

WORDS ABOUT MUSIC

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WORDS ABOUT MUSIC

What follows is a sampling of the columns which I have written for my congregational Bulletin over the past years. Some of them are on universal subjects and are applicable to all congregations; others deal more specifically with events which took place here in Temple Beth El in Rochester, New York.

It seems to me there are two ways in which these can be used. The first is to reprint them, as is. In that case I would appreciate it if the credit were given both to the author and to the congregation's Bulletin.

The second way is to use the ideas of these columns to guide you to writing your own.

In either way, you could return the favor by sending me copies of whatever you do print.

Samuel Rosenbaum
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On Life and Beauty

Judaism's flexibility and rationality are among its greatest virtues. In spite of what many think, even the most Orthodox practice can be modified or even discarded at certain times.

When there is no wine one may make Kiddush over beer. In an emergency involving human life one may be exempted from observing the Sabbath. The Baal Shem Tov once commanded his congregation to eat on Yom Kippur because a plague was then raging in his country. Another great hasidic saint, in the late nineteenth century, ordered his congregation to bring money to the synagogue on Yom Kippur because the lives of two Jews of that community had to be ransomed from the Czar. While worship in the company of a minyan is desirable, one may pray at home by himself.

But, music is a facet of Jewish life which cannot be discarded. In most cases we could not omit it, even if we decided to do so. Can you imagine merely reading the Sabbath Kiddush? Can you imagine Kol Nidrei without its plaintive and stirring melody? Can you imagine the prayer for the dead, El Maleh Rahamim, without its mournful chant? Talmudic study is impossible without the sing-song tunes to mark question, conjecture and answer.

Music plays a unique role in the life of the Jew. Certainly, it enhances life; but it is far more than that. We study, pray, celebrate and mourn in the language of music. It is a part of life's fabric. In many cases it is the fabric itself.

Caught Again

Once more, a careful and knowledgeable reader catches us in an error. Some time ago, in connection with thoughts on the inescapable presence of music in Jewish life, we carelessly made the statement "where there is no wine one may make Kiddush over beer."

Dr. Joseph Noble, who knew better, was kind enough to point out my error and to send along the following additional information which we are pleased to share with our readers.

While most people associate the word "Kiddush" with the blessing borei p'ri haqafen, there is a definite difference between the way we use wine in our sacred rituals. The term "Kiddush" is applied only to the benediction which we recite over wine on Friday evening or on the opening evening of a festival. This Kiddush should be recited over wine. When there is no wine available it may be recited over bread. The "Kiddush" which is recited following the morning service on Sabbaths or festivals is called "Kidusha Rabba" and may be recited over wine or over any other beverage if wine is not available.

Our statement concerning making Kiddush over beer would have been correct had we indicated that this was permissible at the Havdalah ceremony. The Shulkhan Arukh (96.3) says, "Just as it is mandatory to sanctify the Sabbath on its inception, so is it mandatory to sanctify the Sabbath on its conclusion over a cup of wine. This is the Havdalah ceremony. When wine cannot be procured, Havdalah may be pronounced upon another beverage which is the national drink, water excepted." Some authorities say that even milk may be used for Havdalah. Eisenstein states "One may use sweet tea or sweet coffee."

Wine is also used for the benedictions at a circumcision. Here only wine may be used, no substitutes are indicated. At a Pidyon HaBen the benediction should be said over a goblet of wine. If none is available any beverage may be used. In a wedding ceremony, if no wine is available the benedictions may be recited over beer. If neither wine nor beer is available the borei p'ri haqafen is omitted and only the betrothal benediction is recited. At the Passover Seder only wine is prescribed. One who abstains from wine during the rest of the year because it might be injurious to his health should, nevertheless, try to drink the prescribed four goblets. He may dilute the wine with water or he may drink raisin wine instead.

We are grateful for the additional information which this error has elicited from Dr. Noble. However, all of the foregoing only serves to underline the point which the original column made; that while in many cases substitutes for ritual items are permitted, the chant or tune which accompanies the ritual is indispensable.

Just to be safe, however, we are laying in a large supply of Israeli wine for Passover. We urge our friends to do likewise.

L'chayim!

On the Office of Hazzan

The Bible affords no evidence of congregational prayer. While there are numerous citations of personal, individual prayers, no systemized routine is mentioned. Worship was carried on through the sacrificial regimen in the Temple in Jerusalem.

In order to broaden participation for Jews who did not live in Jerusalem, representatives of each community were invited to participate with the Priests and the Levites on a rotating basis in the sacrifice of animal offerings. When a representative of a far-off community was on duty at the Temple, those who remained at home were required to gather together at specific times to read appropriate sections from the Torah. These groups were known as maamadot and from this primitive assembly did the synagogue develop.

When the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the Israelites taken away into captivity, the sacrificial regimen was abandoned. It was deemed inappropriate to recreate Temple activity on foreign soil so long as the Temple lay in ruins.

The captives, in need of some spiritual ties with their homeland and with their past, gradually began to substitute prayer, the offering of the heart, for sacrifice. By the time they were permitted to return to Palestine, in 536, the tradition of oral prayer, although not yet systematized, was well established.

Groups of worshippers formed themselves into a kneset and chose as their leaders a Rosh haKneset and a Hazzan haKneset. The latter was not a prayer-leader, but probably an administrative official or caretaker; however, here we meet for the first time the term which was to become the official title of the cantor we know today.

(To be continued)

What It Takes

We continue our informal survey of the development of the office of hazzan

Traditional literature is studded with a great variety of qualifications for the office of hazzan, many dating back to medieval times. What stands out in all of them is the very sharp difference in the requirements as set down by the rabbis and those set down by the communities. The first standards were established in ancient times. The Mishnah stipulated that the hazzan "be mature, conversant with the prayers, one who has children and whose heart is centered on his prayers,"

In the Talmud, Rabbi Judah added to these, stipulating that the hazzan be one "burdened by labor and heavy family obligations but who does not have enough to meet them, one who draws his sustenance from the field and whose house is empty, whose youth is unblemished and who is meek and acceptable to the people, who is skilled in chanting with a pleasant voice and who possesses a thorough knowledge of the Tanach and is conversant with the Midrash, with Halacha and Agadot and all the liturgical benedictions."

Additional requirements were that he should wear a full grown beard as evidence of maturity. Rabbi Judah the Prince, specified that the hazzan be no younger than twenty years.

Over the ages still more qualifications were added. It is obvious, however that neither then nor now is it easy to find an ideal hazzan, although Jewish knowledge, piety, a pleasant voice and musical skills certainly head everyone's list of qualifications.

A rather bright student with whom I had occasion to discuss the requirements of poverty and extreme need, asked me why I thought such qualifications were imposed. I answered that the rabbis believed that the hazzan must be one of the people, closely associated with their needs and problems. Since most congregations consisted of poor people it seemed reasonable that the hazzan should also be poor, and thus better able to understand their needs from personal experience. The young man thought a while and asked what would the rabbis have required of a hazzan who served a rich congregation. Should he not likewise be of the same status so that he could understand the needs and problems of the rich?

I could not give him an answer but I patted him fondly on the head.

More on the Hazzan

From time to time we have been pursuing an informal study of the development of the role of the hazzan in the synagogue. As a by-product of these studies, one must come to the conclusion that Ecclesiastes was right - that there is nothing new under the sun.

A case in point:

It was during the seventh century that great amounts of poetic insertions into the service (piyutim) began to make inroads on the Sabbath and holiday services. The early hazzanim, as you may remember, were not only musicians, but often wrote the words of the piyutim as well. Since the piyutim were poetic in form it was not difficult to find melodious and pleasant tunes to accompany them. These became popular with the masses with the result they cut into the time normally allotted for lectures (not sermons) by the medieval rabbis.

Some scholars maintain that the piyutim became more popular than the rabbinic lecture because the latter were spoken in Hebrew, which had become foreign to the Jews of the Islamic lands who spoke Arabic. However this theory does not really hold up. The poetry, like the lectures, was written in Hebrew, and the poetic style probably made it more difficult for the average Jew to understand than the rather straight-forward Hebrew of the Sabbath or holiday lectures.

Perhaps we are partial, but it does not seem unreasonable to conclude that the popularity of the piyutim was due more to the music than to language differences. The truth is, that the masses did not understand either the words of the lectures or the words of the prayers. It was easier for them to listen to the melodic song than to a learned discourse. Furthermore, when the Emperor Justinian prohibited study and preaching, the Jew substituted the piyutim, whose content was based on the same raw material. Thus, the medieval hazzan took the place of the preacher by chanting liturgical compositions saturated with excerpts from Jewish tradition. The musical and poetic additions complicated the service in a technical sense. While layman could lead the daily services, the Sabbath and holiday services now required the hand of an expert. And so, the role of the hazzan developed along these lines.

