrumentally. The words — in plain sight on the page of the Siddur, and usually even memorized — inspire the singing, but they remain unsung.

On a theoretical level, these congregational songs without words are in line with the fundamental chasidic approach to singing, in which the melody of a nigun is at least as important as the words that carry it. On a more practical level, however, this approach to congregational singing is dictated by the halachic proscriptions against *hafsakah*, or interruption of the statutory prayer texts by unnecessary repetition of the words. Thus a hazzan's extended melodic fantasia on the passage in the Shacharit Kedushah — *Mimkomcha, Malkeinu* — supported by congregational obligati on *yam-bam* and *ai-dai* (a favorite among Hungarian and Galician hasidim), is perceived as a valuable and desirable intensification of *kavvanah*, while a single word in that passage sung by a congregant would constitute an unwelcome intrusion into the prayer ritual. (**Example 1**)

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<sup>1</sup> The terms *ba'al-t'fillah* and hazzan are used interchangeably in this article to denote the lay prayer-leader in chasidic congregations.

**Lento**

Mim - kom - cha mal - kei - nu  
ki - kom - cha - nu

to - fi - a v' - sim - day  
[oy oy oy a ay day day day]

ya ba bay bam ay ay loch a - lei - nu  
ay] a - nach - nu lach.

*Example 1. Mimkomcha Malkeinu*

The kind of wordless congregational singing described above is heard most typically in the Friday night prayer *L'chah Dodi*, and in its Saturday morning counterpart *Eil Adon*. These two *piyyutim* are performed in the following *pizmon* format: The hazzan starts to sing. In a matter of seconds the alert congregation “names that tune” and joins in the nigun. As he reaches the end of the first verse, the hazzan pauses. The congregation then recites aloud the first verse, plus the second verse. The hazzan continues from where he had paused, and sings the second verse, again accompanied wordlessly by the congregation. At the end of the second verse he pauses for the congregation to recite the third verse, and this pattern continues for the rest of the prayer; i.e. he sings the verse which the congregation has just recited.

Chasidic performance style of *piyyutim* (and of many *zemirot* as well) normally does not distinguish between “verses” and “refrains.” Thus the opening line *L'chah dodi likrat kallah, p'nei shabbat n'kab'lah*, repeated twice, functions musically as one verse, and each subsequent singing or recitation of

**Moderato**

L' - chah do di [ay yay ya ba bam] [ay - nei yay ya ba bam]

lik - rat ka lah,  
[ay ay] n' - ka b' - ka lah, lah.

*Example 2. L'chah Dodi refrain. This chasidic nigun was also adapted to the Israeli folksong “Rad Halailah.”*

that recurring line (what we normally would call a refrain) is simply absorbed into the preceding verse. In most melodic settings, this requires the hazzan to pad that single line with filler vocables so that the metrical symmetry of the tune remains intact (**Example 2**).

Not all sects follow this musical convention for these two *piyyutim*. Many Ukrainian and Lithuanian chasidic dynasties (Ruzhiner, Boyaner, Slonimer, etc.) do not sing them at all, but instead recite the verses of L'chah Dodi and Eil Adon responsively with the *ba'al-t'fillah*. The Karlin-Stoliner don't even go that far, treating L'chah Dodi like a regular prayer: The hazzan recites only the first and last verses in the prevailing Kabbalat Shabbat nusach. In the last few decades some of these dynasties (e.g. Skverer and Lubavitcher) have adapted their services to the prevalent minhag of singing these *piyyutim*, even though their historical minhag was not to sing them. In the Bratslaver *shtiblech* we find a variation on the L'chah Dodi theme that is a bravura display of musical imagination and *kavvanah*: hazzan and congregation recite one verse at a time, then both hazzan and congregation sing a nigun to this verse, with nobody singing the words.

Practically all chasidic congregations that sing L'chah Dodi divide the verses into two musical sections, switching melodies at the sixth strophe, Lo Teivoshi. The melodies that are used for the first five strophes tend to be more sedate than the ones used for the last four. In addition, the second melody is usually also in a new meter, so the change in mood is rather striking. Several homiletical explanations have been advanced to account for this custom of shifting melodies, but the most plausible explanation seems to be simply the desire for musical variety. Details of this practice are not uniform over the entire chasidic landscape: The Bratslaver and the Vizhnitzer, for example, switch to the new tune at the seventh strophe rather than the sixth, while Polish and Galician Chasidim (Gerer, Bobover, Modzitzer, etc.) tend to choose lively melodies for both sections.

The six strophes of the Shabbat morning hymn Eil Adon are always sung to a single melody in the *pizmon* format described earlier. The exceptional chasidic groups, who do not sing *piyyutim* at all, recite these verses responsively. Virtually all chasidic congregations also recite responsively the nine<sup>2</sup> sentences of Hakol Yoducha, the *piyyut* that immediately precedes Eil Adon. None of the other commonly sung Shabbat prayers — including the fixed-meter *piyyutim* such as Adon Olam and Yigdal — is generally accorded any special melodic treatment in chasidic congregations.

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<sup>2</sup> Nusach Ashkenaz has only eight sentences in *Hakol Yoducha*.

Congregational singing plays a greater role, however, on Festivals (the Hallel Psalms, the *piyyutim* Yah Eili, Tal, Geshem, etc.) and the High Holidays (Zochreinu L'chayim, M'chalkeil Chayim, Areshet S'fateinu, Ein Kitzvah, Heyeih Im Pifiyot, Ha-yom T'amtzeinu, Ki Hinei Kachomer, etc.). Newly composed nigunim often get their inaugural hearings at these special prayers. V'ye'tayu Kol Lovdecha, for example, is a favorite High Holiday *piyyut* for presenting premieres of extended chasidic marches. Most of these holiday prayers and *piyyutim*, moreover, are characterized by much more congregational singing of the actual words, owing to their contexts in the *chazarat hasha"tz* or in other points of the service where the restrictions of *hafsakah* do not apply.

The preeminent occasion for chasidic congregational singing is, without a doubt, Simchat Torah. Not only is there singing during the prolonged *hakafot*, and dancing to all manner of nigunim with and without texts, but responsive chanting abounds in Atah Hor'eita, Sisu V'simchu, and the *piyyutim* that are inserted into the *Hakafot* (e.g. Ha-Aderet V'ha-Emunah, Mi-Pi Eil). An interesting custom in the Torah Reading for *Chatan B'reishit* is the singing of a joyous nigun as a prelude to each of the six congregational responses to the phrase, *vai'hi erev vai'hi voker, yom...*" (Example 3).

**Allegretto**

ay di day day day day day day ya di day day dam ay di di day dam

ay di day day day day day day yay ay day dam. Cong., then Hazzan:  
Vay'hi erev vai'hi voker yom ehad.

oy oy oy oy yoy ay di day dam ay ay ya di dam oy oy oy oy yoy

ay yay yam ay yay yam. Cong., then Hazzan:  
Vay'hi erev vai'hi voker yom sheini.

Example 3. Typical Nigun introducing congregational responses in *Chatan B'reishit* reading.

Chasidic congregational dancing is not confined to Simchat Torah. The Bratslaver Chasidim, for example, conclude every Kabbalat Shabbat service with a suite of traditional dances. Some Bratslaver congregations perform the dances between Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv, while others wait until the end



of services. The Karliner have a traditional nigun and dance that is performed every day, exclusively during the seven weeks of *S'firat Ha'Omer*.

As suggested at the beginning of this survey, a proper appreciation of the congregation's participation in chasidic worship requires a more comprehensive understanding of the term: congregational singing. Needless to say, all of the statutory responses in prayers like Bar'chu, Kaddish, K'dushah, etc. are taken up by chasidic worshipers with all the gusto they can muster. Similarly, the entire annual cycle of *Mi-Sinai* melodies are familiar to chasidic congregants young and old, who chant them along with the *ba'al-t'fillah*. In our examination of the various practices regarding L'chah Dodi, we contrasted congregations that sing the verses to those who recite them responsively. Yet, since such responsive reciting is actually responsive chanting aloud in the prevailing nusach, this choreographed swell of voices falls squarely under the functional heading of congregational singing no less than any Sulzerian hazzan-congregation call-and-response does. Viewed in this light, chasidic congregations are indeed paragons of congregational singing.

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## Impressions of Congregational Singing in an Orthodox Service

by Judah Leon Magnes

The service is the supposedly genuine-brand Ashkenazi Orthodox product without any foreign admixture contrary to law. I have seen Orthodox services before, but never one in which I took so much interest and felt so much pride. It was as noisy as any Orthodox service. The worshipers were of the same stripe that compose other Orthodox congregations. It was I who was different, who saw it all with different eyes.

What is it that this service consists of? How many different elements compose it when it is as naïve and natural as this was! There were the worshiper memories of childhood, of training at home. There was the repetition of prayers learned years ago and mumbled as fast as possible. There was the interest in the reading of the Scroll (of the Pentateuch); the love of literature as manifested in the reading of the lesson from the Prophets, the vanity of the Reader [hazzan] and his trills and roulades; the delight of singing out of tune and making your voice last the longest in the congregational singing.

There was the social converse, the passing of the snuff box, the “shhhh” of the Beadle [shamash] to people who were talking, whereupon he himself engages in louder conversation with the crowd of his friends. It was a service of all morning; for those in it, the event of the week.

It is a combination of mysterious feeling which is expressed in the mumbling away of the prayers that are not understood. For these people they ought not to be understood. Prayers are made simply to allow them to express in words—in voice—that feeling called religious which is within them.

Such a service a modern man cannot duplicate. The moderns have divided things into different spheres. Here is the place for literature, here for social converse, there for the expression of mystery, in another place for hearing song. But in this Orthodox service everything is blended...the reason that it is good is that it is naïve. As soon as Orthodoxy becomes a matter of Academic consistency, it is lost.

Getting out into the world again, one feels as though he had been transplanted into another land. The memories of that *Schul* linger, and it is somehow with great reluctance that one realizes that, after all, the world without is so different. And when you see three Jews ahead of you, the one shambling along with heels at a right angle, the other dirty and rheumy-eyed, the third looking at you as though you wouldn't believe him under oath, you realize

again that in the synagogue you don't notice his feet and eyes and face, but only his praying shawl and fervent responses and active participation in the service, that this Jew is a man worthy of respect and admiration.

*Editor's Note: After four Orthodox cantors declined the Journal's invitation to submit a symposium entry on congregational singing in their movement's synagogues, we turned to a young Reform rabbinical student's report to his parents in San Francisco of his visit to a small Orthodox synagogue in Berlin, 1901. Judah Leon Magnes' impressions, as valid today as they were then, are reprinted with permission of The Jewish Publication Society, publisher of **For Zion's Sake**, by Norman Bentwich, © 1954. Rabbi Magnes (1877-1948) served as assistant rabbi at New York's Temple Emanu-El, as president of the Kehillah in New York and as founding chancellor and first president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.*

## Congregational Singing and Congregational Silence When Eastern and Western Sephardim Attend the Same Service

*by Joseph A. Levine*

Synagogue ritual of the Sephardim in Colonial America featured a slow, meticulously rendered cantorial chant, according to historian Peter Wiernik. And in that carefully measured rendition lay the seeds of the Western Sephardic rite's ultimate decline in this country, for it allowed no break in the relentless monotony of three-and-a-half hour Sabbath services. A sephardic-style minyan on weekday mornings and evenings continues to remain problematical for the same reason.

The founding Sephardic community — descended from poets, philosophers, physicians and judges — was in fact on the verge of disappearing through intermarriage and assimilation when others arrived whose forebears had lived quietly in Eastern Mediterranean lands until the present century. There the Eastern Sephardim had observed their cherished religion with a certain fervency and superstition that is endemic to that part of the world. They began to emigrate here from Greece and Turkey in the early 1900s, and could not believe what they saw.

The reports they sent home, aglow with descriptions of Jewish prosperity in the New World, led many more to emigrate from the Ottoman Empire. They in turn would eventually be augmented tenfold by their still darker-skinned and more primitive-appearing cousins from the Levant, Balkans and North Africa, spurred by the Turkish Revolution following World War I. They all gravitated toward the stately Spanish/Portuguese synagogues built during the previous century in North America, but not to the point of overwhelming them, as has occurred elsewhere.

Beginning in the 1960s, for example, a quarter-million Sephardim from Morocco, Tunis, Algeria and Egypt inundated the 180,000 Jews who remained in France after the Holocaust. Worship, until then Ashkenazic in a grandly operatic style, could not cope. The result today is a strange bird neither airborne nor edible. Futilely striving to satisfy both traditions at once, a hazzan leading services in the ornate neo-Romanesque edifice on Paris' Rue de la Victoire emits a cacophony that would feel more at home in the Casbah of Tangier. Unlike Central European Ashkenazic Jews in 19th-century America, who backed off to organize their own preferred type of service when confronted

with Amsterdam/ London ritual, 20th-century North African Sephardim have simply taken over existent Ashkenazic houses of worship in France.

The North Africans were accustomed to a highly informal manner of praying. In Morocco or Tunisia the synagogue had often consisted of a single room tacked onto the home of a wealthy individual. Functionaries subsisted on honors auctions held during the t'fillah, and decorum waned in direct proportion to the length of proceedings. Worship often gave the impression of being an adjunct activity to greeting friends and enjoying a good laugh. It is easy to see why that type of prayer appears as misplaced in Paris' Rothschild Synagogue as chasidic daven'n would be in New York's Reform Temple Emanuel.

Sephardic worship as practiced in North Africa and the Levant is equally far removed from the stately minhag that first arrived in the New World via Portuguese-descended Dutch refugees. For 350 years, if a non-Sephardi vied for the position of minister in any of the Spanish/Portuguese synagogues — as did Westphalian-born scholar Isaac Leeser (later to become American Jewry's first national leader) at Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel in 1829 — he first had to demonstrate a mastery of the proudly unchanging Western Sephardic rite. Mikveh Israel's present order of service does not deviate appreciably from that established by Gershom Mendes Seixas, the "patriot rabbi" who fled from New York in the 1770s. (Seixas earned the sobriquet while still a chazan-minister at New York's Congregation Shearith Israel, by removing the plaque that bore a perpetual blessing for the welfare of Britain's King George III).

Even today, Sephardim of Eastern derivation who join established Western Sephardic synagogues in North America must adjust to the prevailing practice. It is much less animated than they would prefer; Sephardic hazzanim trained in London — current seat of the World Sephardi Federation — are reserved almost to the level of inertia, and their stoic self-containment is contagious. Only in the unlikely event that one of their own is asked to lead prayer do Eastern Sephardim show signs of life at a Spanish/Portuguese service. On one such occasion when I had the good fortune to be present, the father of a Bar Mitzvah celebrant invited Moroccan-born Hazzan Jo Amar to officiate in Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel. The family had emigrated from Iraq in the late 1970s, and of necessity joined the only Sephardic congregation in the area. After nearly two decades they were celebrating the last child's religious coming-of-age, to which several hundred guests had flown in from all over Europe and Israel.

The visitors' spoken Hebrew was impeccable, unlike their demeanor in synagogue. Some of the men at first refused to wear prayer shawls, but when

persuaded by the parnas (lay sexton), they sullenly flipped the silken tallit over their head upside-down and inside-out. A few of the women carried shopping bags full of hard candies into the sanctuary. But instead of lobbing the wrapped sweets gently for children to retrieve, they fired them like musket shot at everyone called to the Torah. When requested to desist until all honorees had descended from the ballustrated teivah from which the Torah was read, the ladies promptly redoubled their salvo.

Hazzan Amar chanted the Shacharit and Musaf sections as he customarily does, from the heart and with a magnificent native musicality, the Easterners joining in loudly and clearly. Mikveh Israel regulars seemed to appreciate this generous display of vocal fervor but politely demurred at every cue that was not exactly in sync with their own unvarying custom. They finally came alive during the Torah recessional, conducted by the minister of Mikveh Israel, Albert E. Gabbai, an ordained rabbi who also serves as hazzan. Then it was the guests' turn to maintain silence and gape as the Torah bearer, minister, parnas and trustees filed toward the heichal (Ark) at an incredibly deliberate rate of one half-step every five seconds. The accompanying hymn – *Havu L'Adonai* (Psalm 29; **Example 1**) — perfectly matched this slow-motion advance in its languid tempo, while giving the home team a chance to demonstrate some of the exquisite forbearance that characterizes Spanish/ Portuguese t'fillah. Compared to Ashkenazic — or even Eastern Sephardic — worship it appears so maddeningly cautious that Hanoach Avenary felt compelled to issue the following caveat about it:

Traditional Amsterdam-Sephardic song as it is intoned... today makes a deep but somewhat strange impression on the listener. One is tempted to say that it is Oriental music misunderstood ... and nevertheless performed in a naive faithfulness.

Yet Sephardic Psalm recitation is extremely effective, especially when an utterance such as *va'anachnu nevarech yah*, “we bless the Lord” (Psalm 115:18), is immediately converted into the act it described: *halleluyah*, “praise the Lord!” Sephardic group-singing's performance style at times resembles loosely measured chant, which allows worshippers the split second needed to make a connection between word and deed. Its lack of rigorously measured rhythm transposes it into a timeless, otherworldly dimension where syllables seem to float semi-detached from the words they form. At other times, during passages clearly defined by an imposed meter, the deliberate rate of enunciation is so tightly controlled that listeners experience the same net effect: they feel themselves disembodied, an aggregation of minute particles and waves churning through the quantum foam that comprises our universe.

# Havu L'Adonai (Ps. 29)

Spanish/Portuguese Tradition  
As Sung at Mikveh Israel,  
Philadelphia, Since 1740

Sung by Rev. Albert Gabbai  
Transcribed by Joseph Levine  
April 2004

(Original Pitch) Largo (♩=52)

Miz-mor l' - Da - vid. Ha - vu L'A-do nai b' - nei ei -

8  
lim, ha - vu L'A-do- nai ka - vod va - ngoz.

14  
Ha - vu L'A - do - nai k' - vod she - mo,

18  
hish-ta-cha- vu L'A do - nai b' - had rat ko - desh. Kol A - do

23  
nai ngal ha - ma - yim, eil ha-ka-vod hir- im, A-do- nai ngal

27  
ma - yim ra - bim. Kol A-do nai ba- ko - ach, Kol A - do

32  
nai be - ha - dar. Kol A-do- nai sho- veir a - ra - zim,

37  
vai- sha - beir A-do- nai etar-zei ha-le- va - non. Va - yar - ki

Example 1. Psalm 29; Havu L'Adonai

2

42  

 deim\_\_\_ ke-mo ngei - gel, le-va- non ve-sir yon\_\_\_ ke - mo\_\_\_ ven re - ei -

47  

 mim. Kol\_ A do nai\_\_\_ cho - tzeiv la ha- vot\_\_\_ eish. Kol\_ A - do

52  

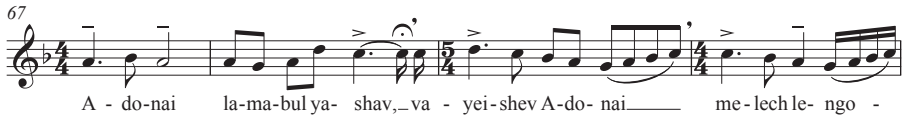
 nai\_\_\_ ya - chil mid - bar, ya - chil A-do- nai\_\_\_ mid - bar\_\_\_ ka -

57  

 deish. Kol\_ A-do- nai\_\_\_ y' cho - leil a- ya - lot, va - ye - che

62  

 sof\_\_\_ ye- nga - rot, uv - hei-cha- lo\_\_\_ ku - lo o-meir ka - vod

67  

 A - do- nai la- ma- bul ya- shav, va - yei- shev A- do- nai\_\_\_ me- lech le- ngo -

71  

 lam. A - do- nai ngoz le\_\_\_ nga - mo yi - tein,

75 *rit.*  

 A - do - nai\_\_\_ ye - va- reich\_\_\_ et nga- mo\_\_\_ va - sha - lom.



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*This eyewitness report is adapted from "A State of Mind," the chapter on Sephardic practice in **Rise and Be Seated: The Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship**, by Joseph A. Levine, editor of the **Journal of Synagogue Music**. For this article he also transcribed the music of *Havu L'Adonai* as customarily sung by Reverend Albert E. Gabbai, the rabbi and hazzan of Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia.*

## Tunes of Engagement: Using Congregational Melodies to Combat Alienation in Conservative Worship

*by Neil Schwartz*

It's no secret to any hazzan working in a Conservative synagogue that many congregants appear to be alienated from the traditional Jewish worship experience. Conservative hazzanim may wonder whether anything that they do — any introduction of livelier melodies for worshipers to sing — will make the slightest dent in this disaffection.

The premise of this article is that an astute use of congregational tunes at the right liturgical moments can make all the difference for some congregants between confusion and therefore boredom on the one hand and understanding and therefore engagement on the other hand.

A team effort between rabbis and hazzanim is needed to tackle this crucial issue in the future of our Movement. Conservative Judaism has already lost many members during the last few decades. Many synagogues find their seats filled only with “regulars” or B'nei Mitzvah guests, as opposed to those congregants who pay dues but who are not comfortable attending our services more than one or twice a year.

The great flagship synagogues are beginning to find some of their members departing for smaller, more intimate minyanim where participants lead the services on a rotating basis. When the leadership of these minyanim or havurot is asked, “Why?” the unsettling answer is this: “We would rather chant everything ourselves, even if it is not perfect, because we like being involved.”

We cannot force a worshiping group — large or small — to engage a hazzan, and neither can the United Synagogue. However, in the positions we retain we can do our best to stem the alienation which leads either to non-attendance on the one hand, or to member transfers to synagogues or havurot without hazzanim on the other hand. We must daven with our congregants, not for them, or we may lose them.

I believe this — in a nutshell — is what is meant when recent Jewish Prayer Commissions issue calls for “empowering the people.”

### **What types of melodies might best implement this goal?**

I am going to postulate that for the average congregant, the entire concept of “nusach” is almost irrelevant. Notice that I refer to the average congregant,

not the maven. Most of us hazzanim use Adult Education, Bulletin articles and school classrooms to share the concepts behind the wonderfully complex systems of interrelated prayer modes which define our chanting. Given the larger issues of discomfort with the Hebrew language and with the structure and the theology of our liturgy, the proper use of nusach is off the radar screen for most of our congregants.

When most of us teach nusach, we explain its usefulness for defining the liturgical occasions, the sections of the services, and the moods of the texts. However, the best indication that few non-maven congregants really care about this is the proliferation of Lewandowski's Chatsi Kaddish (**Example 1**).<sup>1</sup> For decades JTS graduates and other hazzanim have been taught separate melodies for the Chatsi Kaddish of different services, but in many synagogues there are few congregants who want to hear those other versions.

I am convinced that the reason Lewandowski's Chatsi Kaddish is so widely used is simply the congregational melody which it includes. Most congregants like to sing whenever and wherever they can, and by and large they are not concerned if this Kaddish melody is the "proper" one for any particular liturgical occasion, nor whether or not it fits the mood of a particular section of the worship service.

Lewandowski's melody became instantly popular among the hazzanim of Europe, who brought it to America. How did this melody spread so pervasively throughout American synagogues during the 20th century?

We can thank the Goldfarb brothers – Rabbi Israel and Dr. Samuel – for the popularity of Lewandowski's Friday evening Kiddush,<sup>2</sup> because they reprinted it (without attribution) in their popular Sabbath Eve songbook.<sup>3</sup> However, we cannot credit the Goldfarb Brothers for the spread of Lewandowski's Chatsi Kaddish, because they had composed a melody of their own for the same text.<sup>4</sup> One possible missing link between the congregational melody's first appearance in Lewandowski's *Kol Rinnah* and its later popularity in America could be its citation shortly afterward in Abraham Baer's authoritative nusach compendium, *Baal T'Fillah*, as the recurring refrain *kein anachnu b'yodcha* ("so are we in Your hand") in the Yom Kippur penitential

<sup>1</sup> Louis Lewandowski. *Kol Rinnah U'T'fillah* (Berlin: self-published, 1871), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Israel and Samuel Goldfarb. *Friday Evening Melodies* (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1918), p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Cantor

Congregation

Cantor

Yit-ga - dal v' yit-ka-dash sh' meh ra - ba. A - men. B'al -

6 ma div-ra chir - u - teh v' - yam-lich mal-chu-teh b' cha-yeichon uv' yo-mei-chon uv' cha

9 *Andantino, dolce*  
Congregation

Cantor

yei d' chol bet Yis-ra-el, ba-a-ga-la u - viz-man ka - riv, v' im-ru:

14 Congregation

Cantor

A - men. Y'hei shmeh rab-bah m' - va-rach l' - a-lam ul-al-mei al - ma-yah. Yit-ba

19 rach v' yish-ta-bach v' yit-pa - ar v' yit-ro-mam v' yit-na - sei, v' yit-had-dar v' yit-a-

22 Congregation

Cantor

leh v' yit-hal-lal sh'-meh d' kud - sha, brich\_ hu, brich\_ hu, l' -

26 *Andantino, dolce*  
Congregation

ei - la min kol bir - cha - ta v' shi - ra - ta, tush - b' cha - ta v' -

29 Cantor

Congregation

ne - che-ma - ta da - a-mi-ron b' - al - ma, v' - im - ru: A - men.

*Example 1. Lewandowsky's Chatzi Kaddish for Friday Night*

piyyut *Ki Hineh KaChomer* (“As Clay in the Potter’s Hand;” **Example 2**).<sup>5</sup> Its appearance at this key moment in the High Holy Day liturgy might have supplied a second point for drawing the tune’s ultimate line of proliferation in American Shabbat usage.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham Baer, “Kein Anachnu...” *Baal T’Fillah* (Gothenburg: self-published, 1877), no. 1321b.

Congregation

Kein a-nach-nu v'-ya - d'-cha che - sed - no - tseir  
la - b'-rit hab - beit v' al tei - fen la-yei - tzer.

Example 2. Baer's "Kein Anachnu" refrain in *Ki Hineh Kachomer*

### Determining the usefulness of a melody versus its appropriateness

This leads to the logical question of the usefulness of a particular melody, which may conflict with its appropriateness. If one's goal is to get the kahal singing regardless of the melody's consistency with the ongoing chanted nusach, then the usefulness of a melody is far more important than its appropriateness. However, the real issue is whether or not we can have both usefulness and appropriateness simultaneously.

How do we measure the usefulness of a melody? Is it by how enthusiastically our congregants sing along? Few congregants are going to say "Oh, that melody really fits the text / mood here." Most of them are not concerned about that, they just want to sing, whenever they can!

It is much easier to set aside congregational considerations and to judge the appropriateness of a given melody for a particular text on its own merits. Does it fit the words? Is it in the ongoing modality prescribed by common usage for this part of the service? In sum, does the mood of the melody fit the mood of the service at this point?

Here are two examples. On Friday evening, those of us who still chant *Mizmor L'David* (Psalm 29) in Kabbalat Shabbat have a few choices. Do we use the "traditional" marching melody in a Major key from the Shabbat morning Hachnasat HaTorah service, just because our congregants already know that version?<sup>6</sup> Or do we use the Yemenite-sounding Moshe Nathanson version,<sup>7</sup> or the Spanish-Portuguese melody (Western Sephardic),<sup>8</sup> or any of the other alternatives which are appropriate for Friday night?

<sup>6</sup> *Zamru Lo Vol. II, Shabbat*, ed. Moshe Nathanson (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1960), p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> *Zamru Lo Vol. I, Friday Evening*, ed. Moshe Nathanson (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1955), p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Zamru Lo—The Next Generation, Shabbat*, ed. Jeffrey Shiovitz (New York: Cantors Assembly, 2004), p. 294.

Similarly, how many of us are using Moshe Rothblum's lively chant with syncopated chorus for virtually every *V'shamru*<sup>9</sup> (including the Shacharit Amidah), simply because our congregants like singing it better than most of the several dozen other good *V'shamru* versions available? It takes a lot of courage to say to a congregation, "There are many other ways of singing this paragraph, and you will enjoy our services more if we switch around the melodies occasionally."

Many congregants are content with only one melody per prayer. They may resent our attempts to enrich their musical repertoires, because it feels less familiar to them when we switch melodies, including ones they know. Thus, we are forced to choose between the risk of boring those who are ready for multiple melodies per text, versus alienating those for whom the one melody they prefer is their only touchstone to that text.

It gets more serious than merely thinking through our choices of melodies. It seems that simply singing a congregational melody as it was written (or as we know it is usually done elsewhere) may not be enough. We often have to sing these melodies in the exact same way that the congregants are used to, including adopting their particular way of accenting that text, or they may still feel that we are "not singing their tunes".

We also need to decide how grammatically correct we want to be about accents. Entire source books like *Gates of Song*<sup>10</sup> and the latest *Zamru Lo* have been edited for proper accents, but in real life it may be counterproductive to insist on chanting congregational melodies that way. For example, the false *mil'el* accents in the popular Major-key marching version of *Mizmor L'David* during the Hachnasat HaTorah service are very hard to correct into *milra* accents, and in fact may sound awkward if we try to do so.

### **How can melodies be used optimally by prayers leaders?**

In an ideal world, we would have constant give-and-take between the kahal and the sha"tz. The sha"tz would daven in nusach, the kahal would murmur along where appropriate. Periodically there might be cantorial recitation of some text, and at key points the congregation would join in aloud to keep everyone on track. Of course, this assumes that the kahal is fluent in Hebrew, that they appreciate nusach and cantorial singing, and that they have an understanding of and an interest in the traditional style of presenting Jewish liturgy.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> *Gates of Song*, ed. Charles Davidson (New York: Transcontinental Music, 1987).

Instead of this rosy picture, what we often have (except for the regulars and the mavens) are many congregants and guests who sit confused and often bored, perhaps looking at the English in the siddur if they are interested, waiting for the congregational melodies so they can sing along with them. When the sanctuary is full of B'nei Mitzvah guests who are even less familiar with a traditional service, this situation becomes even more the norm.

One result has been an initiative to increase the number of places and texts in the service where we can add melodies. The service then becomes a series of tunes strung together with occasional pieces of nusach. Our role as hazzanim becomes that of a song leader, not to satisfy any evil purpose on the part of anyone else, but simply because if we do not lead these melodies, many congregants may get little from the worship experience we're providing.

Max Wohlberg tried to address this issue with his publications *Chemdat Shabbat*<sup>11</sup> and *Yachad B'Kol*.<sup>12</sup> In both books he composed music that has parts for the hazzan and parts for the kahal. However, these compositions have not caught on in very many synagogues and where they have caught on, congregants often seem to prefer singing the entire melody rather than sharing parts of it responsively with the hazzan. This reflects the move in many congregations away from sha"tz / kahal responses to a sung-through style for the K'dushah of Shacharit as well as of Musaf.

## What melodies are appropriate, and where?

### 1) *Shabbat*:

Let's look at the Friday evening service first. Except for nusach at the ends of Psalms 95 - 99 (if we still chant any of them) and at the end of Psalm 93, the entire Kabbalat Shabbat service has become congregational. In Arvit L'Shabbat, communal song predominates in both the Sh'ma U-Virchoteha and in the M'ein Sheva section. Some colleagues have even converted the Lewandowski Kiddush into a congregational singalong. The Leoni melody for Yigdal is favored for the end of Arvit, but it is often hard to restrain the kahal from trespassing upon the hazzan's domain—the opening half of each strophe—as the melody was originally written. The very first volume of *Zamru*

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<sup>11</sup> Max Wohlberg, *Chemdat Shabbat, A Sabbath service for Hazzan and Prepared Congregational Choir* (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> Max Wohlberg, *Yachad B'Kol, Sabbath Recitatives for Hazzan with Congregational Refrains* (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1975).

*Lo* (Example 3)<sup>13</sup> presented it that way. The latest edition has obliterated the double bar line that signals when the hazzan's musical statement ends and the kahal's response is supposed to begin.<sup>14</sup>

**Moderato**  
Cantor

Yig - dal E - lo - him chai v' - yish - ta - bach nim -

3  
tsa v' ein\_\_ eit\_\_ el m' tsi - u - to. E - chad v' ein ya - chid k' -

6  
yi - chi - do\_\_ ne'e - lam v' gam ein sof\_\_ l' - ach - du - to. D.C. etc.

Example 3. Leoni's *Yigdal* — as a give and take

On Shabbat morning there may be one or two melodies in *Birchot HaShachar* and *P'sukei D'Zimra*, and perhaps a few more in the *Sh'ma U-Virchoteha* section of *Shacharit*. Some hazzanim repeat the *Amidah* of *Shacharit* while some repeat the *Musaf Amidah*, but few do both, and many repeat neither *Amidah*. This limits the areas where everyone can join in song to *Hotsa'at* and *Hachnasat HaTorah*, which are done almost entirely congregationally.

## 2) *Chol*:

Weekday congregational melodies are mainly for *V'ahavta*, *Mi Chamocha*, *Avot / G'vurot / K'dushah* and *Aleinu* (some Morning minyanim sing *Shomer Yisrael* during *Tachanun*, but *Tachanun* is becoming rare in Conservative shuls). One interesting phenomenon is the virtual disappearance of an *Amidah* repetition from *Shacharit* and *Minchah L'Chol*. What was once supposed to be an emergency shortcut—the *Hoicher K'dushah*—has now become the norm in our movement.

