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CONTENTS

TRADITIONAL JEWISH MATERIAL IN

SCHOENBERG'S "A SURVIVOR FROM WARSAW" *Charles Heller* 3

SURVIVING FUTURE SHOCK :

SOME OTHER VIEWS 9

Charles Davidson 10

David Tilman 22

Michael Isaacson 29

TWO SABBATH EVE PRAYERS:

NEW TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARY *Elliot B. Gertel* 32

DEPARTMENTS

REVIEW OF NEW MUSIC

39

Hebrew Songs for All Seasons, Susan C. Searles

Two High Holiday Settings, Sydney Hodkinson

Hashirim Asher L'Yehudah, Leo Rosenbluth

Psalm 23, Michael Isaacson

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TRADITIONAL JEWISH MATERIAL IN SCHOENBERG'S *A SURVIVOR FROM WARSAW, OP. 46*

CHARLES HELLER

Of all Schoenberg's serial compositions, *A Survivor from Warsaw*' is probably the one which makes the most immediate impact on a general audience. This is due to the compelling nature of the events in the story and the way they are described, leading to the climax at the singing of the *Shema Yisroel*, the Hebrew name for the affirmation of the Jewish faith. Much of the impact of this work comes from the way in which a unison male chorus suddenly bursts into singing the *Shema*, in its original Hebrew, to a theme with a particularly singable and memorable contour (Ex. 1a). I wish to discuss this theme and account for its significance by describing its similarities with a traditional melody for the same words as sung by European Jews.

Example 1

a)

She - ma Yis - ro - el A - dô - noy E - lô - hei - nu A - dô - noi E - chod.

b) *Lento*

She - ma Yis - ro - el A - dô - noi E - lô - hei - nu A - dô - noi E - chod.

c)

She - ma Yis - ro - el A - dô - noi E - lô - hei - nu A - dô - noi E - chod.

Two versions of the traditional Jewish melody are compared with Schoenberg's theme in Ex. 1. Example 1b is by the German cantor Abraham Baer² and Ex. 1c is the version of the French cantor

¹Arnold Schonberg: *Samtliche Werke, Abteilung V. Reihe A. Band 19. Chorwerke II* (Mainz. Wien: B. Schott's Sohne, Universal Edition, 1975).

²Abraham Baer, *Baal T'fillah, oder Der Practische Vorbeter* (Frankfurt a.M., 2nd Ed., 1883).

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Samuel Naumbourg.³ Each festival in the year has its own traditional melody for the singing of the *Shema*, but the examples quoted are versions of the melody used on the most solemn occasions, i.e., during the synagogue service for the New Year and Day of Atonement, as well as the “Profession of Faith” service at the close of the Day of Atonement. The melodies used in these services are regarded by the mass of the Jewish people as being particularly solemn and significant. The Hebrew text as sung in the synagogue is taken from Deuteronomy VI, verse 4; Schoenberg not only set this verse but also verses 5 through 7. (These verses, together with verses 8 through 10, are also part of the Jewish liturgy, but are recited in a monotone.) When the *Shema* is sung in the synagogue, the conventional style of performance is for the melody to be sung by the cantor, then repeated by the choir and congregation in harmony, as for example in Naumbourg’s harmonization (Ex. 2). Baer did not provide a harmonization but his general style assumes that his music may be harmonized *ad lib.* in a simple way by any choir.

Example 2

The musical score for Example 2 consists of two staves. The upper staff is a vocal line in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody begins with a falling phrase for the words "She - ma — Yis - roel —", followed by an upward leap on "Ad - noi" (marked with a fermata), a fall on "E - loe - he - nu", and then another leap up on "Ad - noi" followed by a final fall on "E - chod." The lower staff is a piano accompaniment in the same key and time, featuring a steady rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests.

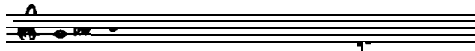
Whether Schoenberg was consciously referring to a traditional theme or not, there is an audible similarity between his version and the traditional versions. They all have a similar melodic contour, which begins with a falling phrase for the words *Shema Yisrael*, an upward leap on *Adonoi* followed by a fall on *Eloheinu*, and then another leap up on *Adonoi* and a final fall on *Echod*. This contour naturally follows the phrasing of the spoken words. The intervals used at cadential points are themselves the same in the traditional version and Schoenberg’s version. Thus the words *Shema Yisrael* embrace the fall of a fifth. The last syllable of the next word, *Adonoi*, is sung to a pitch higher than any used previously, being a wide distance from the last syllable of *Yisrael*. This interval is a minor sixth in Schoenberg’s theme, an octave in Baer’s version, and a minor seventh in Naumbourg’s version. In all three versions, the

³Samuel Naumbourg, Zmirot *Yisrael, Chants Liturgiques de Grandes Fetes* (Paris, 1847. Reprinted New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954).

penultimate word *Adonoi* uses pitch C, and the last word *Echod* ends with the fall of a minor second, from Ab to G. Although Ex. 1b does not end with a falling minor second, the implied harmony (which would of course be audible if a choir were performing) is a progression from F minor to G major which incorporates the fall of Ab to G by a minor second.

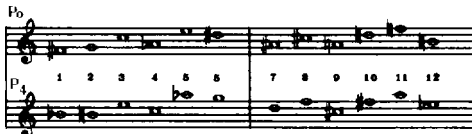
The last-mentioned feature is of particular importance since it is a basic element of a great deal of traditional European Jewish music. Much of this derives from the use of a particular scale known to Jewish musicians as the “Phraigish” scale (the “Ahavoh Rabbah” mode of Idelsohn⁴), sharing with classical Phrygian mode the interval of a minor second between the first two steps (Ex. 3). This characteristic interval of a minor second has been described by Schmidt⁵ as forming a sighing motive in op. 46, symbolizing the suffering of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Example 3



The *Shema* is musically the climax of the work, as Schmidt describes;⁶ the singing of this passage is the core of the actual drama. It is reasonable that Schoenberg would have referred to a traditional motive when composing a striking melody for the *Shema*, or else would have chosen a melody with certain obvious or traditional features that the traditional melody could also be shown to use for the same purpose. If Schoenberg was indeed quoting a traditional theme, the question of its relationship to the basic series of the work needs to be discussed. Schoenberg's theme is a six-pitch melody, the first hexachord of the basic series transposed up by four semitones (**P4**). The entire row (P0) and the **P4** transposition are given in Ex. 4.

Example 4



4A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1929. Reprinted New York: Schocken Books, 1967).

5C. M. Schmidt, “Arnold Schoenberg's Kantate ‘Ein Überlebender aus Warschau’ Op. 46,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 33/4 (1976), p. 261.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

The requirements of Schoenberg's serial method of composition restrict the literal quotation of material from outside the work but nonetheless the pitches available in P4 are sufficient to create Schoenberg's traditional-sounding theme. Since the whole work is derived from one basic series, it is possible that the series itself was constructed with the knowledge that it would later have to be transformed into the *Shema* melody. Indeed we know from Schoenberg's draft that the music breaking into the *Shema* was a primary idea in the work's composition.' This dramatic conclusion, the singing of the *Shema*, is described by the narrator at the opening of the work, using the words "... they all started to sing .. the old prayer ... the forgotten creed." At this point (mm. **18-21**) the horn quotes the actual *Shema* melody as given in Ex. 1a.

THE idea that op. 46 contains authentic Jewish musical material has already been suggested by Gruhn,⁸ who refers to the extramusical, emotional significance that such a quotation would have. He also notes that the phrase which he identifies as this quotation (at the words *uvahol ma'odeho*, mm. **89-90**, Ex. 5) does not apparently relate to the basic series of the work. This idea has been criticized on the grounds that the passage in question was omitted in the first draft of the work, and was later inserted to follow the 'cello part.⁹

Example 5



It might also be pointed out that the quotation of a traditional theme would have less expressive effect if it were placed in the middle of a passage, as is the case with the phrase *uvahol ma'odeho*, instead of at the beginning, or any other conspicuous place. Further, contrary to what Gruhn says, this phrase is not a traditional "nigun" (melody) known to Jews through chanting the Talmud, except insofar as it resembles the speech pattern of the words involved,

⁷Ibid., p. 268.

⁸W. Gruhn "Zitat und Reihe in Schonbergs 'Ein Uberlebender aus Warschau'," *Zeitschrift fur Musiktheorie*, 5/1 (1974), p. 32.

⁹C. M. Schmidt, loc. cit. (see footnote 5), p. 270.

since the Talmud is not recited to any fixed melody, but half-chanted according to the sense of the text.¹⁰

We have 'discussed here the importance of the *Shema* to op. 46, both as a key part of the drama and as an important element in the musical structure. Also of importance are the ideas implicit in the words of the *Shema*, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." That Schoenberg himself regarded these ideas as important is indicated by his writings and by the choice of subjects for his works.¹¹ As already mentioned, utterance of the Shema is symbolic of the Jew's devotion to his faith, and it was in this faith that Schoenberg found inspiration throughout the major part of his life. Five of his last eight compositions deal specifically with Jewish themes; but for many years earlier, indeed from as early as 1912, as suggested by Ringer,¹² Schoenberg had followed a line of religious development that he found already-expressed in Old Testament themes, One such theme, as Schoenberg himself wrote in a letter to Walter Eidlitz dated 1933,¹³ is "the idea of the inconceivable God" which Schoenberg internalized as the inconceivability of a final goal in life. Life was constantly a process of searching despite all obstacles. Schoenberg returned to this theme on many occasions: in Jacob's *Ladder* (the text completed in 1917) the Archangel Gabriel declares: "One must go on without asking what lies before." Similarly in Moses *and Aaron* (the text begun in 1928 and the second act completed in 1932) the Voice in the Burning Bush declares, in a paraphrase of Amos III, verse 2: "This people is chosen ... to be the people of the only God ... that it undergo all trials ..." The devotion of the Jews to their ideals throughout their history, despite all trials, resembled Schoenberg's own devotion to what he considered to be a task he had to do.