The resulting conflict continued almost to modern times. The rabbis, on one hand, trying to maintain the austerity of the service; the hazzan, on the other hand, trying to reflect and to respond to the mood and need of the masses.

Some Guides for the Perplexed Hazzan

The Shulhan Arukh is a compendium of laws governing every aspect of living as a Jew. The codes which pertain to the Hazzan are found throughout many sections of the Shulhan Arukh. They deal not with theoretical matters but with practical ones: personal preparation for the Hazzan, the attitude of the Hazzan toward the liturgy, requirements and qualifications of the Hazzan, special procedures for the Amidah, the order of the services on Sabbath, festivals and holy days, the blowing of the Shofar and the reading from the Torah.

Here are some of the items which regulate the manner in which the Hazzan carries out the functions of his office:

"Since prayer, service of the heart, takes the place of sacrifice, the Hazzan, standing before the Ark represents the image of the Kohen of old. It follows that many of the strict requirements of that office also apply to the Hazzan. The rabbis suggest that "...he should be a modest person, pure in conduct and thought, crowned with a good name and beloved by his congregation. He should have a sweet voice and be adept at reading the Torah and the Prophets and know the philosophical, historical and literal meaning of the liturgy of the entire year.

"The Hazzan may not stand at the Amud in soiled or torn clothing. It is desirable that he should wear a special robe and head-covering while leading in prayer. He should wear a tallit whenever he stands at the Amud, even at evening services when a tallit is not required.

"When chanting a brakha the Hazzan must be careful to stop after 'Barikh ata Adonai,' so that the congregation may respond, 'Barukh Hu uvarukh Shmo,' (Blessed is He and blessed is His name). He must also pause at the conclusion of each benediction so that the congregation may answer 'Amen.'

"When he reads from the Torah the Reader must be careful to recite each word from the scroll. He may not chant even one word from memory.

"The Hazzan who prolongs the prayers with song 'for the sake of Heaven' and in honor of the Sabbath or a festival, he is blessed. He who allows his voice to be heard for his own honor and to gain favor with his listeners, he is unfit for his sacred office. Nevertheless, it

is commendable to extend the Kabbalat Shabbat in order to show our gratitude and joy for the Sabbath. Likewise, the Hazzan is bidden to prolong the introductory prayers of the Maariv service at the end of the Sabbath in order to increase the time of holiness at the expense of the secular."

An old prayer book contains the following meditation for the Hazzan to be recited before he rises to chant a service:

"I beseech Thee, my God and God of my fathers. Be of assistance to me as I stand in prayer for myself and for Thy people, the House of Israel. Remove from my mind all varieties of strange thoughts and anxieties so that my thoughts be not confused. Strengthen my heart so that my devotion may be directed to Your Holy Name and my service be consecrated; that I may have only good impulses and not be ruled by evil inclinations. And let my heart love and revere Thee so that I may stand before Thee to serve and to sing in Thy name. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before Thee, my Rock and my Redeemer, Amen."

More On The Cantorate

It is obvious that the first requirement of a cantor is that he must possess and know how to use a pleasant voice. Additional basic requirements are good intonation, a discriminating musical ear and a broad knowledge of Judaism, including Hebrew, Bible, liturgy, customs, ritual and practice. It is also extremely important that a cantor have a foundation in basic musical skills. It is helpful if a cantor knows how to play a musical instrument. Continuing vocal, musical and religious study help to improve the cantor's skills and to broaden the area of his responsibility and concern.

The cantor is one of the ministers of the Jewish faith. He should be a man of high moral standards and possess the genuine desire to be of service to others.

A background of participation in synagogue and Jewish community affairs is most helpful. Jewish education, active involvement in Jewish youth groups, attendance at Jewish camps, and participation in junior congregation services are all means of gaining a proper background.

There are now three schools, one in each of the three branches of Judaism, where students may prepare for the cantorate. Depending upon a man's background and ability the course of study may be completed in three to five years. Upon graduation the student receives a diploma as a Hazzan.

These schools are: School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform), 40 West 68th Street, New York City; Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (Conservative), 122nd Street and Broadway, New York City; Cantorial Training Institute of Yeshiva University (Orthodox).

Another New Tune?

Perhaps one of the least thankful duties of the hazzan is his responsibility to refurbish the storehouse of synagogue music with new tunes from time to time. There are many reasons why the hazzan considers this a sacred duty.

For one, rabbinic tradition admonishes us all, al taas tefilatecha keva, "Don't," say the rabbis, "permit prayer to become routinized." A new tune can illumine anew some neglected facet of the ancient words. Then, too, why should all our music be restricted to melodies born out of the Jewish experience in Russia, or Poland, or Germany some century and a half ago?

No art style is eternal. Each generation, each era develops its own favorite forms of artistic expression. Within the lifetime of many who will read these words music has gone through a number of revolutions in taste; style and form: impressionism, polytonality, jazz, barbarism, futurism, neo-classicism, tone-row, etc.

Yet, when we enter the synagogue we are faced by the implicit command to turn off our musical sophistication and to attune ourselves to music which, although old, is no more the essence of Jewishness than that of our own time.

On the other side stand the worshippers who decry every new tune as an attack on "Tradition." They, too, may have a point.

Worship is, to a great degree, an act of looking back. In our search for comfort, peace, inspiration, courage we turn to the old prayer book filled with ancient words. Their familiarity, the feeling that these same syllables have comforted fifty or more generations of Jews who preceded us serve to enhance their antiquity. When a worshipper sings the old text in an old, familiar and comfortable tune it makes him feel good.

(To be continued)

Another New Tune? (II)

There is much to be said for the love of old tunes.

But there are some things we should think about.

The word "Traditional" is as misleading as it is meaningless when applied to synagogue music. Whose "Tradition"? For what community? In what age? Is the "Tradition" of the nineteenth century hasidic shtetel the same as the "Tradition" of synagogues in which the Jews of Tunis worshipped in the thirteenth century? Even within the confines of the East-European shtetl, was the "Tradition" of the shneider-shul (tailors' synagogue) the same as that of the katzev-shul (butcher's synagogue) which stood not ten yards away?

In Israel, musicologists have recently isolated and catalogued over seventy different and authentic musical prayer traditions which developed over the long centuries of Jewish dispersion. It would be almost impossible to catalogue the hundreds of thousands of variations within these traditions which developed within each community.

The truth is that in Judaism, "Tradition" must include all traditions, the good, the bad, the authentic and even the spurious - everything that represents a time, a place or a style in the Jewish experience. And our duty, both hazzan and worshipper, is to continue to add to that Tradition. Some of the old will fall away to be replaced by the new, but in the process our prayer experience will be refreshed, replenished and reinvigorated.

Beethoven and the Jews

One may indeed conjecture as to the course which Jewish music might have taken had Ludwig von Beethoven become more active in it. It is interesting to note that in 1825, Beethoven was invited by the Jewish community of Vienna to compose a cantata in honor of the dedication of a new Temple. Although he started to work on this opus, nothing ever came of it and another composer completed the work.

But it is known that he did become extremely interested in synagogue music and became familiar with some of its motifs. You can judge this for yourself, if you will examine Beethoven's Quartet in C# Minor. opus 131. You will easily hear a remarkable similarity between the opening theme of Movement 6 and Kol Nidre. It is even more interesting when we learn that the quartet was composed in 1826, just one year after Beethoven had received the commission from the Jewish community of Vienna. Of some interest is the fact that in 1792, Beethoven fell in love with Rachel Lowenstein, a Jewess, who rejected Beethoven's offer of marriage.

The Kol Nidre motif seems to have interested many other composers, Jew and non-Jew alike. Lalo, who was Jewish, uses the theme almost note for note in his Symphony Espagnol. Max Bruch, a Protestant, developed a whole suite for cello on this theme which he called, quite appropriately, Kol Nidre. While the Kol Nidre motif is certainly Jewish in origin and inspiration, Bruch utilized the melody as a novel theme for a brilliant secular concerto.

The work displays a fine technique and artistry but expresses nothing of the atmosphere out of which the original was born. There is little in it that brings to mind the feeling of awe, repentance and hope that ties Kol Nidre to the Jewish soul. It is easy to see that Max Bruch never recited Kol Nidre himself.

On Eating One's Words

One of the perils of writing is a careful reader. I had hardly launched my column with what I thought to be a documented hypothesis on Beethoven only to find my exhilaration turned to ashes.

I was pleased to receive a letter from a perceptive reader questioning my facts. Pleased, because the reader was none other than the world famous composer, David Diamond. Mr. Diamond pointed out that many of the so-called facts upon which I based my column had long since been exposed as fallacious.