The *Ramah Camps* have contributed another fascinating musical quirk to weekday services. Since they have always been careful to separate *Nusach L'Chol* from *Nusach L'Shabbat*, the *Amidah L'Chol nusach* has crept backwards into the *Sh'ma U-Virchoteha* section. I attribute this development to the fact that it is hard to chant a simple *Ahavah Rabbah* mode in one's low vocal

<sup>13</sup> *Zamru Lo* (1955), op. cit., p. 125, No. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), op. cit., p. 121.



register on weekdays without letting it slip into the more complex *Ahavah Rabbah* mode used on Shabbat, and once that happens people's patience is taxed because of time pressures.

### 3) *Yamim Noraim*:

New tensions have arisen in the use of congregational melodies on the High Holy Days. How many of us are able to retain the *Yigdal* melody in *Ahavah Rabbah* mode<sup>15</sup> for the end of Arvit, as opposed to being requested to use the Leoni melody even here? On the other hand, how many of us are misusing the congregational melody in the Chatsi Kaddish for High Holy Day Musaf<sup>16</sup> by chanting that in other places such as over the Torah scrolls before Maftir? To me, that takes away from its special soul-stirring power when Musaf does begin.

Apropos, how many of us are overusing the special Chasidic Kaddish<sup>17</sup> at the conclusion of Neilah by singing that festive version after Musaf and even after Shacharit on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? Same problem: if you do not save that melody for a one-time use after Neilah, you lose its power to musically say at that point "we made it through Yom Kippur, and we will be Sealed in the Book of Life". Its appearance in Neilah becomes an anticlimax when we've already used it several other times.

Just as Shabbat services could someday have no Kaddish melody other than the Lewandowski tune, the High Holy Days in the Conservative Movement could conceivably see every Chatsi Kaddish solemnly declaimed to the Musaf refrain and every Kaddish Shaleim danced to the Neilah rikud. Are we already responding to popular demand by edging in that direction?

The real question we must ask ourselves is this: if using (or misusing) mostly those two melodies helps open the High Holy Day experience to congregants who do not appreciate the complexity of the High Holy Day liturgy, is it worth foregoing the proper Kaddish melodies and maybe even some of the High Holy Day nusach? For example, do we use a Shabbat congregational

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<sup>15</sup> Gershon Ephros. *Cantorial Anthology Vol. I, Rosh Hashanah* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1957), p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> *Zamru Lo Vol. III, Shalosh R'galim & High Holidays*, ed. Moshe Nathanson (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1974), p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> "Chasidic Kaddish–Rosenblatt," *Ketonet Yosef, Hazzanic Compendium for the Entire Year*, ed. Joseph A. Levine (New York: H. L. Miller Cantorial School at the Jewish Theological Seminary, 2000), p. 713.

*L'Dor VaDor* rather than the High Holy Day version by Abraham Baer,<sup>18</sup> just so the congregants can sing another melody that they know?

Since most non-maven congregants were not taught an appreciation of the traditional style of davening, just listening to our cantorial recitatives and choral (i.e., non-congregational) pieces may be boring to the average younger congregant who will someday be supporting his or her synagogue as an adult. We have not done a very good job of helping them to understand the concept of using music as a touchstone for t'shuvah. Therefore they appreciate the congregational melodies which are in the High Holy Days, as music, and some of us use our choirs primarily to lead those melodies rather than to perform classic choral pieces. Is this really what we should be doing with all our training?

#### **4) *Shalosh Regalim*:**

Pilgrimage Festival services are even more problematic than High Holy Days. In many synagogues, the average congregants have little sense of the liturgical role the *Shalosh Regalim* play in the cycle of the Jewish year. In their lives Pesach means home sederim, Sukkot has become a school-based holiday (since few homes have sukkah dwellings), and Shavuot is totally lost among Memorial Day barbecues and Graduation parties.

There is a very haunting nusach for Arvit L'Shalosh Regalim,<sup>19</sup> and a beautiful Chatsi Kaddish melody as well.<sup>20</sup> How many of us use these unusual melodies? The problem is this: unless one is blessed with a group of mavens, the few congregants who do attend *Shalosh Regalim* Arvit have little familiarity with Festival melodies heard so seldom.

Therefore, some hazzanim choose to use the Lewandowski Chatsi Kaddish instead of the one for *Shalosh Regalim* Arvit, just so their congregants can have something to sing along with. Which is more important — chanting it in the prescribed nusach that heralds the arrival of a new liturgical season, or getting people to sing? Synagogues, minyanim or havurot which have opted to do without hazzanim have clearly chosen the latter priority, while some shuls with hazzanim are following suit so as to not alienate their members who also attend breakaway services.

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<sup>18</sup> Baer, *Baal T'Fillah*, op. cit., No. 1114, 1. W.

<sup>19</sup> Baer, *Baal T'Fillah*, op. cit., No. 722.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 758, 1. W.

### **What benefits do hazzanim gain by using congregational melodies?**

Briefly, seasonally shifting nusach is unmatched for delineating liturgical occasions, the structure of the services, and the moods of the texts. Throughout the years that I have taught nusach at CAJE (Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education), I have also said that our liturgy in general and our nusach in particular have two main functions. They serve to build a vertical connection with our Jewish past, and a horizontal connection with Jews worldwide. Moreover they serve to bind together the community which is performing a particular liturgy at a specific time in a specific place.

However, this is only valid for congregants who find such values to be meaningful, and who buy into the system. The majority of Jews in our larger cities are not affiliated with any synagogue, and most synagogue members do not attend services regularly. Do we just concern ourselves with satisfying the musical and spiritual needs of the regulars who do attend, or do we reach out to the non-attendees (and maybe even the non-affiliated)?

Either way, we will attract more attendees by turning them into participants in our liturgy than if we just chant more recitatives at them. An occasional recitative is fine in the right spot with the right kahal, and disciplined, well-planned chanting helps keep us professionally challenged as hazzanim. However, for each congregant who follows our every note with excitement, most of us have at least three other congregants who may become bored half-way through our recitatives because they do not have a clue as to what we are doing.

So, it seems to me that a judicious use of congregational melodies is the most potent tool in our skill-set to attract the attention and participation of those other three-quarters of our congregants. We actually gain some benefits which help us fulfill our mission as shlichei tsibbur when we use melodies that they can sing.

There are two diametrically opposed reasons why congregants are periodically at different points in a traditional Jewish service. The wishful reason is that they may be so involved with their own davening that they go at their own pace. The realistic reason is that they may not be comfortable with the language or the liturgical ideas, so they read the English (or daydream, or talk) and then we hear the rustle of pages as they get caught up when a page number is announced. For both of these groups, congregational melodies help keep the entire kahal moving through the service at approximately the same pace.

Some of our congregants seem to experience kavvanah when they daven along, especially the knowledgeable ones for whom the texts have meaning. For the rest, often the only time they attain a sense of devotion is during the group rendition of congregational melodies, even if they do not understand what they are singing. It is the act of singing in a group which seems to release the endorphins for some of them. It also lets us help them to bind together as a community for that brief moment.

A new buzzword is “ownership” of an activity or a concept. There is no question that singing a prayer gives most congregants more ownership of that prayer than merely listening to us chant it. So, the question is whether or not we can encourage the give-and-take of the old-style davening. That worked better when the kahal was more knowledgeable, but it can still work for us nowadays with the kahal we have.

We hazzanim thrive on give-and-take. Many of us would agree that a vibrant series of exchanges with our kahal (such as a responsive K’dushah) does at least as much for our sense of professional satisfaction as does chanting a recitative. What do we do when our kahal wants only a sung-through K’dushah? We have to find other places in the liturgy to reproduce that lost give-and-take.

The hallmark of instrumentally accompanied services like Craig Taubman’s *Friday Night Live*<sup>21</sup> and the so-called “B. J. Experience”<sup>22</sup> is the spotlighting of livelier melodies than some of us have been using. While this certainly combats the boredom factor and opens the service to a younger crowd whose music is more rhythm-oriented, it sometimes offers too much of a good thing. As you will see in the 1970s Camp Ramah service below, there was an exquisite moment when the frenzy of the chasidic *L’cha Dodi* (all nine verses with four consecutive melodies) gave way to a suddenly slow *Mizmor Shir L’Yom HaShabbat*. When we pick and choose melodies from the newer services, we need to keep a similar balance in order to retain interest.

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<sup>21</sup> Craig Taubman. *Friday Night Live* (Sherman Oaks, CA: Sweet Louise Music, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> The Singles Service at B’nai Jeshurun Congregation, whose late rabbi, Marshall Meyer instituted an almost completely sung liturgy accompanied by keyboard and punctuated by spontaneous dancing in the aisles (New York: the Upper West Side of Manhattan, 1985 to the present).

## What are some difficulties encountered when introducing / changing melodies?

During the years leading up to the publication of the original *Siddur Sim Shalom*,<sup>23</sup> some leaders of the Conservative Movement may have made a conscious decision to present a new siddur which had minimal transliteration. The *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*<sup>24</sup> also had little transliteration, and in this respect both prayerbooks were following the style of the Silverman series which they updated. The theory may have been that if there was virtually no transliteration in the official siddur, congregants would be encouraged to learn to read Hebrew (or at least to decode it).

Needless to say, that did not happen. As the independent Prayer Book Press published *Siddur Likrat Shabbat* (1973), *Mahzor Hadash* (1977), and then *Siddur Hadash* (1991),<sup>25</sup> they took pains to follow a path of accessibility for Conservative congregants who were not fluent in Hebrew. All three prayerbooks were full of transliteration for every prayer which could possibly be sung by the congregation, as well as meaningful responsive readings and very legible typography in a modified Frankreuhl font.

By the mid-1990s it became clear to the Conservative leadership that the original *Siddur Sim Shalom* had real competition in *Siddur Hadash*. The response was to publish a revised *Siddur Sim Shalom* (dubbed “Slim Shalom” in appreciation of its smaller size and weight) in two parts - Shabbat / Festivals (1998) and Chol (2002).<sup>26</sup> Both of these siddurim have more transliteration than the 1985 version, and more responsive readings as well.

This subject concerns hazzanim directly, because when adequate transliteration is not available it becomes harder to encourage our congregants to participate. Even if it is agreed that English transliterations open the davening experience for those who do not read Hebrew, there is still plenty of room to disagree about which transliteration system we should be using. Scientific transliteration is not an option, where each Hebrew letter is matched by a single English letter with diacritical marks. A prime example: in non-scientific

<sup>23</sup> *Siddur Sim Shalom*, ed. Jules Harlow (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1985).

<sup>24</sup> *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, ed. Jules Harlow (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1972).

<sup>25</sup> All edited by Sidney Greenberg and Jonathan D. Levine (Bridgeport, CT: Media Judaica).

<sup>26</sup> Both edited by Leonard Cahan.

transliteration, the only two choices for “Tzadi” are “tz” or “ts”. Given how often students misread the “Tzadi” as a “Z,” I prefer using “ts”.

Another transliteration issue is how to render “Chaf” and “Het”. If one wants to retransliterate back from English into Hebrew, then having different values for these two is useful. Since most American Jews cannot make any difference in the sound of these two consonants, there are those who use a “ch” for both letters. If there are going to be different English values, do we use “ch” or “kh” for “Chaf”? Do we use “h” with an underline or “h” with a dot under it for “Het”?

Unfortunately, the three major religious movements and the major publishers of Hebrew educational texts have all moved to the “Hadassah” typeface. This is a problem of orthography: how the letters look on the page. In the Hadassah font, the classic points of confusion from one Hebrew consonant to the next are in fact worse than in the Frankreuhl font. For example, “Bet” / “Vet” look similar to “Kaf” / “Chaf”, because the lower right corner of the latter is squared, not rounded. There is not enough space in the upper left corner of the “Hey”, and the list goes on.

One last comment about orthography. Those of us who are using the “Trope Trainer” software from Kinnor to print our Torah and Haftarah readings are finding very useful the fact that the Sh’va Na and Kamatz Katan are in bold print. While *Siddur Sim Shalom* uses the special symbol for Kamatz Katan of a line with a dot underneath, it would be nice to someday have an official siddur (not a classroom siddur) which presents both the Sh’va Na and the Kamatz Katan in bold print.

Another issue for many congregations is the use of musical instruments. At one time, either a congregation had an organ or it didn’t, and guitars and other instruments were either used or they were not. Now we have the phenomenon where an otherwise traditional congregation will say to their clergy, “We want to do Kabbalat Shabbat with instruments during the summer months when sunset is later.” When that proves to be successful they then may say, “We want to use instruments for Kabbalat Shabbat year-round.” It is hard to say “No” if there are three times more attendees at the services with instruments than there are at services without instruments.

If the issue were merely halachic, then whatever one’s rabbi says becomes the pattern in that shul. However, if one’s approach to Shabbat includes an enjoyment of the peace and quiet of no TV, stereo, telephone, etc. then this may become an imposition on the religious life of the hazzan. Some leave

their jobs over such issues, but many of us just put aside our own sense of religiosity for the sake of the needs of the synagogue.

Just as we would love to chant recitatives but we recognize that our congregants enjoy melodies with which they can sing, so too some of us face the reality that the use of instruments brings in the crowds even if inside we are bemoaning our lost Shabbat quietude. Which values should prevail here? We directly benefit from the larger attendance and the sense that we are connecting with our congregants, but what do we lose as hazzanim? To quote a recent popular book: has the cheese moved and some of us do not yet accept that concept?

If we are forced to make concessions in both our craft and our personal religious sensibilities, where are the positives we all need to keep going in this profession? Can we find our job satisfaction in teaching the adult education courses necessary to help our congregants become more knowledgeable? Do we live for the occasional Bar/Bat Mitzvah student who really “gets it” and goes on to more davening and leyning? Or can we find fulfillment in a service where people sing along enthusiastically, even if we have to fudge the nusach to use more compelling tunes?

The last issue involved with the difficulty of changing melodies is really a review of a comment made in another context above: congregants not only prefer the melodies they already know, but they also want them sung in the manner which they already know. It amazes me that a colleague can come to audition for a pulpit we are leaving, and not ask a single question about what these congregants enjoy singing. On the other hand, just giving one’s successor a list of favorite melodies is not enough — a tape or CD is needed to find out the details of how they actually perform their favorite melodies.

### **Is there a “Conservative” approach?**

Most of us serve United Synagogue-affiliated congregations, or shuls which in some other way fall under the umbrella of Conservative Judaism. As such, we are immersed in an atmosphere which purports to value traditional liturgy, yet we must engage congregants who do not have a knowledge base with which to understand and appreciate that liturgy. In the Conservative movement, we use congregational melodies in alternation with traditional styles of davening to bridge that gap.

This is different from Orthodox services, in that the majority of Orthodox congregants (supposedly) do have the knowledge of Hebrew and liturgy to actively participate in their services. Yet, the truth is that less congrega-

tional singing goes on in many Orthodox services than in ours. There are also proportionally far fewer trained hazzanim in Orthodox shuls than in Conservative synagogues.

This also differs from Reform and Reconstructionist / Renewal services, because there is little assumption in those movements that the traditional manner of davening is relevant to their congregants. Reform and Reconstructionism operate under no constraint against having the majority of their liturgy read to them in English, with interceding Hebrew selections communally sung, usually to instrumental accompaniment.

In Conservative services we try to balance traditional davening in the prescribed nusach with judicious use of congregational melodies as a method of engaging those congregants who otherwise may be getting little from the musical aspects of the service. While congregants who do know what is going on also appreciate a chance to sing as a group periodically, congregational melodies are often the only point of entry for many congregants who are less knowledgeable.

**What melodies were used in a “classic” Camp Ramah Friday Evening service?**  
During my student years at the Cantors Institute (1975 - 1980), I did research among our colleagues who were working in synagogues, on the contents of the Friday Evening service in the Conservative movement. The data revealed a remarkable overlap between the services I experienced as a counselor on the staff of Camp Ramah and the actual practice in Conservative synagogues at that time. Perhaps even more surprising is the anecdotal evidence that only during the last few years have there been any significant changes in the Friday Evening service between what is done in the Ramah camps and in mainstream Conservative congregations.

Back in the 1970s some of the Ramah camps would hire a Rabbinical School student to serve as Rosh T’fillah and a Cantors Institute student to be Rosh Hazzanut. During recent years, the latter position has faded away, and the Rosh T’fillah position is now sometimes filled by a Cantorial School student. One benefit for Seminary undergrads working at the various Ramah camps has always been the opportunity to help develop a variety of prayer services keyed to the various age levels of the campers.

By hiring JTS students for these positions the Ramah camps gained a remarkable consistency between the way services were done at JTS and at camp. I cannot say for certain that this is still the case, because there are many influences at work in services nowadays which were not present in the 1970s.



However, the generation of rabbinical and cantorial students who attended JTS and also worked at Ramah in those days brought the camp melodies into their synagogues when they began working full-time in the field.

There are two remarkable considerations about the 1970s Camp Ramah Friday Evening service which I analyze below. One is that there was very little variation (if any) in these melodies among all the camps at that time. The other is that, contrary to opinions I have heard from colleagues, with only one exception these melodies are all “kosher” and the nusach is in keeping with the Shabbat evening modalities we were taught in Cantors Institute classes.

There was in the 1970s – and still is thirty years later – a sense among some members of the Cantors Assembly that incorrect nusach was and is being used at Ramah. As the following examples will show, that is by and large not the case. Most of the melodies were written by known composers like Goldfarb or Lewandowski or Sulzer, or they came from authentic Chasidic and Sephardic traditions. The Ramah camps actually do a better job than some of our own synagogues in making sure that Nusach L’Chol is properly limited to use on weekdays. So why the lingering resentment among many of our cantorial colleagues?

I believe that the answer lies in the larger cultural trends of the period. In the 1960s this country experienced wrenching social changes such as the Vietnam War protests and the rise of Black Power. American Popular music changed under the influence of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Peter Paul and Mary, John Denver, Glen Campbell and Joni Mitchel. As the pace of social change quickened, Americans began to experience cultural shock.

In addition, after Israel triumphed in the 1967 Six Day War, it suddenly became acceptable to express one’s Jewish identity openly, and there was an explosion of new Jewish music which has not let up yet. Shlomo Carlebach, Folk-Rock services, the Chasidic Song Festivals, Debbie Friedman, Jeff Klepper, Theodore Bikel, and Safam all began performing or composing (or both) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. An unrecognized influence was also the Lubavitcher Chasidim, as they made inroads into the life of Jewish students on many campuses with their enthusiastic and tuneful services.

All of these influences were felt by the rabbis-and-cantors-to-be who staffed the various Ramah camps. They then brought the melodies back to JTS, and their young charges carried them back to local congregations across the country. These were two main sources for new congregational melodies in the Conservative movement. It seems to me that this uncontrolled flow of melodies may have alarmed the established hazzanim, because it was

happening outside of their control and without their moderating influence. However, that is in keeping with the way many aspects of cultural life happened in America during the 1970s — it was the democratization of Jewish synagogue music.

There is a tangible indicator of the direction in which this spread may have taken place. Back in the 1970s the Seminary Synagogue used the old Singer siddur.<sup>27</sup> Into the front of every siddur the text for *Y'did Nefesh* was pasted. To me this indicates that *Y'did Nefesh* was first introduced to the Conservative Movement at Camp Ramah, then it was added to the services at JTS, and from there it spread to the synagogues. Notice that the Pursa melody in 4/4<sup>28</sup> – the one sung at Ramah – was never completely replaced by the Zweig melody in 3/4<sup>29</sup> when that variant became known.

Please visualize the setting for a Friday Night service at Camp Ramah. If the weather was nice, the whole camp (over 500 people) would sit on benches outside the Beit Am Gadol, with almost everyone dressed in white. In bad weather we would be inside, but it was still a very special atmosphere. By and large the tone of conversation was hushed, and even non-observant campers could feel that something different, something special was about to happen.

Kabbalat Shabbat, which could be led by a camper of any age, began with the Pursa *Y'did Nefesh* melody and its *Ya-da dai-dai-dai dai* sequel. Arvit – from *Bar'chu* to the end – could only be led by post-B'nei Mitzvah age

5 L' - chu n' ra - n' na l'A - do - nai, na - ri a l' tsur yish - ei - nu n' - kad -  
 ma fa - nav b' - to - da biz - mi - rot na - ri - a  
 8 1. lo; n' - kad - lo. 2. (Repeat for vss. 3 & 4)

Example 4. *L'chu N'ran'na* — as sung at Ramah camps

<sup>27</sup> *The Standard Prayer Book* (Orthodox) American Edition, ed. Simeon Singer (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1954).

<sup>28</sup> *Zamru Lo*—2004, op. cit. p.10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

campers. The melody for *Lchu N'ran'nah* (**Example 4**),<sup>30</sup> in Major, was very much in keeping with the majestic mood of Kabbalat Shabbat. Unfortunately, I have not yet found the composer of this melody, and it does not appear in either the original or the new *Zamru Lo*. Interestingly, while the melody does not technically fit *Adonai Malach* mode because its seventh scale degree is raised, its style matches the rest of Kabbalat Shabbat, and it is still being used at Ramah.

The beginnings and ends of Psalms 96 - 99 were stylized, almost to the point of becoming mini-congregational melodies. The so-called Ukranian-Dorian variant – a minor mode with raised 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> degrees – never appeared (too “European”-sounding, evidently). The nusach was a straightforward, if simplified, use of *Adonai Malach*.

*Mizmor L'David* was always done to the Spanish-Portuguese melody in Major.<sup>31</sup>

The nine verses of *Lcha Dodi* were sung extremely energetically to a series of chasidic melodies, possibly of Lubavitcher origin (**Example 5**).<sup>32</sup>

After the rush of this chasidic *Lcha Dodi* came a wonderful change of tempo and mood with *Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbat* (Psalm 92; **Example 6**).<sup>33</sup> Not only was the sudden slowdown a welcome contrast to what preceded it, but the harmonies inherent in this short melody were truly beautiful.

Speaking of harmonies, several hundred people singing Lewandowski's *Tzaddik Katamar*—the end of this paragraph—probably came up with more harmonies than Lewandowski himself ever imagined (**Example 7**).<sup>34</sup> The fact that the setting remains popular in synagogues of every stripe is a testament to the beauty of those harmonies.

Both in the 1970s and to this day, the most common melody for *Ahavat Olam* seems to be the one by Eric Mandell.<sup>35</sup> There have been other melodies

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<sup>30</sup> Transcribed from memory by the writer.

<sup>31</sup> Levine, *Ketonet*, op. cit., p. 85; see also *International Jewish Songbook*, ed. Velvel Pasternak (New York: Tara Publications, 1994), p. 134.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89; a reconstruction of elements that appear in *Zamru Lo* (2004), pp. 36, 37 and 40.

<sup>33</sup> Transcribed from memory by the author.

<sup>34</sup> Lewandowski, *Kol Rinnah* (1871), op. cit., p. 13; harmonized after his 4-pt. arrangement in *Todah W'Simrah Vol. I, Shabbat* (1876), p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> *Zamru Lo* (1955), op. cit., p. 59, no. 4.

Opening Refrain

L' - cha do - di lik - rat ka - lah, p' - nei sha - bat n' - ka - b' - lah; L' -

5  
cha do - di lik - rat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bat n' - ka - b' - lah.

9 Verses 1-5

1. Sha - mor v' za - chor b' di - bur e - chad, hish mi - a - nu - eil ha m' - yu - chad; A - do

14  
nai e - chad ush - mo e - chad, l' - shem ul' ti - fer - e - ret v' lit - hi - lah.

Refrains 1-5

L' - cha do - di, L' - cha do - di lik rat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bat n' ka - b'

L - cha do - di L' - cha do - di lik rat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bat n' ka - b'

24  
lah. L' - cha do - di lik - rat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bat n' ka - b' lah.

lah. L' - cha do - di lik - rat ka - lah n' ka - b' - lah.

29 Verse 6

6. Lo, lo, lotei vo shu, v' - lo, lo, v' - loti kal mi, ma, ma tish - to cha chi u ma - te he - mi;

37  
bach, bach ye - che - su - a - ni - yei a - mi v' - niv - n' - tah - ir al - ti - lah - L'

Example 5. *Lecha Dodi* — as sung at Ramah camps (page 1)

45 Refrain 6

cha do - di lik - rat. ka - lah, p' - nei sha - bat b' - ka - b' - lah. L' - ka - b' - lah.

55 Verses 7 & 8

7. V' - ha - yu lim - shim - sah (clap) sho - sa - yich v' - ra - cha - ku kol (clap) m' - val - a - yich,  
8. Ya - min u - s' - mol\_ " tif - ro - tsi v' - et A - do - nai " ta - a - ri - tsi

64

ya - sis a - la - yich e - lo - ha - yich, kim - sos cha - tan al\_ ka - lah. L'  
al yad\_ ish\_ ben\_ par - tsi v' nis - m' cha v' nis - m' cha v' na - gi - lah.

72 Refrains 7 & 8

cha\_ do - di, Lik - rat\_ ka - lah, p' - nei sha - bat p' - nei sha - bat n' - ka - b'

79 Verse 9

lah. L' - ka - b' - lah. 9. Bo - i v' - sha - lom a - te - ret baa - lah, gam be - sim - cha

88

uv' - tzo - ho - lah; toch e - mu - nei\_ am se - gu - lah\_ bo - i cha - lah, bo - i cha -

97 Refrain 9

lah. L' - cha\_ do - di, Lik - rat\_ ka - lah, p' - nei sha - bat p'

103

nei sha - bat n' - ka - b' - lah. L' - ka - b' - lah.

Example 5. *Lecha Dodi* — as sung at Ramah camps (page 2)

Miz mor shir, miz-mor shir, l' - yom ha sha - bat. Miz  
 mor hir, miz - mor shir, l' - yom ha sha - bat.

Example 6. *Mizmor Shir* — as sung at Ramah camps

composed, but by and large they have not proven as enduring in the Conservative Movement.

Like most Conservative synagogues in the 1970s, Ramah used the *Mi Chamocha*<sup>36</sup> melody which is appropriate either for Friday evening or Shabbat morning. It works well with the “Lithuanian” minor mode used for davening Maariv and sits a fourth above the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode of Shacharit. Therefore it’s in perfect transpositional relationship with the surrounding nusach of both.

According to the information I have heard, Rabbi Moshe Rothblum wrote his upbeat *V’shamru*<sup>37</sup> melody for Camp Ramah in Ojai, California many years ago. It immediately swept the rest of the camps, and (perhaps via JTS as described above) it became deeply imbedded in the musical life of Conservative synagogues nationwide. It is also used extensively in the Reform Movement, and offers the possibility for both sha”tz and kahal to shine in their respective parts, which may explain its popularity. Sad to say, that has been a double-edged sword. It was among the first settings whose musical structure called for repeating HaShem: *Ki sheishet yamim asah Adonai* (twice), a convention that is being increasingly ignored in American Conservative and even Orthodox practice.

At Ramah the famous (or infamous) Chatsi Kaddish melody was not sung in exactly the way Lewandowsky first notated it.<sup>38</sup> His congregational melody (*ba’agala...*) remains the same, as does his middle response (*Y’heh shmeh...*), but the melody is now often moved back to include the previous sentence (*b’chayeichon...*) And set in 4/4 time instead of 3/4, which only weakens its

<sup>36</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> See Example 1.

Melody

Tsa - dik ka - ta - mar\_ yif - rach k' - e - rez bal - va - non, bal -

7 Harmony

va - non yis - geh sh' - tu - lim b' - veit\_ A - do - nai, b' -

va - non\_ yis - geh sh' - tu - lim b' - veit\_ A - do -

13

chats - rot\_ E - lo - hei - nu yaf - ri - chu. Od\_ y' - nu - vun b' -

nai b' - chats - rot E - lo - hei - nu yaf - ri - chu.

19

sei - va d' - shei - nim v' - raa - na - nim yih - yu l' -

25

ha - gid ki ya - shar\_ A - do nai

l' - ha - gid ki ya - shar\_ A - do -

29

tsu - ri v' - lo av - la - ta bo.

nai Tsu - ri, v' - lo - av - la - ta bo.

Example 7. Lewandowsky's *Tsaddik Katamar* (Kol Rinnah, 1871) with harmonies based on his 4-pt. arrangement (*Todah w'Simrah*, 1876.)

tautness. In comparing current practice<sup>39</sup> with the original, please notice how Lewandowsky's elastic rhythm has been stiffened, and how his clear contrast between the hazzan's lower – and the kahal's upper – vocal register has been muddied.

If *Oseh Shalom* was sung aloud at the end of the silent Amidah at Ramah, it was to Nurit Hirsch's version from the 1969 Hassidic Song Festival.<sup>40</sup> However, this was done very softly and very slowly, and only the first two sections were sung, allowing just enough time for the last few daveners to complete their Silent Amidah. At first, this thoughtful custom transferred to synagogues successfully, but over time the complete setting was sung loudly for its own sake and often repeated, in total disregard of its liturgical context.

According to my research in 1978, there were two main options for singing *Vaichulu* in the M'ein Sheva section. By far the more popular was that by Goldfarb.<sup>41</sup> The other choice, by Lewandowski,<sup>42</sup> was occasionally used at JTS, rarely in Conservative synagogues, and never at Camp Ramah.

*Magein Avot* saw the only significant difference between a Friday Evening service at Camp Ramah versus one at JTS. While Camp Ramah (and the vast majority of synagogues) used the Goldfarb<sup>43</sup> melody here exclusively, JTS used Lewandowski's *cantilena* – a cross between metered song and free chant – with solo section for hazzan sandwiched in between the kahal's opening and closing (**Example 8**).<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately the discussion is becoming moot now, because many Conservative synagogues have jettisoned the entire M'ein Sheva section from the Friday Evening service.

The *Kad'sheinu* paragraph in M'ein Sheva was the only place which saw an occasional lapse into incorrect nusach on Friday evenings. When knowledgeable and supportive staff were present, this paragraph was chanted correctly in *Magen Avot* nusach. However, as in many synagogues today (if the M'ein Sheva section is even included), there was a temptation to chant the familiar congregational melody in the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode of the Shabbat morning Amidah<sup>45</sup>. Here, too, the whole discussion is proving pointless as more

<sup>39</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), op. cit., p. 102 (unattributed).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>41</sup> Goldfarb, *Friday Evening Melodies*, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> Lewandowsky, *Kol Rinnah*, op. cit., no. 26.

<sup>43</sup> Goldfarb, *Friday Evening Melodies*, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Lewandowsky, *Kol Rinnah*, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

<sup>45</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), op. Cit., p. 223; attributed to A. W. Binder.



*Flowing  
Congregation*

Ma-gein a - vot bid-va ro, m'cha yeh mei - tim b' ma - a - ma - ro ha - Eil ha ka-dosh she

4  
ein ka-mo-hu, ham-nei - ni - ach l' am-mo b' yom shab - bat kod-sho ki vam ra - tza l' ha

8 *Freely  
Cantor*  
ni - ach la - hem. L' fa - nav na - a - vod, b' - yir - ah va - fa - chad, v' no - deh lish - mo b' chol yom ta -

12 *Congregation*  
mid, me - ein hab - bra - chot. Eil ha - ho - da - ot, a - don ha - sha -

15  
lom, m'ka - desh ha - sha - bat um' va - reich sh'vi - i, u mei ni - ach bik - du - shah, l'

18  
am m' dush - nei o - neg, zei - cher l' ma - a - seh v' rei - shit.

*Example 8. Lewandowsky's cantilena for Magein Avot.*

shuls drop not only the M'ein Sheva section from Friday evening but also the Amidah repetitions of Shacharit, Musaf, or both, on Shabbat morning.

Friday Night Kiddush at Ramah is chanted by the entire camp in the Chadar Ochel, and the Lewandowski<sup>46</sup> melody has been ubiquitous for decades. It is interesting that this same melody is also standard in the Reform Movement, and I have heard it in Orthodox venues as well.

The original *Zamru Lo* for Friday Evening (1955) listed the “standard” Aleinu<sup>47</sup> as being composed by Sabel. More recent compilations now credit it to Sulzer. It really should be labeled “after Sulzer.”<sup>48</sup> There are those among

<sup>46</sup> Lewandowsky, *Kol Rinnah*, op. cit., p.21.

<sup>47</sup> *Zamru Lo* (1955), op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>48</sup> Salomon Sulzer. *Schir Zion*, ed. Josef Sulzer, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1922), no. 45.

us hazzanim who see a resemblance between the *Shehu Noteh Shamayim*<sup>49</sup> melody that has since been appended to Sulzer's noble psalmody, and the children's nursery song "The Teensy Weensy Spider."<sup>50</sup>

In the 1970s, the Leoni *Yigdal* was not used at Camp Ramah nor at JTS. Rather, a melody which I understood had been sung in the Orthodox chain of Young Israel Synagogues as far back as the 1930s – and which I first heard at a Lubavitch House – was used. It appears in the new *Zamru Lo*<sup>51</sup> pretty much as I'd remembered it. During the intervening years, the Leoni melody began to appear in Ramah services, and it remains the most common melody for *Yigdal* in Conservative synagogues.