¹⁰The reader who wishes to see examples of these chants will find them in Chemjo Vinaver. *Anthology of Jewish Music* (New York: Edward B. Marks Music Corp., 1955).

¹¹For a fuller discussion of this topic, see Peter Gradenwitz, "The Religious Works of Arnold Schoenberg," *Music Review*, 21 (1960), pp. 19-29.

¹²Alexander L. Ringer, "Arnold Schoenberg and the Prophetic Image in Music," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, 1/1 (1976), p. 28.

¹³Erwin Stein, ed., *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, translated by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 172.

From the belief of God's Unity, or rather Uniqueness, stems the Jew's conception of unity in mankind and in the universe. We find this expressed in the final words of *Moses and Aaron* (which Schoenberg did not live to set to music), which look forward to such a union with God. The same belief is incorporated in *Kol Nidre* op. 39, the text of which deals with God's forgiveness of Jews who had been forced to stray from their pure, monotheistic path in a Christian, but not godless, environment. Since these ideas were central to his own beliefs, Schoenberg must have found added significance in the incorporation of the *Shema* into the events described in op. 46. The dramatic story of the singing of the *Shema* by the inmates of the Warsaw Ghetto in the face of death provided not only the material for this piece, but provided an actual symbol for Schoenberg's own life and ideas.

SURVIVING FUTURE SHOCK: SOME OTHER VIEWS

Under this title there appeared in the June 1979 issue of the *JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC* a talk delivered by **Hazzan** Samuel Rosenbaum, Executive Vice President of the Cantors Assembly, at the 32nd annual convention of that organization. The talk constituted Hazzan Rosenbaum's Annual Report and was an analysis of a survey which he had conducted on the evolving office of the Hazzan. It included, as well, a proposal of some options for dealing with emerging worship patterns in the American Conservative synagogue.

Appearing with Hazzan Rosenbaum as discussants, were Hazzan Charles S. Davidson of Adath Jeshurun, Elkins Park, Pa., and Hazzan David Tilman of Beth Sholom Congregation, Elkins Park, Pa. Hazzan Davidson is a distinguished composer of synagogue music, as well as a creative and articulate Hazzan; Hazzan Tilman holds a postgraduate degree in Jewish music, is a talented choral conductor and the Hazzan of a large and active congregation.

The publication in the *Journal* of Hazzan Rosenbaum's report elicited a number of comments, pro and con. Because we believe that discussion of such a vital matter is of extreme importance to the future of hazzanut, we want to publish as many of the comments as possible. In order to give our readers the benefit of the full discussion which ensued at the convention, we are publishing below the comments on Hazzan Rosenbaum's paper made by Charles Davidson and David Tilman.

Following that, is a response to Hazzan Rosenbaum's article by Dr. Michael Isaacson, an energetic and talented composer living in Los Angeles, who divides his time between synagogue music and composing for television. There are a number of additional comments which we hope to publish in succeeding issues.

We welcome any thoughts which our readers may have on the subject.

The Editors

DISCUSSIONS

HAZZAN CHARLES DAVIDSON

We are aware that times have changed. The signs are clear for those who know how to look. The guiding principles of secular America seem to include: instant gratification, “me-too-ism”, instant appeal, short-term high interest speculatives, an unstable and frightening economy, the spectre of a world winding-down without adequate fuel.

In the midst of this confusion, religion seeks to justify its existence. To many, its relevance in a secular age is still moot. Organized religion remains at a low point in all denominations except those of the fundamentalists and “born-again” evangelicals.

In addition to trying to justify its existence, Judaism seeks to maintain at least a status quo while teaching the values and priorities of the *mitzvot* to a rapidly declining American-Jewish population, decimated by inter-marriage, a low birth rate and blase disinterest.

Schweitzer claims that “in age of sophistication, religion disappears entirely.” It would seem today, that many see religion as a medieval concept no longer important and for which they have substituted secular surrogates — and yet, people and their needs are basically unchanged and still want to actualize themselves as human beings. Religion has sustained the souls of men for 4,000 years. The fundamental concepts which have pointed the way toward greater moral sensitivity in the past are still valid and are needed to refute and counter balance the narcissistic secularism of our time. As hazzanim by choice, with the obligation of service to God and a people, we must function within those parameters.

Our Executive Vice President is blessed or cursed with an acute awareness of cause and effect. He understood the religious and sociological waves of change throughout the past decade and the changes, voluntary and involuntary, which resulted from them. With others, he foretold the confrontations of the 80’s and has been a constant reminder to us, repeatedly and consistently, of the changes in our communities and our lack of response to them over the years. He outlined the general areas of concern as far back as the 1960’s and begged the cantorate to respond to problems, then in their infancy:

- I. The lifeless quality of many worship services.
- II. The disappearance of Jewish musical authenticity.
- III. The abandonment of Jewish values generally.
- IV. The disinterest of synagogue leadership in providing a spiritual oasis when that effort came into conflict with “financial accountability.”
- V. The lack of incentive for Jewish music creativity.
- VI. The continuing conflict between synagogue professionals, particularly in terms of “livening-up” the worship service.
- VII. The deterioration of the position of Hazzan.

Do you remember hearing the following?

“Somehow, as individuals, we have become bogged down in the daily grind. We are so involved with personalities, salary, status, working conditions, insurance and retirement that we rarely have the time or energy to think about anything else . . . the cynicism with which many of our generation are so dangerously infected seems to have captured us as well. Somewhere along the line we seem to have given up the future.”

These quotations are from “Epitaph for Jewish Music?” printed in the September, 1968 issue of *“The Journal of Synagogue Music.”* This article appealed to the cantorate in particular and the Jewish community in general to rescue Jewish music creativity from what Samuel Rosenbaum felt was a short-lived revival soon to come to an ignominious end.

He said that plagiarism in a true sense was being practiced on a large scale by those who saved a few pennies reproducing music on a copier rather than by purchasing it. “In trying to save money in this fashion,” he stated, “we are actually saying to our congregations that Jewish music doesn’t deserve serious budgetary consideration, that it is not worthy of a full budget and that we, as practitioners in the field of Jewish music, do not understand, or do not care to point up the importance of working with proper materials.” He might also have added that it deprived publishers and composers of rightful royalties and recompense for the increasing costs of publishing. Without those returns Jewish publications could not be sustained nor would younger, talented composers become interested in the field of Jewish music.

Well, that was the prophecy. What of the here and now? How have we, as guardians of Jewish music, helped with the projected problem? Judging by the results we have done poorly. For practical purposes, Jewish music publishers have disappeared. In terms of composers of Jewish music still alive in America; 6 are cantors, 6 music directors (4 of whom are retired), 2 are musicologists or teachers on a college level. The rest are active in other fields. Of the above, only 15 still compose for the synagogue, none are younger than 30, 4 are between 30-40, 2 are between 40-50, 13 between 50-60, 8 between 60-70, 2 between 70-80 and 2 over 80. The prophecy is fulfilled. (JWB Music Summary, 1978, Steven Richards)

Hazzan Rosenbaum accurately described the future pattern of many services when in 1967 (*“Journal of Synagogue Music,”* September, 1967) he said: “... the congregation *sits* uncomfortably well dressed, faces fixed, eyes shallow ... waiting for the Rabbi to tell them it is time to pray. The Rabbi, Cantor and choir are finally in their appointed places as they perform solos, duets, trios and ensembles, but the hum of congregational prayer, the surge and breath of prayer are frozen as if in a far away wasteland. Once in a while the congregation joins in a perfunctory response, or reading, or tune, but these are only barren islands scattered over a vast sea of indifferent emptiness. But the prayer we so desperately need, lies deep in the untouched recesses of the heart.”

What, has happened in these ensuing years? How have we and the synagogue met the challenge? Did we recognize a need for change from “solos, duets and trios?” Do our services now reflect a discernible quality of life or sense of prayerful dignity? Have we been able to lead that passive unresponsive congregant to active prayer?

And the congregant. Who is he? Where does he come from? Who influenced him positively or who helped to “turn him off?” If we are the musical strings he is our sounding board. His song must be our response.