With Mr. Diamond's permission, I want to set the record straight. Two items in my column caught Mr. Diamond's attention: the invitation to Beethoven to write an oratorio marking the dedication of a Vienna temple in 1825 and the rumor that Beethoven had once asked for the hand of Rachel Lowenstein in marriage, to be turned down by the lady because he was not Jewish. My information came from "Jewish Music" a book by one of the early Jewish musicologists, A. Z. Idelsohn, whose work, it would now appear, is more deserving of praise for the fact that it was the first effort in this field than for its accuracy.

Mr. Diamond writes: "As I had suspected, Idelsohn's book on "Jewish Music" has for long (particularly his embroideries in footnotes, etc.) been the bottom steps of a long ascent to more detailed and proven knowledge. His remark about the Jewish Community in Vienna and the invitation to Beethoven to compose a cantata is nowhere documented by him and he gives no verifiable data as to where he got this. Nettl's book of 1923 is also today considered inaccurate and his Breslaur quote about the Kol Nidrei started the whole tendency to attribute Op. 131's part 6 melody to "a similarity" to Kol Nidrei. Other than Beethoven's wish to read up on Old Testament stories in case he should do a SAUL (after hearing Handel's SAUL), there is no other source that refers to a Jewish community, a commission, or an interest in Hebraic modes or cantillation. Musically, in re the Op. 131 slow movement, part 6, a study of the sketch books for that quartet will show how he arrived at that theme: his usual way of starting with three or four motival notes and then, after arduous metamorphosing of the growing notes as a phrase, establishing them as a thematic relation of his opening fugue subject.

"Now to Frau Lowenstein!! As Dr. Warren Fox, (internationally recognized musicologist) states, he has never heard this name mentioned in Beethoven bibliography and indeed never seen it or heard it discussed when articles or talks have been given about Beethoven's innamorate. Here again, with all respect to the title. Vienna's WAHRHEIT of 1901 was a timely but today wholly discounted journal of rather assumed than proven data. If the Library of Congress will not come up with something about Frau Lowenstein I shall have to keep suspecting her as being a figment of WAHRHEIT's editorial fantasy department."

The Jewish Music Research Centre

As Jews, we are grateful for the establishment of the State of Israel for many reasons. The political, historical and religious factors are obvious and well known. Many of us, however, are unaware of the great cultural activity which goes on in that state and which may prove, in the long run, to be among the greatest of Israel's contribution to modern times.

In the field of Jewish music there is now in Israel one central institution dedicated to the study of the history of Jewish music and to its perpetuation. This is the Jewish Music Research Centre, established a very few years ago at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The chief tasks of the Centre are to collect and study music, documents and literature relating to the musical traditions of the Jewish communities from all over the world during their long history. The Centre also carries on a program of publication in this field.

It works chiefly along two lines. The ethnomusicalogical section is concerned with the recording on tape of the early musical traditions of the Jew. With the ingathering in Israel of representatives of almost every ancient and modern Jewish community it is still possible to find, in a relatively small area, those who remember the musical traditions of their ancestors. As these last authentic remnants of those ancient communities pass on it will no longer be possible to record this material first hand. Therefore, this section of the work is pursued with the utmost intensity.

The second line of the Centre's activity concerns itself with written or historical documentation.

The work of the Centre is supported by an annual allocation from Israel's Ministry of Education and Culture and from income from a fund established under the aegis of the Friends of the Hebrew University in Italy. The Cantors Assembly is considering establishing a similar fund here in America.

It might provide food for thought that tiny Israel, beset with a multitude of problems from within and from without, can find the time, the place and the funds to devote to this esoteric scholarly work, while the American Jewish community, the most affluent and powerful in the world, continues to leave this and other important cultural activities in the hands of individual, scattered scholars, many working in ignorance of what the other is doing.

What Happens To My Money?

From time to time, friends in the community, particularly those concerned with the continuity of synagogue music in this country, have made contributions to the Scholarship and Publications funds of the Cantors Assembly. Their funds are matched by the hazzanim of the Assembly in the form of an annual assessment on each member. Since synagogue music is the cultural treasure of the entire Jewish people it is fitting that hazzan and worshipper should express their concern in such positive and concrete terms.

This is in the nature of an informal report on what the Cantors Assembly does with these funds.

Each year, some ten to twelve thousand dollars are given in scholarship aid to the students preparing for the cantorate at the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In addition, an annual grant of two thousand dollars is made to the Jewish Music Research Centre at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This year, because there are special additional needs, the budget projects scholarship gifts and grants of over twenty-six thousand dollars.

Only three months ago, the last of a half dozen commercial publishers of Jewish music went out of business. If Jewish music is to continue to be a vital and relevant cultural force in our lives the publication of new music and the republication of out-of-print classics must be continued. In its short, thirty year history, the Cantors Assembly has published forty-seven volumes of new and old synagogue music, almost half of them commissioned from the leading synagogue composers of our day. During the coming year, we are committed to the publication of three new works: one for use by Junior Congregations, another containing 45 new, yet traditional settings of the high holy day liturgy for Hazzan and Choir, and a third, which will be a collection of songs, zemirot, hasidic nigunim, Israeli tunes, etc., for use by young and old on all occasions. These three volumes will represent an outlay of twenty-thousand dollars.

Last month we completed arrangements to purchase and to present to the Library of the Cantors Institute, one of the outstanding private libraries of Jewish music in America. The collection includes not only hundreds of published works, but countless manuscripts, articles,

books, journals, documents and memorabilia relating to the history of Jewish music and the cantorate. It will constitute a rich resource for cantorial students and scholars. The cost: eight thousand five hundred dollars.

I am grateful, therefore, for the support of the many friends of synagogue music in our community. I hope they will agree that their money and ours has been well spent. The challenge to assure the survival of synagogue music and the desperate need that it flourish and grow continue.

Prayer: The Lost Art

Our time is hardly one of spiritual uplift.

It should not come as a surprise that many find it difficult to pray. The fires of doubt and cynicism have been too well fed this last half century.

And yet, Jews continue to come to the synagogue. Seemingly undisturbed by the contradictions in our personal lives, in spite of the state of the human situation, they come in greater numbers than ever before. Not only do they come, but they work, they gather money and they build magnificent, even opulent synagogues.

And, yet, the synagogues remain strangely silent. Can it be that in our thirst for decorum we have gone too far? Possibly, but not likely. It is not the absence of conversation that disturbs us. Anyone who ever sat with his father or grandfather in a shul knows that something else is missing. It was a sound which you could almost feel between your teeth; the sound of prayer, warm, exciting, sanctifying. It hummed and droned and throbbed filling every corner of the synagogue and overflowed to the outside.

Our fathers and grandfathers had a nigun which they hummed as they walked to the synagogue; a nigun for washing the hands. There was a nusah with which they unpacked the long tallis, unfurled it with practiced grace and wrapped it around them. And there was melody - quiet, sad, introspective, kedushah-evoking melody with which they prayed as they prepared for prayer with prayer.

Today, the congregation sits, eyes fixed, eyes shallow, focused on things far away from what is to come. They wait for the rabbi to tell them that it is time to pray.

Finally, it is time. The rabbi, the hazzan and the choir perform their solos, duets, trios and ensembles. But the hum of congregational prayer, the surge and the breath of prayer are frozen as if in a far away wasteland.

And the prayer, the prayer we so desperately need, lies buried deep in the untouched recesses of the heart.

Prayer: The Lost Art, II

Rabbis, hazzanim and concerned laymen have not been unaware of the demise of the art of praying. A great number of cures have been suggested and tried. Most of **them** have failed; not for lack of sincerity or determination, but for lack of insight into the real source of the trouble.

If people do not, or cannot pray, the logic went, then there must be something wrong with the service. Therefore, let us change the service:

Have it start later, finish earlier. Make it shorter, make it longer. Put in an organ, take out the organ. More English, less Hebrew. More Hebrew, less English. Better refreshments, no refreshments. Coffee hour, Kiddush. One Shabbat and even collation. Shorter sermon, longer sermon. More announcements, less announcements, annual Torah cycle, tri-ennial Torah cycle.

Everything has been tried with the exception, perhaps, of trading stamps. Along with the experimentation with the service attempts were made to bring the prayer book up to date, to make it a more useful tool in prayer.

The work on the prayer book was of a more thoughtful and scholarly nature.

It was argued, with **some** justification, that modern theological thought demanded a new translation in order to bring the prayer book closer to contemporary language and outlook. Such translations, the argument continued, would also better serve the needs of this generation of worshippers; particularly those whose command of Hebrew was limited or non-existent.