## Conclusions

I hope that the foregoing has demonstrated the importance of using particular congregational melodies to engage congregants, along with some of the challenges we face in doing so. In examining the Ramah Camps' Friday Evening service of the 1970s we recognize some of the enduring melodies which still typify a Conservative service, especially an *A cappella* service. The journey of common melodies — disseminated by five decades of rabbinical and cantorial graduates — from Ramah to JTS and from there out to affiliated synagogues, stands more as fact than as theory. It is also well documented that many of our most knowledgeable and active lay leadership spent their summers in Ramah camps as teens.

One question still needs to be addressed: how did all the congregational melodies that I have proven to be "kosher" wind up at Ramah in the first place? Did some hazzanim in the early 1950s have an influence despite the fact that they weren't officially involved? From the fact that Ramah camps made a clear musical distinction between Shabbat and Chol from the very get-go, one could easily reach that conclusion; without professional guidance it would hardly have been possible.

Take, for example, the tune for *Adon Olam* that has been sung on Shabbat morning for over half a century in Ramah camps and Conservative synagogues. It is identified as "French Sephardic" in the new *Zamru Lo*.<sup>52</sup> Yet it was first

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<sup>49</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), p. 281; labeled, "Traditional."

<sup>50</sup> "The Teensy Weensy Spider," *Fireside Song Book of Birds and Beasts*, ed. Jane Yolen (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972).

<sup>51</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Zamru Lo* (2004), op. cit., p. 388, a.

transcribed for our movement by the Cantors Assembly's longtime Executive Vice President – Samuel Rosenbaum – in the first *Zamru Lo* of 1955,<sup>53</sup> when Rosenbaum led the charge against Ramah's repertoire of catchy tunes! This one was typical of its time but also hinted at something timeless, which might be why Sam Rosenbaum notated it for posterity. Essentially a call and response between hazzan and kahal, it caught on immediately. So much so that when the Ramah campers first introduced it to their home congrega-

The musical score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system is for the Cantor, with lyrics: "A - don o-lam a - sher ma - lach b' - te - rem kol y' - tzir niv - ra l' -". The second system is for the Congregation, with lyrics: "eit na - a - sa v' - chef - tso kol a - zai me - lech sh' -". The third system continues the Congregation part with lyrics: "mo nik - ra, a - zai me - lech sh' - mo nik - ra. D.C., etc.". The score includes a bass line for the Congregation part and a treble line for the Cantor part.

Example 9. The “Ramah” *Adon Olam* — a call and response

tions, they taught it in two parts: with a lively *obbligato* riding high above the melody (Example 9).<sup>54</sup>

We should note that call and response was in the air at that time, in Broadway musicals like *Brigadoon* (“Almost like Being in Love”),<sup>55</sup> *Call Me*

<sup>53</sup> *Zamru Lo* (1955), op. cit., p. 117, “Adon Olam no. 5.”

<sup>54</sup> Levine, *Ketonet Yosef*, op. cit., p. 425.

<sup>55</sup> Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe (New York: Sam Fox Publishing Co., 1947).

*Madam* (“You Don’t Need Analyzing”),<sup>56</sup> *Annie Get Your Gun* (“Anything You Can Do”),<sup>57</sup> *South Pacific* (There Is Nothing Like A Dame”),<sup>58</sup> and *Kiss Me Kate* (“Always True To You In My Fashion”).<sup>59</sup>

To take root in synagogue practice, though, popular musical innovations have also had one foot planted in Jewish tradition. This is true of the alleged “French Sephardic” *Adon Olam*. It stems from the region of Provence in southeastern France, hence its designation as “Nusach Comtadine” – the region’s Judeo-Provençal name – in a hazzanic compendium commissioned by the H. L. Miller Cantorial School at JTS.<sup>60</sup> Jewish settlement in the area now known as Carpentras goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The tune’s provenance is attested by its use in an early-20<sup>th</sup> century “Song of Zion” setting by the renowned French Jewish composer Darius Milhaud.,<sup>61</sup> whose family traced its ancestry back to the fall of Jerusalem under the Romans.

As proof of its antiquity, the melody’s three leading phrases quote MiSinai prayer motifs “Who remembered Jacob...from Egypt until the present” (*ki fadah Adonai et Ya’akov...mimitsrayim v’ad heinah*) and Ashkenazic cantillation for “Your Prophets” (*n’viecha*) from the Book of Lamentations (**Examples 10a, 10b, 10c**).<sup>62</sup> Its musical message in *Adon Olam* might well be that the

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is titled "Adon Olam phrase 1" and features a melody in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lyrics below are "A - don o - lam a - sher ma - lach". The second staff is titled "Mi Sinai Motif #2" and features a melody in G major and 4/4 time. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lyrics below are "Ki fa - dah A - do - nai et Ya - a - kov".

Example 10a. A MiSinai motif from High Holy Day Maariv

<sup>56</sup> Irving Berlin (New York: self-published, 1953).

<sup>57</sup> Irving Berlin (New York: self-published, 1946).

<sup>58</sup> Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II (New York: Chappell & Co., 1949).

<sup>59</sup> Cole Porter (New York: T. B. Harms Co., 1948).

<sup>60</sup> Levine, *Ketonet Yosef*, op. cit., p. 425.

<sup>61</sup> “Chant de Sion,” *Poèmes Juifs* (Paris: Editions Eschig, 1916).

<sup>62</sup> Joseph A. Levine. *Synagogue Song in America* (1989; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2001): p. 217, MiSinai motif #2; p. 209, V, LAM, 4e; p. 226, MiSinai motif #32.

Adon Olam phrase 2

l' - eit na - a - sa v' - chef - tso kol a - zai me-lech

Lamentations: Zakef Gadol

n' - vi - e - cha

*Example 10b. A Cantillation motif from Lamentations*

Adon Olam phrase 3

a - zai me - lech sh' - mo nik - ra.

MiSinai Motif #32

mi-mits - ra - yim v' - ad hei-nah

*Example 10c. A MiSinai motif from Kol Nidre night*

Eternal One watches over Israel even today, when the power of prophecy has been removed just as it was at the time of the Temple's fall.

This bright, Israeli-sounding setting was introduced to American Conservative campers and synagogue goers at a moment when the Jewish State was about to embark on its first successful military campaign, in the Sinai Desert, then held by *Egypt!* That it was chosen from among all the dozens of other tunes for Adon Olam – by our unknown madrich / hazzan to teach to summer campers precisely then – goes a long way towards explaining the amazing persistence of the Ramah tradition in American Conservative synagogues.

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## Shul Has New Tunes, Less Harmony: An Informed Reaction to the Reconstructionist Approach

by Morton Gold

The congregation that I attend has seen the retirement of its rabbi and the hiring of a new one...

Since the congregation was founded back in the 1920s, it has been part of the Conservative movement. Now it seems that “we” are going to determine the future affiliation of the Center. This has as much tension as the outcome of a baseball game between the Detroit Tigers and the New York Yankees. Why? The Conservative placement service did not send any prospective candidates (maybe we didn’t pay enough). In fairness, actually they did, and he was offered a contract, but he decided to go instead to a relatively nearby temple in Glens Falls, NY. But he was it.

On the other hand, the Reconstructionist seminary actually sent us two, the second of which was hired. From the first service it was obvious that we weren’t in Kansas anymore. The tunes were tunes taken from various CDs and not the ones most of the congregants were familiar with. The gentleman wore the Muslim-style kippah along with the longer black-stripe tallit. Musaf was done away with. The protocol for having aliyot based on Kohen-Levi-Yisrael was done away with. The Saturday Morning service was frequently interrupted with explanations. The service was more seminar than service.

There were frequent English readings during the Saturday Morning service. The translations did not reflect the meaning of the Hebrew but were politically correct and militantly feminist in orientation. For example, Avinu Malkeinu, which means *our Father, our King*, was translated as *our Mother, our Queen*, much to my dismay and disgust. And so on it went. Worshipers who attended often and who were knowledgeable soon left. The thrust of the rabbi’s efforts was centered on the Hebrew school...

While I would be happy with a return to a traditional Conservative service and would be content with a Reform service (surprise!), I am not at all happy with a Reconstructionist service.

While the Reform service is mostly in English and the Conservative mostly in Hebrew, they have essentially left the service alone. The “R” people have tried to reinvent the wheel, and it is neither *milchig* nor *fleishig*. I don’t know whether I am more turned off by the English “translations,” the corny



hassidic-style tunes, the extended “healing” prayers, the service that is more seminar than service, or all of the above.

*Morton Gold is essentially a composer, conductor and educator. He conducted the Boston “Pops” Orchestra in his own music at the relatively tender age of twenty-one. While he has composed over eighty works in most forms, he is best known for his oratorio “Haggadah: A Search for Freedom,” which was widely performed and was broadcast on Public Television nationally in the United States. This article first appeared in **The National Jewish Post and Opinion** of October 29, 2003 and is excerpted here with permission.*

## Miracle on Bathurst Street – a Reform Revolution

by Benjamin Z. Maissner

*Great as music is, it is neither the ultimate nor the supreme. The Ultimate is God, and the medium in which guidance has been conveyed to us is the word... All we have are words in the liturgy and reverence in our hearts. But even these two are often apart from each other. It is the task of music to bring them together*

Abraham Joshua Heschel,  
*The Insecurity of Freedom.*

Although I've been cantor at one of North America's largest Reform temples for over twenty-six years, as an eight-year old I first led t'fillah in a corner *shtibele* – a tiny chasidic prayer room – in Tel Aviv, just off Dizengoff Street. Among twentieth-century hazzanim whom I would eventually meet and admire, my uncle Israel Alter known as *Ha'Ari ShebaChavurah* ("the lion in the pack"),<sup>1</sup> became my role model for life. His hazzanut fell somewhere between orderly but predictable *T'Fillat Ha-Seder* and emotional but potentially uncontrollable *T'Fillat HaRegesh*. It's been termed *Hazzanut HaSefer*, a text-based interpretation of the liturgy, through music.<sup>2</sup> Because Hebrew is my native tongue and my uncle's personality was larger than life, I made his approach to the cantorial element of t'fillah my own as well.

Yet, the world moves on. Nowadays, liturgist Lawrence Hoffman reminds us,

Worship is seen more and more as belonging to the people and demanding, therefore, an engaging musical style that evokes their active participation...artistic excellence may be counter-productive to the goal of communal worship in a democratic age.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Akiva Zimmermann. *B'Ron Yachad* (Tel Aviv: Central Cantorial Archive, 1988), p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph A. Levine. "A Kaleidoscope of Twentieth-Century Hazzanic Materpieces," unpublished program notes for a concert, *Cantors Assembly Convention* (Monticello, NY: Kutsher's Resort, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence A. Hoffman. "Musical Traditions and Tensions in the American Synagogue," *Concilioium: Music and the Experience of God*, ed. M. Collins, D. Power and M. Burnim (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989). P. 35.



Through the course of my career, however, I have found that the people’s “active participation” in worship — through music — can and does take several forms. Contrary to what Rabbi Hoffman implies, cantorial singing remains the most important, since without someone at the helm to guide it, people’s singing during worship is like a rudderless ship: going round and round in circles and getting nowhere.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unison singing by the entire congregation has, of course, been a part of Jewish public prayer for a long time. It began at the shores of the Reed Sea (Exodus 15: 1-19) and has run its majestic course down to our day in widely performed hymns such as Eil Adon, Ein Keiloheinu and Yigdal. But alongside unison singing there has flowed another mighty stream of congregational song, first sounded by Miriam’s alternate version of the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15: 20-21). In only a passing mention the Bible tells us that Miriam “answered” the people — *vata’an lahem* — in responsive song triggered by her call: *shiru* (“you sing”). That “hazzanic” cue could have evoked one of several possible refrains, all of which are spelled out in the Babylonian Talmud (Sotah 30b). But it was indisputably congregational singing, and remained viable until very recently when general Hebraic illiteracy among Jewish laity led to its being overshadowed by the sing-along approach.

The latter form of communal participation used to limit itself to a kind of congregational “drone” when Jews could still pray in Hebrew. Worshipers would move along with the cantor’s chant in an undertone that was soft but definitely audible, articulating the words with their lips. Sociologist Ronald Wolfson has applied the term “participatory listening” to this type of active participation in prayer.<sup>4</sup>

All three forms of sung participation — unison, responsive and semi-audibly to oneself — are equally viable as modes of individual expression (*kavvanah*) within the communal exercise of fixed public prayer (*keva*). I witnessed their use by the hazzanic masters whom I heard as a boy growing up in Tel Aviv during the 1950s: Benjamin Unger at the Great Synagogue; Shlomo Ravitz who directed our children’s choir at the BILU Elementary School; Leib Glantz at the Tiferet Tzvi Synagogue; and David (*Reb Dovid*) Brenner who functioned as ba’al t’fillah at the corner shtibl, Ahavat Zion. From all of these devout men, and particularly Reb Dovid, I heard nigunim woven into every service of the year, be it Shabbat, Chagim or Yamim Nora’im; not a single phrase of their davening was devoid of joy or *d’veikut*, a feeling of spiritual closeness to one’s Creator.

\* \* \* \* \*



As a student at HUC I learned from Israel Alter and Moshe Ganchoff how to use nigunim in the modern synagogue. I would serve two such institutions as cantor over the next forty or more years: Germantown Jewish Center in Philadelphia; and Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. After the late musicologist Judith Kaplan Eisenstein attended a service at my Philadelphia synagogue she told me: “here at Germantown it’s difficult to differentiate art music from folk music; it all so sounds so skillfully pre-arranged.” I still cherish that remark as a vindication of my determined effort to blend the warmth of Reb Dovid Brenner’s passionately sung nusach with the musical sensitivity of my inventive Germantown organist, Howard Gamble, and the high standards set by my hazzanic mentors, Israel Alter and Moshe Ganchoff.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1979 I left the friendly Conservative environment of Philadelphia and entered a larger, multicultural world in Toronto, the Western hemisphere’s last bastion of traditional hazzanut, where many Jews still spoke Yiddish on an everyday basis. My not-so-little island within that world was somewhat different: the huge Classical Reform temple, Holy Blossom (*Pirchei Kodesh*). Jacob Barkin and Ben Steinberg had served as cantor and organist/music director there years before, each having left their mark on the temple’s musical practice. It was an impressive collection of both traditional and classical repertoire, and included a professional octet, organist and volunteer choir of members who just loved singing. On Rosh HaShanah almost 6,000 worshippers, most of whom had not attended services since the previous Yom Kippur, packed every corner of the temple complex. That statistic hasn’t changed much during my tenure.

My early years as cantor at Holy Blossom were not easy, to say the least. The congregation and I had to cope with changes in rabbinic leadership as well as in Sabbath and High Holy Day prayer books. *Gates of Prayer* and *Gates of Repentance* introduced a multitude of Hebrew texts unfamiliar to regular Reform synagogue goers. Understandably, they remained passive, uninvolved, even agitated over their inability to contribute to or gain from the newly imposed liturgical challenge.

The magnificent legacy of music that I had inherited and to which they were accustomed was beautifully executed by a professional choir and pipe organ accompanying me from a balcony at the far end of a long and narrow cathedral-like sanctuary. I felt something was missing; the music of our worship seemed distant, never really conveying its inner depth. With lights dimmed and the atmosphere grim, we — myself included — felt small and insignificant. In this setting I knew intuitively that the combination of words

and music, however gloriously sung, could never fill the space and set the mood it ought to create. Any sense of devotion and spirituality seemed to be manufactured and empty of real substance. It did not feel at all like t'fillah, as I remembered it.

Yes, our services were impressive, but where was some sort of kavvanah, of devotion and reflection? When, I asked myself, would our people feel as if they were even marginally partners to the enterprise and experience which supposedly brought them to the sanctuary to begin with? Was any one present invested at all in what was taking place around them? When would we ever pray, sing, shout, cry, plead, confess or celebrate together as a group? When – if ever — would the imperfect yet harmonious sounds of hundreds of people all murmuring the same prayer, which I was still used to from the distant past, ever be heard again? There were some segments of participation when responsive readings were trotted out to pacify a bewildered and uneasy congregation, in between pages and pages of English liturgy recited by a rabbi. Neither of those exercises, devoid as they were of any emotional or spiritual content, could impart a sense of a community, for the language of many English prayers that were familiar and comforting to congregants had now been revised to keep pace with the movement's progressive thinking.

The musical component of the service did receive the congregation's admiration. This was part of Reform Judaism's aesthetic package, and at times it did create a sense of majesty and awe woven with feelings of inclusiveness and occasionally, of privacy with one's inner self. Evidently, some precious moments of mystery, magic and reflective silence resulted from the high quality of the musical compositions rendered. Nonetheless, my intuition led me to believe that none of those feelings derived from understanding of the newly added prayer texts. At best, worshipers were sitting as spectators, passively trying to enjoy the beauty of the moment while experiencing an inner emptiness and waiting for the service to end.

Nonetheless, a few rays of hope still managed to shine through, as a community thirsting for collective expression came to life in singing Sh'ma Yisrael or Avinu Malkeinu on Yamim Nora'im. Unbelievably, I could discern a murmured congregational accompaniment as I chanted the Great Aleinu of Malchuyot or Oseh Shalom at the conclusion of Mourners Kaddish. It seemed ironic that these moments of engagement occurred during High Holy Day services attended mainly by those unfamiliar with the temple's normally unresponsive protocol.

There had to be a reason why two of the three congregational-singing possibilities were being explored—willy-nilly—by Reform Jews who I felt were

searching for a means of self-identification. And if so, would the third way of involving them – chanted call and response *à la* Miriam – work as well? Yamim Nora'im came only once a year, not long enough to train a congregation in back-and-forth davening. But what about Shabbat, and especially Friday night, when parents brought their children week after week with the sole purpose of welcoming the Day of Rest as a family – through singing the traditional prayers?

\* \* \* \* \*

I decided to try and teach the congregation how to daven, by example, in a renewed modern style. I soon found that combining the world of modernity with the old familiar sounds was no easy task. A host of physical obstacles – time and space – had to be considered in order to allow the normal evolution to take place. There was the placement of the professional choir and organ; their distance from me created an acoustical delay in relation to the area from where the service was being led. Musically, it was obvious that only certain dynamic ranges, rhythmic patterns and tempos were possible with that bi-polar setup.

Still, I could sense a desire from the pews for more participation, an unmistakable urge to sing along with me no matter what prayer I intoned. It was an enigma to me in the midst of this unconnected worship experience. Finally, the critical mass of people that gathered during the High Holy Days encouraged me to insert the occasional nigun within my chant. The congregation's musical patrimony of hymns I left unchanged. Around them I established a repertoire of seasonal nusach and refrains based on the common Ashkenazic usage of several centuries. On that foundation, arranged and presented impeccably, I would sail safely into my dream world of unison communal song – combined with responsive chant and an ongoing congregational murmur. It became increasingly clear that leitmotifs treasured by the congregation had become a catalyst for people to anticipate more of the same throughout the services. Bar'chu was typical (**Example 1**).

B. Schorr

CANTOR

Bar - - - chu et A-do - nai ha - m' vo - - rach Ba -

5

ruch A - do - nai ha - m' vo - rach l' o - lam va - - ed.

CONG.

Example 1. Bar'chu (High Holy Day Morning)

I was convinced of this when, during the Confession of Sins on Kol Nidre night, some clearly antiphonal phrases began to sound in the air. I actually shuddered as people repeated each word after me, using my exact phrases. An electric current seemed to connect me with the worshipers. Then, in the Reform cathedral, suddenly another surprise. Not only responsive chant, but a wordless chasidic nigun consisting entirely of the filler syllables *ai-ai-ai* interposed itself as a communal refrain: Moses' Song at the Sea alternating with Miriam's Song *after* the Sea! All at once, as if it had always been that way, the two elements of congregational singing felt natural together. And it continued. Hazzanic statements in *L'Eil Oreich Din* were answered by *kahal: beYom Din; baDin*. Even in the middle of a sophisticated choral setting of Avot one could hear 1,000 lay voices joining in at *v'Eilohei Avoteinu, lema'an shemo b'ahavah* (Example 2).

Traditional  
arr. Lichtenstein-Lewandowsky

Ba - ruch A - ta A - do - nai E - lo - hei

-nu vei - lo - hey a - vo - tei - nu...

liv - nei v'nei-hem l' - ma - an sh' mo b' - a - ha - va.

*Example 2. Avot*

Once people began murmuring along with me in the *a cappella* chanting of the keva passages — *Uv'chein Tein Pachd'cha, Uv'chein Tzaddikim, Uv'chein Tein Kavod* — our rabbis discovered English reading to be more and more redundant. Our congregants, Canadian Jews of more traditional background than those in the US, found comfort in the simple nusach remembered from childhood. They droned along with *Simcha L'Artzecha, Ochila La'Eil* and the Great Aleinu. As the murmur grew into full-blown song my chant gained momentum and I found myself involuntarily embellishing it at *chatimot*. I was amazed at the congregational energy that lifted me on the words *Melech al kol ha'aretz, m'kadeish Yisrael v'Yom HaZikaron/HaKippurim* (Example 3).

Me - lech al kol ha - a - retz m' - ka - deysh Yis - ra - el

Me - lech al kol ha - a - retz m' - ka - deysh Yis - ra - el

v' yom ha - zi - ka - ron.  
v' yom ha - ki - pu - rim.

Example 3. *Melech al Kol Ha'aretz*

I forced myself to remember that this was no longer my little *shtibele*, but one of the world's most respected houses of Reform Jewish prayer. Notwithstanding, the more I gave, the more I dared, the more I risked the unimaginable, the more positive and immediate the feedback that I received – to the approval of our rabbinic and lay leadership. Whatever we were doing, the end result proved that it was working. Granted, we did not daven like East European Jews did in the old country; I did not try to convey the pain, sorrow and hardship of our forerunners. And granted, my cantorial renditions did not approach the virtuosity of hazzanic giants whose art is preserved on recordings. But the essence of devotional phrases — delivered as purely and unaffectedly as I could — penetrated right to the hearts of our members, who subconsciously knew the language in which I sang to them.

\* \* \* \* \*

By sheer coincidence we started a forty-five minute service on the second day of Rosh HaShanah — planned by our assistant rabbi at the time, Elyse Goldstein — for those in the community who were hearing-impaired. It lasted in its original format only one season. The hundred or so who showed up told their friends about it and by the following year, attendance from members and non-members who wanted to be there had so increased that a special liturgy had to be constructed that would allow for a greatly expanded amount of singing. The optional service drew overflow crowds – in a Classical Reform congregation that had never worshiped for more than one day on Rosh HaShanah in its 140-year history. No longer was that Second Day event specifically geared for the handicapped; in fact, regular attendees of this Miracle on Bathurst Street looked upon the *first* day's more conventional Liberal worship as singing-impaired by comparison.



Word soon spread around the city that Holy Blossom was the place to be if you were counted in the Liberal camp. I quickly learned that people who yearn for the same experience will contribute much toward achieving it. In our case, the goal was t'fillah, without the usual trappings.

I then contemplated changes in the location of the choir at regular services. I placed the professional singers close to the bimah so I could signal them whatever needed to be conveyed in order that the prayers would flow without interruption or pause. I replaced the organ with an amplified piano whose sound was not as overwhelming. In an "L"-shaped grouping I arranged between forty and fifty of our volunteer Temple Singers and mixed them with the professional octet. Since then, this successful combination has managed to maintain the highest standards of musical presentation, no matter what. The volunteers regard our professionals as part of our musical family not only on the High Holy days but throughout the year, as we sing together twice a month on Shabbat morning, and sometimes more frequently than that.

After twenty years of this arrangement, the second day of Rosh HaShanah remains the most popular service in our calendar. In unison with the congregation we sing such complex settings as HaMelech by Baruch Schorr, introduced by the refrain of Uv'Shofar Gadol from the Israeli *Givatron* repertoire, composed by a secular kibbutz member of Beit HaShita. I consider this refrain to be one of the most expressive musical statements, for it bonds notes and words together into a spiritual unit. We use it as a leitmotif to get things going early on, and again later in its full arrangement where it takes its rightful place as one of the main musical offerings of the day (**Example 4**).

a tempo ♩ = 88 Givatron

U - v' sho-far ga-dol yi-ta - ka v' - kol dma-ma dak-ka yish- sha - ma,  
u - mal- a' khim yei-cha- fei - zun, v' - khil u-re-a- da\_\_ yo - khei-zun.

*Example 4. Uv'shofar Gadol*

By now, there no longer exists any separation in the Second Day service between the three elements of congregational singing described above. The special liturgy is laced with thought-provoking, well-edited English readings, and heightened by communal singing of paragraphs carefully chosen to build liturgical units. By now, the ongoing murmuring sounds of congregational

participation which accompany the entire service due to the ever-growing comfort level of the congregation, is sometimes subdued and other time elevated. No matter what I chant, I make sure it is compatible with the musical capabilities of the worshipers. What I then experience is a rather inviting sound – reminiscent of the Old World – of *tsibbur* joining with its *shali'ach* on behalf of the entire House of Israel.

The greater success, however, I attribute to the deployment of choral compositions that have been chosen for their immediate emotional impact. Here in the home of passive listening (the once-accepted mode of worship in Classical Reform) our congregants are unable to differentiate between a choral rendition and a simple unison tune. That is because every phrase in our choir's repertoire is meant to be sung with. Through body language I signal for congregants to join in even when I am facing away from them, returning the Torah scroll to the Ark and leading Lewandowsky's *Uv'Nucho Yomar*, which is normally not considered a congregational tune (**Example 5**).

L. Lewandowski

**Legato**

Ki le - kach tov na - ta - ti la - chem, to -

6 ra - ti al - ta - a - zo - vu, eitz cha - yim

11 hi la - ma - cha - zi - kim bah ve -

14 tom che - ha me - u - shar...

Example 5. *Ki Lekach Tov*

The congregation plays its part as a mass choir when called upon to do so. It also acts as respondent to antiphonal chant for the climactic *Sh'ma-Baruch Sheim-Adonai Hu Ha'Elohim* of Neilah (**Example 6**).

And all the while, the worshipers of Holy Blossom provide an harmonious diapason to the hazzan's ongoing davenen, shifting from one form of participation to another without instruction and without the slightest hesitation. This, I think, is our greatest achievement.

**Freely Chanted**

Once - Cantor, then Cong. Traditional, arr. H. Gamble

She - ma Yis-ra-el\_\_\_\_\_ A-do - nai E-lo - hei - nu A-do - nai e - chad.

Three Times - Cantor, then Cong.

Ba - ruch shem k' vod mal-chu-to\_\_\_\_\_ le-o-lam va-ed le' o-lam va-ed\_

SIX Times -  
Cantor,  
then  
Cong.

**1 - 2**

A - do - nai hu ha - E - lo - him\_\_

**3 - 4**

A - do - nai hu ha - E - lo - him\_\_

**5 - 6**

A - do - nai hu ha - E - lo - him\_\_

**7th Time -  
All**

A - do - nai hu ha - E - lo - him.

*Example 6. Sh'ma ... of Neilah*

*A member of the CA and the ACC, Benjamin Maissner chairs the Certification Program of the American Conference of Cantors. A distinguished hazzan, teacher and performer, he has appeared widely as guest cantor and scholar in residence throughout North America and Europe, most recently in Hannover, Germany, to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.*

## Observational Articles

### The Elu v'Elu ("Both/And") of Synagogue Music – A View from the Other Side of the Bimah

by *Herbert Bronstein*

The renewal of synagogue music in our time, of *hazzanut*, is a measure of the viability and vitality not only of Jewish worship but of Judaism itself. However, the transmission of that precious legacy to future generations, enhanced by our own abilities and creativity, is today very much in question, a question that is often contentious and divisive.

As Liberal Jews we find ourselves in the breakup of those assumptions, styles, and outlooks of modernity to which classical reform offered the most enthusiastic religious response. Through the Enlightenment, modernity brought to the Jews tolerance and emancipation. The classic formulation of modernity stood above all for the autonomy of the individual. The individual was to be obligated only to the moral law discovered by the reason of the individual. Today, autonomy is considered widely among Liberal Jews to mean personal choice, freedom from any canons or principles that could in any sense be accepted as authentic or authoritative. Radical autonomy; along with much *de novo* creativity, has brought radical ambiguity and radical plurality (as distinguished from pluralism) to all aspects of culture, including the liturgy and music of the synagogue.

Particularly for Liberal Jews, there have been consequences of this pattern in what might be called patternlessness. Without a norm of particular styles, modes, or patterns indigenous to our tradition, and without regard to a sense of shared values within our community, there has been the inevitable pressure, instead, of the surrounding culture. Typically, in many areas, Reform Judaism has become obsessed with the "latest" in our culture, only to find, when we have caught up, that it is already becoming *passé*.

Earlier in our modern history; with the civil order of the West opening to Jews, there was the deep desire among western European Jews to be accepted into the manners and civilities of the western Anglo-Saxon order of behavior. As a result, Jewish worship was much influenced by the Protestant style. Especially with regard to worship, there was a preoccupation with decorum, dignity, distance, coolness, and formality in conformity with the Christian cathedral ideal. The great formal sanctuary was, in part, an end

product of that process. Along with this went the profound anxiety to be rid of what some early reformers called “Orientalism,” a term derived from new academic fields of the nineteenth century that accompanied western imperialism.<sup>1</sup> “Orientalism” was opposed to the Occident; to the West. The Anglo-Saxon West thought of the Orient, the East (“the natives”), as backward and primitive. The Anglo-Saxon Christian West would bring to these backward cultures the refinement of a higher civilization. Western, and parts of central European, Jewish culture, in like manner, viewed the eastern European Jewish synthesis as the “Orient.” In the synagogue of western Europe this did lead to new forms of fine composition. But, at the same time, for early reformers, the abolition of Orientalism, a motto which they often used, meant the abolition of specific, particular Jewish traditions strange to the West, especially those of the eastern European Jews, such as the *tallit*, the *shofar*, the *kippah*, “*davening*.” Of course, along with all this “Orientalism” went cantillation, *nusah*, and, in some sectors, the art of the *hazzan* itself. After all, all Jews are from the Orient. This was, then, a form, in essence, of Jewish self-abnegation.

In general, a large number of Jews adopted the true Faith of Modernity, the sanctification of the autonomous reason of the free individual who would, through science and technology alone, raise up all lower orders of humanity and bring about the millennium. But now, at the end of the twentieth century; many assumptions of that faith have collapsed. World wars, the Holocaust, the nuclear bomb, the instruction by the Nazis in the kinds of uses to which reason, science and technology could be put, instruction by Freud and Marx as to how determined by outside factors Reason itself can be, all have collapsed many of the assumptions of modernity. As regards Jewry, much to the surprise of many founders of Reform Judaism, all American Jews did not become Reform. There was the emergence of eastern European Jewry on the

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<sup>1</sup> Max Landsberg of Temple Brith Kodesh, Rochester, New York, one of the founding congregations of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, summed up a widespread attitude among his colleagues in an essay published in *Jewish Tidings*, Rochester, New York, September 8, 1893:

The Talmud, representing a development especially in Babylon under oriental influences, became the power ruling supreme. Rigid conservatism, a result of terrible oppression that continued through the centuries, furthered isolation and preserved existing conditions even in occidental countries. If indeed Judea had seemed like a piece of the Occident in the midst of the oriental countries, now the Jews represented orientalism in the midst of the Occident.

On the plaque honoring him in the foyer of the Temple, Rabbi Landsberg prescribed the following: “He led his congregatian out of Orientalism.”

American scene, and of Zionism. In the general culture, increasingly, there has been a renewed appreciation of the East and of native cultures. There is also the trend in contemporary Jewry of renewed ethnicism, on the one hand, and a renewed spirituality on the other, which are opposites in fact, but which do share alone an interest in past Jewish tradition.

All this has greatly affected the situation of synagogue music. We find ourselves in a period of both enormous creativity and also enormous Confusion. Not only has no *minhag*, or shared custom, synthesis of musical modalities or shared philosophy about synagogue music emerged among us, but there is also no shared belief even that there *should* be a shared community of music.

Worse, of late, discussions on the directions of synagogue music, even in the way the discussions have been framed, have taken the form of oppositions of mutually exclusive polarities. Hostile opposition, in some instances, has emerged, inevitably accompanied by a suspicion and disdain that impede clarification and paralyze synthesis.

Much of the discussion of synagogue music has been framed in opposites, Here is a partial list: vital creativity versus rooted authenticity; rootless musical spin-offs of the flash-in-the-pan *à la mode* against the solid and beloved musical associations that inspire remembrance and commitment and which, in that view, create a Jewish soul. Or to put it from the other side, the free spirit versus the stultifying dead hand of the past, Another opposition: high art as opposed to sincere congregational participation. And put this way, it becomes artifice and show versus sincerity and *kavvanah*. Or, the opposition—yes, suspicion—between those who with all their heart and soul want to retain a connection with historic Jewish musical modes and those who feel that they have every reason, literally, to mock the very word “traditional” or “authentic” and who claim that entirely new melodies in the American folk or rock mode will be the “Sinai melodies” of the twenty-first century.

But long before Hegel’s thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, ancient rabbis only reluctantly, if ever, opted for the “either/or” but rather chose the “both/and,” the *Elu v’Elu*. This was the more difficult, creative, and redemptive task of synthesis as the way of Torah.