Twenty years ago, this Jew was a teen-ager, probably in a Conservative synagogue. He was fashioned by the Conservative Movement, molded by his teachers and now is either predisposed against Institutional Religion as he understands it, or feels comfortable enough to function within it. If the service he was exposed to came through as a meaningful and sincere one, he may seek

a similar religious experience now. He will be in favor of his continued study of Jewish materials if he was so influenced as a youngster or he may still remember a poor introduction to Jewish learning presented by an apathetic teacher or unconcerned principal or Educational Director. The institutional budgetary problems of the times that have prevented the creation of a large cadre of competent, involved and dedicated Jewish educators continue to increase with a further deterioration of the synagogue school. Jewish communal astigmatism remains a serious problem!

Our contemporary congregant may remember “his” Rabbi and Hazzan with love and respect but only if they were free enough to show him the same; or he may not have been personally touched at all by distant and lofty kley *kodesh*. How often in the past years have many hazzanim been more interested in their own performance at the *amud* to the complete neglect of the inter-personal relationships that are so long lasting and meaningful in terms of “life with people.” Rabbanim, hazzanim, educational directors, executive directors, have all neglected the obviously human relationships, heart to heart, face to face, soul to soul, the close kinship each human being needs and seeks, and which are so necessary to cement the Jewish value-scale, which includes music and *t’fillot*.

If you consider this portrait as exaggerated, nevertheless, it is too close to reality for comfort.

On the other hand, many younger Jewish families are experiencing a real desire for commitment and for an involvement in the ritual of worship-and many of them are without an adequate background. They confront us with their presence. What is our response to them? Do we stand by without serious thought to their development? Do we shut our eyes and ears without comment as they absorb direction from those ill-qualified to do so? What is our reaction to obvious liturgical improvisation, short-cuts, easy to sing banal melodies, lack of proper *nusah*, indeed to a complete lack of understanding of the tradition of prayer modes. How do we respond?

Other younger congregants, quite conversely, feel no need for prayer, no need for Hebrew as a skill, no need for ritual in any sense. What is our response to them? They also confront us.

And . . . ah, for the old familiar sound of *davenen* — for the magic, insistent hum — for what the late revered Hazzan, Nehemiah

Mendelson, so aptly named: a “*murmerai*;” a continuum of prayer chant that rose and filled the air.

Elliot Gertel reminds us that Judaism has “sought to conquer time with *mitzvot*, whose cosmic significance, according to tradition, cannot be measured. He quotes Heschel as saying that “creation is the language of God, time is His song. To sanctify time is to sing the vowels in unison with Him.” Gertel claims that “Words, when said, are judged against each other . . . but words when sung, share modulations and become a unified hymn.” That unified hymn is *nusah* and to hazzanim *nusah* equates with Torah.

One could say that the concept of *nusah hat’fillah* is at a low point, in most congregations, particularly those with no or with part-time cantors. Who is thkre to teach, to instruct by example, to supervise, to ensure the continuation of services chanted in the proper *nusah* with intent and with musical integrity? Our *baale batim* no longer have that instinct for tradition in prayer. Jews have become strangers to *nusah* and to *t’fillah*. Are we responsible for this condition? Totally or in part? Another confrontation with the real world? How shall we proceed? By encouraging ignorance? By keeping silent? By working towards progressive change?

And what if we all were teachers in a true sense and could provoke interest, transmit knowledge with the best of them-to whom should we address ourselves? Can our congregants read *alef bet*? Are most capable of reading *Hashkivenu* without error? With correct punctuation? How can we teach *nusah* and *davennen* to Jews who are unable to read fluently enough to communicate freely with God, in His language. Another confrontation with the present. The ill-prepared worshipper. What is to be our position?

Regardless of ability or “prayer-input” we all do acknowledge the attendance at services of one group we call “regulars”; all with varied talents and competence who do “come”, who do try to participate, who seem interested, for a variety of reasons. We, as hazzanim, count upon their response; indeed, we rely upon their understanding of the routine of ritual and ourselves derive a sense of satisfaction when functioning as their *sh’liach ttibbur*. How do we, and they, react to the influx of strangers attending *B’ney Mitzvah* celebrations and who seem most uninterested in the worship portion of the service. In many cases they confront and challenge the rabbi and hazzan.

How unhappily we view them. In those synagogues and on those occasions we are more than ever aware of our general constituency and the presence of many who are attending services under duress, perhaps under familial pressure and who would rather be anywhere at that moment but in the synagogue. By their presence, they physically separate those who would like to respond and pray but who become inhibited and very, very quiet unless there is a strong tradition of prayer and response in that congregation. The odds are that the influx of visitors will mute the usual sound of response by sheer intimidation. Have some of us secretly wished that those who wished to pray and participate might be seated toward the front of the sanctuary while those who wished to remain passive auditors would be seated to the sides and rear? Ushers might ask the question of those who entered, "Passive and/or confrontative" or "Willing to give us a chance"? One could envision a synagogue theatre-in-the-round with worshippers front and center and observers around the periphery.

Maurice Samuels envisioned the kind of *shul* atmosphere that we all hope for, where "the art of '*davenen*' ... the periodic contact with religious emotion ... is a daily necessity to the pious Jew. The davenner's soul is in the posture of prayer ... the familiar exercise is a kind of hypnotic induction." But this aspect of the art of prayer has generally disappeared; the responsorial, audible answer to the hazzan's question, grows ever weaker.

Ten years ago, Sam Rosenbaum, summarized the various remedies current in an attempt to alleviate the tediousness which seemed endemic in our service. "If people cannot or do not pray," he said, "the logic went that there must be something wrong with service. Start it later, finish earlier, make it shorter, make it longer, put in an organ, take out the organ, more English, less Hebrew, better refreshments, no refreshments, coffee hour, *Kiddush*, *Oneg Shabbat*, shorter sermon, longer Torah lesson, more announcements, less announcements, annual Torah cycle, tri-ennial Torah cycle, etc."

Now, ten years later, the "remedies" of the past continue to be prescribed with the same negligible results. Juvenile concepts, such as Hebrew school classes or youth congregation leading *En Kelohenu* or *Adon Olam* in the main sanctuary or birthday greetings delivered by the Rabbi to young celebrants asked to come to the *bimah* are devices to both "liven-up" the service or to demonstrate the leadership's affinity toward and closeness to the younger generation. Again the wrong remedies for the wrong reasons-a

recapitulation of the “special inclusions in the Worship Service” which Heschel decried pointing a finger of blame upon those who sought to add spice to the service instead of considering how to add *kavannuh* and worshipful dignity to the individual prayer effort.

Among recent experiments are the so-called “camp songs.” In the 40’s and 50’s songs of Russian and Palestinian origin were standard fare for Jewish camps and Religious School music programs. They were viable and quite often very musical. Except in rare instances the texts for these songs were non-liturgic. The creation of Camps Ramah and their counterpart, NIFTY Camps, have made an extraordinary impact on American Jewish life. Thousands of young people have returned to their communities, imbued with stronger Jewish values and excited about living as Jews. The Jewish summer camp as exemplified by Ramah, is adding immeasurably to the American Jewish community. In terms of the musical impact of these camp situations, however, specifically in terms of religious services, quite the converse is true. With the exception of the efforts of the very early song leaders and others involved in these camp programs, recent song leaders have done a disservice. Too many tunes of questionable musicality have recently been taught to children who brought them back to become part of the communal experience. The texts of most recent additions to the camp musical literature are of a liturgical nature and this compounds the problem.

Some of these tunes were composed “on location,” at camp, some in the Yeshivah environment, but most were written in Israel and specifically designed for commercial export. They are all attractive to youth and well suited for a summertime camp experience. It was early felt by some cantors and musical directors, who objected to the genre, that the poor musicality of these tunes would soon be obvious to others; and of course, they would be so demonstrably out of place in Sabbath services that it would be unlikely that they could displace *nusah hat’fillah*. After all, *hiddur mitzvah* requires praying with the best and most beautifully appropriate music for heaven directed worship. And although, as individuals, we all have varying concepts of beauty, hazzanim generally felt that the vulgarity and *obvious* secularity of the tunes and rhythms associated with campfires, dining halls and marching tunes would never find hallowed places in the service *per se*.

“But soon the charismatic guitarist who knew a few chords was equated with the cantor, the music director and the composer

of synagogue music, and both *rabbanim* and laymen seemed unwilling to acknowledge the difference.” Steven Richards claims that “in the frenetic drive towards congregational participation, the lowest common denominator is sought—that tune which stirs reaction most quickly— not because of its worth as a tune but because of its sociological effect on a mass.” He continues, “there has been an attempt to turn our synagogues into camps because of the successful summer worship experience many children have in camping situations.” (JWB Summary, 1978)

Max Wohlberg reminds us that the Conservative synagogue in the United States was the place where congregational singing of sections of the liturgy had achieved its greatest popularity. There it was welcomed and flourished and was, for decades, a distinctive aspect of the Conservative worship service.” But, again, these tunes were generally of good musical caliber and were seldom distracting in the general fabric of the service. Wohlberg explained that “a survey of congregational tunes 35 years ago showed heterogeneous sources such as: Yiddish folk influence, dance patterns, pseudo-Oriental and Yemenite melodies, etc.; current practice seems to dictate a blend of American Yeshivah and recent winning songs of the Israel Hassidic Folk Festival.”