As a result, a number of new translations appeared over the last twenty years. In the attempt to bring timelessness, particularity and finiteness to the meaning of the ancient texts, the timelessness, the rhythm and the thrust of the liturgy were lost. Whatever the value of the new translations, they serve scholarship and liturgical research more than they do the exercise of prayer. Each new translation gives rise to more criticism as the experts haggle over shades of meaning, nuances, poetic license, etc. The would-be worshipper finds only the new and strange language which is still different from the language in which the traditional Jewish service is conducted.

Prayer: The Lost Art (III)

The root of the problem of the lost art of prayer is to be found in the illiteracy and alienation of the would-be-worshipper. Attempts to find a quick and easy solution can not help but fail since they focus on changing the tools of the worshipper instead of changing the worshipper himself.

Admittedly, the needs of the moment are urgent and the short term nostrums beckon enticingly. But they cannot succeed. And each failure brings even more frustration and disappointment to the Jew, driving him further away from the only path which will bring success; study and preparation.

It is time we faced the problem honestly. Let us turn our attention to the Jew. No one in his right mind would hope to enjoy golf or bridge or skiing, or to pursue a profession or business without the proper preparation, motivation, education and equipment.

And even these are not enough. There must also be the inspiration gleaned from observing a skilled practitioner pursue his art or profession.

For example, how do the concert hall, the ball park, the theatre treat patrons? This is not to suggest that prayer can be assigned to the category of entertainment. But there is something which can be learned from these forms.

Each of these institutions exists only because of the loyalty of its devotees, its fans. It is in the best interest of the concert hall, the ball park, the theatre, to make its product as accessible, as understandable as possible. Yet no one would suggest that concert artists, or an orchestra slow down the tempo of a composition so that the novices can follow the score, or so that a patron, hearing a Beethoven symphony for the first time, should fully grasp all of the nuances and meaning of the work. Nor does the theatre expose its back stage or its lighting equipment to the view of the audience so that a new patron may better understand the play. The professional ball team does not simplify the rules of the game in order that the man who attends once a year will get something out of it.

On the contrary, the goal for these institutions is to present the best, the most authentic performance no matter what difficulty this may present to the uninitiated. In the normal course of events a man who is really interested in music or the theatre or baseball will read a book, take lessons, attend enough concerts or ball games so that he begins to understand what is going on. After that he can participate at a level which brings him growing satisfaction and pleasure.

A Jew cannot come to the service spiritually naked, intellectually bankrupt and liturgically unskilled and expect "to get something out of it." Prayer cannot be achieved by merely being in a synagogue. It takes wanting, it takes preparation, it takes knowing.

We cannot hope to revitalize prayer by catering to the lowest level, or by changing the rules or the liturgy to accommodate the inept. We serve these better only by conducting the most authentic, the most sincere, the most genuine service which can be mustered. Such a service is not necessarily the most "beautiful" which can be devised unless we define beauty as that which is natural and authentic, uncontrived and uncluttered.

The test for the effectiveness of a service is the reaction of the experienced worshipper, the knowledgeable one. How does it affect him? Let the novice sit among davening Jews and sooner or later the experiences of others will guide and infect him.

Prayer: The Lost Art (Iv)

Prayer is achieved more by what we feel than by what we know. During the very brief moments when we are truly moved we are unaware of the literal meaning of the individual words of the text. Rather we are affected by a tune, by the ancient words, by the atmosphere, by the antiquity of the act.

This is not to imply that ignorance of the meaning of the text is a desirable factor in prayer. On the contrary, one should know what he is praying for. But this he should learn through study. At the moment when a prayer is affective, the literal, line-for-line translation is not only unnecessary but may even be a psychological hindrance.

We have all seen Jews who know how to pray, who pray three times a day. We even may have criticized them for the speed with which they pray. It is not possible, we think, for such a man, rushing through the Amidah, to be able to concentrate on the full meaning of the text. But he does know - from long prayer experience, from study - that the paragraph which begins with Refaenu is a prayer for good health; that Barech alenu is a petition for sustenance and that S'lach lanu is a prayer for forgiveness.

We have all been present at a funeral at which a mourner is not able to recite the Kaddish. For such mourners the undertaker provides a pamphlet with the Kaddish in Hebrew, in an English translation, and in transliterated form as well.

When the times comes for the mourner to recite the Kaddish which does he choose? The English translation which he can read easily and understand? Or does he, embarrassing as it may be, choose instead to stumble through the transliteration of "Yisgadal veyiskadash shmay raboh...."

Even a person of high intellectual achievement prefers to struggle with the Hebrew rather than to read, "Magnified and sanctified...." why?

Because, somehow, deep within him, the old unintelligible but mystically inviting words evoke something which the English, with all of its intelligibility, does not.

The novice can best be taught during the service by example. If he is sincere he will derive benefit just

from being in the midst of other worshippers and identifying with them. When this is no longer sufficient he should find an opportunity for study outside of the service. If the would-be worshipper does not care enough to improve himself we should be courageous enough to withstand the temptation to lower standards in order to accommodate him.

Ten Commandments for
Congregational Singing

1. Thou Shalt Sing!
2. Thou Shalt Sing with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
3. Thou Shalt Sing fearlessly, ignoring the possible wondering glances of your neighbors. They would like to sing with you if they had the nerve and they will sing with you, if you continue.
4. Thou Shalt Sing Joyfully, as it is written by the prophet Isaiah, "Sing O Heaven, be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains."
5. Thou Shalt Sing Reverently, for music is prayer.
6. Thou Shalt Not be Afriad to Sing, for though an individual may pray in prose or even in wordless silence, a congregation must sing.
7. Thou Shalt Not Resist new melodies, for it is not written in the Book of Psalms: "O sing unto the Lord a new song"?
8. Thou Shalt Not Mumble the melody, but shalt sing it out loud, even if with occasional mistakes.
9. Thou Shalt Not Hesitate to sing together with the trained voices of the Choir. They want you to join with them.
10. Thou Shalt Not Forget the words of the Psalmist: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live."

Hazzan Robert Zalkin
Indianapolis, Ind.

The Next Twenty Five

Life is a pendulum swinging from excess to excess. In order to keep one's balance one must be aware of where the pendulum is at any one particular moment.

On May 16th, I had the special pleasure and privilege of enjoying an excess of praise. I think it would be appropriate now to remind admirers, friends and myself that, seen from the perspective of that Olympian height, there are yet many things left to be done.

We have not yet succeeded in understanding the part which music can and must play in our lives, if we are to judge from funds allocated to the cause of music. Neither our congregation, nor the Rochester Jewish community, nor even the general Rochester community keeps faith, in dollars, with what it proclaims in words. Despite the fact that music is an integral part of Jewish life, accompanying us in happy or sad cadences from the moment of our birth to the moment of our death, we still do not boast a music education program in our Religious School worthy of that fact. It should also make one stop and think that out of a budget of almost \$400,000 the congregation plans to spend next year less than \$6,000 on music.

The Jewish community often calls on me to provide a musical adornment to some important community occasion. They ask, in vain, for the services of a chorus or an orchestra or some other musical group. Yet, year after year, we fail to plan for or to provide the funds for such organizations to exist in our community.

The Rochester community talks much about its love of music; yet the Eastman Theatre is very rarely filled and the administrators of the Rochester Philharmonic still have to scrounge for funds to keep that fine orchestra alive.

This may seem like a shabby way to repay friends and admirers who went out of their way to be nice to me but I think that one repays kindness best with honesty. We have, indeed, much to be proud of in terms of musical achievement in Rochester, but we have not achieved nearly enough to make us complacent.

It looks like another rough twenty-five years ahead.

On Hazzanut*

(*From an address by Dr. Eric Werner, Professor Emeritus of Jewish Music at the Jewish Institute of Religion's School of Sacred Music before a convention of the Cantors Assembly.)

"Let us consider the important question, is hazzanut art or folklore. Obviously, neither. For in musical art one version is preferred by the composer to the exclusion of all others. It is folklore? Obviously not. For real folklore is limited to a relatively small region and does not migrate over oceans and continents. Moreover, true folklore is restricted to one language. If hazzanut is neither true folklore nor art music, what is it? We might regard it as a stylized and acculturated tradition. What does "acculturated" mean? It means, generally, the adjustment of a less developed civilization to traits and concepts of a higher civilization.

"One more element has to be considered before we can survey the true nature of hazzanut: the legal status of the Jewish community. Here in the United States the Jewish community has no legal status whatever, due to the separation of church and state in the constitution. Only the individual congregation enjoys a strictly private legal status. Yet the legal form of the kehilla could have survived; the consistory, the consistoire still exist in Europe, Africa, Australia and in part of South America.

"A kehilla means considerable underpinning for both the rabbi and the hazzan. Where a good musical training and an organized kehilla come together there we find, first, acculturation, then a close link with the art of music of the period. The examples of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Frankfort during the 19th century come to mind.