In one of the earliest rabbinic texts, the *Mekhilta*,<sup>2</sup> the rabbis rejected either particular Jewish tradition by itself, or universalism by itself, no matter how humane, as authentic enduring Jewish teaching. It has long been considered a hallmark of Judaism that, ideally, the two were to be conjoined. In *t’fillah*, in prayer and worship, we know very well the rabbinic motto: neither *keva* by

<sup>2</sup> *Mekhilta, Pis’cha* (Lauterbach ed., vol. 1, Philadelphia: 1933), pp. 7-10.

itself nor *kavvanah* by itself; neither the statutory fixed pattern as the model, nor the free creative individual expression—*kavvanah* alone—no matter how sincere. Somehow, they both had to be melded. For each of these “opposites” separated from the other could be destructive of spirituality.

As to the assumed polarity between high art and the participation of the singing congregation: let us simply set aside the involvement of the congregation that does take place when the cantorial art or a great musical work sweeps up the congregation as if in a chariot of fire to the very gates of heaven; or when the cantor breaks open the heart of the people in joy or yearning to the influx of the divine. I am thinking rather of the kind of *yichud*, unification, of high art and familiar singable melody. This happens when the cantor in his or her own style begins a piece, the *v' shamru*, for example, with a fine modal composition or improvisation to create an expectation which the cantor then both skillfully and soulfully resolves by bringing the congregation into participation through a familiar, beloved, melodic, lyrical melody. In each instance the cantorial role can be an opportunity for artistry, whereas the congregational part is reassuringly always the same, allowing the congregation to enter with enthusiasm and fervent worship. There can be both artistry and participation. Both “performance” and “participation” are subsumed, ideally, to worship.

### “Performance” as Opposed to Worship

I remember a service of worship that I attended in a fine congregation with an excellent cantor and an obviously professional well-trained quartet, which was seated rather prominently. From the regular *amud* the cantor was leading the congregation in a fine responsive *piyyut*, an edifying musical composition that I had never heard before. The cantor’s role was finely artistic, the congregation’s part, the refrain, musically fine and at the same time eminently singable. Sometimes the choir did interact on the verses with the cantor without being conducted. While on the refrain, the cantor was obviously leading the congregation in worship and they were singing, worshipping. For the first three verses the mood in the sanctuary was thrilling, spiritual, joyous, and elevated. Then suddenly the cantor left the *amud* and went up and directed the quartet in a more complex musical rendition of the fourth verse. It was artistically excellent as a performance, but it was clearly a performance, and immediately the spiritual, emotional, affective mood of worship was gone, over, not to be brought back. The circuit had been broken, the congregation was no longer there and did not resume either formally or inwardly. The congregation had been distanced from sharing and from God.

As long as performance is subsidiary to worship, then there is no necessary contradiction at all within the context of an entire service between high, transcendent, even numinous moments and moments, on the contrary, when the *Sh'chinah* is brought down into the worshiping community.

The same possibility of resolution, I contend, holds true even more in the contentious polarization between innovation on the one hand and the preservation of the heritage of *nusach*, the seasonal and holiday modes and the *Misinai* melodies. Over the centuries, innovative creativity has always enriched our worship. Wandering tunes from the middle ages—who knows, maybe older—have found a secure resting place in the synagogue. The *Baal Shem Tov* once was “said to have said” that he heard a Ukranian peasant melody in which he recognized, as he put it, one of King David’s songs, and he liberated it from captivity by bringing it into his *shtibl*. On the other side, the setting of *Lechah Adonai HaG'dulah* from the great Bloch *Avodath HaKodesh* can accompany the Torah processional on the High Holidays, especially in a great sanctuary; with tremendous spiritual effect. But even in the very same service, without dissonance, a properly placed and simply composed *Oseh Shalom* in the folk mode, shared by the congregation in a contemplative way at a certain time, can accomplish a wonderful religious purpose.

On the other side, the greatest danger to the future of Jewish religious life, whether among our people or even among rabbis or cantors themselves, is a rootlessness that lays us open to the shallow, the superficial, the banal, the ephemeral in the culture around us. Whether in Broadway styles or in so-called neo-traditionalism and ethnicism or the vagaries of the feely-touchy narcissism of so-called New Age religious styles that have moved so easily into our stream of Judaism, nowhere is this danger more real than in the music of the synagogue. The great tradition of the modes, of *nusach* of cantillation, the *Misinai* melodies, has endowed, and still do endow, wide sectors of Jewry with a deep-rooted sense of community. Musical patterns and associations make us more devoted, loving Jews with shared memory and shared hopes, attuning the soul to its seasons, inspiring commitment. Surely, among the greatest responsibilities of those responsible for worship is the obligation to take responsibility for these holy treasures placed in our keeping. Like many native cultures in the world today, like the precious flora and fauna of the rain forests that are being destroyed moment by moment, never to be brought to life again, these, our own resources, are in danger of disappearing forever from among us—all because of negative aspects of secular modernity. These are spiritual associations; they correspond with the seasons of the soul.



It is not appropriate to sing the *Avinu Malkenu* on Shabbat, as is done in some synagogues, simply because people like the melody. High Holy Day melodic responses should be reserved for the Days of Awe and not used on Shabbat. For a long time we gloried at our summer camps and our youth movements in creative services. Children who found no meaning in synagogue services did relate to the special, creative camp services. But we have paid a price. We withheld from our young people the substance of the *matbeia shel t'fillah*, the forms and basic prayers of our liturgy, the knowledge of the substance of our worship. We withheld from them, therefore, the great narratives of our people that our people relive in every statutory service. We withheld from them competence in worship, and they now resent it. When they go to college, visit other services, they discover how little they know of the real liturgy of their own faith. The same holds true as regards musical rootedness.

Years ago, a large group of our people from Chicago went on a special trip for the dedication of the United States Holocaust Museum and experienced many profound emotions. But the one event about which everybody commented when they returned was the fact that when the congregation was coming into Arlington Cemetery the United States Marine band played the well-known *Yigdal* melody. That simple experience stirred them to their very beings. That was their identity, their soul. It was a *Yigdal* based on an historic Jewish mode.

But there need be no opposition between rootedness on the one side and contemporaneity and creativity on the other. We cannot be slavishly bound, certainly in music, to tradition. But there can be what I have called "creative retrieval." Writing about liturgy, I have also used the term "resourcement" to mean both using resources creatively and, at the same time, resourcing ourselves in the tradition. We would consider it an act of cultural barbarity, would we not, if we were simply to throw out entire sections of our sacred literary texts, not turn to them for study or spiritual enhancement. We would consider it erratic to dump or ignore aspects of Judaic culture such as the *midrashic* mode of teaching and interpreting sacred texts. How can we dismiss, to begin with, the great old musical modes, the *Misinai* melodies, the holiday or sectional musical modes of great musical traditions from the various streams of Jewish life, Sephardic, Ashkenazic, others, that have nurtured our souls and created Jewish religious community?

I once heard someone making fun of the idea that many people consider the most popular folk version of the *Oseh Shalom* (Nurit Hirsch) to be "traditional" because it is only a few decades old. However, that setting of *Oseh*

*Shalom* does happen to have in it elements of very old Jewish modalities and melodic patterns. And that, do not forget, may very well have contributed to its popularity. Cantorial borrowing from the operatic style of the nineteenth century did not last in Jewish music; we now disdain it. But the modes of indigenous Jewish cantorial styles have endured. As to contemporary pieces becoming sacred as if from Sinai, that is true. In the Midwest the late Max Janowski's *Avinu Malkenu* is considered almost as fundamental as the *Kol Nidre* melody. But Max Janowski did base a good part of that piece directly on older Jewish musical patterns. He was so rooted, as someone has put it, that he could not compose in any other way. Those who are gifted, composers in the folk mode as well, can use the modalities and melodic patterns of our heritage for our worship.

Many years ago, in her cantata, for her time, Judith Eisenstein showed how the *Akdamut* mode could be framed in a simple melody that thousands of young people have sung, linking them to an identification of that melody with *Shavuot* and the giving of the Torah. In the same way this can be done along many lines, in a folk or other style, to enrich our spiritual life, contribute to our heritage, and create a sense of wider community.

We need musical patterns. The loss of the sense of community is behind much of what is ailing this society and our civilization. We have had enough of hyper-individuality. We need the kind of music and musical patterns that create community. This was supposed to be one purpose of *Shaarei Shirah*, an official anthology of Jewish music for worship. One of the original goals was to preserve at least some of the European musical melodies for the festivals or sectional motifs. This has never happened—at least not yet.

Only as we “deepen our stakes” in the sacred soil of our heritage—to use the metaphor in the book of Isaiah (54:2)—will we be able, durably, “to widen the place of our tent” even further both for more creativity and to include more people. The deeper our rootedness, the more are we able to be creative. We can provide synagogue music that has depth, substance, and beauty and bring wider and wider sectors of our congregations into a musical community. We will be able to say of this period of synagogue music and of our worship as a whole: *Mah Tovv Oholecha Ya' akov*, “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob,” and add: the places where you can dwell abidingly; O Israel.

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## New Cantor on the Block – How a Recent Graduate was Saved by a Congregational Melody

by Ken Richmond

Leading congregational melodies in a new congregation can be exciting and challenging, rewarding and dangerous. I remember a man coming up to me years ago after services and telling me in Yiddish that if I did a particular tune for Adon Olam again, he would stab me with a banana. Congregational melodies are a matter for the kishkes. By and large we love the melodies that we grew up with. A few of us have a constant yearning for something new and inspirational.

You can therefore understand my excitement and fear – as a recent graduate of the H. L. Miller Cantorial School — at starting in a new congregation with a clean slate. After years at the Seminary, student pulpits, shul-hopping in Jerusalem and Manhattan, learning melodies from friends and teachers, I had developed my own style of leading a congregation in song. My new shul – Midway Jewish Center of Syosset, NY — was also used to a style of congregational singing that Cantor Morris Dubinsky had led there for twenty-four years until his untimely death two years before my arrival. I realized during my audition weekend that the congregation loved to sing, but that it had a different set of melodies than the ones I preferred, and what is more, it found them musically interesting and spiritually invigorating. I wondered, as I started as their new cantor, if I could help bridge that gap, and how.

Our rabbi, Perry Rank, who has a beautiful voice and often harmonizes with me from his side of the bimah, made me a helpful tape of the congregation's traditional melodies, accurately sung. In addition to many of the tunes regularly heard at Conservative shuls, camps and schools around the country, there were some surprises. Several tunes were new to me, including a beautiful *Uv'tseil K'nafecha* (**Example 1**). There were also several variants of common melodies. I didn't realize how firmly the congregation stuck to those variants until I tried to tinker with them. I quickly acquiesced to their version of the traditional *Mi Chamocha* when I realized that their rendition harmonized with mine—in parallel seconds.

The traditional *SheHu Noteh Shamayim* was another story. The congregation would lose two beats on both *m'romi* — — *m* and *l'va've* — — *cha*, substituting a half-note for either the held whole note or the 8-5-6-7 progression that many of us insert there to fill in the four beats. It took a couple of months of strategizing and dueling with the congregation, but I finally got the extra couple of beats to stick.

U- v' -tseil k'na- fe - cha tas - ti - rei - nu tas - ti - rei - nu, u - v'

tseil k'na-fe - cha tas - ti - rei - nu tas - ti - rei - nu; ki Eil shom -  
ki Eil me -

-rei - nu, shom - rei - nu u - ma - tsi - lei - nu,  
lech cha - nun v' - ra - chum

shom - rei - nu u - ma - tsi - lei - nu uma - tsi - lei - nu a - tah.  
melech cha - nun v' - ra - chum v'ra - chum a - tah.

Example 1. *Uv'tseil K'nafecha* — as heard at the Midway Jewish Center

As per advice by my mentors, I've tried to initiate change gradually, and to repeat the new melodies for several weeks in a row until they become familiar. I introduced the Shlomo Carlebach melody for *Shiru Ladonai Shir Chadash* (the second Psalm in Kabbalat Shabbat), which has gradually caught on; it took time and some encouragement for congregants not only to catch on to the words but to keep singing *ya-ba bai*...after the words run out. I limited myself to only one Carlebach tune so I wouldn't overwhelm the congregation with change and also so I wouldn't have to do an all-Carlebach service every week.

I generally tried to introduce melodies where they wouldn't take away something that the congregation had sung for years. For *L'cha Dodi*, I kept their traditional melody but began to add a second one for either the first or second half. I added some tunes for *Mikolot Mayim Rabim*, at the end of Psalm 93. Where the congregation had sung the same tune for *Mizmor L'David* (Psalm 29) on Friday nights and Saturdays, I kept the traditional Major melody for Saturday and added the Sephardic tune on Friday nights. The first time I did it, it took at least half-way through the Psalm before the congregation realized they were singing the second tune in a kind of strange harmony against the new one. This too caught on, I think in part because we kept their version on Saturday morning. Without sacrificing cherished congregational melodies, I tried gradually to make the service more my own.

Two recent Friday night services showed me how far the congregation and I have moved in just six months towards a common ground. First, we

had a Womens League Friday night service led by the Women of Midway. I thought they would be delighted to let all the melodies revert back to what they were before I arrived. Instead, while they didn't include all of my changes in melodies and nusach, they did meet me halfway. They asked my wife to lead them in the Sephardic *Mizmor L'David*, and two women led the Carlebach Psalm 96, including an enthusiastic chorus of *ya-ba bai*. The *ya-ba bai* refrain kept cropping up throughout the service, mostly from their enjoyment in singing the nigunim, I think, and perhaps to poke a bit of fun at me in a good-natured way. That service also taught me one or two melodies that I didn't know, which I've tried to include subsequently.

The Friday night after that was Shabbat Shirah, for which we did a klezmer service called *Lchu N'ran'na*, written by myself with some assistance from my wife, Shira Shazeer. It had been my senior project at JTS, written under the tutelage of Hazzan Charles Davidson, and it included about twenty new melodies. At the Seminary last spring, we had done the Kabbalat Shabbat section with instruments, before candle-lighting time, but now, with the early nightfall of January, we went *A Cappella* from the beginning.

I had taught the melodies to the choir, many with two or three-part harmony. Two *t'fillot* were officially choir pieces; for the rest, the choir was supposed to help the congregation in singing the new melodies. I held a single-session crash course for congregants, gave music to a few musicians among the membership, and asked the Religious School music teacher to prepare the children in a few of the tunes. I also began introducing a handful of the melodies on previous Friday nights. Still, I wondered, how would the congregation respond to all these new melodies at once?

Most people enjoyed it very much (or so they told me) and were able to catch on to quite a few of the melodies. It was liberating for me to be able to use the new melodies as a group at last, after having gone so slowly with them previously. At the same time, I realized the importance of the congregation feeling comfortable with the melodies and with me. Several people who hadn't realized it would be a special service of new music asked nervously "if services were like this every week." The minor changes that the women had included in their services the previous week would be more reliable barometers of the effect I was having on the congregation than the radical changes on Shabbat Shirah. Since that service, I've introduced one or two of my new melodies at a time, so that I'll be able to rotate them with the known melodies, and we're planning to try the klezmer service again in Daylight Savings months when we can use instruments for Kabbalat Shabbat. **Example 2** shows my wife's

*Shehu Noteh Shamayim*, a setting that avoids the problem of two-beat or four-beat measures altogether, and **Example 3** is my setting of *Yigdal*.

I've been focusing mainly on Shabbat, but I want to close with a few words – and a story — about the High Holidays. Congregational singing on Yamim Nora'im is, of course, extremely important, but it can present challenges.

G A D A Bm Em Em F# Bm ,  
 Ha ka-dosh ba-ruch hu. She - hu no-teh sha-ma-yim v' - yo-seid a - retz u-  
 Bm Em A F# Bm Em Em FADD Bm ,  
 mo-shav y' ka-ro ba-sha - ma-yim mi-ma-al ush' - chi - nat u-zo b' - gov-hei m' ro-mim  
 Bm Em F# Bm Bm A D Bm  
 hu E-lo-hei-nu ein od. E-met mal-kei-nu e-fes zu-la-to ka-ka-tuv b'-  
 A Bm Bm A D Em F# ,  
 to - ra - to v' - ya-da - ta ha - yom v' ha-shei - vo - ta el l' va-ve-cha  
 Bm Em Em F# Bm , Bm Em A F#  
 ki A-do-nai hu ha - e - lo-him ba - sha-ma-yim mi - ma - al  
 Bm Em Em F# Bm , Bm Em F# Bm  
 v' - al ha - a - retz mi - ta - chat. ein od.

Example 2. *Shehu Noteh Shamayim* — by Shira Z. Shazeer

Concurrent services are one. While Rabbi Rank and I officiate in one room, a guest rabbi and cantor are officiating in another, and leading a totally different repertoire of tunes. Acoustics can be problematic; our “West Chapel” is really a gym, and sound dies in the rear of the main sanctuary. The number of people present will dictate if congregational singing is even possible at a given moment, not to mention the interplay between cantorial, choral and congregational elements.

Because this was my first year, I took a few precautions to insure that I wouldn't be singing the congregational melodies all by myself. First, I blurred

Yig-dal e-lo-him chái v' - tish ta bach\_ nim-tsa v' ein eit el m' tsi-u-to

E-chad v' einya - chid\_ k' - yi-chi-do\_ ne-lam v' gam ein sof l' - ach-du-to

ein lo d' mut ha- guf\_ v' - ei-no guf\_ lo na' - a-roch ei-lav k' - du - sha-to

Kad-mon l' chol da- var\_ a - sher ni- vra\_ ri-shon v' ein rei-shit l' - rei - shi - to.

Example 3. *Yigdal* — by Ken Richmond, 2004

the line between congregation and choir by teaching the choir tunes that I'd earmarked for congregational singing, and added a second voice as harmony. The choir, which accompanied me in both rooms, then helped “seed” the new melodies. As with *Shabbat Shirah*, I held a crash course and handed out CDs of the High Holiday tunes. What complicated everything even further was the fact that this was the first time I led services using the Silverman Machzor. My JTS classmate Sam Levine, who had led a full Silverman service for years, taught me workable congregational melodies for several *piyyutim* that I had never led before.

Mine was among an increasing number of Conservative synagogues that have retained (or restored) the traditional *duchanen* (Priestly Benediction) from the *bimah* during the High Holidays, and so we scheduled a meeting to review the ancient ritual's choreography with all parties involved: rabbi; cantor; Kohanim; and *Leviyim*. On the day of the meeting I realized that I couldn't remember a single *duchanen nignun*! The only time I had witnessed Kohanim — shrouded in their tallitot and blessing the *kahal* with their arms raised — was in Israel, and I could only remember a few bars of the melody from the packet of special material that the late Hazzan Max Wohlberg had prepared for students. Worse yet, I hadn't finished unpacking, and couldn't locate my Wohlberg packet, my class notes or my *Zamru Lo*. I turned to Hazzanet with a plea for anyone to please sing a *duchanen nignun* into my answering machine.

I was at shul teaching B'nei Mitzvah at the time, but at home my wife listened in amazement as the answering machine filled up with Priestly Blessing nigunim recorded by friends, colleagues, and teachers from around the country. I ended up using one that Sam Levine had left on my machine (**Example 4**).

Example 4. *Duchanen Nigun* — heard from Sam Levine

I taught it not only to the Kohanim, but to the choir as well, and this enabled everyone to catch on. That snippet of a tune, started impromptu to the filler syllables *ai-ai ai* by a group of barefooted Kohanim, turned into one of the best congregational singing moments of the Yamim Nora'im. The simple folk melody – led by cantor, choir, Kohanim and Levi'im and sung joyously by young and old alike – connected us all with our collective past. It was a true *Zecher l'Mikdash*, a remembrance of the Temple Rite, marked by a reverent hush that descended over the sanctuary.

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## A British-Accented Voice from the Pews

By Philip Lachman

My name is Philip Lachman and I'm from London, UK. I am a total layman and unfamiliar with cantorial singing other than the occasional concert. The services I attend are either at a small Orthodox synagogue where they scrape together a minyan and everyone takes an active role in the service—doing everything from opening the Ark, Torah blessing, lifting, binding, etc. (and frequently doing it more than once!). Periodically I will visit a non-Orthodox synagogue with a horrible choir that sings several octaves too high and thinks it is performing *The Pirates of Penzance*.

On grand occasions in a place like the Spanish/Portuguese Bevis Marks



*The Spanish/Portuguese Bevis Marks  
Synagogue in London, UK*

Synagogue, participation can be as much through listening as through singing—and who would want to hear my voice trying to compete with Hazzan Adam Musikant! Given the correct frame of mind, sound alone (however unfamiliar) can create the hypnotic effect that is both spiritual and uplifting, and that is what I experienced at Bevis Marks. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the place let me tell you that in my opinion it is the most interesting shul in the UK—though I'm not sure I should be using the Ashkenazi word 'shul' when referring to a Sephardi synagogue!

Electric light is scantily used in Bevis Marks. Instead, huge candelabras dominate the interior, and these candelabra contain real candles which are lit when required. The effect is magical. The walls surrounding the ladies' gallery are hung with plaques listing the names of synagogue officials dating back 300 years. And what exotic names they are—Carvalho, Mesquita, Nabarro, Pereira—quite different from Ashkenazi names. Next time you are in London, you now know which shul you *must* visit.

Anyway, to music – I attended a Selichot Service at Bevis Marks Synagogue in 2003 and was treated to some wonderful and very distinctive singing. For me, music in a service creates a mood that no amount of pious staring at a siddur can replicate. To understand the words is secondary to feeling the emotion, and what an awesome responsibility it must be to lead the music at a synagogue service.

That particular Selichot service was a unique experience for me. The shul—or rather the Sephardi word for it, ‘esnoga’—was packed, and bathed in the warm yellow glow that is peculiar to candlelight. The congregation consisted of members from the remaining Ashkenazi East End shuls, members of the Bevis Marks Synagogue and assorted ‘distinguished’ invitees. The music was fairly unfamiliar to me, but again, this didn’t matter because it was thrilling just being there. The cantorial singing was hauntingly beautiful.

In December 2004 I was back at Bevis Marks to attend a concert entitled ‘A Sephardi Celebration by Candlelight’, which marked the launch of their ongoing project to preserve and develop the musical heritage of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews’ Congregation in London. This is what I wrote about the concert on my website:

A wonderful evening of choral music was presented by the choir of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews’ Congregation of London on the evening of 4 December 2004. As an Ashkenazi Jew I found many of the tunes unfamiliar, but not the message. The highlight for me was ‘El Norah Alilah’—sung in front of the Ark by a superbly trained choir of men and boys. The traditions of the Spanish and Portuguese branch of Sephardi Jews go back to before the tragic expulsion from Spain in 1492. This concert was a living link to those days...

Meanwhile, my wife has fallen in love with their honorary Cantor, Adam Musikant, whose stunning good looks and even more stunning voice are earning him a world-wide reputation!

When in the presence of talented voices I am aware of my own limitations. That is not to say that everyone else is of like mind. I have been at services where the most talented of musicians were accompanied by the murmur of a tone deaf, out of tempo congregation discussing the previous night’s TV! A solemn service should be just that—a setting where an intense feeling of spirituality is generated. The rhythm of the words, the song and the psalm should pervade your being and blot out all else. For me it is not necessary to vocalize in order to participate.

Attending Selichot at Bevis Marks Synagogue—led by musicians of great talent, in some unfamiliar tunes—I knew when to keep quiet! This in no way detracted from my involvement with the service. On the other hand I have

been at much less formal Orthodox Services where movement around the sanctuary, random standing up and sitting down and generally doing things in your own time and at your own pace is the order of the day. In such a setting I am perfectly happy to join in as loudly or quietly as the mood takes me.

In the often more formal setting of non-Orthodox worship a mixed choir is a familiar site and sound. Some choirs I have witnessed think they are performing opera and they do it at a pace and pitch that does not encourage communal participation—not good!! On the other hand some choirs know their proper function: to enhance the service and provide a professional foundation for congregational singing. The Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood, London has the mix about right.

As for my personal allegiances, I am a member of a non-Orthodox synagogue but spend alternate Shabbatot attending an Orthodox Synagogue—which causes confusion for some. When asked why I do this, my answer is that I like the tradition and ritual of the Orthodox service, but also like the musical variety and inclusivity of the non-Orthodox service. Go figure!

What I prefer most of all is the intimacy and lack of formality you find in the remaining Orthodox shuls of London's East End. They have a purity and simplicity that for me is very involving and very fulfilling. Fieldgate Street 'Great' Synagogue is my favorite, a shul that couldn't be more different than Bevis Marks.

As for the future of Jewish Music in the UK, cantorial and klezmer concerts are sold out. For this we have to thank the Jewish Music Institute (ably directed by Geraldine Auerbach) who are major promoters of Jewish Music here. The musicians themselves are getting younger (rather like policemen...) and music from across the Jewish (and non-Jewish) world is being used in ever more innovative ways in synagogue services. I've always that known Adon Olam can be sung to just about any tune (my favourite is to William Blake's *Jerusalem* – try it, it works). But hearing it sung on the Bimah by a 'barbershop' quintet (not quartet) to the combined tunes of *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Swanee River* was something else!

For those visiting London, be sure to attend a Shabbat service at Bevis Marks—but be warned; their Shabbat Morning service starts early, around 8 a.m. Do also visit some of the remaining Synagogues in London's East End. For a special musical and architectural treat visit the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood to enjoy their magnificent choir and historically land-marked building.

Meanwhile, Jewish life (and music) in all its diversity is alive and well in the UK!

*While not shul-hopping on his 'midlife' motorbike, retired businessman Philip Lachman runs a website –<http://olamgadol.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Jewishthumbnails.html> – that features thumbnail photos with commentary on what's doing in the Jewish East End of London.*

## Lights, Camera, Chazzones! – A Director’s Cut

By Erik Greenberg Anjou

I walked away from any form of functional, normative shul-going Judaism immediately after my Bar Mitzvah ceremony at Beth Sholom Congregation in Elkins Park, a suburb just north of Philadelphia. I had fulfilled what my religion and parents dictated as mandatory. It was thus *forward* to the more germane and important (or so I believed) streams of my life: prep school, athletics, and the concomitant achievements that would lead to an elite college and beyond.

So, who I am some twenty-seven years later, to be producing and directing a documentary film about hazzanut (or the Yiddish term *chazzones*, as it’s referred to in the film) and, by virtue of association — congregational singing?

The long-time editor at Scribner’s, Maxwell Perkins, once commented to Ernest Hemingway while visiting him in the Florida Keys that the author should write about his obvious passion for that milieu. Hemingway’s response was essentially – I will, when I know it inside and out. Only then will I be ready. Hemingway’s ultimate literary response, of course, was *The Old Man and the Sea*.

I’m not claiming to have produced a hazzanic corollary to *The Old Man*. Nor do I pretend to say I know my subject matter encyclopedically. In fact, it’s as much artistic boldness as acumen that has allowed me to enter the domain of synagogue music.

The contemporary rap against classic cantorial music is that it’s always the same. It’s old-fashioned. It’s long. It’s bombastic. It doesn’t include a participatory congregation that wants to clap and sing alongside. In essence, the complaint is that hazzanut no longer relates to our American spin on Jewish life. If true, that assessment at best would be debilitating, at worst, tragic. For no matter on what side of the hazzanic fault line one stands, a cantor’s chant remains the most direct connect to congregational singing. It cues it, leads into it – without prior announcement – which dampens its spontaneity. Cantor Jack Mendelson, who stands at the dramatic center of my movie *A Cantor’s Tale*, recently shared something with me after a class he had taught at JTS. “Anybody who grew up singing in synagogue choirs,” he said, “is still a synagogue Jew.”

Jack’s observation cut to the quick of the hazzanic imbroglio. During the making of the documentary, I’d been afforded a wonderful, variegated journey

across the denominational spectrum and its divides; from the black-hatted ardor of Temple Beth El in Brooklyn's Borough Park section to the sunny new sanctuary of H.U.C. on West 4<sup>th</sup> Street in lower Manhattan, where I sometimes felt passé for lack of body piercings. I met Alan Dershowitz, Matthew Lazar, Lawrence Hoffman, Joseph Malovany, Ron Rifkin, Faith Steinsnyder, Jackie Mason, Ben-Zion Miller, Debbie Friedman, Simon Spiro, and Noach Schall, amongst many others. Over the course of numerous interviews, colloquies and debates, it became clear that the individual speaker's relationship to the deep understructure of classical (for lack of a better word) hazzanut and its retinue of choral settings had a direct, almost transcendent effect on his contemporary devotional practice and affinities.

Okay. So nothing new here, right? You grew up listening to Elvis or Benny Goodman or Sinatra, you grow old still loving and crooning the same music. *However*. What's interesting in the context of *A Cantor's Tale* is that the film's very premise is an empiric contradiction of the jeremiad that hazzanut is the enemy of congregational singing. In fact, I discovered the opposite to be true; hazzanut is the catalyst for the most inspired, soulful, well crafted, and sublime congregational singing there is. Ask any one of Cantor Mendelson's "shul Jews." Or better yet, go to a traditional service and listen to them daven. Let the tingles prick the back of your neck – maybe even your heart of hearts – as a cantorial "set-up" teases them into the modal bridge for *Mimkomcha* or *Modim*. It is not the music of another time and place. It is the music of here and now.

It's now time for me to come out of the closet. I'm a member of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (home of "The BJ Experience") in Manhattan. I also live two blocks away from the so-called Carlebach Shul, and often attend services there as well. I do believe that both BJ and Carlebach are special places, and offer important models for the way music can touch and elevate a congregation. When you can step into each of those shuls on any given Kabbalat Shabbat or Shabbat service and have difficulty finding a seat... They're doing something very right. What I find distasteful, and rail against with complete lack of penitence, is the fact that these synagogues have re-defined, even co-opted, the current, idiomatic definition of congregational singing and/or participation.

In seven cases out of ten, worshipers at the BJ or Carlebach services are familiar with the respective institutions' well-established melodies and musical patterns. Those melodies are not often complex. In one, two, perhaps three services, a relative novice can catch the specific liturgical wave and feel comfortable within its curl. The soon-emerging fact is that *everyone* can be

at shul and sing. *Everyone* can know the tune and participate. *Everyone* can attend a service and feel safe knowing that the music they love is structurally embedded in their experience. And if one's Hebrew is not at a level where one can engage the literal text, there are abundant lacunae where yai-dee-dai-ing one's way through is perfectly acceptable, if not invited.

Are people singing? Yes. Is that singing stirring? Very often it is. Are the congregants "connecting?" Like anywhere else; sometimes yes, sometimes no. Is what they're doing congregational singing? Absolutely not. It's merely jingle memorization. See the Golden Arches, regurgitate the song. Page 254. Click on icon and go. Service in and service out, the jingle will remain the same.

As you the reader have already gleaned, I harbor my own personal predilections about cantorial music, what it can be, and where it can lead. I am forty-three years old. I grew up playing football on Shabbos and eating Taylor's pork roll. Today, I still love football – on appropriate afternoons. The *treif* cuisine has disappeared. And I go to bed at night listening to recitatives by Hershman and Rosenblatt. What's wrong with this picture? What's *right* with this picture? Who am I to hector you about the way liturgical music is "meant" to serve God?

My hope is that my movie addresses many of these questions, as does Cantor Mendelson's own unique Jewish journey. What I discovered ineluctably through *A Cantor's Tale* is the majestic role that hazzanut plays – and has played – in the Jewish experience. How the music soars, aches, and pierces in ways I simply didn't have the chance to engage as a child. During the filming, we followed Jack into delis, restaurants and bakeries through the length and breadth of Borough Park. He would begin singing. The man across the counter would respond. In melody. Or in harmony. To any number of sublime settings. The musical acumen and fluidity of these laymen were nothing short of staggering. It's through these devotees – not B'nai Jeshurun, or Carlebach, or any number of like shuls – that I've come to understand the true essence of congregational participation.

Ultimately a film – like a song, a painting, a poem – is a jail-broke child sprung out on its own in the world. I may have fashioned the work with my own intentions. But it's yours – the viewer's – own personal apprehension that rules the day. If I may offer one prayer for the project that's filled my life for over two years, it's that hazzanut will be an open invitation to modern rabbis, cantors, and congregations alike to actively re-engage the text, the service, and its innumerable musical possibilities. As Jews, we have a retinue of active choices ahead of us. Do we want to dumb down the shul experience in order to ensure that we never risk losing a potential new body who might

otherwise opt for a New York Knicks' game on Friday night; or do we want to use the music in a way that would inspire congregants – and kids — and their teachers – to reach higher.

*A graduate of Middlebury College, Northwestern University and the American Film Institute, Erik Greenberg Anjou has written and directed films in both the feature and documentary realms. In addition to the currently showing documentary – **The Cantor's Tale**, distributed by Ergo Media and discussed in this Journal's Review section – he's produced **The Cool Surface** (Columbia Tri-Star Pictures) and **Road to Ruin** (Canal Plus).*



## Caught on Hazzanet – Views from Cyberspace

*By Richard Berlin*

Hazzanet has been up and running for some time now and has proven itself to be an invaluable tool for those of us on line together. As one who reads and posts on Hazzanet regularly, I can attest that the assistance available is ever growing with: help in locating specific musical pieces, help with last minute congregational requests for educational offerings, help with concert planning, help with Torah readings, help with the daily minutiae that we hazzanim encounter every day. And many new – and old topics – show up regularly.