Relative to “legitimate” hassidic tunes and the commercial variety, he goes on to further explain that “the legitimate hassidic tune is in a category of its own and is not subject to critical musical analysis. The qualities of pious fervor and ecstatic yearning which infects its singers, place it outside the realm of analytical consideration. To introduce it into a sedate and formal service would be to commit an esthetic blunder. Similarly, a pleasant Z’mirot tune is not necessarily appropriate for a liturgical text.” (Conservative *Judaism*)

It is a commentary on the lack of background in Jewish music by so many in the Jewish lay community and an acknowledgement of the strong influence of recorded music in our time and society, that convinces so many that Hassidic Song Festival favorites are indicative of the mode of prayer current in Israel and therefore appropriate for synagogue use in the United States, when, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

When Wohlberg points to the forward of Lewandowski’s “*Kol Rino Usefila*” of 1871 he shows us two remarkable statements by Lewandowski. Remarkable in the sense that, to this writer at least,

they encapsulate the two-pronged nexus of congregational apathy and uninvolvedness in our own time.

Lewandowski's statement, written over 100 years ago, is an indictment of synagogue practices in his own time and could very well have been included in this year's report of congregational worship practices. He said, in 1871, "ungifted and unmusical individuals have introduced trivial tunes" into the worship service and also that congregations "who have previously shouted, have been, since the introduction of choirs, condemned to silence."

Translated into current terms, this writer believes that:

1. By not providing sufficiently good congregational tunes and affording worshippers an opportunity to sing them we have helped prepare the soil for an implantation of tunes whose worth is negligible.
2. By misusing professional choirs and organs we have helped to subdue congregations that had the capacity to *daven* and have not yet found ways to combine the best aspects of both modes of worship, that is choir/organ and *daven-nen*.

Regarding the long standing practice of the bravura, solo recitative or recitative with choir, I respectfully suggest that for most situations this is no longer a successful prayer vehicle. The very few hazzanim really capable of stirring the soul with magnificent coloratura and exceptional voices still continue to do so, and should continue. Unfortunately, all hazzanim are not equally capable and some are still unaware of it. We must face the challenge of our time. The congregation for whom our hazzanic forebearers chanted no longer exist. The congregations in which we function require a considered and thoughtful approach. Each situation is different and solutions to the problems of a balanced service must be faced intelligently and with compassion. Continuing in the style of a bygone era is not appropriate for today unless we are again able to reeducate congregants and elicit a response from them. It is our problem and our confrontation.

There was a time when it would have been unthinkable that the hazzan would be asked to abdicate or subordinate his main function, that of *sh'lich tzibbur*. A hazzan was retained for his interpretive skills, devotion to the concept of *t'fillah* and ability to inspire the *kahal*. We all know that even vocal ability was not a prime consideration. Recently, congregations and a newer generation

of rabbis prompted by many pressures wish the *B'ney Mitzvah* to lead large portions, if not complete services on "their" day.

The question which seems most relevant is one of "intent". Is the Bar Mitzvah a ceremony which is part of the larger worship service, as it should be? Or is it a "show" in every sense of the word? Is the entire Shabbat service more a vehicle for child, family and friends, rather than a worship service for congregation and community ?

Reading of Torah and Haftorah with thoughtful English or Hebrew introductions to those sections are certainly appropriate for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Chanting the service is not! Do we as hazzanim offer alternatives to the showy display of pulpit ability requested of many youngsters? Do we respond that weekday *minha-maariv*, Sunday morning *shaharit* or Shabbat afternoon *minha* and *havdalah* led by the youngster would serve him and Judaism better than functioning in place of the Cantor at Shabbat services? Why is leading the service on Shabbat not a "show"? Should the child give the sermon in place of an inspirational discourse by the Rabbi whose function in Israel is that of teacher and preacher? Would the service actually benefit by such a substitution? The answer is no!

A congregational youth service which can be led weekly by young people qualified to lead, taught by the hazzan, which paralleled the main sanctuary service, would certainly provide the future Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the tools and understanding to lead future services, at *some other time*, when the taint of "show biz" would not be an adjunct to what is basically a religious experience, intended for the whole congregation, not only for those celebrating a *simcha*.

But again, who will speak out? Who is able to confront gently and in the spirit of redemptive progress? Who will relegate self-interest to a secondary role and speak out for the betterment of the synagogue and American Jewry? Who will be unafraid of difficulties and change 'because they speak from knowledge, secure in their craft and art, as guardians of tradition and instigators of change? It is our confrontation. How shall we respond?

The evolved patterns on which this paper is based were anticipated in years past. They are no longer projectory. They are here and now. We must work with them to the betterment of our calling and heritage. We must raise our heads and face the issues clearly,

sensitive to all aspects of the problems, with compassion for the efforts of others and a desire to add our expertise to decisions made on high levels. We have an obligation to help in the holding of Jewish consciousness in the present as well as future generation. Each hazzan must look upon himself as though he were personally responsible for the continuation of *hazzanut* as a profession as those who “have a special, distinct and unique, tradition-honored role to play in Jewish life” (Rosenbaum — C.A. Proceedings, 1978).

What are some of the practicum that we might employ?

The hazzan should have a regular column in the synagogue publication. He should speak out in areas of concern. The column should be an educational tool.

The hazzan should encourage publicity on a national scale which will be an extension of the synagogue bulletin. To create an awareness of the special problems inherent in worship and in Jewish music.

The hazzan should be involved in congregational and communal life as a Jewish professional.

The hazzan should be the musical resource for the congregational school, for congregational music and *t’fillah* classes, for youth services, etc. All music which might find its way into any service in the congregational building should have direction from the hazzan. He should not permit or encourage deviations from the proper *nusah* which would not be welcome in the main service.

The hazzan might institute or supervise the teaching of Haftorah and Torah *trop* in the Religious School music class, the creation of Torah Reading Clubs and *Shomrei Nusah* groups.

The hazzan might direct a program of *nusah hat’fillah* for adult lay leaders and create a program for learning and chanting Torah and Haftorah for adults.

The hazzan might gather together family members qualified to read Torah and institute a family reading program for Shabbat *minha* or *Rosh Hodesh* Torah readings.

The hazzan should supervise the proper training of *B’nai Mitzvah* so that an understanding of the system of *taamey hamikrah* is insured. He should oppose and discourage the use of children as “*shi’lichey tzibbur*”.

The hazzan should give lectures as well as programs of Jewish music and use those opportunities to impart legitimate Jewish musical values.

The hazzan should help create a responsive and responding congregation by helping to teach basic Jewish skills and Jewish prayer responses.

The hazzan could implement the presentation of annual Zimriyah Festivals for the school, congregation or community which would encourage the public presentation of music of worth.

The hazzan should teach *menshlichkeit* by example.

The hazzan should remind the community that “The voice of prayer is never silenced but speaks to men of all generations and summons them to communion with their Maker. Be open to its prayerful song. All that matters is that you hear it and respond.” (UAHC Prayerbook *Shaarei T'fillah*) .

HAZZAN DAVID TILMAN

Before I begin my formal remarks, let me begin with a slight preface that I feel I must add, based on some of the discussions I have had with friends since I arrived here yesterday afternoon, and based on some of the things that Sam has stated this morning.

Let me begin by stating that I am very happy in my job. I really am. I am very happy in my job. I enjoy what I do very much. I think I am in touch with my congregation's needs and I think that I respond to the needs of my congregation. I am faced with the same problems and confrontations that all of you are faced with. Yet, somehow I manage to cope and come out the better man for it. Let me state for the record that I daven every Friday night and Shabbat morning, most of the time with organ and choir, ten months of the year. I am a fervent believer in *nusah hatefillah*. I feel that every day I accomplish something worthwhile, that I've touched somebody or that I have learned something new for myself. I do many things every day of which *shlihut* is a major part, but only one component of many. I feel that everything else that I do contributes ultimately to the success or the failure of my own *shlihut*.

As only Sam has a way of characterizing, in a very few words what sometimes takes me many, many weeks to think of, when he said in the very beginning of his speech: "The hazzan has the mandate to lead his congregation both *to* prayer (and I underline that three times), and in prayer (and I also underline that preposition three times), because I believe that what I do in leading people to prayer is as important as leading them in prayer.

Ultimately, I consider myself an educator of Jewish values using the means of musical expression and Jewish musical resources as my tool, and I've said that before from this podium.

My presentation this morning is really a description, a very personal description, of how I confront the problems facing all of us. How I solve some of these problems, and how I fail to solve others of them. Please accept what I now have to say in that light.

Allow me to begin my formal remarks, this morning, by relating to you two seemingly unconnected but relevant subjects to my presentation to you.

About a month ago there appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES science pages, a report on research done by biochemists in the area

of tranquilizers and pain killers. The paper reported that scientists had discovered that the body produces its own natural tranquilizers and pain killers in certain situations. What is more interesting, and what immediately grabbed my own attention, was the discovery of certain receptors (and I'll come back to that word over and over again), in the brain for these naturally produced substances. As soon as these natural drugs were released into the bloodstream, they went directly to the receptive nerves in the brain and attached themselves at that point. Each substance had its own specific receptor-nerve package in the brain. End of first item.