"Where there is little musical training and no kehilla the music of the synagogue remains completely arid or petrified. Passive assimilation and musical decay set in and neither tradition nor art music can unfold. This is the case of Oriental Jewry and, alas, also that of Israel. There prevails a false tradition which is gradually fossilizing. Excepted from this petrification are only a few elements of Oriental Jewry which have saved traces of their old folklore, among the Yemenites, the Iraqis, Kurdistanis, etc. Where there is high musical training but no kehilla - only single congregations as is the case here in America - we encounter occasional spurts and even

concerted attempts in the right direction. But we are not protected by the rabbis; our cultural interests are not championed by our educators; and in most cases the consequence is that the public remains indifferent, or at best, lukewarm.

"Where there was little music training but a lot of tradition and a closely knit kehilla, as was the case in Eastern Europe, we find active assimilation, acculturation, up to the point where musical education becomes respectable. From then on the links with art music increase. That was the situation in the great centers of Russia during the 19th century. It led to the development of stylized tradition in the cases of Gerovitch, Novakovsky, Minkowsky, etc."

What is our future?

The Cantors Assembly at 25

This year the Cantors Assembly will mark its 25th anniversary. It is a meaningful milestone in terms of the life of an organization but even more meaningful in terms of what actually has been accomplished.

The state of hazzanut before 1947, when the Assembly was founded, was in the nature of a personality cult, or of a private art. In those days everyone knew the ten, twelve or fifteen star hazzanim who went from synagogue to synagogue thrilling congregations with their beautiful interpretations of the liturgy. Each was an unique artist, with his own style and voice characteristics but there was no feeling of professionalism among these men. Very few of them shared their art with a colleague and very few of them were concerned with the broader needs of congregations beyond the hours devoted to Sabbath or holiday worship, or with the perpetuation of hazzanut.

One of the principle reasons for which the Cantors Assembly was founded was to make of this personal art a profession of sacred service. The founders of the Assembly believed that while there was a continuing need for the liturgy to be interpreted beautifully and meaningfully there were broader needs in each congregation for a personality who was trained in the liturgy but who would not be satisfied with merely chanting it; one who would be concerned with disseminating it and enriching it and making it part of our people's cultural heritage.

Over these 25 years we have striven mightily to attain this goal. There no longer exists the once-a-month-hazzan or the artistic interpreter who can survive on a synagogue circuit. Each hazzan of the Assembly is today totally involved with and concerned for the broad needs of his own congregation, in teaching, counselling and helping to enhance Jewish life wherever possible.

Over these 25 years we have helped to establish the clergy status of the hazzan in several land-mark cases in the courts of our country. We have raised standards for the profession and standards of musical taste in our congregations. We have carried on a program of continuing in-service education and a program of publication which has produced some 25 volumes of synagogue music.

Our proudest achievement is the impetus we gave to the establishment of a school for the training of hazzanim

and in the continuing support the Assembly provides for its survival. Almost from the very beginning of our existence we began to raise the funds and to convince people that a school for hazzanim was the only way in which we could guarantee the continuity of synagogue music in America.

The Cantors Institute was born as a result of our efforts. Over the eighteen years since, over \$300,000 has been raised by hazzanim in communities across the land. 25 graduates are already full-fledged members of the Cantors Assembly. The Institute continues to grow in accomplishment and in quality.

This celebration is as much the celebration of the American Jewish community as it is ours, for, in the long run, the Cantors Assembly would be meaningless if it could not have the understanding, cooperation and help of Jews in congregations all over the country.

Let me congratulate you as I know you will want to congratulate the Cantors Assembly. A contribution towards the sacred work of the Assembly on the occasion of this anniversary would be most gratefully received.

The Dilemma

Of **all the arts, says** Professor Abraham Heschel, hazzanut most reveals the soul of the artist. All creative **artists leave a** piece of themselves in their work, but it is not always exposed. The voice, sincerely raised in prayer, is always an evocation of what is in the heart and mind of the hazzan, bared and open for all to sense.

Beset by the knowledge of his own inadequacies, the hazzan must, nevertheless, be the spokesman, the sheliah tzibbur, of those whom he would lead in prayer. Because only one broken heart can fully understand another and only one who has himself been defeated by life's problems can fully understand the frustration of another loser, it might seem that the best hazzan is one who best expresses the frustrations and the disappointments of his congregants because he himself has experienced them. Yet, the hazzan who is himself defeated by life is, in the end, a poor sheliah tzibbur. For the act of prayer is an act of faith, an expression of the possibility of hope. Prayer for the sake of the mechanical repetition of fixed texts is meaningless and purposeless.

What is required is that the sheliah tzibbur should know intimately the doubts and the pain which beset his people and yet, at the same time, be able to articulate the hope and the promise that are the birthright of every human being. It is for this purpose that the hazzan enlists the art of music.

And this is the great dilemma: How, at the same **time, to** be sincere, understanding, honest and open and, yet, conscious of the strict disciplines of the musical art. Hazzanut is a difficult synthesis of art and faith.

One might think that the hazzan should come to the amud without prior preparation and allow his own thoughts and feelings about the liturgy at that particular time to express themselves as they will. Isn't there something inherently premeditated, and therefore dishonest about preparing an emotional response in advance?

We might agree except for one thing.

The hazzan's sacred duty is to be more concerned with the needs of those he leads in prayer than with his own needs. For their sake he cannot come unprepared, hoping

that in the excitement of the moment he will create a prayer-song which will evoke the desire to pray in others. Before he can lead in prayer, he must lead to prayer. Like a teacher, who must skillfully map out his classroom procedure in advance - no matter how thorough his knowledge of the subject - so the hazzan must give careful attention beforehand to what he will sing and how he will sing it. Sincerity and piety are fundamental and important but vocal line, artistic interpretation of the nusah and the text are vital if he is to gain the attention of the worshipper and involve him in the act of prayer.

To be at once artless and artistic, that is the dilemma of the hazzan.

As We Turn A Corner

The last forty years have seen a welcome revival of interest in Jewish music and in synagogue music in particular. Aside from the historic, sociological and economic reasons, and in purely musical terms, the great figure of Ernest Bloch and the unabashed Jewishness of his music constitute the chief inspiration of this revival. Following Bloch's example a flood of talented composers turned their attention to the liturgy and to other sacred texts and sought, through these efforts, identification as Jewish composers, or better, as composers of Jewish music.

The decades that followed gave us the creativity of men like Jacob Weinberg, Lazare Saminsky, Joseph Achron, Zavel Zilberts, Max Helfman, A. W. Binder, Isadore Freed, Sholom Secunda, Lazar Weiner, Herbert Fromm, Samuel Adler, Charles Davidson and others. The period was marked by the founding and growth of two national cantorial bodies, Cantors Assembly (Conservative-400 members) and the American Conference of Cantors (Reform-150 members); the establishment of two schools for the training of cantors, synagogue musicians and composers; the National Jewish Music Council to highlight the creation and celebration of Jewish music through annual festivals, publications and competitions.

There have developed also, a number of additional formal and information national and local societies and groups whose primary purpose is to highlight Jewish music through performance and discussion. During the last two decades at least six major publishers of Jewish music were doing a thriving business in this field.

As we prepare to move into a new decade the Cantors Assembly asked me to conduct a survey on the progress of this revival. How goes it with Jewish music? Are we reaping any fruits? Has the revival brought us to a high plateau, or a rising scale of interest or has it, contrary to what is happening everywhere else, experienced a deflation?

I will share with you, in the next issue of the Bulletin, the results of my survey. I confess that less than 75 of my colleagues responded; some 300 were polled. For this reason alone my statistics may be open to question. But I doubt that they can be entirely disregarded. And I wonder, too, whether the meager response is not, in itself, a statistic of the highest creditability.

Some Sobering Statistics

As promised, the results of a recent survey on the state of Jewish music today. The statistics are quoted at random, but taken together they form a pattern.

In congregations where the late Friday evening service is the major service of the week, on the average, less than a half hour of that service is devoted to music. (Most services last one hour and a half). The half hour of music is divided in varying proportions among hazzan choir and congregation.

In the great majority of congregations the professional choir and the professional quality of singing are things of the past. A partial or wholly volunteer choir now participate in the service.

While the average Sabbath morning service lasts from two to two and one-half hours, the largest regular attendance is attained only for the last hour of the service of which no more than 30 minutes is given over to music.

Most Jews still come to the synagogue on the high holidays. Less than 30% of the average four-hour service is allocated to hazzanic, choral or congregational music.

The average congregation last year (1968) spent a maximum of seventy dollars on the purchase of synagogue music.

To my knowledge, not one of the three cantorial schools has graduated a single, qualified teacher of Jewish music. I am not now speaking of cantorial graduates who can and do teach Jewish music.