For those who have not had the opportunity (the computer challenged among us), this article will try to highlight some of the ways that Hazzanet is used to advance our professional lives. First, here is a little cerebral context to understand what you are about the read. Despite what our teachers would have us think, the human brain does not function in a purely rational way – moving from one idea up or down and very precisely organized content outline or hierarchy of necessary logic. In fact, we think in what computer folks call Hyperlinking. When “stuff”<sup>1</sup> enters our consciousness, it rolls around in our thought processes until it finds a memory to which we can relate that stuff. Along the way, any number of unrelated or tangentially related ideas may surface. That’s what Hyperlinking is, in the individual brain.

In this context, we can think of Hazzanet as being a “meeting of minds,” a hyperlinking place in cyberspace where the stuff that rolls around (about any idea) comes around. What follows offers a case in point: an innocent query that led to previously unthinkable (or at least previously unspoken) extensions of congregational singing activity.

### **The Kol Nidre “String”<sup>2</sup>**

To see this hyperlinking in operation, along with its value, we will examine some of the responses to a particular inquiry posted on Hazzanet in Septem-

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<sup>1</sup> The word “stuff” is being used here as a semanticist would use it, i.e., to refer to any idea, thought, concept, perception, or content we might be cogitating.

<sup>2</sup> A “string”(also known as a “thread”) includes all of the comments on a single idea and all of the branches that derive from that initial idea. If what you are about to read sometimes seems disconnected, attribute that to the time it takes to respond online. Each of the emails above are listed only according to the time and date they were received.

ber of 2004 – when all of us were inundated with preparation for the *Yamim Noraim*. What you will see are messages to and from the hazzanim who responded to, commented on, or otherwise mentioned that initial “posting.”<sup>3</sup> Their names—actually initials—have been changed to preserve anonymity and to maintain focus on the issues being raised.

The initial posting came as a common on-line request:

From: “HAS”      Subject: Kol Nidrei w/accomp.

Can anyone recommend a good arrangement of Kol Nidrei w/accompaniment for baritone? Need to come up with a good one - soon, me thinks. ;) <sup>4</sup>