Second item: About three weeks ago, my own synagogue, Beth Sholom Congregation, brought Mr. Velvel Pasternack to our congregation to discuss what he does before the Men's Club. Velvel described, and those of you who have heard him know that he is an incredibly valuable person as well as an incredibly capable stand-up comic, he described, in very humorous fashion, his research into all the various Hassidic sects that he has studied. I was specifically caught up with what he had to say with regard to a specific tune of the Bratslaver Hasidim. He tried to track down, during his year in Israel, the source of one specific *nigun*, which had been identified to him as a holy Bratslaver *nigun* sung by the Rebbe for generations, but which he knew, after he heard it, to be nothing more than a Greek-Arab dance called the Miserlou.

True story. You should hear him tell it. His field work ultimately led him to a *farbrengin* in S'fat, on the occasion of the Yahrzeit of Moshe Rabeinu. There it was that he discovered how the Bratslaver sing this particular tune with such gusto and *hishtaphut hanefesh*. It seems that prior to 1948, the Druze Arabs also used to gather in S'fat on exactly the same day, at the same time as the Bratslaver Hassidim. They would sing this Miserlou tune, in *Ahaia Rabah* mode. Slowly the Hassidim learned it, applied to it various Bratslaver syllabification, a variation of ya-be-bai, whatever, and forgot its origin. They had totally assimilated it by 1948 when the Druze Arabs stopped coming to S'fat. Now the Bratslaver Hassidim claim it as their very own, and imbue it with all the sanctity and holiness of much earlier and more authentic *nigunim*. End of second item.

My friends, our profession is indeed changing because, simply, the needs of our communities are changing. I have realized that I must change to fill these needs or I will become, at best, irrelevant and at worst, an unneeded item on my congregation's budget.

In 20th century America, and again Sam said it so well, in this age of extreme narcissism, we have elevated the highest form of narcissism to the artists in our time. We worship the superstar musician, we worship the superstar painter and we glorify him as he shows us the perfection of his chosen field of specialization. I am afraid that many of us express tremendous resentment when we don't receive similar glorification from our own congregations.

For too long we have been totally consumed with the art of transmitting our sacred heritage without doing anything or very little, to create the receptors- and I refer back to the word I used before-in the hearts and minds of the Jewish community for what it is that we are trying to transmit. It is possible that we must share part of the blame for our own frustrations and the current deterioration of our craft, as Sam so aptly described to us. **I** think *so*.

If rabbis (who also must share the guilt of creating a mirror Jewish community which no longer really **davens**) wait and see that we are not really reaching our people, do you blame them for pushing us into all kinds of short-term solutions to our all-common problems. This is due, as I said before, to the fact that we have done really very little to create these receptors for the messages and art forms that we are trying to transmit. You can't transmit anything unless you have a receiver to receive it.

Allow me to state a very highly controversial position, and I want you to listen to it very carefully before you jump down my throat. There is nothing inherently sacred about the various combinations of notes that make up our modes or **Misinai** tunes; nothing inherent, no inherent **kedusha** in putting one note next to another. These tunes and modes which we so assiduously strive to protect and preserve are in themselves no more sacred than a **besamim** box, a candlestick or a **hallah** cover. To take this analogy one step further, we cannot content ourselves with being musical jewelers — silversmith who produces a magnificent **yad**, breastplate, **rimonim** or kiddush cup does absolutely nothing to insure that his work will be used properly. He does nothing to teach the values inherent in their use. He merely produces a beautiful object and product and lets someone else cultivate an appreciation for their beauty and teach their function.

We cannot afford such a luxury. We can no longer strive to produce the most beautiful music possible without worrying about

cultivating the values and tastes of our congregants at their most elementary, and I underline the word elementary, level of their knowledge. Our Executive Vice President said this in 1970. (In preparation for this talk I want you to know that I re-read about ten reports of the Executive Vice President) and I quote from his 1970 report: “**We** have **been content** to sing, to pray, to chant, to teach on demand and then fade into the background. Too many of us care more about the sounds of our prayers than their relevance or meaning.” And I might add my own insertion, the ability and sensitivity to appreciate them. We are more intent on pleasing the ear of the worshipper than on the immeasurably more difficult task of challenging the mind.

I began with a discussion of brain receptors. If it is indeed true that **Hakadosh Baruch Hu**, in His infinite wisdom, designed the human brain with specific nerve receptors for pain killers and tranquilizers, I doubt very much if in addition, He placed in the Ashkenazic Jewish brain a specific compartment which automatically, from the moment of birth, imparts the ability to recognize **nusah l’hol** from **nusah l’Shabbat**. I would question the wisdom in 1979 of the statement mentioned by Sam of Adolph Katcho in 1947 that there remains a glimmer in the heart of the most dedicated Reform Jew. I don’t think that that glimmer exists automatically anymore. We must create and implant these receptors by becoming the best educators we can be. **In** the role of one we are insuring our positions as pulpit artists and interpreters of **tefillah** because we are creating an intelligent audience in the short term; and what is more important, we will be making Jews and thereby contributing to the survival of our people.

I come now to Pasternack’s story of the Bratslaver Hassidim and I find in this story a paradigm from much of our Jewish musical history. I learned in school that our tunes, the holy **MiSinai** tunes which we all hold up with such tremendous significance are admittedly of secular origin, most of them. They have acquired sanctity by use and re-use over a period of time and eventually their original sources are long forgotten.

Allow me to state the converse of my position that I stated above. Just as there is nothing inherently sacred about the music we call our traditional Jewish music resources, let me reiterate that these acquire sanctity through their use to the degree of which they may be used. There is nothing inherently profane about con-

temporary tunes written to sacred texts since 1967. Can you imagine the negative effect we must have on our own people who all run to buy Israeli and Hassidic records, genuine or otherwise, when we issue a blanket condemnation, and don't even make an attempt to discriminate between what is good and what is bad. What does indeed fit into the *shtimmung* of *tefillah*, to use Sam's words, and what doesn't. What may be tastefui, what may be used in a school setting and what may not be used in *tefillah*, and what may be, indeed, secular or worse, ill suited to convey these sacred texts. After we make this blanket condemnation of music that our people have, indeed, been moved by. And in Philadelphia it is a phenomenon that the Hassidic Festival, for better or worse, comes to Valley Forge every December and sells 6,000 tickets at between \$10-\$25 a ticket. They must be doing something to touch some souls. We may then be frustrated by the seeming lack of appreciation for our talents after we make this blanket condemnation.

I am not saying to you, and far be it for you to think that I fill my own services with Hassidic Festival tunes, but I am saying that you must, as educators, find some way to exploit the fact that our people, adults and children, have been genuinely touched by the revival of music set to sacred texts. If you keep an open world for a period of time, the good will, indeed, be separated from the bad. The cream will rise to the surface. But don't reject all of this material in a blanket overall fashion, *a priori*. I feel that we are ultimately hurting ourselves. I am struck by positions taken by two non-Jewish musicians during the 20th century.

This past summer I recently completed a biography of Pablo Casals, one of the great musicians of the 20th century. It is an incredible book, written by a man whose name is Kirk. This book describes a study of tremendous personal self-discipline over a life-span of 96 years. Yet Casals, the great Casals, considered his music making to be of no value in itself, unless he used it to make a political and moral statement. You may, or may not know that Casals after 1945 refused to play solo recitals anymore, as a protest against world acquiescence to the regime of Francisco Franco. I was struck, as I read this biography- you may remember that around last May or June the winner of the Tchaikovsky competition, the cellist, was a Jewish fellow from Pittsburgh, I believe, who exactly at the time of the Shcharansky trials, proceeded to play whatever he was playing, in Moscow. I found this to be an absolute complete contradiction and negation of everything that Casals stood for.

Toward the end of his life Casals wrote a cantata on behalf of world peace. He used his music and his performance to teach values. He strove to become the best cellist in the world, and succeeded and then used his music-making to teach values. *Can we* do any less? In Sam's address of 1968 (as I said, I have become an authority on Sam's addresses), he quoted Robert Shaw, the great American choral conductor and presently the conductor of the Atlanta Symphony, and Robert Shaw said (in a church publication) nothing but the best is good enough. "If one comes to me (Robert Shaw), saying one man's St. Matthew Passion may be another's Old Rugged Cross, then I may only reply that that is unfortunately his loss for there can be little doubt about which music ascribes to Him the greater glory."

"It is good to have 5,000 young people chanting softly and tenderly, 'Jesus Is Calling,' in Madison Square Garden, but if they could only have heard the St. Matthew Passion, they would have indeed have had a religious experience of far greater vigor and enrichment."

I don't know if I agree with Robert Shaw any more. I don't think our people are adequately prepared for the hazzanic equivalent of the St. Matthew Passion. Let me state for the record that I love the St. Matthew Passion. I spent four years and thousands of dollars learning and cultivating an appreciation of that kind of music. But I don't know that if at an earlier point in my life the St. Matthew Passion may have been anything more than a lot of noise. We are dealing with a Jewish community which needs, I think, simple, basic hymns, such as the Old Rugged Cross, which Robert Shaw referred to.

Here I come to the exact same conclusion that Sam came to. In the words of a contemporary commercial, we have to get back to basics. The simple hymns will lead to a cultivation of and an appreciation of the higher forms which has been lost by today's Jews. How can we *daven* for Jews who don't know how to *daven*? They must learn how to *dauen* before we can sing authentic *hazzanut* for them. For this complicated *hazzanut* to have any lasting effect beyond that of an esthetically pleasing performance.