The Junior Congregation is where the foundation must be laid for an understanding and appreciation of synagogue music. Most of those canvassed are led by teachers of Hebrew, or by lay volunteers who have little musical knowledge, training or talent.

The average student who attends a religious school is offered a maximum of twenty minutes of instruction in Jewish music per week, usually led by a teacher with no special training in Jewish music. The curriculum offered in most cases amounts to a few songs from Israel and a number of holiday songs.

There does not exist today a single text book of Jewish music for use in the religious school. (Most students are taught from illegally copied song-sheets, or from home-made ones, run off on the congregation's mimeograph machine.)

Congregations whose annual school budgets varied last year from \$25,000 to \$200,000 all managed to spend exactly the same amount (\$50) on music and music materials for their schools.

There remains today in this country only one publisher specializing in Jewish music. Fifteen years ago there were more than a half dozen.

During the '40's and '50's a host of internationally known singers of Jewish art and folk music appeared regularly before the American Jewish public. Today, one man remains in the field and it is no secret that he must seek a high-holiday hazzanic position in order to make a living.

As much as 80% of the music heard at services in the American synagogue today was composed before 1900. In some, more progressive congregations, as much as 50% of the music was composed before 1940. In no case is more than 20% of the repertoire composed of music created after 1940.

Some comments on these statistics next week.

Speculating on Statistics

One does not need to be a prophet to foretell, from the limited statistics on Jewish music reported here last week, the passing of the professional synagogue choir. The reasons for this phenomenon are many: they have as much to do with our time as with specifically Jewish or even musical factors. There is abroad in the world a universal spirit of ennui, of dissatisfaction and disenchantment with all kinds of forms, rituals and institutions which symbolize an organized establishment.

In the theater, the proscenium gave way to the thrust stage in the early days of the last decade. It was soon followed by the appearance in the audience of actors and action. The carefully wrought play, every detail, nuance and climax planned by the craftsman playwright is now out of fashion. It has been replaced by the Theater of the Absurd and by improvised "happenings." First costumes and then clothing have been discarded in the attempt to achieve "honesty," "naturalness," "spontaneity" and "TRUTH." The theater today gives us much to ponder but I would venture the thought that there is more spontaneity, honesty, naturalness and truth in a few lines by Shakespeare or Shaw or even, Neil Simon, than in entire plays by Ionesco or Brecht. Certainly, there is more art.

In music a similar revolution is underway. The symphony orchestra as a living institution seems doomed. Some of the causes are indeed economic but these are outweighed by the sentiment that the symphony orchestra is a luxury we can do without: a token of opulence and affluence that we cannot afford in these bitter and tragic days. Truth and beauty and artistry, some say, are kept from us by the iron curtain of the formality, the ritual and the etiquette of the symphony concert. Truth and beauty and artistry are more real, more accessible in Alice's Restaurant than in the Alice Tulley Hall of Lincoln Center, they would have us believe. Two concert artists have even tried to pierce the barricade between audience and performer by appearing in sweatshirt and slacks instead of the traditional white tie and tails. Interesting, but not one critic reported that Chopin or Beethoven profited from the innovation.

Now, what has all of this to do with the synagogue choir?

So, What About the Choir?

A synagogue choir of professional caliber makes a number of contributions to the service. The first of these is variety. The voice of the hazzan, no matter how beautiful its quality or artistic its use, can become monotonous, or at least, lose its impact when it is heard alone, unaccompanied over the course of a major service. The choir, with its rich variety of vocal and harmonic colors refreshes the ear. In the process it helps psychologically to renew interest in the liturgy, gives an emotional lift to the congregation, and when the hazzan resumes, everyone benefits anew from the contrast.

But the choir is an asset not only because of the sound of its song, its tone and texture, but because of the music itself. So many of the melodies which the congregation sings and loves and considers as its very own were originally choral compositions which caught the imagination and the hearts of Jews over the years and were literally wrested from the choir and firmly established as "congregational melodies."

In our own service, En Kamocha by Solomon Sulzer, Av Harachamin by Dunajewsky, Vayehi Binsoa and Hodo Al Eretz by Lewandowski, to name only a very few, were originally choral pieces.

Not all choral pieces have been treated so. The great majority of them remain in the realm of the choir, too complex to be sung by the congregation, yet moving and uplifting to listen to.

This is not unique to the synagogue. What opera lover cannot whistle or hum or sing the Quartet from Rigoletto? Yet he will sit transfixed through the entire opera even though he can only reproduce a small fraction of it by himself. Obviously there is benefit and even a sense of achievement and communication which can be derived just from listening.

Some people feel that the synagogue choir somehow stands between them and God. It may be that they are right, but if they are it will be an innovation that goes contrary to much of musical and Jewish history.

All classical music from the Baroque of the 16th century through the atonality of our own time was created to be listened to. If, here and there, a listener can hum

a phrase or even a section of a symphony or an aria, or a Schubert song, it is all to the good. But a music lover would not want to wipe out all music that he could not sing himself. The very art of listening to music is a spiritual experience. Heschel argues that the spiritual experience in the concert hall is of a lesser order than that which can be felt in the midst of a sincerely worshipping congregation. How much more elevating, then, can be the act of listening to liturgical music in the synagogue?

Finally, the choir adds richness and lustre to the service in a manner which cannot be duplicated by the unison voice. Its existence is a prod to composers to create new compositions, new ways of praying to God. It, alone, can create the climaxes which are so important to a meaningful service. These, in turn, enhance the voice of the hazzan, or the mighty unison song of the congregation, and most important, lend inspiration, courage and support to the lonely worshiper.

A Special Sabbath

Ordinarily this space is reserved for some of my thoughts on the music of the synagogue. Today, I would like to share with you the fruits of the labor of a number of young people who prepared two source books for the Shabbaton held in our congregation early in April. I read the material and was filled with a true sense of joy: the words rang with a special kind of music to me. Following are two quotations from the source book on the Shabbat prepared by Sharon Kowal. It should prove to be of comfort to those who, from time to time, have doubts about the future of Jewish life in America.

"Are you ready for Shabbat?"

"M'nuchah is no casual word in the Bible. It is usually translated as rest, but it is also the Biblical term for peace, harmony, calm, and the good life. It is much more than physical rest. It is the peace that comes from being at peace with God. It is the harmony that comes when one's work is blessed.

"At the end of the first psalm of Kabbalat Shabbat, Psalm 95 (L'chu N'ranena) we are told that the generation of the wilderness did not earn M'nuchah. They angered God and wrought evil, and there is a law in the spiritual life that he who causes strife does not earn M'nuchah,

"He who does not trust God but must constantly prove his own power may achieve many things. He may have pleasure and power, wealth, honor, and strength. But he cannot have M'nuchah.

"Now we understand why Psalm 95 is placed at the beginning of the Kabbalat Shabbat service.

"The Sabbath is the end product of the six days of the week. One cannot be cruel and callous six days a week and still hallow the Sabbath. We cannot be bound up in greed and hostility six days a week and enjoy inner peace on the seventh.

"What are we? What have we done with the week that has gone by? Are we ready to rest?"

"The Sabbath is not something automatic that comes each week at a set time. M'nuchah is something that must be earned anew each week.

"Are you ready for this Sabbath?"

"What is prayer?"

"Prayer is an experience. Prayer is a way of speaking in a world where no one can hear.

"When do we pray?"

"We pray three times a day. We pray when we are at peace. We pray when we are filled with love and also when we are filled with hate.

"Where is prayer?"

"Prayer is in the synagogue. Prayer is in the heart. Prayer is anywhere we can sense God.

"For what do we pray?"

"We pray for our desires. We pray for self-satisfaction. We pray for the good of others. We pray for inner peace.

"To whom do we pray?"

"Prayer is to God. Prayer is to the trees and grass. Prayer is to ourselves and for ourselves.

"Why do we pray?"

"We pray because we were commanded to do so. We pray because our needs in life are many. We pray because there is something in us, whether it be a love, a hate, a joy, or a sorrow, which is bursting and can no longer be contained.

"Who must pray?"

"Prayer is for all men. Prayer is for the faithless man whose wounds cause him pain. Prayer is for the grieving and the exulting alike. Prayer is for everyone who has ever laughed or cried.

"How do we pray?"

"We pray with all our hearts and souls. We pray in the same way we enjoy nature's beauty. We pray with that within us which asks, "How do we pray?"

I hope that you will feel as I do that these words constitute a special kind of music. (To be continued)

Shabbaton Continued

The theme of the Shabbaton was Jewish Mysticism and a source book on various aspects on that subject was prepared. This is a subject which is very little known or understood by most of us. The source book was, therefore, truly a revelation. It dealt with such exotic things as "The Three Aspects of the Soul," "The Spirits of the Dead," "The Potency of the Name of Man," "The Name of God," "Incantations," "Sympathetic Magic," etc. I think that you will be interested in the introduction which was prepared by Miriam Gross, Howard Crane, Debby Roxin, David Wallach.