I think I have something by Lewandowsky and Binder, but wondered if someone had something better for the voice part. Thanks,      H.A.S.

~~~~~

From: “JAR”. Subject: RE: Kol Nidrei w/accomp.

Dear All,

It isn't quite what H.A.S. requested, BUT..... a couple of years ago, I made an arrangement of Putterman's Kol Nidre for cantor, keyboard and 'cello, with a part that can be played by a good high-school player. It's in g minor, but I have it in Finale<sup>5</sup> and could transpose it down if there are several requests for one key. I've posted .pdf files<sup>6</sup> on our website, - *www. website address deleted*. Enjoy! L'Shana Tova,      J.A.R.

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From: SPS      Subject: Baseball or Kol Nidre?

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<sup>3</sup> “Posting” means writing and sending an email message to the “Discussion for Cantors Assembly.” For more information about getting onto Hazzanet, email Carey Cohen, the current Hazzanet administrator, at: [hazacoh1@aol.com](mailto:hazacoh1@aol.com)

<sup>4</sup> This symbol – “;)” – is a “wink and a smile.”

<sup>5</sup> *Finale* is one of several applications for composing and creating printable music. There has been an ongoing Hazzanet discussion about which application (or some people use the word “program” instead of “application”) of this type is better. The two main contenders are *Finale* and *Sibelius*. The JSM uses *Sibelius* (which can open *Finale* files, though *Finale* will not open *Sibelius* files). The choice between the two programs is a personal preference – whichever one people started with is generally the one people prefer. These programs also do a lot of other musical things, but that's for another article or a convention session.

<sup>6</sup> A “.pdf” file is a type of computer document that can be opened on any computer, using a free application called Adobe Acrobat.

You may not have noticed the problem facing area Jews this September. The upcoming critical Red Sox - Yankees series at Fenway Park starts the same night as Kol Nidre, the solemnest time of the Jewish calendar. This has put many local fans into a quandary.

A very distressed Red Sox fan goes to his rabbi.

“Rabbi,” he says, “I don’t know what to do. I know that tomorrow night is Kol Nidre, but the Red Sox are playing the Yankees and Pedro Martinez is pitching.”

The rabbi smiles. “That’s alright. It’s for nights like this that God invented VCRs.”

“Really?” the man said,– his face lighting up, “I can tape Kol Nidre?”

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From: “CRW”                      Subject: Re: Baseball or Kol Nidre?

Very cute!

I actually have a couple who recorded my first Kol Nidrei and Y”K service, and told me that every year thereafter they listen to it instead of having to fight the crowd at the shul. This way they also abide by the rule of the MAHARIL<sup>7</sup> that we are not permitted to change the musical tradition of the *Yamim Noraim*. :-))<sup>8</sup>

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From: “HJC”                      Subject: Commentary on Yom Kippur

[HJC shared his congregational bulletin article about his upcoming *Yamim Noraim* services with the rest of Hazzanet, if anyone cared to use parts of it for their own congregations. As part of his multi page article, HJC wrote this sentence to his congregants:] “I ask you to amplify my voice by singing the third Kol Nidrei together with me...”    H.J.C.

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From: “HSW”                      Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

Interesting concept; does it work? Do your congregants sing along? Any other colleagues that encourage singing along with Kol Nidre? (Is there a [sing-along] version?)    H.S.W.

<sup>7</sup> MAHARIL is an acronym for Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Levi Moellin, halachic authority for all of German-speaking Jewry in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>8</sup> Another one of those email symbols (usually jocular in nature) that save keystrokes; in this case, it is a broadly smiling face. To figure out what these symbols represent, try looking at them after you rotate the page 90° clockwise.

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From: "HBK" Subject: Fw: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

I had the choir join me 2nd time around in unison. By the 3rd time around, the congregation was singing as well. It was very effective. H.B.K

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From: "HEB" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

Not to be a cynic or anything close but all of us that ask the congregation to join in the Kol Nidre have stripped ourselves to the "bare bones" and have nothing left to be called "hazzanim." Most of us have given up the Shabbat Service by now and now this?

Is [the] H.L. Miller School wasting the students' time and money in teaching all the beauty of our tradition and the skills of our profession?

G-mar Tov to all! H.E.B.

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From: "HNF" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

Ask any of those congregants to come up and lead it. See how far they get. H.N.F.

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From: "HJC" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

[Dear "HSW" – in response to your question [about]: "I ask you to amply my voice by singing the 3rd Kol Nidrei together with me." Interesting concept, "HJC"; does it work? Do your congregants sing along? Any other colleagues that encourage singing along with Kol Nidre?]

This is the 2nd year that we have done this. I think that it worked better this year than last, in the sense that more people were engaged in it.

I have come to the conclusion that some High Holiday enterprises require 1-3 years to develop.

I didn't receive any complaints. I think that it was a valuable experience for many people, and I think that it's inspiring for people to hear Kol Nidrei from everywhere.

A lot of my efforts have been directed toward engaging the congregation more deeply in the act of tefillah — or at least singing — throughout the holiday.

Sol Zim's and Moshe Schulhof's session at the Convention provided some materials that I used. And, in response to my experiences with the Spirituality

Institute for Cantors, I adapted a Carlebach melody and used it as a nign throughout the high holidays, and then for Sh'ma Koleinu.

These holidays were incredibly fulfilling for me and, I believe, for my congregation.

I was able to sing throughout as never before. I was in better voice at the end of the 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah than in most concerts I have ever sung. Similarly, I had complete strength and range at the end of Yom Kippur – despite the fact (or was it because of the fact) that I hadn't held back throughout either holiday.

I felt that the big difference was the spirituality experiences that I have had in the last 2 years. I felt so open inside (I've always felt pretty open inside, but this is a quantum leap) — and some of the techniques and experiences enabled me to float over petty irritations that might have been holding me back in the past...

Best wishes all for a deeply joyful Sukkot holiday. H.J.C.

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From: "HEE" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

I'm at a synagogue with a volunteer choir that had no direction for the last 10 years that I worked with since the summer. I had them come in on select words in the 2nd Kol Nidrei and told them to sing as much as they could/wanted in the 3rd, and congregants started singing along a bit in the 2nd and at least 1/3 of the congregation was singing for at least big chunks of the 3rd one. H.E.E.

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From: "HEP" Subject: After Yom Kippur Will Things Really Change

Dear Chazzanim,

So many of us middle-aged members find ourselves between the brave competence of our founding members and the slow but deliberate erosion of our noble craft... the erosion of traditional hazzanut... the erosion of professionalism.... We feel ourselves marooned but not disabled on an island of cantorial capitulation.

We have quarantined ourselves as if we have biblical leprosy. We are disheartened, suspicious, but not hibernating...We must reawaken ourselves and others to serve as a catalyst for rejuvenating the ancient modes in our younger members.

I pray that members over 50 and about to retire will join me in trying to reinvigorate and evoke the memories of our earlier members that so many younger members never delighted in. Some of them, (no fault of their own) are becoming inspired by the untrained freeloaders and self-promoters, who panhandle our sacred music and calling. Who persuade us to dismantle our art by offering up the recitation of Kol Nidre like it was three self-indulgent meals.

On Yom Kippur with a full professional choir we chanted the Kol Nidre up a half step for each of the repetitions. We chanted Weisgal, Naumbourg, Rosenblatt, Lewandowski, Sulzer, and many other great masters. The Shema Koleinu and others were original in the correct nusach in contemporary settings.

Respectfully, H.E.P

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From: "HRW" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

Dear H.E.P,

I tend to feel the way you do. I thought to myself: the next thing, they'll be singing the Malei with us too. But to be fair to the other side, there is a major difference here. Kol Nidrei is done three times, so this lends to some creativity and innovative contrast. If you said the congregation was singing it with you all three times, I would be very much concerned. H.R.W

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From: "HDS" Subject: Re: Fw: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

My choir (15 dedicated volunteers rehearsed to within an inch of their lives) sang a traditional Kol Nidre with me pianissimo for the first recitation, I was solo for the second, and they repeated the piece forte for the third. I told them that with the first recitation, they should think about evoking memories, and with the third, think about their roles as shlichei tzibbur, and about the power of words (the theme of Kol Nidre) and the power of music (why we do what we do). The effect was tremendous, and by the third time through, I could hear congregants joining in on some of the familiar themes. It was a joy. We also added a very traditional, old-school Hashkiveinu and Shema Koleinu to the mix this year, and my little choir was spectacular. My congregation is made up of some people who only remember this kind of music from their youth, and others who have never heard classical synagogue music, only sing-along stuff. The reaction from a wide cross section of shul goers (regulars as well as the three-day-a-year crowd) was electric. I think that what [HEP] is praying

for is not only possible, but is in the cards. If we choose our music well, and deliver it spectacularly, congregants would have to be made of stone to not be affected and want more. I have always felt that we live in a wonderful age as far as liturgical music is concerned. When else in Jewish musical history could a hazzan sing his/her heart out with a traditional recitative, and then use the emotion and spirituality that the classical idiom has dredged up to light a fire under the kahal who then can't help but sing the last line or the next paragraph with gusto, using the most modern but still nusach appropriate congregational tune. That, to me, is nusach America, and one that I think we, as the vanguard of cantors with feet planted firmly in both the old and new worlds, are able to pull off effectively and with style. The goal is to whet Jews' appetites for good and effective synagogue music that draws equally from old and new traditions, all in the interest of creating the kind of honest kavvanah that makes people need to come to shul in spite of themselves.  
H.D.S.

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From: "HRW"                      Subject: Re: After Yom Kippur Will Things Really Change

Dear H.E.P.,

I really like what you say and certainly know where you are coming from. The problem is that the complexion of the congregation in today's world has drastically altered. The change, good or bad, has a major impact on what is being done. We may reawaken ourselves and even our young colleagues, but what about our congregations?! They don't want to sit more than an hour and that's it. I don't know about anybody else, but at one point, I thought it was Pesach; we had a mass Exodus right after the rabbi's sermon, and an even greater Exodus after the Yizkor service. (And we have a professional choir and organ which are excellent).

Do you really think those people want to sit and listen to the masters? We have a serious problem. This extends right across all of our denominations. Though the true orthodox daven all day, they certainly aren't interested (for the majority; I know there are exceptions) in listening to real chazzones. To them it is a distraction. Again, I am very aware of the few minor exceptions. As far as a response, solution or remedy, I have no answer. We have colleagues who may have some very good responses. I'm sure HXY [a hazzan renowned for old-fashioned hazzanut], for one, could come up with a very valuable response.

I believe this is an issue which confronts us all. Perhaps we can address this at our Convention in May. It certainly is one that needs to be addressed.  
HRW

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From: "HSB" Subject: Re: Commentary on Yom Kippur

I have always encouraged the congregation to sing along with Kol Nidre. I've always done the very traditional one, a capella. Usually, no one sings on the first one, some are singing on the second one and most are singing by the third. I find the most kavvanah when the congregation is with me. After all, we are all in this together, and I find that when we enable our congregants to daven by davening with them, that our collective energy works at its best. Many congregants over many years have told me that they were very moved by the experience of singing/davening WITH the Hazzan. H.S.B.

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From: "HSM" Subject: Kol Nidre

Chevre:

It has been interesting and somewhat enlightening to read so many reactions to and ideologies about the chanting of Kol Nidre. Yet, in reading the reactions of some colleagues whom I am quite familiar with as well as those whom I have never met, I've become a bit perplexed. As both a "young" recent graduate of the JTS, and as a dedicated student of three of our more well known and respected colleagues, I feel compelled to respond to the past few days of comments. I hope that I am not insulting anybody, as I am sure no insult is intended by the other writers (I hope).

Yes, we the hazzanim are standing before the congregation, flanked by two Torahs, and we are chanting from our hearts, building up to a crescendo in volume, pitch and kavvanah as we repeat Kol Nidre three times. But if the congregation feels moved to sing along, especially those members of the congregation who may be experiencing this service for at least their seventieth time (yes, my congregation is not a young one), then who are we to stop them in the midst of their expression of prayer?

We are leading and representing the congregation in prayer, are we not? When I commented that the congregation "sings along" with me all three times, whether or not invited, I was not inferring that it is done as a "sing along"... but rather that many members of the congregation appear to be moved to join in for some part of the chanting... especially the "Sh'veekeen Sh'veeteen b'teileen Um'vutaleen" phrases.



The reaction and participation of the congregation does not cause me to cringe or to leer at them until they stop. It does not compel me to slow down, speed up, or to change the direction of the phrase in order to “lose them”... On the contrary: the energy created and shared within the sanctuary builds up throughout the chanting of Kol Nidre... the “tone” (so to speak) is set...the kavvanah, in every sense of the word, is heartfelt, emotional, quite moving.

Most moving experiences evoke a human response which is audible. This audible human response is a shared reflection of remembrance, one of sharing that which has been building up inside for a year of anticipation, a year of trying to live justly, a year of dealing with success and with failure, a year of affecting and accepting life as it has been personally experienced. It is a response of remembrance and of atonement.

If this Jewish audible response is one of chanting along with the hazzan, then I do not believe that it is wrong for the congregation to feel moved to musical expression.

As hazzanim we stand upon the bimah and chant the prayers through that which moves our hearts and our voices; the source and the mode of our expression are combined through liturgy and hazzanut. Chanting is not a “performance”... it is prayer. Let’s not lose sight of that. B’shalom:  
H.S.M.

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From: “HSB”                      Subject: Re: Kol Nidre “sing along”  
Chevre:

Just because people sing along with the cantor does not in any way diminish the cantor’s leadership or role or inspiration. On the contrary, when people are “moved” enough by the cantor’s rendition to sing along, the cantor is giving the best example of what the cantor could and should be doing in and for the congregation. H.S.B.

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### Summary

There you have it – the hyperlinking of the hazzanic mind, set free through the magic of Hazzanet. From a simple question “does anyone have another tune for...” to a full blown discussion of merits of congregational singing and today’s (perceived or real) crisis of the imminent demise of the hazzan and hazzanut, all stripes of our profession have chimed in. Far be it from this Internet reporter to imply that – of the questions raised – one or the other has “the answer” for the rest of us. Suffice to say that the questions retain their

viability through this medium and each of us – as the *Mara d'Shira* of our congregations – has to determine the pathways for the future. The medium of the future – Hazzanet – is now asserting its growing maturity. Yes, there are occasional spurious messages or accidentally sent emails. Yet on the whole, we benefit, professionally and personally, from this medium where one can get that needed solution (or more accurately, any number of solutions) to an imminent or critical problem that we are facing – and we can get those answers within days, hours or even minutes. Hazzanet is now our Chavruta. To learn more, join us on line.

*Richard Berlin is the Spiritual Leader (Kol Bo) of Parkway Jewish Center in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, PA. An ASCAP publisher and composer, Rick continues to create new liturgical works that bridge hazzanut and congregational singing. As Associate Editor of the **Journal of Synagogue Music**, he assists in its publication – setting all the music and copy for print.*

## A Cross-section of Congregational Singing in One Israeli City

By Yosef Zucker

Writing an article on congregational singing in Israel presents both an opportunity and an excuse. The opportunity is to get out on Shabbat, visit other synagogues in the area, and see what they do. I've permitted myself this luxury occasionally but never in a systematic way, and I had never recorded what I heard and saw. The excuse was an opportunity in itself – to be able to release myself from duties in my own congregation in Kfar Sava in order to visit as many synagogues as possible in the several months that I had before the article was due.

When I made *aliyah* to Israel in 1983 as a graduate of the old Cantors Institute, I had a special interest in the music of the different *eidot*. Being an idealist in heart and mind, I expected that in the melting pot of modern Israel a *nusach Erets Yisrael* would develop, to which the *nusachim* of the different *eidot* would each contribute their share. Indeed, I looked forward to making my own contribution towards reaching this goal. Numerous factors, both musical and social, could eventually play a part in merging different traditions, and to date there have been some conscious attempts to hasten this process. I feel, however, that the unconscious mingling of tunes between Jews from different traditions is what will ultimately serve to create an Israeli nusach.

The past twenty or so years have been marked by conscious attempts by different groups, political and religious (which go together in Israel), to return the Crown of Torah to its former glory: *l'hachazir Atarah l'Yoshna* as expressed in the motto of the Shas<sup>1</sup> party. The Shas school system has grown greatly in numbers all over the country, and represents an attempt by ultra-Orthodox Sephardim to establish their own identity, independent from the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox. The first generation of Oriental Sephardim to arrive in the state of Israel studied in the Orthodox *yeshivot*, among them that of Vishnitz. The Shas party was originally under the patronage of (the Lithuanian) Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Shach; later Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (born in Iraq) established the party's independence and became its halachic authority (*poseik*). Children enrolled in Shas day schools learn Sephardic traditions, and the party has taken over many neighborhood Sephardic synagogues, not always with the agreement of the worshipers. A similar process has taken

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<sup>1</sup> Sephardi Torah Sages.

place in the Ashkenazi synagogues and schools, which in some cases, but not all, has been spurred by Chabad<sup>2</sup>. There are also crossover situations, such as the Sephardic followers of Rabbi Nachman of Bratislav,<sup>3</sup> and the Bukharan synagogue in my neighborhood which seems to have been recently adopted by a Chabad rabbi.

My primary question was: can one sense a movement towards the development of a *nusach Erets Yisrael*, or is the current trend of strengthening of ethnic identities serving to prevent such a merger? Clearly, an examination of what is sung in a sample of different synagogues could shed light on this question. It is worthwhile noting that the Israeli Defense Force (*Tsahal*) approached this question regarding the liturgy years ago, and in all the synagogues on army bases one can find siddurim that follow *Nusach Achid* (“The Uniform Version”) based upon *Nusach Sepharad*. Normally there are many other siddurim available, and most of the worshippers choose a siddur of their own preference. The musical nusach used for a particular occasion in the army depends on who leads the service, and at every occasion that I attended services on a base, everybody was very accepting of whatever tradition was used. I now hear from soldiers currently on active duty that this is not necessarily the case today.

I limited my research to the numerous synagogues of Kfar Sava. I attended different services, mostly on Erev Shabbat, and recorded my observations on Saturday night. I would have liked to speak with the *sh’lichei tsibbur* and *gabbai’im* in those synagogues, but in most cases time did not permit this on Shabbat and I was unable to connect with these individuals during the week because of their regular work schedules. Kfar Sava is a city of 80,000 founded a little over a hundred years ago and situated northeast of Tel Aviv. The city is known for its cultural life and educational system, and houses a large secular-liberal population as well as many *olim* from English-speaking countries and many Oriental and Sephardic (“mizrachi”) Jews. The eastern section of the city, in which I live, is predominately Oriental; of its 28 synagogues, only two are Ashkenazi and one is Ethiopian. The remainder are Persian (the largest number), Sephardic, Moroccan, Yemenite, and Bukharan. I made a point of going to “the people.” As opposed to searching out synagogues that were known for their singing (I do not think that there is a professional *hazzan* in the city), I concerned myself with the experience of the average person who

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<sup>2</sup> The world-wide Lubavitcher chasidic movement.

<sup>3</sup> Ukrainian chasidic leader, 1772-1811.

chooses to attend his neighborhood synagogue. I believe that my experiences could be duplicated throughout Israel.

A few words on the nature and organization of these synagogues, which is a feature they have in common with our Masorti-Conservative congregation as well. All of these synagogues are composed of people who have come together for the sake of prayer and study. They receive limited financial support from the municipal Religious Council, and are responsible for their own internal organization. Each synagogue has its own steering committee and *gabbai*, responsibilities that may rotate among the different members. As noted, full-time professional *hazzanim* are a rarity in Israel. Rabbis are likewise not part of the landscape in the vast majority of synagogues. The prayers are led by more (and less) knowledgeable individuals, and congregational participation varies greatly among the different synagogues. The smallest synagogue that I visited has room for perhaps 30-40 worshipers; the largest can seat about 200. Dress is informal, and varies from T-shirts to full ultra-Orthodox garb. Most of the worshipers are men; women do attend all of the synagogues except the Yemenite congregation, which has no women's section. The smallest women's section I saw seats about twenty. The largest seats about fifty, and took up a third of the synagogue from front to back. Children were present in all of the synagogues except the Ethiopian, and wander freely in and out. In some congregations the children are given roles in leading prayer.

One last comment is in order regarding the definition of "congregational singing." In normal usage among American cantors, this term refers to those places in the service when the congregation sings together. However, the practices in some of the congregations which I visited gave me cause to expand this definition to include all those occasions where members of the congregation other than the *shaliach tsibur* participate in the reading of the prayers.

My research got off to somewhat of a comic start. My first visit was to the Ethiopian synagogue in our neighborhood, which I visit at least once a year. As they are the newest community in Israel, I was interested to hear what they were singing. The prayers on Erev Shabbat begin with a long prayer by the *kais*.<sup>4</sup> The congregation stands, and the *kais*, holding his staff, begins a long plaintive prayer in Amharic. The congregation apparently knows the prayer well, and participates by repeating words and bowing. Amharic is a Semitic language, and the words "Adonai" and "Halleluyah" are noticeable. This is the height of congregational participation; the one (elderly) woman present participated fully, genuflecting with the men (ostensibly in the neighboring

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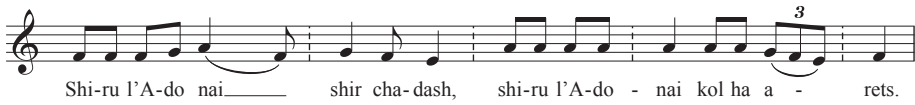
<sup>4</sup> Ethiopian spiritual leader.

room, but the door was open, and she may have physically been in the room with the men part of the time). There were not many young people in the synagogue at this time, so I was not able to judge if those who were born or at least grew up in Israel are comfortable with this ritual. Then the unexpected happened: the *kais* asked me to lead the prayers. I explained that I wanted to hear what they sung, and he told me I could sing anything I wanted. I wasn't surprised; this is not the first time this has happened, and I knew that I was testing my luck. I recalled the first time I had visited the synagogue, when the prayers were led by one of the young men. Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit were an interesting hodge-podge of Ashkenazic and Sephardic melodies. After the services I asked him where he had studied, and he told me that he had attended a yeshiva high school and picked up what he knew there. I had no choice but to try to remember the melodies I had heard on that occasion. Fortunately, I received some guidance from somebody standing near me. As a reliable source of information that particular service was not of much use to this study. I appreciate my acceptance among this community, but being given the honor of *shaliach tsibur* each time I visit does not help me to understand their usual practice. It does demonstrate the desire of the Ethiopian community to be a part of mainstream Judaism.

The observations listed below were made at Shabbat services at the following synagogues in Kfar Sava: Al Shem Hatsadikim (mixed Oriental-Sephardic, leaning towards Moroccan), Olei Turkia (despite the name, the congregants tell me is mixed Oriental-Sephardic), Bukharan, Persian, Beit Yosef (Yemenite), Ohel Moshe (Ashkenazic modern Orthodox, Ts'irei B'nei Akiva), Ner K'doshim (Ashkenazic modern Orthodox). I visited all of the Oriental synagogues on Erev Shabbat, and both Ashkenazi synagogues and Al Shem HaTsadikim for morning services on Shabbat.

All of the Oriental synagogues I visited read Shir HaShirim before Kabbalat Shabbat, with the exception of the Persian synagogue where it is read after Kabbalat Shabbat. There are also a number of changes in the order of prayers at that synagogue, which are outside the scope of this report. In all of the synagogues, each chapter of Shir HaShirim is read from their seat by a different person. In some of the congregations, the readers seem to know their chapter in advance; in others the gabbai calls out the name of the readers at the beginning of each chapter. In the Bukhari and Persian congregations, the readers included boys that looked as young as eight years old.

The Psalms of Kabbalat Shabbat are sung to the same melody in all the Oriental-Sephardic congregations (**Example 1**).



Example 1. *Shiru L'Adonai* (Psalm 96) as sung in Oriental Sephardic synagogues

In the Al Shem HaTsadikim Synagogue, the congregation sang all the psalms out loud together. The Persian congregation also sings together, but their singing is not very melodious. In the remaining synagogues, the psalms were each read by a different reader, including children, and some worshipers did join in the singing. At the Yemenite Beit Yosef Synagogue, the psalms were sung together with typical Yemenite organum.<sup>5</sup> The melody was rhythmic and yet, psalmodic, varying within a small range of pitches, never more than a third. *Mizmor L'David* (Psalm 29) is sung in all the Oriental-Sephardic congregations to one of several melodies. The most common tune is notated on page 7 of *The Sephardic-Oriental Songbook*,<sup>6</sup> with the tune on page 10 as close runner-up.

*L'cha Dodi* provides an opportunity for congregational singing in most synagogues, and it was interesting to see what melodies would be chosen in each venue. In the Al Shem HaTsadikim and Olei Turkia synagogues, a common Sephardic melody is used (*Sephardic-Oriental Songbook*, p. 11), and the chorus is not repeated. The Bukharan and Persian congregations sang the melody called “folk” on page 23 of *Zamru Lo—The New Generation*.<sup>7</sup> The Yemenites sing *L'cha Dodi* to their own melody, joining in with the *shaliach tsibbur* primarily for the recurring refrain.

In Sephardic synagogues every word of the Arvit service is sung out loud by the *shaliach tsibur*, with the congregation joining in at specific words and phrases. This is true in the Yemenite synagogue as well. I must say it stands in stark contrast to the typical Ashkenazi synagogue, in which the *shaliach tsibbur* finishes the prayers, and the congregation joins in only when prompted. There is a liveliness in the Oriental-Sephardic synagogues which is lacking in the Ashkenazi synagogues. I witnessed other exotic practices for the *Vaichulu* section and for *Aleinu*, but none that were significant enough to receive detailed description here.

<sup>5</sup> The Yemenite Jews sing together in a harmony of parallel fourths reminiscent of parallel organum during the Middle Ages, from about 900-1050.

<sup>6</sup> Edited by Velvel Pasternak (Cedarhurst, NY: Tara Publications, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Edited by Jeffrey Shiovitz (New York: Cantors Assembly, 2004).

The prayers end with *Yigdal* in all of the synagogues. Most use a common Sephardic melody; an interesting variation that I heard was at Al Shem Ha-Tsadikim, where *Yigdal* was sung to the tune of the Ladino song *Cuando El Rey Nimrod*. At the Bukharan synagogue the members of the congregation rise, greet each other with “Shabbat Shalom,” and leave during the singing of *Yigdal*.

It is easy to sum up my Shabbat morning experience at two Ashkenazi modern Orthodox synagogues and at the Al Shem Tsadikim synagogue. In both of the Ashkenazi synagogues, the congregation sang where expected, and in many cases sang the same tunes one might hear in an American synagogue. (Of the two synagogues, Ner K’doshim has a higher percentage of English speakers.) My overall impression was that in both synagogues there was much less congregational singing than in the typical American Conservative synagogue. My feeling at Ohel Moshe was that the communal singing was initiated by the congregation. In the Ner K’doshim synagogue individual worshipers joined in what I would call a congregational choir at certain points in the Amidah and Torah service. Where unison congregational singing occurred, it was initiated by the *shaliach tsibbur*. At the Al Shem HaTsadikim synagogue there was continual participation by the congregation at specific, pre-understood places. These places are indicated in the siddurim, but the markings differ from what happens during actual practice. I was present there on Shabbat Chanukah, and was looking forward to (and disappointed by) Hallel. There was not any particular congregational singing during the Hallel, and what there was lacked any feeling of coordination. *Ma Ashiv* was sung to the traditional Ashkenazi *Maoz Tsur* melody, modified in Sephardic fashion to fit the words.

All things considered, and from the small sample of synagogues I visited, it is very easy to arrive at the following conclusions: There is considerably more congregational singing in Oriental-Sephardic synagogues than in Ashkenazi synagogues. Among the Ashkenazi synagogues, my own Masorti-Conservative Hod VeHadar Congregation sings much more than the average. The repertoire which we sing is based on the melodies that the founders of the congregation brought with them from the States in the late 1970s, plus a few Shlomo Carlebach and Debbie Friedman tunes that have been introduced in recent years. Moreover, our congregation has expressed a desire to expand its repertoire. The development of a *Nusach Erets Yisrael* would seem to be far in the future, since Ashkenazim and Sephardim evidently want to perpetuate their own traditions. One hears more Ashkenazic melodies in Sephardic-Oriental synagogues than Sephardic melodies in Ashkenazic



synagogues (an exception to the trend being Hod VeHadar). The young generation of Sephardim has lost the accent of their parents' and grandparent's generation; at the same time, a little Oriental ornamentation can be heard in the singing of the Ashkenazi *sh'lichei tsibbur*. It seems that the Sephardim, who are now the majority in Israel, are setting the trend by maintaining their own traditions and involving young children in the public participation of the prayer service.

*Hazzan Yosef Zucker is the owner and editor of OR-TAV Music Publications in Kfar Sava, Israel.*

# Practical Articles

## The Birth of an Idea: Commissioning Music for a Trained Congregational Choir

by Solomon Mendelson

*O Interactive Grantor  
of the gift of life and learning,  
restore to us ...  
the congregational response—for Amens,  
the chorale of mixed voices—for Halleluyahs.*

Issachar Miron,  
**18 Gates** (1993)

In our post-Golden Age era the only questions waiting to be resolved are the calibre of the music and its variety, not whether we should or shouldn't use congregational singing. As with most Conservative congregations of the late 1960s and early 1970s we in Long Beach (New York) had a sprinkling of congregational melodies throughout the service. But they were disconnected, without any relationship to each other. Truth to tell, the people were not unhappy. They sang a great deal, but from my professional perspective as hazzan, something was missing.

At the Cantors Assembly convention of 1970 the problem became crystallized in my mind. Max Wohlberg, my former teacher at the Cantors Institute, had retired to my community, and my wife Emma and I felt honored to drive him home from the convention. On the way I asked him if he would be interested in writing a Shabbat Morning service for hazzan and trained congregational choir.

Two months later, *Chemdat Shabbat* was born.<sup>1</sup> For a period of six months, following Kiddush after Shabbat Morning services about sixty men, women and children spent a half-hour of rehearsal time working on the service. My brother Jack did the same in his congregation, and at the premiere Jack's group joined us. We were about 100 strong, and the crowd of worshipers in attendance reached Yom Kippur proportions.

The next week we returned the favor and joined forces with Jack's group at the Conservative Synagogue of Riverdale. In those days many of the Seminary's

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<sup>1</sup> Max Wohlberg. *Chemdat Shabbat* (New York: Cantors Assembly, 1971).

intelligentsia davened there, including the late Rabbi Gershon Cohen and his successor, Ismar Schorsch, currently in his twenty-sixth year as Chancellor. I can honestly say that they were thrilled at the result of our efforts.

Writing in the published service's Preface, Sam Rosenbaum, then Executive Vice President of the Cantors Assembly, explained the premise behind *Chemdat Shabbat*.

One of the things which congregations today seem to want most is a wider share of participation in the service. Unfortunately, many American Jews cannot participate in the most meaningful way, in the way in which Jews for centuries participated, by davening. However, the need is there and it is legitimate. It is up to hazzanim and rabbis to devise a service which is at once true to Tradition, but which, at the same time, will permit even partially illiterate Jews wider participation.

*Chemdat Shabbat* is a unique answer to this need. It is a service conceived, from beginning to end, as an antiphonal, cooperative venture between hazzan and congregation. It is more than a collection of tuneful strains. It is a unified, through-composed work of hazzanic artistry which permits both hazzan and congregation an opportunity to join in the worship of the Almighty at the highest level possible. Like all good things it will not be acquired easily. Congregations will need to undertake to study the parts which the composer has assigned to them, and the hazzan will require the discipline of chanting his sections just as the composer has written them in order that the maximum effect be achieved.

My only specific request of Max was that he compose a new, contemporary setting of M'chalkeil Chayim. His previous version<sup>2</sup> was, and is, one of the most widely sung congregational melodies ever written. Yet, he always considered it a concession to popular taste, intended for children. Max obliged willingly, creating an American-sounding folk tune in the spirit of Simon and Garfunkel.<sup>3</sup>

**Example 1A** gives the entire setting of M'chalkeil Chayim, and **Example 1B** isolates its leading motive. **Example 1C** shows the opening motive of Simon and Garfunkel's hit song "Scarborough Fair" of a few years earlier. **Example**

<sup>2</sup> Max Wohlberg. "M'chalkeil Hayim," *Shirei Zimroh* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1947), number 50A.

<sup>3</sup> "Scarborough Fair." Lyrics from an old English riddle song (*The Fireside Book of Folk Songs*, edited by Margaret Bradford Boni, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1947, page 26); music by Paul Simon & Art Garfunkel for the film *The Graduate*, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> *Magein Avot* opening, after Abraham Zvi Idelsohn. *Tol'dot HaN'ginah Ha'Ivrit* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1924), pages 14-17.

**Unhurriedly**

M' chal- keil\_ cha- yim\_ b' - che - sed, m' cha- yei\_ mei-tim b' - ra-cha-  
 mim ra- bin\_ so meich nof- lim\_ v' ro- fei\_ cho- lim\_ u-ma- tir a sur -  
 rim, um-ka yeim e- mu - na - to li shei nei\_ a - far.\_  
 Mi\_ cha mo - cha ba- al g' vu rot\_ u - mi\_ do - me lach\_  
 me-lech mei-mit um-cha - ye\_ u-mats- mi-ach y' - shu - a.

*Example 1A.*

M' chal- keil. cha- yim b' - che - sed,

*Example 1B.*

She was once a true love of mine

*Example 1C.*

Ma-gein A - vot bid-va-ro\_ m' - cha-yei mei-tim b' ma' a- ma- ro.

*Example 1D.*

**1D** cites a typical opening statement of the *Magein Avot* prayer mode, paralleled in Arabic secular song by the combined modes (called *makamat*): *Bayat*; and *Nava*.<sup>4</sup> The similarities among all three are self evident; either of the latter two which might have provided the inspiration for Wohlberg's haunting melody.

Max wrote a lovely anthem for the Prayer for the Government, unique in that the text is normally read in English, not sung in Hebrew. That and the naturalness of its phraseology made it an instant hit with my congregants. It never took more than my cueing them with the invocation—*Uv'chein y'hi ratson milfanecha* (“Therefore, may it be Thy will...”) for them to enter reflexively with *Shet'hei Artseinu...* (**Example 2**).

**Calmly** ( $\text{♩} = 58$ )  
 Congregation

Shet-hei ar-tzei-nu b'-ra-cha l'-chol yosh-vei tei-veil v'-tash-re  
 bei-nei-hem rei-ut v'chei-rut v'-ka-yeim bim-hei-ra cha-zon n'-vi-  
 e-cha, lo yi-sa goy el goy che-rev, v'-lo yil-m' du od mil-cha  
 ma v'-ne-e-mar: Ki chu-lam yeid-u o-  
 ti l' mik-ta-nam v'-ad g'-do-lam. A mein.

Example 2.

Leading motifs are recycled from beginning to end in *Chemdat Shabbat*, creating a comfort zone for congregants every time another connection between music and text clicks into place.

**Larghetto** ( $\text{♩} = 58$ )  
 Cantor

Ki mi-tzi-yon tei-tsei to-rah  
 U-v'-vin yan e-rets Yis-ra-eil

Example 3A. *Ki Mitziyon* (page 8 in the music) and *Uv'Vinyan Eretz Yisrael* (page 15 in the music).

**Lento** ♩ = 60  
Congregation

Bei a - na ra - cheits v' lish - mei ka - di - sha ya - ki - ra a -  
na a - mar tush - b' - chon.

Congregation

Heim un - shei - hem uv - nei - hem u - v' - no - tei - hem v' -  
chol a - sher la - hem.

*Example 3B. Bei Ana Racheits (page 9) and Heim Un'sheihem (page 14).*

**Briskly** ♩ = 92  
Congregation

Ha - vu l'A - do - nai b' - nei ei - lim ha - vu l'A - do - nai ka - vod va - oz, ha -  
vu l'A - do nai k' - vod sh' mo, hish - ta - cha - vu l'A - do nai b' had - rat ko - desh.

**Vivace**  
Congregation

A - don o - lam a - sher ma - lach b' - te - rem kol y' - tsir niv - ra  
l' eit na' a sa v' chef - tso - kol a - zai me - lech sh' - mo - nik - ra.

*Example 3C. Havu L'Adonai (page 24) and Adon Olam (page 47).*

The *Rosh Chodesh Bentshn* epitomizes Wohlberg's use of nusach as the raw material for hazzanic chant and congregational refrains.

**Lento** ♩ = 60

Cantor

Y' - hi\_\_ ra - tson mil - fa - ne - cha A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu vei - lo - hei a - vo -

Congregation

tei - nu. Shet - cha - deish a - lei - nu et ha - cho - desh ha - ze l' - to - va\_\_ v' -

Cantor

liv - ra - cha... Shet - cha - desh... a - lei - nu et ha - cho - desh ha - ze

**Example 4A.** The cantor's opening statement (*Y'hi ratson milfanecha...*) is echoed in the congregation's response (*shet'chadeish aleinu...*).

**a tempo**

Congregation

Cha - yim shel sha - lom, cha - yim shel to - va, cha - yim shel b' ra - cha, cha - yim shel par - na

Cantor

sa... cha - yim (cha yim) shel chi - luts a - tsa -

**Example 4B:** The development section's *chayim shel shalom...* sung by congregation, expands to include a descant above, by the cantor, at the coda—

**a tempo**

Cantor

Congregation

cha - yim she - yi - mal - u mish - a -

Cha - yim she - yi - mal - u mish - a - lot li -

lot li - bei - nu l' - to - va a mein se - la.

bei - nu l' - to - va a - mein se - la.







**Example 4C.** —where cantor and congregation each reprise the same melodic ideas in *chayim sheyimal'u...*, but interpret them differently.

For good measure, Max wrote an additional melody for Ein Keiloheinu that alternates between Hebrew and English; here it is titled “There is None like Our God.” In my opinion more of such carol-like settings are needed. Not everyone agrees with me, to be sure. A congregant who had attended all the post-Kiddush rehearsals faithfully for four months balked when we started to practice this little gem. Mind you, it’s only an alternate approach that I taught after we had covered the Hebrew version on the previous page (43 in the music). I’m not certain if it was two new melodies in a row that proved the last straw or whether it was use of the vernacular for a beloved hymn that upset him. But I’ll never forget the indignation in his voice as he closed the score and announced just before stalking out, “I will not sing in any service where you’ve changed the Ein Keiloheinu!” I trust that any of you who happen to read through Max’s charming call and response—so reminiscent of tunes for the Haggadah “Riddle Song” *Echad Mi Yode’ia*—thirty-five years later, will judge it more kindly (**Example 5**).

Cantor	Congregation
	
There is none like our God: Who is _____ our God:	Ein___ kei - lo - hei - nu; Mi___ chei - lo - hei - ni;
Cantor	Congregation
	
There is none like our Lord: Who is _____ our Lord"	Ein___ ka - do - nei - nu; Mi___ cha - do - nei - nu;
Cantor	Congregation
	
There is none like our King: Who is _____ our King:	Ein___ k' - mal - kei - nu; Mi___ ch' - mal - kei - nu;
Cantor	Congregation
	
There is none like our sav - ior: Who is _____ our sav - our:	Ein___ k' - mo - shi - ei - nu. Mi___ ch' - mo - shi - ei - nu.
Cantor	Congregation
	
We'll give thanks un - to our God; Bless - ed be _____ our God; Thou___ art___ our God;	No-de___ lei - lo hei - nu; Ba-ruch___ e - lo - hei - nu; A-ta hu e - lo - hei - nu;

*Example 5. — Ein Keiloheinu as bi-lingual call and response.*



Cantor	Congregation
	
We'll give thanks un - to our Lord;	No-de__ la - do - nei - nu;
Bless - ed be__ our__ Lord;	Ba-ruch__ a - do - nei - nu;
Thou__ art__ our__ Lord;	A-ta hu a - do - nei - nu;
Cantor	Congregation
	
We'll give thanks un - to our King;	No-de__ l' - mal - kei - nu;
Bless - ed be__ our__ King;	Ba-ruch__ mal - kei - nu;
Thou__ art__ our__ King;	A-ta hu mal - kei - nu;
Cantor	Congregation
	
We'll give thanks un - to our Sav - ior;	No-de l' - mo - shi - ei - nu;
Bless - ed be__ our__ Sav - ior;	Ba-ruch__ mo - shi - ei - nu.
Thou__ art__ our__ Sav - ior;	A-ta - hu mo - shi - ei - nu.

*Example 5. concluded*

The following forward-looking hazzanim and congregations co-sponsored the commissioning of *Chemdat Shabbat* along with me and my congregation, Beth Sholom of Long Beach, NY:

- Isaac Goodfriend of Ahavath Achim, Atlanta, Georgia;
- David Silverman of B'nai Emunah, Tulsa, Oklahoma;
- Ivan Perlman of Temple Emanu-El, Providence, Rhode Island;
- Isaac Wall of Har Zion Temple, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and
- Abraham Lubin of Rodfei Zedek, Chicago, Illinois.

*Sol Mendelson, who sang as a young choir boy with Berele Chagy, Moishe Oysher, Leibele Waldman and Leib Glantz, went on to receive nine Solomon Schechter awards for visionary programming as a cantor in his own right for forty-five years. Active in the Cantors Assembly even longer, he has served it in virtually every capacity, including president from 1987-1989. The many new works he has commissioned have greatly influenced the way we pray in Conservative synagogues.*

## Music on the Balanced Bimah – How a Composer Sees It

By *Michael Issacson*

I write on this topic not in any way to suggest that I am an adversary of “popular” music, nor that my own synagogue music isn’t enjoying popular performances of its own, and especially not as an ideologist for any one exclusive stylistic musical menu for Jewish worship, but simply as one composer who, having contributed both easy songs and more considered synagogue compositions to the repertoire, represents four types of musicians whose work and message needs to be heard.

- A. First, I speak on behalf of those who believe in a philosophy of balance in worship music; a balance of style, content, and diversity for all congregants.
- B. Second, I stand for a cadre of distinguished composers who have, in the past, created a notable body of synagogue music that is lamentably being overlooked in our worship today; works for trained cantors and choirs that is accompanied by instruments other than the guitar and vocal forces other than unison singing.
- C. Third, I represent those who are presently composing choral settings and hazzanut.
- D. Lastly, I’m here for the generation of younger, highly talented composers who have all but given up composing for a genre, which, at the present, they perceive to be frivolous and unreceptive to their craft as seriously trained musicians.

In fact, for the past two years I’ve been contributing a column on today’s precise topic to a periodical called *The American Rabbi*. I address and discuss Jewish musical ideas for Rabbis who hold so much influence in shaping our worship music. My column is called “The Balanced Bimah.” Simply put, the column advocates balance as the key to how we best receive and use information and, in this symposium’s context, how we can best employ and appreciate both the literary and the musical aspects of an optimally effective Jewish worship experience.