I believe our panel discussion is entitled "Surviving Future Shock" and I may conclude in the following way: I think I'll make it into the 80's, the 90's and, I hope, God willing, should give me strength into the next century because, I understand my role as an

educator of Jewish values, using Jewish musical resources as my tools: because, I try to create receptors, receivers among both children and adults for that which I am trying to transmit; because I constantly try to make myself a, better professional so that I may become a better educator of Jewish values; because, ultimately, I know what my goal is and my goal is to make Jews. This goal is not at odds with the goal of making beautiful music. Far from it. By improving the means of my teaching, by increasing my repertoire, by improving my voice, by increasing my musical knowledge I will ultimately make more and better Jews of the people with whom I come into close proximity.

These are the principals by which I govern my own professional life. These are the guidelines I try to impart to my students at the Cantors Institute and I hope that some of you share these guidelines with me.

DR. MICHAEL ISAACSON

In the June 1979 edition of the Journal of Synagogue Music, Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum published an article entitled: “Surviving Future Shock”; originally a talk given to the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Cantors Assembly. The thesis, as I understood it, was that in the name of survival Hazzanim should revert to a tenaciously classic posture thereby tabling the demands of current cultural trends and spiritual movements.

“So long as hazzanim remain in place and are considered **klei kodesh**, and do have a part in leading in prayer then there is still the hope and the possibility of one day returning ‘hazzanut’ to its proper place. We have seen greater miracles come to pass. We must not be discouraged.”

Well I must say after reading these concluding lines I was deeply discouraged. Discouraged not only because an admired, progressive leader is now assuming an old guard posture, but more significantly because the larger concept of future shock and the lessons it suggests are being misunderstood and unheeded.

Future shock is the phenomenon experienced when social and cultural movements happen so quickly that we, at our existing rate of change and adaptability, fail to find equilibrium. By the time we move ahead we find ourselves further behind. It seems that just when one gets a “handle” on some problem the winds of change sweep it from one’s grasp and transform it by contact with cross currents into a dilemma of even larger dimensions. This perplexity is indeed one of the critical issues of our lives today. It affects not only hazzanim but every productive, thinking individual in our society.

Toffler suggests that, at best, all one can do is keep up with the movement — it is the rare personality who moves ahead of it. But how does one keep up — by remaining in place? Let me offer an analogy:

Two automobiles approach a highway heavy with traffic. The first driver slows down, finds a safe entrance but maintains his idle speed upon entering the traffic flow. The second driver slows down, finds a safe entrance, upon entering the flow, resumes moderate speed and then in the name of highway safety accelerates to cruising speed. Who is the safer, better driver? The first driver

by decreasing and maintaining a slower speed is not only endangering himself, but, because he is inextricably part of the larger traffic situation, is risking the safety and the destination goals of all the other drivers as well.

It is the same with future shock survival. If we merely maintain existing speed we fall behind — but if we “remain in place” the undercurrent consumes us.

I was amused recently to read a bit of graffiti that asked “what-ever happened to nostalgia?” The answer to the handwriting on the wall is, of course, it never existed. The good old days were never that good or rosey — they were just old. The solution to problems then are not necessarily the solutions now. The longing for their return is not only a counterproductive exercise but it is one that invites future failure as well.

What then is a realistic, productive strategy for a hazzan grappling with future shock?

I believe the only way that a hazzan can survive is to demonstrate to his congregation that his leadership is vital and absolutely necessary for a fulfilling, contemporary, synagogue experience. The key word is contemporary. He is or should be a *‘sh’liah tsibur’* — a representative and a messenger not only of the people but to the people. If he does not maintain speed and accelerate with other leading forces and movements of the time, how can he be sensitive to his people’s longings and spiritual needs which stem directly from these times?

If the old ways of being a respected hazzan are being challenged find new ways of challenging the imagination of the congregation. If you are feeling intimidated or excluded by others on the pulpit engage them in a joint, creative project that will elevate everyone. Accelerate!

Look at the media explosion around you. The potential for varied, alternative forms of meaningful communication has never been so great. Today you have the opportunity of personally leading each member of your congregation in prayer, meditation and song right in the intimacy of their own home. Do not discount the tremendously affecting programs of your creation which can be communicated via video-discs, cassettes, records, tapes and home computers. Any use of media is worthy if it carries your message and aids in your holy task.

If you still resist the potential of electronic Judaism (an idea that will outlive us all) then speed up your involvement in “live” musical activities. Jewish musical weekend retreats, more performances of Jewish works by local symphonies, increased chamber music concerts at the synagogue, additional use of instruments at services for a sense of fresh color, sponsorship of choral festivals of Jewish music at the local university. Resume voice lessons and coaching, take courses in 20th century styles and practices, learn new works regularly — seek out the indications of change and wrestle with them until dawn.

Not for you? Perhaps for someone else? Avot is there to remind us: If not you, who will? And if not now when?

Surviving future shock is not to be found in the ways of the ostrich. Nor is the successful strategy new and exotic — when in doubt “Choose Life!” Minister to your congregation of today in all the vernaculars of today. Sustain the value of the past but do not long for its return.

Look ahead, accelerate your devotion to your calling, speed up the innovations in your programming. State by your actions that the hazzan is not only necessary but continues to be glorious in what he offers the congregation.

The future will be behind you in an instant. Keep up with it and you might survive. Resist it by sedentariness and you will surely perish.

Do not look back. Seize the moment before its decay. Waiting for miracles is not half as exhilarating as making them happen.

TWO SABBATH EVE PRAYERS:
NEW TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARY

ELLIOT B. GERTEL

HA-MA'ARIV ARAVIM

Praised be Thou, Who in speaking,
Bids twilight to unfurl the evening;
Opening, in wisdom, supernal partitions;
Changing times and varying seasons.
Thou appointest stars to their stations,
According to Thine inscrutable reasons.
Thou createst day and night,
Rolling light before dark,
And dark before the light.
Because Thy Name is Lord of Hosts,
Thou keepest day and night divided;
As one is moved, the other coasts;
Within Thy plan, their turns provided.
Eternal Guide of constant nature,
Reign over us, though we waver.
Praised be Thou, Devine Being,
Who bringest forth the evening.

Man's relationship to nature has been twofold. Since his eyes first reflected the sunlight and beheld the wonders of the world, man has been mesmerized by the mysteries of the universe. Civilizations treasured, glorified and worshipped many of the natural elements. Yet it was the revelation of Israel alone that man, the universe, and all the natural courses were an *allusion*, indicating a Creating Unity. Thus, Judaism hallowed nature, holding it to be not the ideal beauty, but a mirror of the crafts of the Holy Bestower of beauty. The miracle of sunset, as preserved in the splendor of this simple evening prayer, is testimony to the word of God which orders nature with the sanctity of beauty, and guides human life with the beauty of sanctity. Indeed, the Bible calls upon nature to bear witness to God's faithfulness in Covenant, and to the degree of Israel's constancy in fulfilling her side of the bargain.' Nature,

¹ See, for example, Deut. 4: 26; 30: 19; 31:8; and Job 16: 19.

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which is ever faithful to the word of God, is invoked to scrutinize man, who is capable of wanton infidelity.

Yet man has also been frightened by nature — vexed by its violence, persecuted by its pestilence, chastized by its creatures, and damaged by its dangers. With all our cumulative investigation of the cycles of nature, we find ourselves embarrassingly unsure of the world in which we live. We are still inclined to cry with Adam, as the Sages envisioned his experience of the first sunset: “*Oi li, woe is me! The world is returning to void and nothingness!*”² We do not always sense the faithfulness of the Almighty in the cycles of nature. The appearances of nature can be deceitful to those not fully aware of the changes and hazards of phenomena. Furthermore, many do not find beauty in the odorous gases and indecorous gizzards which underlie all natural phenomena. As Schleiermacher observed :

. . . that joy in Nature, which so many extol, is . . . little truly religious. . . . What is it that they admire? Rear the plant in a dark cellar, and, if you are successful, you can rob it of all these beauties, without in the least degree altering its nature. Suppose the vapour above us somewhat differently disposed; instead of that splendour, you would have before your eyes one unpleasant grayness, and yet what you are contemplating would be essentially the same. . . . They are in a perplexity between appearance and reality, and what is so doubtful cannot be a religious stimulus, and can call forth no genuine feeling.³

According to Jewish teaching, man can learn to experience God because of this very ambivalence toward nature. The ancient Israelites were not hypnotized by the appearances of nature, for they were more detached from them than other peoples. Yet this did not prevent the Jew from rejoicing in nature as a fellow creature of God.⁴ The Biblical writers challenge us to employ our senses to experience the world of nature, and, in so doing, to realize that we do not experience our salvation in nature, but our need for a God of salvation, Who somehow exalts us by releasing at least a part of our being from being fettered by nature’s cycles of growth and

² Jer. *Avodah Zarah* 39c.

³ *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, tr. **Rudolf Otto** (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1958). pp. 65-6.