"It is difficult for most of us to grasp the concept of Black Magic and Mysticism in the Jewish Faith. Though it may not be an official part of the religion and is not and was not recognized by rabbinical authorities, superstition played an important part in Judaism during the Middle Ages. It is amazing to look back to the ideas considered strange by us today that were once as well accepted as Nixon by the silent majority. It is also of interest to note the mysticism of Medieval Germany that lingers in our contemporary society is no longer associated with Black Magic. Nevertheless, this is where the roots of many of our traditions lie.

"How did the Jewish people ever get involved with such "taboo" practices? Though the Jews were isolated in ghettos, they were not quite as isolated as we have been led to believe. The ideas and practices of the outside (Christian) world had no trouble filtering through. These practices were greatly modified and adapted to fit the mold of Judaism.

"Even if growing superstition seemed to be the rage of the common people, the Rabbinate frowned upon mystical undertakings. They undertook to stamp out the line of practice, but were unsuccessful. Jewish magic and superstition had become the religion of the common folk, starting around the eleventh century, and continuing until the sixteenth. Because of the fact that the "folk religion" was an unrecognized and then unofficial Judaism, it is rarely studied or acknowledged today."

The Sounds of the Seder

Passover is an especially fine time for singing. It's spring, it's a holiday and new hope is on the horizon. In the synagogue, if you listen attentively you can hear the uniquely original festival modes which clothe the old prayers in new colors. There is the Hallel with its poignant bitter-sweet minor mode: the mystical and beautiful prayer for "Tal," in which we beseech the Almighty to be gracious to the land of Israel and to bless it with dew during the coming dry season. And there is the original and distinctive pattern for the chanting of the brakhot of the Amidah with the final note left hanging in the air, unfinished and yet somehow complete.

But the best singing is heard at the Seder. There are some who claim to be tone-deaf but most of these are really only ear-lazy. The melodies of the Seder are so simple, so much the creativity of the whole Jewish people, so inherently and instinctively Jewish that it is hard to believe that one could sit at a Seder and not join in,

The Four Questions are traditionally sung to the same nigun which students of the Talmud have been using in their study for centuries.

Dayenu, with its recurrent joyous refrain, is hard to resist. The hymns which are collected at the end of the Haggadah and sung at the pleasure of those sitting around the table have come to us from Jewish communities all over the world - from Germany, Yemen, from Eastern Europe and even from Spain.

Passover is a time for singing. It is a time of freedom. One of the freedoms I wish for you is freedom from the inhibitions which may have kept you from joining in the singing!

Song Power

The melody of Kol Nidre became, over the ages, the best known and most moving of all the melodies of the Ashkenazic synagogue. Somehow it has the power to reach and to move even the most disinterested peripheral Jew. If one needed additional testimony that words alone, no matter how elegant, are not enough for a Jew at prayer, he need only step into a synagogue on Kol Nidre eve, the holiest night of the year.

Empty and deserted much of the rest of the year it is now packed to overflowing. Impending judgment hangs suspended, mist-like, in the air. All wait for Kol Nidre. And then the Ark is opened, the holy Scrolls brought forth and the Hazzan begins to chant Kol Nidre.

The notes shine like stars. In them you hear the heartbreak and the misery of the Jewish people; the pain and the anguish of the bitter centuries. Your soul quickens and you sway in response as if pulled by some unseen string. For an instant, the man in front of you is your grandfather, wrapped in his white kittle, prayerbook moist with his tears. He, too, is swaying. He to your tempo and you to his. You blink and it is over. You are back in the present. Unconsciously you touch the pages of your own prayerbook and they, too, are moist. With those tears?

You glance at the words of Kol Nidre, enigmas in their Aramaic. So you look to the facing page, to the translation, and you are shocked. There is no poetry, no prayer, no majesty. Merely a dry-as-dust ancient formula; a blanket, legalistic release from unfulfilled promises.

And then you understand the power of a song.

L'shanah tovah tikateva vitechatemu.

Zemirot

The Sabbath is enhanced by a large treasure of poems and songs which are sung around the Sabbath table. These table songs, called "Zemirot," may be traced back to the Second Temple.

The Jew is bidden to make the Sabbath a delight. It is natural that music should be involved in carrying out this commandment. The zemirot helped the Jew to enjoy the Sabbath and to shut him off momentarily from the pressures and persecutions which surrounded him.

The "payyetanim," composers of sacred poetry, came into vogue in the Middle Ages. Many of the tunes for their early poems, being borrowed from the secular and alien songs of the day, became very popular. Many found their way into the prayer book and into everyday religious life. The Sabbath synagogue service is rich in such poetry; L'cha Dodi, El Adon, Yismach Moshe, Ein Keloheinu, Adon Olam are but a few examples.

Many piyyutim, bearing the unmistakable influence of the mystical beauty of the "Kabbalah" and of the Biblical "Song of Songs" became popular zemirot. Since the early poets were Sephardim, most of the early zemirot were set to Sephardic tunes. Centuries later, the zemirot became especially popular with the hasidim of Eastern Europe, for their roots go deep into the mysticism of the Kabbalah. They reset them to their own joyously rhythmic or deeply meditative melodies.

Certain zemirot became associated with specific Sabbath meals: the festive meal of welcome on Friday evening, the relaxed Sabbath noon meal and the melancholy third meal (Seuda Sh'lishit) which follows the Sabbath nap and carries with it portents of the secular week about to begin. The hasidim, eager to extend the Sabbath instituted still another table session at Havdalah time called "Melaveh Malkah," marking the imminent return of the Sabbath Queen to heaven.

The zemirot tunes are many and varied, reflecting the communities all over the world in which Jews found a haven.

In times past, when Jews lived in small, widely separated villages and towns, they waited eagerly for guests from afar: not only for the news they might bring but also for the opportunity to hear a new synagogue tune or zemirah. It was one of the few ways, in those simple times, in which the Jew brought variety and fresh beauty into the narrow confines of his own life.

A Purim Story In Time For Purim

One of the first things I did when I resumed my duties last month was to invite a number of young women to participate in the Family Megillah Service by reading a portion of the Megillah. I was in the midst of this process when Julia Goldberg, of our Temple Library staff stopped by quite coincidentally, with "something interesting" to show me.

The "something interesting" was a three column clipping from the February 22nd, 1964 issue of the Democrat and Chronicle, topped by a picture of a much younger Hazzan surrounded by a number of boys and girls who were preparing to read the Megillah at that year's Purim service. It brought me up with a start. I had just not realized that this lovely Beth El tradition was that old, 18 years to be exact. The coincidence and the number 18 were too good an omen to go unnoticed. One doesn't sneeze at Hai (18), especially if one has undergone coronary surgery.

The young people who joined in reading the Megillah in 1964 were Sara Ruderman, now pursuing a career in voice and computers in New York; Shelly Michlin, now Shelly Projansky - married to a Professor of Physics in Ithaca and the mother of two lovely children; Arnold Rosenberg, now a successful attorney with the New York Telephone Company; Michael Shafer, who long ago earned his medical degree and has been pursuing a number of highly technical specialities in San Francisco; and Jan Goldberg, Julia's son, who is an electrical engineer in California, married and the father of one child.

It produced a lovely moment of nostalgia for me and I thought it was worth sharing with you. Nahas fun kinder is always welcome.

The Songs of Selihot

Just as the Selihot liturgy serves as a prelude to the High Holy Day season so does the music serve as an overture to the musical riches of the solemn season about to begin. The musical mode is a somber one but particularly moving to Jewish hearts. Technically, it is an amalgam of several Western minor scales and is known to synagogue musicians as the Penitential Mode. Its use is not restricted to this service or to the High Holy Day season. It can also be heard in more simple form at the daily service and at certain moments on Sabbaths and festivals.

Just as an overture presents snatches from the music of the opera about to begin, so the Selihot Service presents highlights of the most moving sections of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgies. The beautiful, majestic and always inspiring Kaddish of the Days of Awe is heard for the first time since the preceding Yom Kippur. The piyyutim, the sacred poetry of the Selihot Service, are particularly suited to musical ornamentation since they were originally written to be sung. Many of the payyetanim were, themselves, hazzanim. Since these poems are not part of the "matbeah shel tefillah" (the coin of prayer - those prayers which are specifically required for each service), the musical modes vary widely, offering a rich collection of tunes and chants. The moving "Sh'ma Koleinu" prayer is heard again in its plaintive plea for God's attention, as is the major congregational confession, an alphabetic acrostic beginning "Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu..."