Consider this: Our minds have both a cognitive function (the left side of the brain if you will) and an emotive function (the right side), when both sides are processing stimuli in balance we understand and feel on an infinitely higher level than if one side was dominant over the other. For example when listening to a piece of music what we cognitively know about its text, history, instrumentation, and architecture acts to enrich its sonic allure and heighten its overall emotional impact upon us.

An elevated synagogue bimah and its pulpit leaders may be similarly understood as the right and left sides of our Jewish worship consciousness. The left side of the bimah, the rabbi, guides our cognitive understanding through words, while the right side of the bimah, the cantor, stimulates our emotions through music. When they are in confluent balance sharing the bimah equally, we are the fortunate beneficiaries of an extraordinary worship experience. This gets even more delicate when you consider that each rabbi has a left-sided Maimonadean rationality and a right-sided Shneur Zalman folksiness and each cantor has a left-sided nus-chaot aspect along with a right-sided nigin propensity. Each one and all four have to be in balance as well.

However, if there's too much music and not enough rabbinic readings and commentary on the bimah, it is as unbalanced as if there is no music at all. If all we hear is one kind of music like guitar strumming and unison singing, the service is as unbalanced as if even the finest hazzan and choir precluded any congregational singing. All styles of well-crafted synagogue music are welcome and necessary on a balanced bimah; the key word, however, must always be balance.

Equally disproportionate is a service that presents musical or literary ideas that are too accessible or "popular". Judaism is a great religion that has sustained us because it has given us great spiritual ideas that were not always immediately accessible; as a result our people were challenged to grow, think, feel and act na-aseh v'nishma; to do and to listen" and we were all elevated in the process.

Today it seems that any thoughtful, contemplative silence during the service for any musical or literary concept that needs more than a nanosecond to fully comprehend is suspect and labeled as "heady or too intellectual"; how the mighty ideas have fallen. Our worship services need to regain a sense of musical balance and heightened textual and poetic interest for all members of our congregations; for all worshippers of every age in every stage of their lives.

However, the solution is not a menu of divisional boutique services exclusively for specialized factions like singles, seniors, youth, women, or gay congregants. A devotional service should be about worshipping one God rather than separating different worshippers. This fractionalization policy affirms that our differences are greater than our commonalities.

We must return to the durable idea of Am Echad Lev Achad—one people, one congregation. The contemporary worship service, while engagingly eclectic, must be inclusive for all. When we discard this notion, we unmind-

fully forget history, we trivialize the present and we diminish hope for an elevated spiritual future as one, unified people. I suspect that the Sephardic community over many years, in its adherence to one synagogue for all, has learned this lesson far better than the Ashkenazim.

As in so many other areas of our lives today, ignorance is our common enemy and education is always our strongest ally. But it goes further than that. Not only must ignorance be identified but effective education must also be focused and lavished upon those who influence and design our Jewish communal tastes.

After more than thirty-five years of presenting music and teaching at cantorial conventions, I now realize that I was literally preaching to the choir. Cantors knew something about their musical heritage and were not going about re-designing the synagogue service in 2000 by discarding a legacy of over 150 years of sacred music. Cantors weren't the pulpit leaders needing our guidance and instruction. Their bimah partners, the younger rabbis, our new leaders, are the clergy who more appropriately deserve and require effective music education and cultural direction. Rabbis, while well trained in talking, urgently need instruction and first hand experiences in music listening to learn about the wealth of worthy sacred music that presently exists before they go about running a wholesale cultural clearance sale.

I don't think our rabbis set out to be cultural ax men or ax women. If you ask any rabbi he or she will profess a profound love of Jewish music; and I believe them. It is not their n'shamah that is in need of repair; it is their musical ignorance, their lack of music historical perspective, and dearth of personal listening experience. When it comes to understanding our y'rushah, our legacy of Jewish music, most rabbis are like those limited souls, who when invited to an elaborate smorgasbord, eschew the gourmet delicacies laid out before them because they've only munched on hot dogs and s'mores over a campfire.

Is it any surprise? Rabbis have been given too little musical education as children; they probably don't play an instrument other than the guitar (if one at all), and are given no serious, substantive, cumulative, Jewish music education at Hebrew Union College or at the Jewish Theological Seminary. They've probably have never sung in a legitimate choir, they rarely attend classical music concerts, and most of their first-hand Jewish musical orientation and information comes from the few weeks during each summer when they attend Ramah or NFTY camps. Is it any wonder that rabbis believe that camp songs make up the sum total of the Jewish musical universe?

Yet, these are the leaders, not the cantors and music directors, whom we now entrust with our present and future musical content, values and decisions. Clearly rabbis should not be singled out as the only cultural culprits; they are most ably encouraged and abetted by the budget watchers on our temple boards ... but for quite another reason than esthetic preference.

A cantor, choir and organist are simply more expensive to financially sustain than a song leader with a guitar. It is much cheaper to buy into a “cross-over”, homogenized, folksy sound than a more comprehensive Jewish sacred music program. Today it seems serious hazzanut, trained choirs and instrumental music are relegated mainly to the real moneymaker services ...the High Holidays. Is profit on expenditure to be the primary criterion for our Jewish cultural goals now and in the future?

Feeling the pressure of rising costs and dwindling congregations, board members seek a band-aid remedy by touting the new, in vogue, “Jewishness” of continuous congregational singing. They encourage their rabbis: “Let’s get Friday Night Live or the BJ service and they’ll surely cure our congregational problems.”

While these events are well attended by mostly young singles as inexpensive pick up dates and Friday Evening pre-pub hopping warm-ups, I challenge anyone here to report that temple membership or financial support of any substance has dramatically increased by those singles (not their bill-paying parents) attending these cocktail parties disguised as services. As a matter of fact, these events, perceived as “freebies” by the young singles are, ironically, more expensive for their struggling parents’ generation to regularly produce than elevated Shabbat musical services. Furthermore, I can guarantee you that the components of these “cross-over” musical “raves”, predicated on an au courant timeliness, will become outdated even faster than what they have prematurely replaced.

You might think “Michael Isaacson’s got it all wrong! In the synagogue of 2005 we don’t want to stay quiet and passively listen to a five-minute vocal performance by some Hazzan or choir - we want to participate!”

You know, it’s funny but I never hear rabbis saying: “Instead of the congregation sitting down, becoming quiet and thoughtfully listening to me deliver a forty-five minute sermon, Let’s save some time and money and get a lay leader up on the bimah and the entire congregation can all participate in an enthusiastic free for all about what they think the parsha is about!” I don’t see rabbis abdicating their professional homiletic and pedagogical mission;

but I do observe them asking the cantors to abdicate their musical calling in favor of a lesser one.

Again, why should we be surprised? Rabbis and temple boards are People of the Book, not People of the Score. When it comes to words, rabbis understand the spiritual importance of periodic congregational silence and thoughtful listening in contrast to continual congregational speaking. Rabbis comprehend that our services must include active listening, reflection, and learning; what our rabbis in this generation particularly have yet to be effectively taught and fully appreciate is the value of a congregation's periodic silent attention to sacred musical enrichment as well.

So, how do we regain a balance between the spoken word and a thoughtful, mature appreciation of the best sacred musical settings of our liturgy?

I would suggest that it is not the existing musical settings that are musty and need replacing so much as it is the sub-standard performances that they receive by inadequately trained singers and soloists with too little rehearsal time. When you hear magnificent performances of our best compositions, the music clearly shines through. From time to time, we, unfortunately, hear a less than dynamic rabbinic sermon diminish the brilliance of a weekly Torah portion, but we don't throw out the Torah. In more capable hands, or with greater preparation time, the same truth will shine with inspired, insightful light.

It is the same with hazzanut and choral synagogue music; we must learn to distinguish the skill of the musical messenger from the intrinsic value of the musical message.

So, the first step in musically balancing the bimah is enlightening rabbis, temple boards and congregations to the great legacy of our existing Jewish music through the very best performances of it both live and on recordings. Rabbis and congregations need to actively listen, not just mindlessly hear, they need to learn the midrash of this music before they discount, dismiss, and discard it.

Balance, balance, balance shalt thou pursue; both in life and in worship. When we achieve a balanced bimah we also affirm God's gift of musical awareness. Our congregations are diverse, polyglot assemblies that need diverse tastes satisfied by the best elevation of both the spoken word and synagogue music of all styles and all periods. Simplistic, juvenile liturgy and adolescent camp music demeans our religious maturity as a people.

But before we can offer the widest menu, we must educate our leaders about the profound jewels that lie before them. Do we throw out rabbinic Midrash

because it's more than a few years old? Why are we doing this to our musical Midrash, our synagogue music? We need to regain and rededicate the temple for all Jews of every age at every stage in their lives.

Balanced, intelligent, creative, eclecticism is the most effective way to attract the widest cross section of our community back into one, unified, service. Undoubtedly, the service has to sparkle. Our rabbis have to be better and more knowledgeable and our cantors, singers and instrumentalists must be first-rate as well. There has never been a viable alternative to quality control in business, art, or in effective worship. But let us always remember that:

Quick fixes fall into disrepair just as quickly.

When we achieve a balance in content by educating our leaders, when we balance and treasure the classic along with encouraging the innovative, and when we balance the more lofty, less immediate idea with the "fast-food" accessible bon bon; we will ultimately realize the success of a truly balanced bimah.

*Dr. Michael Isaacson, a prolific composer, conductor and producer, is founding Music Director of the Israel Pops Orchestra and the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music. His two-volume **Michael Isaacson Songbook** is published by Transcontinental, and he recently completed thirty-six Seder songs for a new sight and sound Haggadah. This article is adapted from his talk at a panel discussion: **Pushing the Limits: Tensions between Text and Music in the American Synagogue** (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, November 10, 2003).*

## The Tune's the Thing – Lessons Learned in a Half-Century as Cantor/Composer

*by Charles Davidson*

I shall try to put into a few words what I feel to be the difference (if any) in the genre of congregational tunes which are current now and those used in past years.

The oft-heard aphorism, “familiarity breeds contempt,” did not apply to congregational melodies except, perhaps, in extreme circumstances. Synagogue goers have always enjoyed singing along with their cantor, and the more familiar the melody the easier it was to join in. In many a congregation the same tunes were applied to the same texts almost constantly, and became part of that synagogue's tradition. These tunes were usually composed by hazzanim or choirmasters and often contained kernels of nusach hat'fillah. These older melodies tended to have a folksy, European musical structure that resonated within the traditional worshiper as an authentic extension of the davening found in many congregations at that time.

Tunes were shared and spread from congregation to congregation through the informed efforts of the professional congregational musician. Good melodies benefited by the transfer, being tested in the exchange, as it were, and they survived. Their continued popularity was usually merited. Inappropriate tunes were soon recognized as such and were discontinued, to be replaced by others. The arbiter of these arrangements was generally the hazzan.

The davening, encompassing congregational murmurai and cantorial recitative, prepared us for the congregational tune and made that tune a part of the whole. Audible congregational sounds in response to the hazzan's call have mostly disappeared from the synagogue. In some synagogues today an effort is being made toward the congregations' reinstatement as party to the process, as is an effort to re-educate hazzanim toward a selective, more traditional style of recitative-chant. The generally accepted reason for the congregation's gradual dis-involvement from American-Jewish worship was the lack of an hebraically capable laity that could participate in a traditional prayer style.

This factor, in conjunction with a surge of Jewish summer-camp musical creativity, gave rise to a tendency to fill the prayer space with tunes as much as possible, eventually, to the point of services being completely sung to melodies. The ascendancy of the congregational-melody service contrasted strongly with the traditional manner of Jewish prayer, which did include the



use of melodies or congregational tunes, but not to the exclusion of the other two elements; that is, murmurai and cantorial recitative.

The service was historically led by the hazzan, who would include in his cantorial recitative or ongoing chant a congregational refrain, or periodically insert into the davening a tune for the congregation to sing. This had seemed to satisfy generations of worshipers: interpretive chanting by a professional, coupled with audible congregational prayer and good melodies.

What the current sea-change in American synagogues has presented, however, is a wonderful opportunity for younger and older synagogue composers, hazzanim and other musicians, to create meaningful melodies that would be reflective of our times and contemporary musical mores.

And create they have. From the 1960s on, the Jewish musical world has been flooded with camp songs, chasidic and pseudo-chasidic melodies, Israeli song-festival hits, jazz tunes, rock and folk tunes, reborn Christian sound-alikes, Amer-Pop and others, all attempting to fill a void that some synagogue leaders perceived of as a lack of active congregational participation. Of course, this void could be better understood as a lack of the sound of active Hebrew davening.

Many of the creations were very good, many were not. Many possessed a unique musical sound, many did not. The tunes which seemed to have some staying power were those widely known through recordings or public concerts and subsequently evoked an instant response, gratifying to those eager to hear an audible or enthusiastic response from the congregation.

Perhaps some of that eagerness had been fed by a subtle form of spiritual envy. While it is evidentially clear that Jewish worship takes the form of private and communal Hebrew prayer through an established and ritualistic liturgy, the energetic vocal and bodily involvement of our Christian Evangelical and African-American neighbors, as observed on television, might cause some to think of ways to similarly involve Jewish worshippers. And, indeed, that trend has recently been observed as well.

In yet another category are the banal tunes, German marches, Israeli love songs, outdated and trite imports, and others, first heard in some progressive synagogues and now known by everyone. Some feel an obligation to use them because of their popularity, no matter their provenance.

While the European synagogues in general may have had their own individual and respected musical traditions, the American trend seems to be moving quickly toward a universal manner of singing the same tunes to the same texts, be they appropriate or not.

I don't consider the desire for change to be a problem. We do live in different times that call for different approaches in all music as well as for music used in the synagogue. Given that thought, I do find somewhat curious the obviously strong desire in America to use supposedly new congregational tunes that are written in the old European style. The shtetl type tune has become very popular particularly among our young people. Perhaps this preference for such melodies goes hand-in-hand with the current trend towards more observance and toward the religious right and the ever-growing search for spirituality. One hopes that there exist composers with synagogue backgrounds who can write not only tunes, but complete synagogue services that reflect our times. Where are the new composers, in addition to the few already recognized, with synagogue backgrounds, who can write music which will speak to and be accepted by a modern generation?

Regarding my own experience in trying to write tuneful music, my intent has been to attract the ear of the listener with some melodious addition that is somehow related to tradition and to create it with musical craft; ensuring that it is appropriate to the text and adds to the kavvanah of the service, without disrupting the mood. An added delight always, of course, is finding new ways to have fun creating new forms with our cherished nusach hat'fillah. (Example 1).<sup>1</sup>

**Broad style, exalted**

Cantor *mf*

Mo - she u - v' nei Yis - ra - eil l' - cha a - nu shir - rah b'  
 sim' - chah - rab - bah v' - a - m' - ru chu - lam

Example 1. Davidson's creative use of nusach and trop in *Mi Chamocha* for Friday night.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Davidson. "Mi Chamochah," *Kol Ya'akov* — A Sabbath Evening service for Three-Part Congregational Choir (Elkins Park, PA: Ashbourne Publications, 1978).

**Lightly, bounce** (♩=112)  
Congregational Choir

S  
A

Mi cha - mo - cha ba - ei - lim A - do - nai - - - - - Mi ka - mo - cha ne - dar - ba

(T)  
B

Mi cha - mo - cha Mi cha - mo - cha, Mi ka - mo - cha Mi ka

S  
A

No - ra t' - hi - lot - - - - -  
ko - desh No - ra t' - hi - lot o - se fe - le.

(T)  
B

mo - cha, No - ra t' - hi - lot - - - - - o - se fe - le.

*Example 1 (concluded). Davidson's creative use of nusach and trop in Mi Chamocha for Friday night.*

In spite of the obstacles and problems discussed in this article, I believe that we should have faith in the creative process of our people and look forward to a renewal of Jewish musical energy to the betterment of our art.

*Charles Davidson is one of America's most respected cantors and the Nathan Cummings Professor of Liturgy and Hazzanut at the Jewish Theological Seminary's H. L. Miller Cantorial School. His compositions—now featured on a Milken Archive CD (Naxos label)—effortlessly traverse musical styles ranging from Baroque to Yiddish folk to jazz.*

## What's Wrong With my Adon Olam?

### — A Hazzan/Educator's Checklist

by Jeffrey S. Myers

They sang through the *Musaf Kedushah* with great gusto. They were even tapping their toes during *Ein Keiloheinu*. So how come their response to *Adon Olam* was lukewarm at best? We'd sung the melody countless times, yet the vast majority were talking and moving about. Does this scenario sound familiar to you, even if you experience involved a different prayer?

As both Hazzan and Educational Director, I have an opportunity to implement the congregation's (and my) musical taste in prayer melodies from the earliest levels. I am also able to supervise this progression at different stages along the path, fostering change when necessary. It is through this unique role that I am able to note the evolution in musical preferences of the student and adult populations in my congregation, and share my reflections with you, the reader. I'd like to explore two major areas: variables to consider in congregational singing; and the ability to observe yourself.

It is important that you know the history of your congregation's melodies, in order to create a foundation from whence to begin. That entails identifying the intelligentsia who are self-appointed guardians of the *mesorat hamakom*. With your permission, I digress for a moment to illustrate the danger of relying solely on this source. Upon assuming a previous congregational post I was informed that I had been announced as the pre-Selichot program. That news gave me even more reason to learn the congregation's High Holy Day melodies.

I reached out, through the Ritual Committee, to the regulars. We sat down one evening with machzorim, a tape recorder and a music pad. I had previously created a list of tefillot that might normally be sung as congregational melodies. We went through the list, and I carefully notated the tunes they shared with me. After reviewing the cassette to confirm accuracy, I neatly wrote out these treasures (pre-Sibelius/Finale) and photocopied them for distribution at the pre-Selichot program. As I moved down the list of selections, I discovered, much to my dismay, that few people were singing along. At one point when I asked: "How come no one's singing?," people called out: "That's not how we sing it here."

As I responded by telling them about the meeting I'd had with the Ritual Committee, I scanned the room and noticed that none of those "regulars"

were present. I then asked the people in attendance to teach me how to sing their melodies, and the evening actually ended quite successfully.

You need to cultivate individuals who are not only conversant with the congregation's melodic heritage, but who are musical enough to reproduce it for you. Then, when you introduce a new V'shamru, chances are that no one will tell you: "The last cantor tried that melody too".

In addition, there are several other considerations:

1. The general Hebrew reading ability of the worshippers (or do 75% of them require transliterated texts?).
2. The singing ability of the worshippers.
3. What types of congregants are present at what point in the service (i.e., do the daveners come for P'sukei D'zimra while the remainder arrive for the Torah service)?
4. Is the Rabbi supportive and encouraging?

Before introducing a new melody, consider the following questions;

1. If it's in place of an existent melody, why are you replacing the old one?
2. Are you open to alternating the new with the old?
3. Through which group or in what setting will you introduce it?
  - a. Via the Religious School.
  - b. By way of your B'nai/B'not Mitzvah students.
  - c. At a pre-service rehearsal.
  - d. During the service.
4. How frequently will you repeat it during its introduction?
5. What are the criteria that demonstrate whether it has been learned?
6. What feedback will you elicit to ascertain approval and support?
7. Will you hand out sheet music?

Successful introduction of a new melody, as well as a careful evaluation of current congregational chant, requires the ability to dispassionately and objectively observe the congregation and your interaction with them. We must make use of our senses to research and document how things work at present. While it requires a slightly different approach if you face the Aron HaKodesh when you daven, you will nevertheless need to develop the following skills:

1. The ability to observe (where possible).
2. The ability to hear.
3. The ability to motivate through body language.
4. The ability to make careful mental notes.

### The Ability to Observe

Suppose that you are carefully evaluating the effectiveness of current congregational melodies. As you sing each one, watch your worshipers to determine the following:

1. For those who are singing, how would you rate each person — from one to ten — with ten representing lusty, joyous singing, down to disinterested, robotic repetition.
2. For those who aren't singing, take note of identifiable reasons why not, and/or the behaviors that they are showing:
  - a. Involved in conversation.
  - b. Clueless.
  - c. Secretly reading something else.
  - d. In deep study or meditation.
  - e. Constantly checking wristwatch.

### The Ability to Hear

1. Are there specific melodies that engender a better response? If yes, which ones? Why do you think this is the case?
2. Are there specific melodies where few participate? If yes, which ones? Why do you think this is the case?

### The Ability to Motivate through Body Language

How we lead and how others respond is mostly based on visual cues. Some of these criteria that refer specifically to you as leader are interchangeable with the

Criteria used in evaluating congregational response. For our purposes, the presence or absence of instrumental accompaniment is not a relevant factor.

1. When you lead a congregational melody, what physical actions do you perform, e.g.:
  - a. Move your hands and/or conduct.

- b. Sway your body.
  - c. Move your head.
  - d. Smile.
  - e. Clap hands.
  - f. Pound the podium.
  - g. Make eye contact.
2. If you observe that you do none of the above, have you determined that merely leading the congregation in song is sufficient to elicit their participation?
  3. Whichever of the above questions you answered yes to, why did you answer that way, i.e., if you use physical actions, why is this so? If you do not, why is this so?

Let us now observe the body language of the congregants.

1. What do you notice when you lead a congregational melody? To answer this, observe the body language of the entire congregation, those singing as well as those not singing.
2. Compare your initial observations with those made during a second, third and fourth melody. Are there any differences? Whichever answer you arrive at, give consideration to why this may be so.
3. Does each congregant react consistently, or are there variations? What can you learn from your answers?

### The Ability to Make Careful Mental Notes

Through the ongoing process of carefully observing your congregation you should come to realize the following:

1. Congregants are consistent in their singing behaviors. They can be divided into three categories:
  - a. Those who always sing (may we all be blessed with this group in abundance!).
  - b. Those that never, or at best rarely, sing.
  - c. Those who occasionally sing but are frequently distracted or uninterested.
2. Certain melodies engender the most participation, and conversely...
3. Certain melodies engender the least participation.
4. There is a hierarchy in terms of:
  - a. Your favorite melodies versus the congregation's favorites. These two lists may be less similar than you expect.

- b. The degree of difficulty in the Hebrew.
- 5. The more body language you utilize, the greater the participation.
- 6. Congregants are consistent in their response to change:
  - a. There are the Masorettes, opposed to any change, who view their ancient melodies as “Misinaï tunes” to be used respectfully and never discarded.
  - b. There are those comfortable enough with change, who look forward to an uplifting, invigorating style.
  - c. There are those who don’t mind change, yet need a smattering of the old and familiar as anchors to be comfortable in services.
- 7. These observations hold fast and true for all services.

Having carefully researched the status of congregational melodies and organized the data, you are now in a better position to make informed choices. If and when you choose to introduce/change a melody, the congregation’s history of their response to this sort of change will be helpful in your planning. There is ample research that has shown that people and institutions adapt slowly to change. Within the past decade, a new profession has been borne – Change Facilitators.

Armed with answers to the questions that I have raised, you can now plot a careful course, mindful of the differing needs of your congregants. Perhaps one of the more difficult questions not yet dealt with is: How do I meld my tastes with those of my congregants? If you determine that your musical tastes are similar, then your path is clearer. If they aren’t, then it is more difficult, but not impossible, to come to a compromise. To effect any change without prior research can doom any anticipated success. A well-planned curriculum of change will be rewarding for both the congregation and you.

*Jeffrey Myers just celebrated his Bar Mitzvah year as Hazzan/Educational Director of Congregation Beth-El in Massapequa, New York. He is Membership Chair of the CA, and currently sits on the United Synagogue’s National Education Commission and the Advisory Board of The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, a joint initiative of JTS and HUC-JIR funded by UJA-Federation.*



# *Friday Night Alive – Without Instruments!*

## Drawn from Popular, Chasidic and Classic Jewish Musical Styles

By Mark Biddelman

### BACKGROUND

As a child growing up in Springfield, New Jersey, I loved to go with my parents to Friday night services which were held at the Presbyterian Parish House. I grew up in a very small Conservative congregation, of which my father was a founder. We had a rabbi, a lay cantor and lots of congregational singing. I didn't really understand much about what was going on but I loved to sing along as the prayers were chanted.

When I graduated as a cantor from HUC in 1967, the popularity of folk music was waning and Beatlemania had reached its prime. Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones were all the rage in an era of folk-rock, acid rock and every rock in between. I assumed my first pulpit that same year in a sleepy North Jersey bedroom community that contained a Jewish core of mostly European background. I chanted with nusach, read Torah with trop and occasionally wowed the old timers with compositions by the Golden Age masters. Attendance was sparse even with a Bar Mitzvah, and I rarely saw a youngster outside of Junior Congregation.

I felt the need for encouraging younger couples and their kids, and I asked my rabbi if I could present a service featuring music that they would relate to. He favored the idea, and especially my stated intent to quote musical motifs familiar to the generation I was writing for. As my springboard I would use the music I had grown up with.

The format consisted of congregational melodies separated by English readings that I composed myself. I printed a special prayer book containing all the Hebrew and English texts and the service was presented without interruptions for page announcements, etc. I didn't know it at the time, but I was laying a foundation upon which others would later build: Congregation B'nai Jeshurun's "Experience" (instituted by its rabbi, Marshall Meyer, z"l, ca. 1987), and composer Craig Taubman's *Friday Night Live* (commissioned by Sinai temple in Westwood, CA, 1999). The reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Almost 700 people came to the premier service, which we had to hold in the social hall. The congregants got hooked on the contemporary melodies and sang along with exuberance.

After that wonderful experience I started incorporating the melodies in regular worship, and during the next thirty-five years congregational participation on Friday nights reached a level of ninety percent. Presentations that I witnessed from time to time at Cantors Assembly conventions convinced me that my approach was gradually gaining adherents among my colleagues in the Conservative movement. By now it has become the thing to do.

## RATIONALE

The services we attend in most American synagogues today were created to answer the needs of previous generations. They reflect the societal status of the Jewish community where they were created as well as the popular musical styles of the day. The Oranienburgerstrasse Temple in Berlin was a magnificent cathedral-style building seating 3,000 people. Cantor, choir, and a newly introduced organ led the prayers in dignity and beauty, to music composed by the Chief Choirmaster of the Berlin Jewish community, Louis Lewandowsky. The order of prayer – in that imposing setting — spoke of the newly found wealth and stature of Jewry in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany.

Is that worship style really appropriate for most American Conservative Jews in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What about the stately processions sung by Spanish-Portuguese Jews in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Amsterdam, or the emotional refrains chanted by Eastern European Jews in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Warsaw? The answer is both yes and no. We live in a very unusual time and place. The great grandparents of today's American Jews came from all over the world, bringing with them liturgical traditions developed over hundreds of years. Each of those traditions reflected the life they had led in the lands from which they emigrated. Were their lives hard and full of pain, oppression and suffering, or did they include equal citizenship, with rights and liberties like the rest of the populace? What was the popular and folk music that the Jewish communities of those countries heard all around them? Were the Jews permitted to build their synagogue on a main thoroughfare or was their prayer confined to a small room hidden in a dark alley?

All of these circumstances helped shape a worship style for each Jewish community that was unique, viable and authentic. And each community tradition has a place in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Jewish American worship because we, like the rest of America, are a society of immigrants with varied customs from all over the world. It is this rich variety that distinguishes America — and American Jewry. And just as the liturgy of our worship is continually changing, so is its music constantly evolving to meet our needs today. For the past hundred years American Jews have taken center stage in the evolution of American

popular culture: Arthur Miller, Leonard Bernstein, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Bob Dylan, Steven Spielberg, Neil Simon, Mel Brooks – the list is endless. Today's American Jews are integrating this culture into every area of their lives, including the hours they spend at public prayer.

While American Jews may be relatively secure physically, they (and their non-Jewish neighbors) face other challenges in a society which is immensely wealthy, materialistic and impersonal, a culture addicted to food, drugs and sex, and a populace that commonly mistakes the fantasy of entertainment for the reality of existence. American Jews have embraced American culture, but would still like to preserve their past. They want to celebrate their position in American life, but they also need to feel connected to their community and their God.

## IMPLEMENTATION

As a hazzan, my mission is to help them maintain that balance through an innovative worship style based on models developed by B'nai Jeshurun in New York and Beth Yeshurun in Houston, two of the more forward-looking Conservative congregations in the United States. That type of service, parts of which I outline below along with directions for performing them, integrates popular, chasidic and classic Jewish music styles into worship that is accessible to congregants of all ages, those with and without a knowledge of Hebrew and prayer skills.

The melodies used throughout the service can be introduced via the Hebrew School music program and over the course of many Friday nights leading up to the special service's debut. But its music alone is not what makes *Friday Night Alive – Without Instruments!* stand out. It invites everyone present to participate almost totally. It tries to bring people together. Its goal is to bring a fresh, engaging Shabbat spirit to anyone who might feel disenfranchised, and to give them the opportunity to worship within the family of a community.

It achieves all this by not interrupting the flow of prayer with readings or announcements. At the outset, the rabbi speaks for five minutes and tells of upcoming events. Once the service begins, it runs without interruption, following the traditional text of the liturgy while still allowing time for private meditation and introspection during the singing of wordless nigunim. It manages to hold the interest of everyone including teenagers, with neither rabbi nor cantor on the pulpit, supervising, but praying amidst the congregation.

The atmosphere is user friendly. Every attendee is greeted personally and ushered to a seat by members of the synagogue choir who then sit scattered among the congregation. Texts to be sung are printed in bold type, with

transliteration on the facing page for those unable to read Hebrew. This also allows traditionalist daveners to do so with the unabridged text. For others who are less familiar with synagogue practice, directions on when to stand, bow, etc. appear in the siddur.

To help prepare the congregation for this special experience, I produced and distributed a CD containing all the prayers that would be sung, so that parents together with their children could listen and learn the melodies. Neighbors played the CD in their car pools on the way to public and Hebrew school, and made the prayers a part of their everyday life. When the time came, they were able to participate fully in the service.

## TIME TABLE

### 9-12 Months Prior to event

1. Pick a date
2. Estimate and submit a budget for approval to committee that will be responsible for it
3. Arrange for use of the sanctuary and social hall (rehearsals etc.)
4. Contact person in charge of Oneg Shabbat
5. Choose music for your texts
6. Form a committee to assist you in various stages

### 6 Months Prior to event

1. Arrange your music and buy copies for choirs if available in print, copy others
2. Secure permission from composers to use their music on a CD
3. Produce a CD to be distributed to the entire congregation or at least the Hebrew School. (This could take several months to do)
4. Give a series of classes for the congregation to teach them the music
5. Prepare your choir and/or junior choir to sing the selected texts
6. Prepare a siddur for exclusive use in the service (this could take 4 to 6 weeks)

### 3 Months Prior to event

1. Distribute CD to Hebrew School students (and congregation)
2. Begin teaching music to Hebrew School children
3. Prepare and put up posters in synagogue and other venues
4. Write a Bulletin article explaining the new service

## 1 Month Prior to event

1. Submit publicity to local papers
2. Arrange for announcements to be made at services
3. Rehearse service with children and adult choirs
4. Make arrangements with custodians for proper service set up
  - a. Sound system
  - b. Arrangements of pews
  - c. Set up for lecterns
5. Submit payment vouchers to bookkeeper

## Day before event

1. Set up the sanctuary
2. Check sound system
3. Check with custodial staff all that they will be responsible for
4. Full rehearsal of the service with choirs, etc.

## PROGRAM

The following are examples of music you can use without instruments. Short texts repeated over and over work best, especially for worshipers who can't read Hebrew.

### *Hallelu* (Pakistani melody)

A good opener, very popular melody and easy to sing. Begin slowly and softly, repeat three to four times speeding up slightly at each repetition and increase volume. Slow down and sing softly the last time to bring back to a calming mood.

### *Tov L'hodot* (Chasidic, arrangement by Mark Biddelman)

Nice easy tempo, about 90. Repeat two or three times. The lai lai lai section becomes a mantra; finish with an extra 8 measures of the lai lai lai.

### *Tzaddik Katamar* (Louis Lewandowski)

An elegant setting with a contemporary feel, especially if harmonized with its original "echo" effect by choir members scattered among the congregation.

### *Ahavat Olam* (traditional, adapted by Moshe Nathanson)

I learned this melody about forty years ago from my friend Israel Barzak, and my congregation loves it. The closing blessing is chanted by the hazzan using correct nusach. Tempo is approximately 110, rather lively.

*V'ahavta* (according to trop)

*Siddur Sim Shalom* is printed with the te'amim; this is a great way to show how we have extracted and used Torah texts throughout the siddur.

*Chatsi Kaddish* (Mark Biddelman)

Children and adults enjoy singing this. In this service it's very fast, tempo around 158. Try hand clapping (2 claps) on rests every eight measures.

*Kadsheinu* (Shlomo Carlebach)

Begin slowly (about 66) and quietly, repeat two or three times speeding up and increasing volume and energy at each repetition. Slow down at the end to original tempo and volume.

## MUSIC EXAMPLES

Pakistani

Ha-le - lu ha-le - lu ha-le - lu ha-le - lu ha-le - lu ha-le - lu ha-le - lu

lu ha-le lu kol han' sha - ma t' - ha-lel ya ha-le -

lu ha-le - lu ya kol han' sha - lu ha-le - lu ya

Example 1. *Hallelu*

Chasidic, arr. M. Biddelman

$\text{♩} = 90$

Tov l' - ho - dot la - do - nai ul - za - mer l' - shim - cha el -

bo - ker chas - de - cha ve - e - mu - na - t' - cha ba - lei -

yon l' - ha - gid ba - lot la la la etc.

la

Example 2. *Tov L'Hodot*

Moshe Nathanson

$\text{♩} = 110$

A - ha - vat o - lam a - ha - vat o - lam beit yis - ra - el a - m' cha  
 a - ha - v' - ta To - rah u - mitz vot - chu - kim u - mish - pa tim o -  
 ta - nu li - ma - d' - ta al ken A - do - nai E - lo -

*Example 3. Ahavat Olam*

Mark Biddelman

$\text{♩} = 158$

Yit - ga - dal v' - yit ka - dash sh' - me ra - ba A - men  
 b' - al - ma di - v' - ra chir - u - teh v' - yam lich mal - chu - te b' -  
 cha - ye - chon uv - yo - me - chon uv - cha - ye - d' - chol beit Yis -  
 ra - el ba - a ga - la - u viz man ka - riv v' -

*Example 4. Chatzi Kaddish*

Shlomo Carlebach

Ka - d' - she - nu b' - mitz - vo te cha  
 v' - ten chel - ke - nu b' - to - ra - te cha

*Example 5. Kad'sheinu*

*Mark Biddelman has been the hazzan of Temple Emanuel in Woodcliff Lake, NJ since 1967. An accomplished guitarist and composer, he thanks his colleagues Ira Biegelisen, Sheldon Levin and David Propis for many of the concepts and procedures that appear in this article, and welcomes reader inquiries [tropmark@optonline.net](mailto:tropmark@optonline.net).*

## Chavurat HaZemer — An Informal Congregational Singing Group

by Iris Beth Weiner

I am a firm believer that we must create as many doors of entry into congregational life as possible. Each member finds a place in a congregation according to the activities he or she enjoys — one loves the hazzan, another loves the sermon; some love the courses, others love the sisterhood/brotherhood, school, etc. The greater the number of entry doors, the greater the chance of attracting and retaining active members. A congregational singing group opens a door for participating in congregational life meaningfully and in a unique way.

Many years ago I was the hazzan at Beth Am Congregation in Baltimore when they celebrated the synagogue's *chai* anniversary which coincided with the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of its founder and spiritual leader, Dr. Louis Kaplan. Dr. Kaplan was a legend in Baltimore, small in stature but larger than life in personality and knowledge. This was the third synagogue he had been instrumental in creating, and those who loved him wanted to pay a fitting tribute to the man and the inspiration he was for our community. Among the many tributes being planned, I was asked to create a unique musical experience on Shabbat which would involve as many congregants as possible.

We had a small volunteer choir of a dozen voices at the time. I was thinking about how to expand it when I lit upon the idea of a congregational singing group — a chorus of voices that would fill the room with a loving musical tribute. The only condition for admission would be a love of singing and a desire to pay tribute to Dr. Kaplan. Anyone who wanted to sing, regardless of background or musical ability, would be invited to join. I would teach them the music and give them tapes and texts to study at home. I based the congregational singing group on the idea that its volunteer members were busy people who would not be able to commit to a time-intensive endeavor. I wanted to create a user-friendly framework which would enable anyone who was so inclined, to participate.

I offered four opportunities to learn the songs. Out of the four, I reckoned that everyone could find at least one that fit their schedule. Each participant needed to attend only one learning session of about two hours — I would be at every one to teach the songs and hand out the tapes and texts. In addition, there would be one general rehearsal of the same duration. I selected music



that was fun to sing and easily learned: Issachar Miron's, *Mah Yafeh HaYom* (Example 1)<sup>1</sup>; and Debbie Friedman's *Kaddish DeRabbanan* (Example 2)<sup>2</sup>.

Simply (♩=116)

Example 1. Issachar Miron's *Mah Yafeh Hayom*.

Andante

Example 2. Debbie Friedman's *Kaddish DeRabbanan*.

<sup>1</sup> *Manginot*, Stephen Richards, ed. (New York: Transcontinental Music, 1992), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Debbie Friedman Favorites* (San Diego: Soundswrite Productions, 1995), p. 43.

Eighty congregants of all ages participated – from age seven to eighty-seven. They were an impressive group as they filed onto the bimah after Musaf on Shabbat morning. The sanctuary was completely filled, and the group's enthusiasm and excitement came through in their voices. Each of them held a folder with the words of the songs and a page with the concluding prayers of the liturgy so they could remain on the bimah and help lead the congregational hymns that ended the service. When they reached the repetitive chorus in Kaddish DeRabbanan – “we ask for peace and lovingkindness and let us say, Amen” – the entire congregation was moved to join in and together they truly made a ‘joyful noise’.

It may seem improbable that such a large group could sing together after only one general rehearsal. However, everyone involved took the event very seriously and were committed to doing their best. In addition, everything was well organized: there were ample opportunities to learn together and the materials they received were clear and easy to study from. Add to this a firm and clear hand in directing the group and you have a recipe for success.

That event's overwhelming success turned what began as a one-time activity into a vehicle which could be used again, and for broader goals. We reactivated the singing group at subsequent special events and it became yet another way to involve congregants in adding a special dimension to our celebrations. In addition, through the chorus I could introduce new melodies, which we incorporated into services as part of an expanding congregational repertoire. After the chorus would sing a new *Sim Shalom*, *Tsaddik KaTamar* or chassidic niggun, everyone would be familiar with it, and adding it to future services was natural.

When I became the hazzan at Kehillat Mevakshei Derech in Jerusalem I revived the idea for the Kehillah's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Again, the response to my invitation was overwhelming, and the morning proved an unqualified success. It was in Israel that the name changed to Chavurat HaZemer. And it was in Jerusalem that the idea took on a new life.

The members of the Chavurah decided that singing together only once or twice a year was not enough. They wanted to participate in a number of events on the synagogue calendar, for example: the Chanukah party, Shabbat Shirah, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Erev Shavuot and one musical Friday Night event.

I eventually had a list of fifty to sixty congregants who were Chavurah members, of whom twenty-five to thirty participated at each event. If you were unavailable for one event you could participate the next time. This meant that the Chavurah has had a different make-up and sound each time

it appeared. The rehearsal format remains the same. As before, people are still busy. So I give them several opportunities to come together and learn the music, plus tapes and texts to study at home. And of course, they still get one general rehearsal. The music has come from traditional synagogue repertoire or from Israeli music. All the pieces are on an easy level – unison, two voices or rounds. Occasionally I add a small percussion instrument, like a tambourine. On a weekday we have a piano to accompany us; on Sabbaths and Festivals we have sung *A Cappella*.