⁴ See **Owen Barfield**, *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1965?), p. 108.

decay. The Psalmist invites us to reflect on our imminent death, which, in the world of nature, will reduce us to particles of dust (Psalm 90). That is why Isaiah urges us to discover, beyond nature's experiences, the Presence of a Saving God:

Lift up your eyes on high,
 And see: Who has created these?
 He Who brings out their hosts by number:
 He calls them by name,
 By the greatness of His might.
 Since His power is abiding,
 Not one fails. (Isaiah 40:26)

To conclude that human salvation does not rest with nature is not necessarily to affirm God. Nor should it mean the repudiation of the natural world as God-forsaken. Rather, man should rely upon his experience of the insufficiency of a life in nature in order to be *reconciled with nature*. Isaiah insists that only one Way of reconciliation can be found: the affirmation of the God beyond nature. Such affirmation brings joy because it reconciles man with nature by affirming life's hope and meaningfulness as the work of God:

For Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad through
 Thy work;
 I will exult in the work of Thy hands.⁵
 (Psalm 92:5)

Said the Baal Shem Tov: "If the vision of a beautiful woman comes suddenly before a man's eyes, or if he perceives any other fair and lovely thing, he should instantly ask himself: 'Whence comes this beauty except from the Divine artistry that fills the world? Consequently, the origin of this beauty is Divine, and why should I be attracted only by a part? Better for me to be drawn after the All, the source of every partial beauty!' If a man tastes something good and sweet, let the taster perceive that it is from the heavenly sweetness that the sweet quality is derived. Such perception of beauty then is an experience of the Holy One, praised be He!" So, too, the Rabbis of the Talmud created special prayers for all occasions — upon sighting a rainbow or lightning, upon meeting a king or president or sage — so that we may acknowledge at any

⁵ See David S. Shapiro, "The Rationalism of Ancient Jewish Thought," in *A Treasury of Tradition*, ed. Lamm and Wurzbarger (N.Y.: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1967).

and every opportunity that the marvel of the human mind and the majesty of nature allude to His wisdom.⁶

In ages when the human body and its achievements were glorified as the supreme beauties, when the courses of the stars were consulted for absolute guidance, the Jew has shared the Baal Shem Tov's perception. On the Sabbath, the pious Jew would not so much as tear a leaf from a tree, or disturb the pollen of a flower, thus alluding in deed to Divine Kingship over nature. It is only when nature becomes an instrument of worship, rather than an object of adulation or even a detriment to praise, that the Kingship of the Most Holy can be felt in an unredeemed world.

HASHKIVENU

Grant us, Lord, repose without strife;
 Raise us again, our King, to life!
 Spread over us a peaceful awning,
 With good counsel Thy people guiding.
 Spare us for Thy reputation!
 Protect us with Thy Presence:
 Bar from us enemy, pestilence;
 Remove sword, famine — all tribulation,
 And from all sides obstruct temptation.
 Beneath Thy wings, grant us shelter,
 For Thou art Guardian and Deliverer;
 Thou art gracious and merciful King,
 Who guides our going out and coming.
 To Thee, Lord God, we offer praise!
 Thy peaceful awning, kindly raise
 Over Thy people, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Like a canopy of downy raiment, like the courts of a holy tabernacle, like the wings of the Sabbath Bride engulfing Israel within the refuge of the Covenant renewed, does the Seventh Day overtake us, stirring within us the regeneration for which we yearn during the week.

Through the pathway of *halachah*, especially through the Sabbath laws, the Divine promises to embrace us. In the *Hashkivenu* prayer, we reciprocate by expressing our dependence upon God. Thus, we urge Him to attune our hearts to life in the sacred dwelling

⁶ See Mishnah Berachot 9: 1-3.

of Sabbath. We beseech Him to remove all plagues, including the detriment of the evil inclination.

We implore God to remove temptation “from before us and from behind us.” Said the hasidic master, Reb Pinchas of Koretz: “Satan is inconsistent. He persuades a man to go to the synagogue on a cold morning; yet when one does go, Satan follows him into it.” *So* continues the inner battle of man, where deeds and intentions struggle for purification. Reb Pinchas was wont to remark: “I am constantly in fear, lest I become too ‘wise’ to remain pious.”

Although criticized as child-like and unspiritual, prayers for protection against temptation and danger express the healthy uncertainty of any sincere soul who perceives that we shall not be able to serve God unless He fulfills our basic needs, and that we, no more than Job, are unable to withstand His cruler tests. We find ourselves echoing Jacob’s vow: “If God will be with me, and will keep me on this way that I am going, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear, and I arrive once more, in peace, to my father’s house — then shall the Lord be my God.” (Genesis 28:21-22)

In petitioning God, in “making demands” upon Him, we exercise, as it were, the righteous indignation that every human being must possess: the will to be treated justly. Yet in recalling before Whom we stand, we realize that we who demand justice are limited in our understanding of its cosmic ramifications.’ While hoping that he will aid us, we understand that He will not reverse nature for any one of us, for that could possibly prove unjust to others. The Rabbis wisely warn against vain prayers such as the father-to-be who begs for a son, or the concerned relative who, upon hearing wailing, prays that the cries do not come from his own household. ² One cannot pray that something be undone once it has already occurred!

It is significant, too, that petitions in the Jewish Liturgy are generally in the first person plural. The Rabbis teach that the purpose of all prayer is to seek mercy (*Z’uakkesh rachamim*) from God.³ They add that it is not only our duty to seek mercy for ourselves, but for all Israel and for all mankind. “Rabba ben Chinena said in the name of Rab: “If one is in a position to pray on behalf of his

¹ On the concept of *mishpat* (justice) in the Bible, see Eliezer Berkovits, *Man and God* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), p. 251.

² See *Mishnah Berachot 4b*.

³ *B. Berachot 34b*.

fellow and does not do so, he is called a sinner, as it is said (I Samuel 12: 23) : 'As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.' ⁴

The paradox of petitionary prayer is that it entails self-assertion without selfishness. It makes the individual aware of the self as he transcends it by focusing upon what Max Kadushin describes as the "larger self."⁵ When we pray for the removal of every pestilence and acknowledge God as He Who can remove all illness, pestilence, famine and strife, we find ourselves approaching Him as members of the human species which is individually and collectively subject to such disasters.⁶

In petitionary prayer, we affirm that God is the sole Arbiter between what constitutes a "miracle" and what can be regarded as "natural law." Science penetrates nature, but not the Divine Nature. The first fruit of human inquiry is a ripened appreciation of the Divine order.

Jacob declared that he would gladly serve God, if only He would provide the opportunity. So, too, we urge God to remove all barriers to Sabbath observance. We pray that after we have experienced and savored the Sabbath — after we have experienced positively Judaism and its teaching — we do not harden our hearts and minds to the splendor and truth found therein. The person who vigilantly guards against temptation does not necessarily suffer from a neurosis of fear, as long as his watchfulness is directed toward preserving that which consistency elevates the quality of life. Such vigilance must derive from the realization that one "fears that which is deserving of fear — an indication of spiritual perfection and health on his part." Indeed, "Judaism as a metaphysical system is optimistic, yet it realizes the tragic character of human existence. On the existential level, it fosters sobriety and shifts the locus of anxieties to the areas that count — concern for the state of one's soul and one's relationship to God."⁸ Jewish teaching does not find it

⁴ B. Berachot **12b**.

⁵ **Kadushin**, *Worship and Ethics: A Study in Habbinic Judaism* (N.Y.: Bloch, 1963), pp. 108 f.

⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 109.

⁷ **Joseph Albo**, *Sefer Ha-Ikarim* (Phil.: Jewish Publication Society, 1930). vol. III, p. 307.

⁸ **Shubert Spero**, "Is Judaism an Optimistic Religion," in *Treasury of Tradition*, ed. Lamm and Wurzbarger (N.Y.: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 214-15. See, also, **Irving Kristol**, "God and the Psychoanalysts," in **Arthur A. Cohen**, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines* (Phil.: Jewish Publication Society, 1970). pp. 347-67.

possible or even desirable for people to live without anxiety. One might well observe that man attains true humanity through sanctified anxieties. "Petitionary prayers . . . play an educational role," observes Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser. "They help us to understand more clearly what our true needs really are. They teach us to pray not for the trivial things we often miss and long for, but for the things which are of enduring value, for wisdom, for nearness to God, for cleansing from sin, for redemption from oppression, for health, for sustenance, for peace, for the vindication of the righteous, for Jewish survival in the Holy Land."⁹

Through the *Hashkivenu*, the petitionary prayer par *excellence*, **we** approach the Almighty with thoughts similar to those expressed by the saintly eleventh-century moralist, Rabbi Bachya ibn Pakudah:

Thou knowest, Lord, what is for my good. When I recite my wants, it is not to remind Thee of them, but only that I may better understand how great is my dependence upon Thee. If, then, I ask Thee for things which do not make for my well-being, it is because I am ignorant. Thy choice is better than mine and I submit myself to Thy decrees and to Thy supreme direction.

REVIEW OF NEW MUSIC

"HEBREW SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS," *edited, designed and produced by Susan Claire Searles, with translation assistance by Dr. Avraham Abba Glicksberg, Toledo Board of Jewish Education; Vol. 1, 63 pp; Vol. 2, 73 pp.*

The recent publication of "Hebrew Songs for all Seasons" Volumes I and II by the Toledo Board of Jewish Education is an exceptional service to every congregation and school in the country. Kudos to Susan Claire Searles and to all those who made its publication possible. Also, a *Yaasher Koah* to Dr. Avraham Abba Glicksberg for his translations.