There have been only positive results:

1. Many more congregants are familiar with the prayers and their melodies.
2. The learning process also gives me the opportunity to teach something about the content and meaning of the prayers we are singing.
3. Many congregants who have become better singers are now more confident about singing out at services and enhancing our congregational singing generally.
4. Because there is always a core group at services who are familiar with the new tunes and able to teach by example, I have been able to easily introduce new melodies into our services, expanding the congregational repertoire for everyone..
5. Congregants who previously did not participate in group activities at the Kehillah have found an outlet with the Chavurah.
6. We have attracted people from outside our congregation who have become members as a result of singing with the Chavurah.
8. The entire congregation looks forward to hearing the Chavurah and has begun to expect them at special events.

Today the Chavurat HaZemer at Kehillat Mevakshei Derech is going through another transformation. After three years of occasional performances the members have now decided they are ready for a more permanent structure. We will be meeting twice a month, working on our singing technique and developing a repertoire. We will never be a choir – again, the only condition for membership is a love of music and a desire to sing. However, as singing Jewish music has become a more important part of people's lives the Chavurat HaZemer is becoming a more integral part of the Kehillah and a wonderful way to enter congregational life and become involved.

Starting and maintaining an informal congregational singing group may be labor intensive, but is also a labor of love. The results can be tremendous and the ripples, or perhaps echoes, can be felt and heard long after the last note sounds. It is a door that, once opened, brings through its portals a wealth of opportunities to involve people in synagogue life and touch their lives with the language we all understand best – music.

*The Cantors Assembly's only female member to hold a pulpit in Israel, Beth Weiner is hazzan at Jerusalem's Kehillat Mevakshei Derech where she directs the Ezri Uval Center for Jewish Music. She also trains rabbinic students in nusach and Tefillah at the Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies*

# Literary Glimpses of the Cantorate

## The Jew Who Destroyed the Temple

by Abraham Reisen (1876-1953)

My neighbor in the country village where I spent my vacation was an American citizen named Henry Rose. His house, which he owned, stood next door to my hotel. He had lived in the village for several years and had prospered enough to allow leisure time in which to enjoy himself.

And he was particular about who he would spend his time with. Proud of having acquired his citizenship, he knew the Constitution of the United States practically by heart, along with the names of every senator and well placed Republican congressman, all of whom he respectfully addressed with the title, "Honorable." He felt very strongly about his adopted country and would not tolerate any disparagement of its institutions.

Luckily for me, Henry Rose still found it easier to converse in Yiddish than in English, and so, we spoke *momeh-loshn* to one another. If we happened to be outdoors and a native villager approached us, Rose would cut short our discourse and greet the passerby with, "How do you do, Mr. Nelson? Nice day...but maybe 'twill rain later?"

Having delivered this sociable greeting and received the expected "yes" or "perhaps" in reply, Rose would turn to me and explain in Yiddish who Mr. Nelson was and how they came to be friends. Then he would tell me how well he got along with Americans, the finest of people, "and furthermore," he would whisper in my ear, "they are better than our fellow-Jews."

If you are getting the impression that Henry Rose was a Jew-hater (God forbid), please allow me to disabuse you of that notion. Just the opposite; he loved Jews. But while he recognized their virtues, he also saw their faults, the biggest of which was the difficulty they had in Americanizing themselves. "It's so hard for them," he would sigh; and one could see how much that thought troubled him.

I asked him to explain exactly what he meant, since the village Jews whom I met had seemed quite Americanized to me. That's when he related the story of the temple.

Once some forty or fifty Jewish families had settled in the village (he began), they felt the need for a house of prayer, or "worship," as it's called in America. The families weren't particularly observant, but they worried about how it

would look for the Gentiles; they have their church, we should have ours. Naturally, Henry Rose wasn't thinking of a study house, a *beis medresh*, like the ones back in Europe. He pictured a genteel temple, nestled in a refined residential street. Instead of a *chazn*, a cantor; instead of a *rov*, a rabbi.

Money was no obstacle; all the Jews (knock wood) were well off. A landowner sold them the ground dirt-cheap, because it was for the Jewish "church." The Jewish families built a lovely temple. Its exterior looked exactly like "theirs," in Colonial style. Its interior was, in fact, that of a synagogue. Why did Rose call it a "temple?" Because he remembered that in the great cities of Europe, that's what the Jewish upper classes called their synagogue.

"What's the difference between a temple and a *bes medresh*?" Rose asked me—and proceeded to answer his own question.

"In a *bes medresh* everybody davens along, but in a temple the *daven'n* is left to the cantor. And the people remain silent or, if someone doesn't want to leave it entirely to the cantor, they may follow along softly, without disturbing those around them. And that's the way it went for a few years. Everyone was afraid to open their mouth during services; it wouldn't have been proper. This was, after all, a temple."

"However, one fine Summer a bearded stranger moved into the village, one of those very European-looking Jews, who opened a stationery store and took up permanent residence. He wasn't really a citizen, you understand, merely a resident. And I realized (said Rose), that from this Jew we would not gain much respect among our fellow villagers."

"It wasn't only the beard. After all, real 'Yankees' also wore beards; only theirs were somehow more acceptable. So, what then was it? This particular Jew, when he came to a service, had no idea of the difference between a temple and a *bes medresh*. When the cantor began, this fellow broke forth in a nigan as if he were still in Eischischok...I could not believe my ears. He was single-handedly knocking down everything we had built up over years!"

"After the service I went over to him and remarked quietly, in Yiddish. 'Mister, this happens to be a temple; here it's not acceptable to daven out loud.'"

"He smiled at me. 'If in America you're allowed to make a *shul* out of a church, then it's certainly permissible to make a *bes medresh* out of a temple!'"

"And believe me; he carried out his plan, with a vengeance. At *Boruch She'omar* he would warble his homegrown nigan and awaken in at least one other person the urge to join him in singing. Then a third individual, then

a fourth, until the nigun became a congregational refrain running through *P'sukei D'Zimro*. Murmured softly at first, it grew louder and louder at the Daily Halleluyohs. By *Sh'ma Yisroel* it had reached the level of a communal howl, just like in a *bes medresh*. By the Amidah Repetition the cantor had forgotten he was supposed to be daven'n from Sulzer's Siddur, and lapsed into the old nusach with its dozens of responses spiritedly interjected by the congregation."

"Now, all evidence of a 'temple' style disappeared. We davened plainly and simply, as our great-grandfathers had davened in the Old Home. We shouted, we shuckled, and in the *Oleinu* we even spat..."

*Russian-born Abraham Reisen was best known for his poetic lyrics to Yiddish songs such as **Mai Ko Mashma Lon and Zog, Maran**. This short story appears in his three-volume memoir, **Episodes From My Life** (1929-1935) and is translated by Joseph A. Levine.*

# Reviews of Books, Recordings and Films

## *Zamru Lo— The Next Generation— Congregational Melodies for Shabbat*

**Compiled and Edited by Cantor Jeffrey Shiovitz  
(Cantors Assembly, 2004)**

*Reviewed by Robert S. Scherr*

In 1968, Moshe Nathanson prefaced the Cantors' Assembly publication of *Zamru Lo* Volume I (second edition of the version that had appeared in 1955) with these words:

It is our earnest hope that this book will elevate the musical standards of the congregational melodies in our Synagogues. The melodies contained in *ZAMRU LO* were selected and approved because they are singable, melodic, Hebraically correct, musical and based on our traditional Nus-haot.

Nathanson presented *Zamru Lo* as a veritable text book for congregational participation. It was to be a tool for invigorating worship and for helping to standardize the repertoire of the postwar American synagogue. Now, *Zamru Lo— The Next Generation* continues to fulfill Nathanson's stated goals, on an even broader scale. Jeffrey Shiovitz has compiled a treasury of beloved traditional melodies (with attribution, wherever possible) and new melodies from contemporary composers, bound to become the standards of this century. With a discerning ear and a collector's judgment, Shiovitz's work will serve as a guide to good musical taste, demonstrate sensitivity to text, offer variety of styles, and become a time capsule of Conservative synagogue practice at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

In the Kabbalat Shabbat section one finds over twenty versions of the Shabbat poem *L'cha Dodi* (pages 20-42). Settings by Lewandowski and Sulzer are there, along with melodies from the Breslov Chassidim and Shlomo Carlebach. Contemporary composers Aharon Bensoussan, Gerald Cohen, Sol Zim, Debbie Friedman and Michael Isaacson have their say as well, using their own individual styles. In the 1968 publication, Moshe Nathanson foresaw that *Zamru Lo* would enable congregants to move from one community to another and find familiar melodies in place because of standardization. While this work, too, will make many melodies more widely known, it will also increase the repertoire of singing congregations, significantly augmenting the "standard" through which communities can enjoy singing *L'cha Dodi* on a regular basis.



The Friday Night section covers about one-third of the 397-page volume, including all the major prayers of the service. Knowledgeable cantors will find most, though not necessarily all, of their favorite melodies, and almost every prayer is bound to have a tune most readers did not know before. Eight settings of *Ahavat Olam* (pages 57-65), sixteen for *V'shamru* (pages 85-100) and nine for *Sh'ma/V'ahavta* (pages 67-72) offer not only many choices of melodies, but also a means of thoughtfully investigating different composers' musical imaginations and styles. This work should bring to its users a deeper appreciation of the musical heritage of synagogue practice in our century.

Chorus

L' cha do di lik-rat ka la p' nei sha-bat n' - ka - b' la

L' cha do di lik-rat ka-la p' nei sha-bat n' - ka - b'-la. Sha-

Example 1. *L'Cha Dodi* by Gerald Cohen

The Shabbat Morning section brings melodies, old and new, for virtually the entire service. Multiple settings for *L'dor Vador* (pages 192-204), *Yismach Moshe* (pages 205-214) or *Kadsheinu* (pages 222-230), suggest that a congregational repertoire can expand over a period of years to include many approaches to a familiar text. Sometimes, short *chatimot* become singable melodies, as in *Et Shem* (page 152) or *Or Chadash* (page 154) or *Ham'vareich* (page 267), that suggest possibilities for brief congregational singing.

Ha-m'-va-reich ha-m'-va-reich ha-m'-va-reich ha-m'-va-reich ha-m'-va-reich ha-m'-va-reich

va-reich ha-m'-va-reich et a-mo yis-ra-eil ha-m'

va-reich ha-m'-va-reich et a-mo yis-ra-eil

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Example 2. *Ham'vareich* arr. by Moshé Ganchoff

Shiovitz's editorial work is evident in a number of ways. This volume does not contain every melody ever written for a prayer text. One may well search in vain for a favorite tune that is missing. There is a balance between

old and new, European and American. The compilation is clearly a working book, not merely a comprehensive catalogue or museum collection. Shiovitz thoughtfully includes several settings of *Sim Shalom* that include the word *ba'olam*, first added by Jules Harlow who edited *Siddur Sim Shalom*, official prayer book of the Conservative Movement since 1985. The word appears in four of Shiovitz's fourteen settings (pages 249-267), and in only one of those is it given as an alternative (page 260). Perhaps a second edition can standardize its usage in all the settings as well as clarify some questionable attributions. Two examples: The *Ahavah Rabah* melodies on pages 155-156, both of which have been popular in American Yeshivot since the 1950s. They appear here in arranged versions, and should be so labeled. Although in the last decades of the twentieth century, many Israeli melodies found their way into congregational singing, most of those melodies will not be found in this volume. To its credit, *Zamru Lo—The Next Generation* is not about popular taste, but rather reflects a synagogue practice guided by the editor's professional esthetic and years of experience in leading a singing congregation.

Shiovitz has made thoughtful judgments as to accentuation of the Hebrew, whenever possible rendering Hebrew according to principles of a living language, without being pedantic when the obviously Ashkenazic melody may take liberty with classical syllabic emphases. Occasionally, I found folk melodies rendered a little differently than I knew them. This volume is not about trying to defend the definitive version of some widely-known melodies; rather, it is a successful effort to make these melodies accessible to a wide—perhaps new—audience. I wish the editor had included dates for the compositions, where known, because it would have added to readers' understanding of how the various composers fit within a spectrum running from "traditional" to "contemporary."

This is a volume that reflects primarily the North American experience. There are few examples from the Sephardic rite. The melodies selected do not reflect the entire spectrum of Jewish experience. Rather, in furthering Moshe Nathanson's 1968 vision, Jeffrey Shiovitz seeks to "answer a profound need of our Congregations." One can almost hear Nathanson singing this next generation of *Zamru Lo* melodies, from *Shalom Aleichem* to *Adon Olam*, in search of the goal expressed by the Shacharit prayer:

*B'nachat ruach, b'safah b'rurah uvin'imah k'doshah*

With delight, clear speech and sacred melody,  
Together as one, filled with awe, we sing of God's holiness!  
(translation after the New Conservative Machzor of 2008).

*Robert Scherr serves as Hazzan of Temple Israel of Natick, MA, and recently has been appointed the Jewish Associate Chaplain at Williams College in Williamstown, MA*

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## Is There Tefillah After Davenen?

### **Joseph A. Levine's *Rise and Be Seated: The Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship***

(Jason Aronson, 2001)

*Reviewed by Gershon Freidlin*

The major works of Joseph A. Levine are encyclopedic; they should be studied by anyone interested in cantorial music in general and in *davenen*, specifically. These works include *Synagogue Song in America* (with companion CDs) and *Emunat Abba*, a published dissertation on the life and works of Abba Yosef Weisgal.

*Rise and Be Seated*—an engaging, literate polemic—raises important questions, surveys Jewish prayer across centuries, tours contemporary North American worship sites and offers gracious observations both on what is already good there and what might yet be. It does not approach the stature of the aforementioned compendia. Although I welcome the author of such material giving his overview about synagogue sounds, the work suffers from what I would call the “Stephen Sondheim Syndrome.” Sondheim’s works are great only when created with a collaborator; in his case, the choreographer-director, Jerome Robbins. For Levine, it’s the illustrative examples.

When the musical notes are present there is wonderful, clear exposition. In the current work where the musical notes are not there to speak for themselves, the text too often rhapsodizes, indulging in literary conceits over-abundantly. And wit. Joe Levine is very witty. Some of his prose here reflects that—but it doesn’t know when to stop. I know that the author wants to forcefully state

the case of what transpires when traditional synagogue modes and style are dropped, where all continuity has been lost. But, I think restraint would have stated the case as well. It's stated, of course, but there's too much of it

One example here might suffice. The title, *Rise and Be Seated*, is filled with meaning and irony; it expresses the inanity of much contemporary public worship. It should have been allowed to stand—minus the subtitle: *The Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship*. Not that this is a bad pun—not bad, but one that readers should be left to come up with on their own. Instead of being pithy and piquant the title as it stands, is cluttered.

*Rise and Be Seated* is annoying and prickly—at the same time it goads me to both reflection and feeling. I think the reason for the book's being off-center is that it does not hit home as to why the davenen stopped in North America. It jumps, kicks and skirts, but doesn't hit that point. I think the reason is suburbanization. The great synagogues with their cantors were very much tied to cities. As the disruption caused by transplant to suburbs took root at about 1950, styles and traditions that had been in place — fashioned by American Jews — crumbled. For example, there had been a common practice on Shabbat of Conservative kids—at least, boys—of attending services in the morning and then going to the movies—often cowboy films—in the afternoon. Or on Yom Tov, of going to shul in the a.m., then playing baseball in the p.m. This was an adolescent life style that would have been passed down—but one which dissembled with the decay of cities. So, too, davenen. It was a tradition brought from Eastern Europe, although Jewish Moroccans, Yemenites, Syrians, and Iraqi and Irani also daven (calling it *tefillah*). Once there was a move out of cities, Americanization took over in toto; thus ended the connection to Eastern Europe.

It is interesting in this light that there has been a revival of the instrumental music of the klezmerim, but not of the vocal repertoire — hazzanut — that uses the same modes as do the instrumentalists.

Especially considering the latter condition, it is unlikely that a revival of davenen—in the words of the book: “the received liturgy along with its normative modes of performance” presented by the “purposeful dialogue between the congregation and its surrogate in prayer” — is likely, for which the book holds out hope. For me it would be enough if there were simply installations in several museums showing what *davenen* is. I have no hope for a revival.

But Levine does have such hope. He is a gracious man to think, given his rootedness in davenen, that there may be some valid successor which may even include davenen on a limited scale. Such graciousness once softened

me. I'd attended a "downstairs" minyan in a local shul, that rejected the cantor upstairs, and whatever he stood for.

That minyan had a lot of community singing, cleansed of many of the modes. It was comprised of the younger and middle-aged activists of the community and boasted several rabbis in attendance.

At *Ahavah Rabbah*, the group would begin a well-known ditty in three-quarter time. It could have been sung at a campfire or in a saloon, with all the barflies swinging their steins. To its credit, it wasn't — in Idelsohn's phrase — *galokhisch* ("priestly;" i.e., *goyish*). One clearly recognized the melody as Jewish (it had originated among students in American yeshivot during the 1950s); but, *Ahavah Rabbah* it was not. After reading *Rise and be Seated*, it occurred to me that this wouldn't be so bad if the congregants sang what they'd been singing, so long as they'd juxtapose a hazzan chanting in *Ahavah Rabah* (the mode, that is) above it. I believe it works musically.

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves: the top staff is for the Cantor, marked *mp*, and the bottom staff is for the Congregation, marked *mf*. The lyrics are: Cantor: A - ha - vah Ra - bah a - hav, Congregation: A - ha - vah Ra - bah a - hav - ta - bu, ta - nu, A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu, A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu. The second system also has two staves, with the top staff continuing the Cantor's line and the bottom staff continuing the Congregation's line. The lyrics are: ta - nu, A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu, A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and a *cresc.* marking.

Example 1. *Ahavah Rabbah* — to a Yeshivah nigun in Magen Avot mode with cantor chanting in *Ahavah Rabbah* mode above it.

In conclusion, read the book — it's an honest, witty, innovative page turner — and think; argue. Then make sure you let folks know that this book is by the author of *Synagogue Song in America*, which both reader and author should promote, promote, promote.

*A member of the Rabbinical Assembly, Gershon Freidlin studied voice and hazzanic repertoire with Moshe Taube, and coached operatic arias with the late Judith Raskin. The most recent book he has edited is **What A Life!**, a biography of the Yiddish musical theater Burstein family.*

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***Two CDs of Victorian Era Music in British Synagogues:  
The Western Ashkenazic and Spanish Portuguese Traditions***  
*Reviewed by Laurence D. Loeb*

*Music of the Victorian Synagogue* (Forum FRC 9105), featuring Cantor Moshe Haschel with the London Jewish Male Choir and the Old Synagogue Singers under the direction of Clive Hyman, is a somewhat enigmatic offering. The accompanying notes (which are quite useful) claim: “this recording aims to combine authenticity and fidelity to the composers’ intentions with aesthetic awareness and artistic judgement.” The attempt to do so presents the performers with a number of problems regarding pronunciation of the Hebrew, choice of available version, keys, and ensemble makeup. Some the decisions seem rather strange; e.g., “Rabbinic authorities allowed for the use of the Divine Name on this recording excepting the *Birkas Ovos* and *Lechah Dodi*.” In the end, the tradeoffs that were made render the result technically good, but emotionally, often sterile.

Most American hazzanim are probably unfamiliar with the liturgical repertory of our English colleagues, whose contributions are conspicuously absent from the Ephros collection<sup>1</sup> and many others. If so, the *Victorian Synagogue* CD is a probably a useful introduction to a range of pieces from England’s most important 19<sup>th</sup> Century synagogue-music composers. While dominated by compositions by Julius Mombach, the recording contains important works by Marcus Hast, Haim Wasserzug and Abraham Saqui. The latter was probably influential in effecting a fusion of Sephardic melody with Ashkenazic liturgy into the British scene. Since the majority of composers were born in Germany, it not surprising that much of the recording sounds closer to German hazzanut than East European.

My favorite pieces from the recording are Julius Mombach’s *Lechah Dodi* for *S’firah* and Marcus Hast’s *Kaddish* for the eve of Pesach. I would consider the *Lechah Dodi* a gem! Many of the other pieces seem anachronistic, and except for the clever use of holiday motifs in the Festival liturgy, rather uninteresting. The use of countertenors to achieve authenticity further diminishes the aesthetic value of the project. The performers are certainly adequate, though not spectacular.

*A Sephardi Celebration* (Classical Recording Co. CRC 1416-2) features *Hazzan* Adam Musikant with the Choir of the Spanish and Portuguese Jew’s

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<sup>1</sup> Gershon Ephros, ed., *Cantorial Anthology*, in six volumes (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1957-1977).

Congregation, London, under the direction of Maurice Martin. Here too, adherence to tradition and authenticity are stated objectives of the recording. This Compact Disc is seen as a possible first of several to document the British Sephardic tradition; a set of LPs—long out of print—documented liturgical highlights of the entire year back in the 1950s. Here, children are used to brighten the sound, though harmonizing seems to be secondary to singing the melody line. The mannered performance is mostly quite pleasant, and though not particularly energetic, rather engaging.

Of Sephardic descent on my mother's side, my only exposures to Sephardic liturgy were occasional visits to Shearith Israel Congregation in New York during my impressionable teen years. Chacham<sup>2</sup> David de Sola Pool was still in his prime and Reverend Lopez Cardoza, now retired, was then a young hazzan. Lately, release of the three-CD set *Historic Music of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in the City of New York* (available from Shearith Israel Congregation) and *Musique de la Synagogue de Bordeaux* (Melodie 822742) together with this disc enables one to become better acquainted with this "other" European hazzanic tradition. The stiff formalism of *A Sephardi Celebration* reflects customary Spanish-Portuguese synagogue behavior. The recording quickly transported me back to my amazing teenage encounter with top hats, tails and formal bowing during removal and return of the Torah scroll from and to the Heichal (Ark).

The recorded music includes "traditional" melodies shared with Sephardim elsewhere, e.g., *Et Sha'arei Ratson*, *Mizmor L'David* and *El Nora Alilah* (the latter two known and used in Ashkenazi synagogues in the U.S.), as well as pieces composed by local hazzanim, mostly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Compositions by non-Jewish composers are also included in the repertory, e.g., *Hashivenu* by Charles Garland Verrinder and a Chanukah *En Kelohenu* from G.F. Handel's *Judas Maccabeus/Joshua* oratorios – the melody is found in both! (The notes, which are fairly helpful, defensively argue that this melody is found in a 6<sup>th</sup> century Armenian tradition and "so it is probable that it was already in use by Jews in ancient times, pre-sixth Century"...a highly imaginative, but not especially compelling claim.)

One should not be surprised to learn from these recordings that, similar to the Ashkenazic synagogue music tradition, the much smaller Spanish-Portuguese practice exhibits musical variation, indigenous composition, and evolving style differences which could already be discerned from published materials, but which are so much more vivid in actual performance.

<sup>2</sup> Honorific title given to Sephardic rabbis who are ripe in both years and wisdom.

**Ashkenazic and Sephardic synagogue music** differs considerably, not only melodically and stylistically, but arguably, even in intention. The former has long solo, elaborate and often dramatic recitative, periods of silence punctuated by the hazzan cueing the congregation, congregational response, and in its most elaborate variation, multipart choir performance elaborating and expounding the text by itself or in concert with the hazzan. The Spanish-Portuguese custom is for the *shali'ach tsibbur* to recite the entire text out loud, with scarce dramatic interpolation. The choir responds and leads the congregation, and only rarely engages in elaborate concert with the *shali'ach tsibbur*. Indeed, even in Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) communities, dramatic evocation with passionate emotional involvement of congregants is most unusual. At one time it was characteristic of the prayer, *Shevet Y'hudah*, customarily chanted during severe drought in Yemen, and in the interpolation of Judeo-Persian interpretive chanting of High Holyday piyyutim and s'lichot, Tishah B'Av Kinnot and Tikkun Hoshannah Rabbah—especially during *P'tirat Moshe* (Moses' death). These practices, however, were already on their way to extinction when I visited Shiraz, Iran, in the late 1960s.

The above-mentioned distinctions in Ashkenazic and Sephardic practice are not readily apparent on these recordings. Neither CD offers enough solo singing to clearly identify any style difference. Performance on the *Victorian Synagogue* CD seems essentially lifeless and mannered, far more similar to the traditional Sephardic nuance than to the German tradition whence this “Victorian” practice arose. Chant on the *Sephardi Celebration* CD is quite lovely with an excellent blend of male voices, but the typical nasal voice production has been diminished to the point where it almost parallels contemporary Israeli Hebrew pronunciation. If these recordings are indeed representative of British liturgical practice during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, then a real fusion of the two musical traditions may be in the offing.

Both CDs are available by email: [orders@jewishmusic-jmd.co.uk](mailto:orders@jewishmusic-jmd.co.uk)

*Laurence D. Loeb has served as hazzan of Congregation Kol Ami in Salt Lake City for twenty-six years and is Associate Professor of Anthropology and also teaches at the Middle East Center of the University of Utah. He is currently preparing a study on the Jews of South Yemen.*

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## The Memoirs and Recordings of a British Cantor/Survivor

### *Charles Lowy's In and Out of Harmony: The Memoirs*

### *Charles Lowy: The Lost Recordings*

*Reviewed by Abraham Salkov*

These two items paint a multimedia portrait of a wonderful cantor, an unassuming yet heroic man who survived Hitler's inferno. They were produced by his children, Leonard Lowy and Helen Montague, in loving memory of their extraordinary father. The book, *In and Out of Harmony*, includes Charles Lowy's reminiscences of his narrow escapes from several death camps during the Holocaust, as well as a biography and a section of photographs showing him at different stages of his career as cantor in Hungary, Scotland and England. It is available in the UK from [lowy@leonardlowy.co.uk](mailto:lowy@leonardlowy.co.uk).

The CD of his recordings that were thought to be lost until a few years ago — *Charles Lowy: The Lost Recordings* — offers a precious reminder of true hazzanut from the recent past. It left this reviewer with conflicting emotions — exultation mixed with sadness. There was exultation in Cantor Lowy's gorgeous interpretation of the prayers, and sadness in the knowledge that this blossom is fast fading. We must try to understand why this is so, and if, indeed, the situation can be remedied.

Lowy's generation as well as that of my father, and to some degree my own, prayed to and for congregants who may or may not have been as well educated as today's worshipers. But they were shul-going Jews who knew the liturgy. These were also people who cut their teeth on *nusach hat'fillah*, who lived and breathed the prayer modes. They could, therefore, appreciate the hazzan's modulations and even digressions from what might usually be expected in an interpretation of text, always certain that the hazzan would find his way home.

Today's worshipers might be more sophisticated and even more learned as a result of having taken Jewish Adult Education courses. And yet, having been brought up on the "anti-nusach" of Camps Ramah, they now demand the pap of wall-to-wall congregational participation and have neither the time nor the inclination to listen to a "concert" at services. The hazzan may wish to sing to the Supreme Critic on High, but because his role is now mostly limited to that of song leader, there is no longer a real emotional connection to the Creator. Nevertheless, these selfsame congregants seem to appreciate great

cantorial music in *concert* form, apart from services. Does hazzanut, then, somehow trigger a nascent nostalgic connection with an ancient tradition? Perhaps, God willing, these current preferences are cyclical in nature, and a golden cantorial age will someday return.

A word on Hazzan Lowy's beautiful voice. I had difficulty in deciding whether it was a lyric baritone with a high tessitura or a spinto tenor with a powerful middle register. This unusual type of vocal equipment seems to fit a term coined by an old rabbi whom I got to know during the 1950s while serving a congregation in Los Angeles. Rabbi Sonderling called it a "Jewish tenor," a clear and lovely tone with a liquid, facile coloratura.

The CD's first two selections are the compositions of Lowy's grandfather, Lazar Lowy. From them we can see that the apple does not fall far from the tree. *V'se'erav*, introduction to the Priestly *Duchan'n*, and *Acheinu Kol Beis Yisroel* from the Weekday *Tachanun*, are both purely and deliciously modal. *V'se'erav* skillfully intertwines a simple Aeolian with a more complex Ukrainian/Dorian. *Acheinu* mixes Aeolian with Ahavah Rabbah, a Phrygian with its third and sixth degrees raised a semi-tone. Both selections are done in a way that challenges the ear to follow, yet so easily that it leaves one breathless. An example of these modes can be found in the *Vaichulu* of Friday evening and the *Yishtabach* of Shabbat morning. I've invented my own term for the mingling of these modes: "Jewish minor;" realizing, of course, that the terms minor and major are categories pertaining to Western (non-modal) music.

We come now to Charles Lowy's *V'shomru*. The beautiful simplicity of this composition, melodious and singable in true *nusach hat'fillah* would, with elimination of the melisma, lend itself well to congregational singing. This music leaves one with the spiritual yet almost physical feeling of the Sabbath. I could practically taste the gefilte fish and cholent.

*Nos'u N'horos* – the ending of Psalm 93 in the concluding section of Kabbalat Shabbat – is in what I would designate the "Jewish Mixolydian" mode, with its tenth degree lowered a half-step. At *mikolos mayim adirim*, the hazzan sings a major tenth instead of the minor one called for in the Jewish Mixolydian. This variation, used by many cantors including my father and my uncle, is a fine interpretation of the power of the text: "greater than the roar of mighty waters." The recitative's conclusion, in the East European tradition, is in a Jewish minor. We are here once again struck by the adherence to nusach. The Kiddush – composed by Bela Gutmann – is melodically very interesting, stately and uplifting, yet done in the traditional manner.

Lazar Lowy's *Heyeh Im Pifiyot* shows us something of what we have lost through deletion and substitution. It is a rare departure from the musical core of the High Holy Day nusach: a prayer in the Ahavah Rabbah mode normally associated with Shabbat. This piyyut from the High Holy Day Musaf Amidah repetition, on behalf of those who pray as *sh'lichei tsibbur* – the congregation's designated agents in prayer – is a companion piece to *Hin'ni* and was always in the hazzan's province. Today it has become an English translation given to rabbi and congregation to read responsively on behalf of the hazzan – who is supposedly praying on behalf of them. What a reversal of roles! This prayer wasn't meant to show off the cantor's versatility or the congregation's reading ability, but to describe the solemnity of the task of leading a worshipping kahal in prayer.

The recording ends with *Sheva Brochos* from the wedding ceremony. It is admirably done. There are no theatrics involved. The hazzan realizes that the bridal party has stood on its feet long enough; so – no histrionics! I would strongly suggest that planners of the Cantors Assembly's annual Rozhinke retreats for recapturing elements of traditional hazzanut every summer include some of Cantor Charles Lowy's selections in their lectures and workshops. *The Lost Recordings* CD is available from [hatikvahmusic.com](http://hatikvahmusic.com)

A "Jewish tenor" and a Grand Master at Bridge, Abraham Salkov was also a composer (see the "Baruch Haba-Mi Adir" from his unfinished Wedding Service in the **Music** section of this issue) and Hazzan Emeritus of Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore. He passed away last February, shortly after submitting this review. Herbert S. Garten ("The Hazzan and the Constitution," *Cantors Assembly 50 Years Jubilee Journal*, ed. Solomon Mendelson and Jack Chomsky, New York: 1988, pages 376-381) wrote of Hazzan Salkov:

His petition before the Tax Court of the United States in 1966 was the pivotal case in the history of the cantor's status vis-à-vis the Internal Revenue Service. Decided in his favor, it established that a full-time cantor, commissioned by the Cantors Assembly of America and installed by a congregation, is a 'minister of the gospel' entitled to exclude the portion of his [later, her as well] remuneration received as a rental allowance from his gross income, under section 107(2), I.R.C. 1954.

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*The Hasidic Nigun*  
*As Sung By The Hasidim*

2-CD set & booklet published by  
The Jewish Music Research Center, Jerusalem

*Reviewed by Sam Weiss*

These captivating and energetic performances are accompanied by 80 pages of informative liner notes that by themselves are a valuable resource on the sociology and musical practices of contemporary Israeli hasidim and, by extension, hasidim worldwide. Besides elucidating the recordings, the text can be enjoyed independently, especially as a complement to the 1971 article by the same authors in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (7: 1421-32).

The entire project is built on the foundations of the 1976 LP & booklet *Hasidic Tunes Of Dancing And Rejoicing*, also published by The Jewish Music Research Center in Jerusalem. Indeed, nine of the forty-seven selections (along with much of their commentary) also appear in the former anthology. Much of the introductory text to the current volume also derives from the first collection, but even the older material has not been cut-and-pasted; rather, every paragraph shows signs of careful editing, freshening and cross-referencing, so that there is little repetition and a great deal of information packed inside the eighty little pages (translated from the Hebrew original, which is also included).

As one who has long enjoyed the original hassidic anthology (and relied on it in teaching the subject), I was glad to reacquaint myself with the poignant voices of Mendel Britchko and Shmuel Zalmanoff and hear additional nigunim which didn't make the cut on the first album. Britchko? Zalmanoff? Not exactly household names, but therein lies the principal charm of this album: a wide variety of nigunim pure and simple (and not-so-simple), sung principally in the late 1960s and 1970s by individual singers and gatherings of hasidim whose ears had not yet been polluted by the Ortho-Pop soundtracks. Just Hasidim singing their souls in a variety of settings; it almost feels like eavesdropping.

The value of these field recordings extends beyond the strict boundaries of Hasidic music. As living exponents of a continuous East-European Jewish song tradition, these singers have a lot to teach Jewish musicians in the areas of melodic phrasing and rhythmic subtleties. Exploring these prayers, nigunim

and Yiddish songs will help contextualize many components of the Klezmer repertoire, and will enrich the style of the hazzan or ba'al tefillah.

The album is available in the U.S. from *hatikvahmusic.com*.

*Sam Weiss teaches Music of the Hasidim at the Academy for Jewish Religion & has contributed numerous articles to the **Journal of Synagogue Music**, including an entry in this issue's Symposium on Congregational Singing, from the Hasidic viewpoint.*

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## ***Atchalta DiG'ula or, The Last Hurrah?***

### ***The Cantor's Tale:***

### **Erik Greenberg Anjou's Film on Jacob Ben-Zion Mendelson**

*Reviewed by Gershon Freidlin*

Although the title of the documentary about the ever-witty Jackie Mendelson suggests a ready pun, the work is no laughing matter. It is, as we used to say in Israel, *sug ben-le'umi*: of international quality, not merely for tribal consumption.

The film is woven of three strands: Mendelson's personal family life, especially as it leads him to become a hazzan; his reverence for nusach, including his ability to pull its sounds out of people from the bakeries of Borough Park to the beaches of Tel Aviv, from young and from aging; and lastly, Borough Park itself, out of which our subject emerged. The Borough Park story, its change from Modern Orthodox center where "*chazones* was in the air" to frum-farm, forms the ground of the film, but is not developed within it. All to the good, otherwise the elegant narrative would have been overwhelmed.

The "*chazones* was in the air" theme is wistfully mentioned as a refrain throughout the film, and given a twist late within it when the subject intones, "*chazones is in the air!*" The case for that updating is made by Mendelson himself throughout as he accosts friends, colleagues, strangers and students, telling them to chant nusach, either by themselves or with our hazzan's aid. He gets an amazing number of folk to do that: old-timers in Borough Park; little kids in his Westchester, New York congregation; and big kids at Hebrew

Union College where he teaches. He includes, too, his share of Borough Park-raised celebrities like Alan Dershowitz and Jackie Mason.

The most moving nusach-vignette takes place on the Tel Aviv beach where Jackie is filmed with two beach bums. (Not a pejorative, but substitute, “denizens of the sand,” if you prefer.) One of these men, long-haired and scantily-clad, does a good, albeit self-conscious duet with Mendelson. Another, in full Yogic lotus posture and bouncing around the sand, says that when amidst his meditations he heard the hazzan’s chant, he was sure that *mashi’ach* had arrived.

Yet, if one is to conclude that a revival for nusach is upon us (but, who knows *mashi’ach*’s taste: it may be for Debbie Friedman material) the film offers us Friedman’s sobering comments about any American re-interest in nusach. I personally believe that social forces stand against such a revival. Nusach was nurtured here in an urban culture like that of old Borough Park. This has been dismantled by suburbanization. Even where folks either continue to live in cities or return to them, the ‘burbs still triumph. A driving culture as in the suburbs now exists even in cities. Huge numbers drive, public transportation has weakened, and people do not take to the sidewalks as they once did. For this purpose it matters not that they refrain from driving on Shabbat; driving still prevails. From the film, I was gratified to see that even in the ultra-frum Borough Park of today, an awareness of *chazones* is still present. I’d have thought that it would have been suppressed as an impious frill.

There is one consideration that might lend encouragement to a nusach revival. Namely, that the American ear has already accepted the synagogue modes—through instrumental klezmer music. If instrumental, why not vocal? I have no non-speculative answer to this assertion; there may be something to it.

Yet there is a further condition to be fulfilled, I believe, before we see a revival of nusach: Is *chazones* prayerful? (Not that I know a better system.) Does one pray better when the hazzan sets the material out there for a congregation to hear? I personally do, but in general, does hazzanut promote prayerfulness?

There seems to be some openness in America now for praying, but will hazzanut bridge a gap? Hazzanut no doubt is a road to the Jewish soul, which it then expresses brilliantly. But, is it prayer?

This is not a question answered by the film, nor do I expect it to be. Not from either *The Cantor’s Tale* nor from possible subsequent collaborations by Hazzan Mendelson with his producer/director, Erik Greenberg Anjou. I

hope a sufficient amount of footage remains that was not used in the film, and that Mendelson and Anjou are able to produce that footage. I also urge that they not worry if their next product does not reach the artistry of their first. It does not have to: even as archival material, it will be both interesting and important.

*Pittsburgh-based Rabbi Gershon Freidlin is the founder of **Jacob's Dream**, a project that prepares materials on the arts, urban issues and Jewish lore. The Cantor's Tale is distributed by Ergo Media of Teaneck, New Jersey.*

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# Music, Old and New

## Shabbat

### Cantor's Solo in Congregational Yedid Nefesh

(Follows first verse of Melody on  
page 12 of Zamru Lo —The Next Generation)

Recitative: Abba Weisgal  
Arrangement: Joseph Levine

*Yearningly*

Ha-dur, na-eh, ziv ha-o-lam. Naf-shi cho-lat

a-ha-va-te - cha. A - na, Eil na, re-

fa - na lah. B' har'ot lah no amzi ve-cha Az tit cha zeik ve-tit-ra pei, v'

hai - ta lah sim - chat o - lam.

(Repeat from "Yaruts Avdecha" till the end)



# Congregational Sim Shalom

Congregation Shalom Kalib

Sim sha-lom, to-vah uv' ra-cha, chen, va- che-sed v' - ra - cha- mim\_\_

a - lei - nu v'al kol Yis-ra- eil\_\_ a - me - cha. Bar'

chei-nu a-vi - nu, ku - la - nu k'-e-chad b' - or\_\_ pa - ne - cha.

Ki v' or pa ne-cha na ta - ta la - nu A-do nai\_\_ e-lo hei - nu,

To - rat cha - yim v'a-ha- vat\_\_ che - sed\_\_ Utz' da-ka

u - v' - ra - cha, v' - ra - cha-mim, v' cha-yim v'-sha- lom. V' -

tov\_\_ b' ei-ne-cha l' - va - reich et am' cha Yis - ra - eil,

*rit.*  
b' - chol eit u- v' - chol\_\_ sha - a bish' - lo - me - cha.

Cantor

Ba - ruch\_\_ a - ta A - do - nai, ha - m' - va -

reich et a - mo Yis - ra - eil ba - sha <sup>3</sup> - lom.

# Festivals

## Congregational Adir Adireinu

Andante leggiero Ahron Gruenzweig  
ca - 1890

*mp* A - dir a-di-rei-nu, A-do - nai a-do - nei-nu, mah a - dir shim - cha - b' chol ha  
a - retz, v' ha-yah A-do - nai l' - me-lech al kol ha - a-rets ba - yom ha  
hu - yih - yeh A-do - nai e - chad u - sh' - mo e - chad.

Cantor Congregation

*mf* U - v' div-rei kod - sh' - cha ka-tuv lei-mor: Yim - loch A-do-nai l' o - lam, e - lo  
ha - yim tsi - yon l' - dor va - dor ha - le - lu - yah.

*f*

## Congregational V'kareiv P'zureinu

Recorded by Mordechai Hershman  
ca - 1935

V' - ka - reiv p' zu - rei - nu mi - bein ha - go - yim,  
u - n' fu-tzo-tei - nu ka - neis mi - yar-ke-tei a - retz, v' ka -  
reiv p' - zu - rei - nu mi - bein ha - go - yim,  
u - n' - fu-tzu-tei - nu ka - neis mi - yar ke-tei a - retz. *rit.*

# High Holy Days

## Congregational M'Chalkel Chayim

Shalom Kalib

M'chal - kel cha - yim, cha - yim\_\_ b' che - sed m' cha - ye mei - tim b' - ra - cha - mim ra - bim,  
so - mech nof - lim v' - ro - fe cho - lim u - ma - tir a su - rim um - ka - yem  
e - mu - na - to li - shei - nei\_ a - far. Mi - cha mo - cha ba - al g' vu - rot  
u - mi do - me lach me - lech  
me - mit um' cha - yeh u - matz - mi - ach y' - shu - ah.

## Precisely (♩=96)

Congregation

after J. Spivak

Ha - vein\_\_ ya - kir li, ya - kir li Ef - ra - yim,  
im\_\_ ye - led sha' a - shu im, im\_\_ ye - led sha' a - shu - im;  
Cantor  
Ki mi - dei\_\_ dab - ri vo, za - chor ez - ke - re - nu od;  
ki mi - dei\_\_ dab - ri vo, za - chor ez - ke - re - nu od.  
Congregation  
Ha - vein\_\_ ya - kir li, ya - kir li Ef - ra - yim,  
im\_\_ ye - led sha' - a - shu im, im\_\_ ye - led sha' - a - shu - im;

# Life Cycle Events

## Baruch Haba

From an Unfinished  
Wedding Service

Abraham Salkov  
(2005)

*Con Brio*

5 Hazzan

Flute

Ba-ruch ha-ba be-sheim A-do

9

nai bei-rach-nu-chem mi-beit A-do-nai

# Mi Adir

2 From an Unfinished  
Wedding Service

Abraham Salkov  
(2005)

12 *Maestoso-Marcato*

Hazzan

Flute *f* Mi a - dir al ha - kol

16 mi ba - ruch al ha - kol mi ga - dol

19 al ha - kol mi da - gul

21 *mf* 3

al ha - kol ye - vaa - reich ye - var - reich cha -

23 *mp*

tan ve - cha - la ye - va - reich ye - var - reich cha -

25 *Tremolo*

tan ve - cha - la; cha - tan ve - cha - la.

# Birkat SheHecheyanu

Richard M. Berlin

$\text{♩} = 50$  Cantor

Ba- ruch A - ta

6

A-do - nai E - lo - hei - nu

11

Me - lech Me - lech ha-o - lam.

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17

ha-o- lam

24  $\text{♩} = 60$  Congregation

lai lai dai dai rai dai dai lai dai dai rai lai lai dai dai rai dai dai

$\text{♩} = 60$

28

lai dai dai lai She - he - che ya - nu v' - ki - ma - nu v' - hi - gi - a - nu laz



32

man. ha-zeh She - he - che ya - nu v' - ki - ma - nu v' - hi - gi - a - nu laz -

36

Cantor

man\_ ha-zeh She-he-che - ya - - nu v' ki-ya

39

ma - nu v' hig-i - a - 3 - 3 a-nu laz -man\_\_\_\_\_ ha

43 *A Tempo* Congregation

zeh... Ah, Ah,

*A Tempo*

47

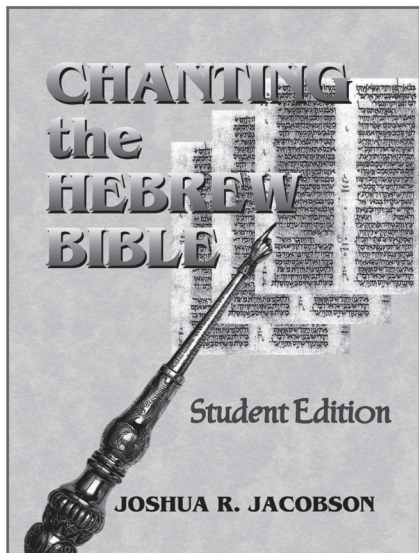
Ah, Ah, A - -

51 *Rit.*

- mein; Ah, Ah, A - - mein.

*Rit.*

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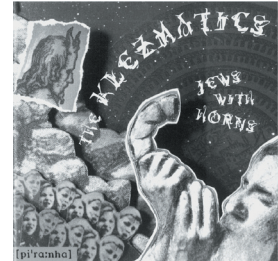
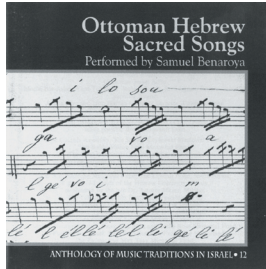
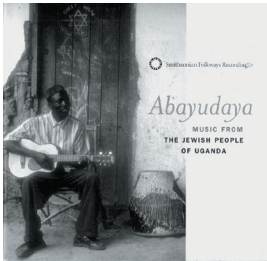
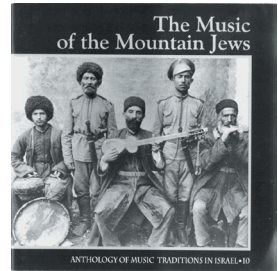
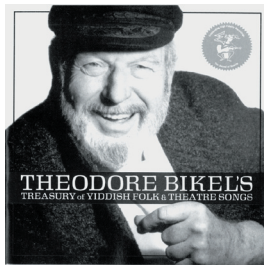
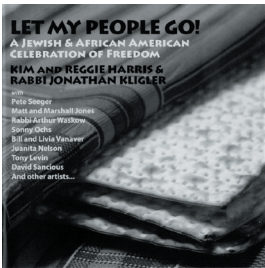
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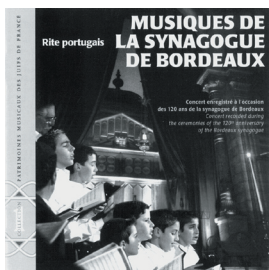
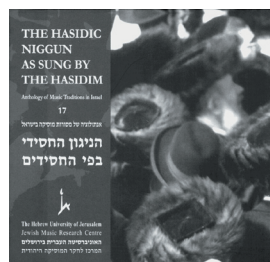
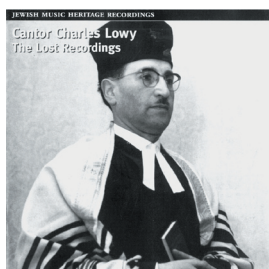


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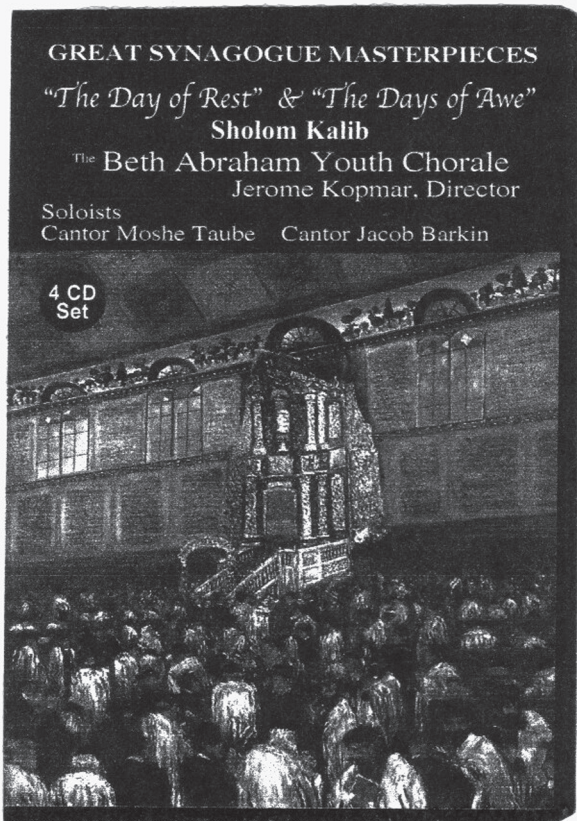
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