Both volumes offer a well-balanced and carefully selected grouping of songs consisting of: Holiday Songs, Love Songs, Songs of Israel, Shabbat Songs. A quick glance at the contents of each volume will confirm the excellence of song selection. Each song is carefully chorded for guitar accompaniment and-in spite of the transliteration, Hebrew and literal Hebrew translation — is clearly and effectively notated.

Indeed, it is precisely the integrated translation, especially helpful to those with little or no knowledge of Hebrew, that makes these volumes an outstanding teaching tool. These songs, when used with an overhead projector, can be a most effective way of teaching Hebrew since each word is isolated along with its meaning. The classroom teacher, not to mention the music instructor or leader, will **find it an excellent resource.**

Ms. **Searles has included** in these collections of songs, a number of her own settings, among them the "*Elu D'varim*" from the Shahrit service (taken from the *Mishnah*.) This setting, unlike the cantorial setting **by** Rappaport, is quite simple but effective for Junior Choir or classroom use.

Again, a "*Yaasher Koah*" to Ms. Searles and company!

David Politzer

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TWO HIGH HOLIDAY SETTINGS, Sydney Hodkinson, "**Ashreinu**," "**The Heavens Proclaim Your Majesty**," for mixed chorus and organ, *Transcontinental Music Publication+ New York*.

Transcontinental has recently published several new additions to the third volume of Samuel Adler's important anthology **Yamim Noraim**. For practical reasons, each work has been published individually. This appears to be a prudent decision as it allows each congregation to pick and choose their own taste and musical tradition.

Professor Adler has encouraged many fine composers, who have never written for the synagogue, to become involved in contributing to the literature. Sydney Hodkinson, a colleague of Adler at the Eastman School, has obliged with two settings for the New Union Prayer Book- **Ashreinu** – TCL 991059, from a Rosh Hashanah morning service, and **The Heavens Proclaim Your Majesty** – TCL 991058, from the Yom Kippur afternoon service.

Ashreinu is a rhythmically athletic fifty seconds of music. For a work that is harmonized by several model aspects of an E tonality its cadence on a C major ninth chord (The E pedal retreats to a mediant function) seems a bit frustrating. Additional hopes are deferred by misaccentuations of the words ashreinu, chelkeinu and goraleinu. If congregations are liberal with their acceptance of poetic license this piece might be of some interest.

The Heavens Proclaim Your Majesty, while interesting on paper, is a rather awkward aural experience. This melody (also devoid of any high holiday motives) is meted out in alternating bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ and later $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$. It is a difficult tune to phrase and one that carries the added onus of words like "source of speech" and "supernal realm". One wonders if some texts are better left to be spoken.

Sydney Hodkinson's music is known for its literacy and challenge but, in these two cases, he seems to have missed opportunities for creating successful congregational music. Worship music makes different demands than concert works. Five specific observations come to mind.

1. The main melodic idea should be easily absorbed by a congregation.
2. Outer voices must sing texts set with correct prosody.
3. Music for particular holidays should allude to traditional melodic motives of that holiday.
4. Compositions should be designed to allow congregations to make musical meanings within one initial hearing.
5. Only liturgical texts fit for musical setting should be set. "Literacy" texts should be spoken over a musical under-scoring or left alone to recitation.

It would be interesting to read in this Journal other Synagogue composer's guidelines for creating congregational works. Composers of secular concert music could surely benefit from such a symposium.

Michael Isaacson

HASHIRIM ASHER L'YEHUDAH, an anthology of *music for the liturgy Of the Sabbath Festivals, High Holidays for Hazzan, mixed chorus with organ accompaniment, Cantors Assembly Foundation, New York 248 pp.*

The **compositions** in this collection represent some four decades of creativity in liturgical music. Since 1931, Cantor Rosenbluth has been chief cantor of Stockholms great synagogue, Mosaiska Forsamlingen. Born to a rabbinic family in Bavaria in 1904, he received a yeshiva education and thereafter studied at the University of Frankfort am Main and the Hoch-sches Konservatorium where his curriculum included music theory, composition, conducting and viola. While specializing in the composition of liturgical music, he has written in a variety of other forms, including oratorios, orchestral works and compositions for theater and television and has been the recipient of important awards both in Sweden and America. Those familiar with Vinaver's "Anthology of Jewish Music" will recall his noteworthy and effective **Naarits'cho** (p. 81, #20) for cantor and choir.

As Cantor Rosenbliith states in the preface of this publication, he sought on the one hand to "save and even strengthen the Hebraic essence common to all types of genuine Jewish music", and on the other, to steer a course between the Scylla of German church music and the Charybdis of a maudlin Jewish "pop" style. In both these endeavors he has been successful.

This "anthology of Synagogue music for the Sabbath, Festivals and High Holy Days for Hazzan, choir [and] congregation with organ accompaniment comprises a collection of 108 compositions arranged in a systematic sequence.

Musically, the material is based on the West-European Ashkenazic liturgical tradition. With occasional exceptions (#47, **Tikanta Shabat**, #48, **Yism'chu**, #74, **K'dusha**) the solos and recitatives eschew the florid ornamentation of East-European chazzanuth; all have a spontaneous lyric quality and integrate well traditional cantillation motives. The compositions are generally modal or minor, but within the solo line itself there are quite frequent modal transitions and modulations. Additionally, chromatic inflections in the

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accompaniment may “shade” the tonal or modal key area of the solo melody. The Sh’mini *Atzeret*, p 162, is a good example of this procedure. The range in the solos is moderate; in a few instances, substitute pitches are provided for low or high tones.

In the organ and choral parts, early twentieth century harmonic influences are evident in parallel (block) chord movements, shifting tonalities and occasional fourth chord construction. The organ parts are functional and altogether accompanimental. Organists (most of whom would not otherwise be made aware of the need of matching music and specific observances) will find useful the Sabbath interludes (pp. 33-36) which provide appropriate materials for specific Sabbaths.

Except for a few compositions for choir alone, the choral writing, understandably enough, is generally of a background or **sup**-portive nature. Its level of difficulty is such that, as Cantor Rosenbluth points out in his Preface, “the great majority of the compositions for choir in this volume have been regularly performed by a choir of devoted amateurs”.

An obvious exception to this “great majority” is #69, Psalm **118 (2) p 42.**

No matter how devoted, without the assistance of professionals in each section, amateurs would have great difficulty with this setting. But this composition, the most adventurous and challenging choral work in the collection, would be well worth doing.

The term “liturgical” is particularly appropriate to the compositions in this anthology, not only because of the texts, but more importantly because this is service-oriented music in which liturgical purpose and musical validity are ideally balanced.

The publication is in a large book format, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size with hard covers. While the music is not engraved it is clearly printed from good manuscript, and in these times when such matters are not to be taken for granted, printed on excellent heavy stock paper. All in all, this collection is an important contribution to contemporary hazzanut and synagogue music. The Cantors Assembly Foundation is to be commended for having made possible its publication.

“PSALM 23,” *for solo voice with piano accompaniment, by Michael Isaacson; Transcontinental Music Publications, New York.*

Every cantor has a favorite setting of Psalm 23. It is the melody we use for funerals or **Yizkor** services; or it is the special setting that we prepare only for the most important, “state” occasions. Being no exception to this rule, it was with some skepticism that I picked up Michael Isaacson’s composition, recently published by Transcontinental Music. I might like it, I thought, but I certainly would never use it in place of “my” Psalm 23! What a lovely surprise was in store for me.

Michael Isaacson has added one more inspired setting of this famous text to the rich literature already available to us. He speaks with a fresh voice, but a knowing one. The text is beautifully set, moving from a recitative-like beginning to a lyrical, loving, even romantic middle section for the setting of: **Gam ki eileich begei tsalmavet**. The lyricism of these phrases becomes deeper, more intense and compellingly passionate at: **Taaroch lefanai shulchan neged tsorerai**. The climax of the piece is reached as it turns suddenly delicate and sweetly intimate at: **Kosi revaya**. The psalm closes, again with recitative-like phrases, in repose and achieved tranquility.

From a vocal point of view, Mr. Isaacson has given us an extremely singable composition. It has a contemporary sound and yet, the vocal line is grateful. From a technical point of view it is a pleasure; from an emotional point of view it is exciting and inspiring to perform.

The composer relies heavily on the structures and dissonances often associated with jazz, in constantly moving referential sonorities that may seem reminiscent of Leonard Bernstein’s work. But whereas some of the contemporary harmonic vocabulary is the same, Isaacson is original, creative, and authentic. I, for one, prefer his more lyrical moments — he has a real gift for them — for the wedding of the text to beautiful melody. His more dissonant, tension-filled phrases, however, have clear intent and appropriate effect. The overall impression is one of great beauty and style, and is deeply moving. Michael Isaacson’s **Psalm** 23 is a most welcome addition to the repertoire: a “new” setting with all of the “old” values : singability, appropriate treatment of the text, inspiration, and musical beauty.

Sarah Sager

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