Strangely enough, this soul-baring confessional is sung, not in a sad minor, but rather in a brilliant major mode. When pressed for an explanation one scholar explained that Jews are so confident of God's mercy and justice that they confess readily, openly and without fear.

While the Selihot Service is essentially a personal one the needs of the people Israel are never forgotten and the service closes with a prayer for the redemption of Israel, "Shomer Yisrael."

We look forward with you to Saturday evening, September 26th.

High Holy Day Reprise

A number of members of the Temple Family were kind enough to comment on the beauty of the music of the high holiday services. There was special praise for the innovative use of folk and contemporary material for the Martyrology section of the Yom Kippur service, both for the spoken words and the music. Compliments are always pleasant, but what pleased me most is that no one said that they had "enjoyed" the services, but rather that they had been touched by them.

For the many who inquired and for others who may be interested I am pleased to supply titles and sources.

The opening passage read so beautifully by Mrs. Daniel Chazanoff was from Milton Steinberg's "A Believing Jew." Rabbi Elkins chose his readings from the pamphlet "Contemporary Prayers and Readings," copies of which are now available at the Sisterhood Book Shop.

I sang three ghetto songs. The first was "Es Brent," by the well known folk poet and composer, Mordecai Gebirtig. "Fire: Fire: Our shtetl is burning. Don't stand there with folded hands. If the shtetl is precious to you help us put out the fire!" The second song was a moving retelling of Bialik's poem, "Moishelach un Shloimelach." In that poem Bialik rhapsodized over the translucently fragile Jewish children of the shtetl. He described them for us as they played on the grass and in the snow. The new tragic parody which I sang says, "Es shpielen zich mer nit kein Moishelach, Shloimelach." "No longer do Jewish children play on the grass and in the snow. Only the Polish forests remember and mourn for them." The words are by Jacob Papirnikoff, the music by Israel Alter.

I transcribed the third song, "Modeh Ani" as it was sung for me by a great Jewish artist who was herself a survivor of the death camps, Sara Gorby. She gave me neither the name of the poet or of the composer. "Modeh Ani" is the first prayer which Jews recite upon arising in the morning. Perhaps your mother helped you to recite it when you were a child as did mine. It is a simple affirmation of faith and an expression of thanksgiving to the Almighty for having seen us safely through the night. In the song, a survivor tries desperately once again to recite "Modeh Ani" but finds that she no longer remembers the prayer. She begs God to help her to remember, to come out to meet her. She wants very much to find her way to

Him, but she just does not know the way. She warns that in her shattered state she could easily be misled by the foe still lying in wait.

The closing selection was Lazar Weiner's "Kaddish." While the Hazzan chants the ancient words, the choir interjects searing reminders of the uncounted atrocities which the Jewish people has endured over the centuries. During the last days of Elul 5732, Munich was added to that list. I arranged the text from my own vivid impression of the closing lines of Andre Schwartz-Bart's "The Last of the Just."

It is good to know that the Martyrology was made meaningful for so many. It is even more satisfying that our efforts touched and moved Jewish hearts to perform the sacred mitzvah of remembering.

Songs and Knedlach

If there was ever any doubt about the wide variety of tunes which exist for any given Jewish liturgical text, that doubt must be dispelled by a quick check among friends on how they sing the songs of the Haggadah. Such a check will reveal the broad spectrum of cultures and civilizations in which Jews, at one time or another, found themselves.

Very little serious research has been done on the origins of even the better known Haggadah tunes, to say nothing of the infinite number of lesser known ones. Hut, perhaps, we can make a beginning.

The tune for Mah Nishtanah, the motivating device for the Seder, comes from the study-nigun so familiar to those whose Jewish education includes Talmud learned in the East European fashion. Since the Seder is intended primarily as a demonstration lesson for children on the Jewish struggle for freedom, it is natural that the folk, in its wisdom, should have borrowed for this lesson the same motif used in other forms of Jewish study.

Kadesh U'r'chatz, the outline which lists the fourteen steps of the Seder and which is actually not a part of the Haggadah, is sung primarily in two ways: One tune traces its origin back to the Jewish community in Babylonia; another, is in the minor mode which is traditional for the week-day Shaharit. The same mode is utilized, with some minor exceptions, for the long section of explanatory and historic material which constitutes the parent's answer to the Four Questions, beginning with Avadim Havinu.

Of course, the hasidim, with their great love for song, have a field-day at the Seder. The Haggadah tunes of the Makarever and Karliner hasidim are especially beloved. They add variety and spice to the musical fare by borrowing melodic themes from the high holidays, from the Selihot liturgy and from other festivals, as well. Chasal Sidur Pesah, for instance, is sung by the hasidim to the tune of the piyut in Neilah, Enkat M'saldekha.

The very popular melodies for Adir Hu and Had Gadya, which are Middle-Ages German in origin are rejected by the hasidim in favor of melodies which seem more familiar to **them**. (Hence, they think, more Jewish.) Alas, a little investigation shows that their tunes are as Slavic in origin as the rejected ones are Germanic.

It is interesting to note that almost all musical traditions agree on the manner in which the Ten Plagues are enumerated. These are read out in a dull, monotonous, one or two-note chant, as if to teach that human suffering, no matter how richly deserved, is hardly a subject for exultation.

As might be expected, when it is time for Hallel at the Seder, all traditions use the mode in which it is sung in the synagogue. It is also remarkable that Hallel is one of the few prayer sections whose musical mode (natural minor) has been accepted almost universally, in Sephardi as well as Ashkenazi congregations.

The hasidim conclude the Seder with a Had Gadya tune which is based on the mode of the Haftarah. Most other communities, especially in America, prefer the madrigal-type tune on which most of us were raised.

All of the foregoing is merely to celebrate again the rich and varied musical heritage which is ours. While we naturally prefer what is familiar, at the Seder — where the Haggadah itself is such a multi-hued tapestry, a little experimentation with a "different" tune might be in order. In our home, guests are encouraged to sing "their" tunes as well as ours. Whatever the tune, the Haggadah must be sung. A Seder without singing is like a Haggadah without kredlach.

A joyous Pesah to all.

Fulfilling A Trust

We have already spoken of the implicit obligation of the Jew to preserve Jewish tradition and also to enrich and expand it. For a long time after the immigrant days of the early twentieth century Jewish music in general and synagogue music in particular fed itself on the past. The traditions of Eastern Europe, of Germany and of other Jewish communities were transplanted bodily onto the American scene. Strangely enough, it was the Yiddish theater that showed the first and greatest creativity and the ability to adapt itself to new situations and a new cultural atmosphere. By the early thirties there were fifteen Yiddish theaters functioning in the New York City area. At least twelve of these were predominantly musical theaters producing dozens of new works each season.

The synagogue, however, enjoyed no such good fortune. Here tradition was harder to remold. Young Jewish composers who should have been influenced and encouraged to turn their talents to the synagogue, had no choice except to turn to Second Avenue or to Broadway where their talents were better appreciated and better paid.

It was not until the early fifties that it occurred to American synagogues and to organizations interested in the preservation and enhancement of Jewish music that composers were human beings who needed to be wanted and who needed to make a living from their craft. A number of leading synagogues, among them the Park Avenue Synagogue of New York and the Temple on the Heights in Cleveland, at the instigation of their hazzanim, David Putterman and Saul Meisels, instituted annual programs of commissions to Jewish composers. These programs have been flourishing now for two decades.

Thanks to the sensitivity and generosity of our own Sisterhood, Temple Beth El can now join the ranks of this select group. Last month the Sisterhood extended a commission to Dr. Samuel Adler, Professor of Composition at the Eastman School of Music, to write a suite of three pieces for the high holy days. Entitled, "Hinay Yom HaDin," the suite contains exciting new settings to three of the major texts of the liturgy: "U'n 'taneh Tokef," "Hayom Harat Olam" and "El Meleh Yoshev Al Kisei Rahamim." The premiere performance of this work will be heard on Sunday evening, December 14th as part of the Beth El Forum Concert. The chorus of the State College at Geneseo under the direction of Dr. Robert Isgro will join me in that performance.

Whatever the reaction to the pieces themselves the fact remains that Sisterhood has already performed a creative mitzvah in that it has made it possible for a talented Jewish composer to think about and to express himself on portions of our high holy day liturgy.

Whatever Happened to
Mendelson and Wagner?

Over the past years weddings at Beth El have undergone a quiet revolution. Without protests, strikes or even the threat of violence, brides and grooms have come to understand that a Jewish wedding should reflect, in every way possible, the traditions, the customs and the culture of the Jewish people.

Since the marriage service is held in the synagogue and the rabbi and hazzan are invited to sanctify the occasion, it is proper that the same standards which we observe at other synagogue services should hold, as well, for the marriage service. Gone is the day when the hazzan or the choir needed to borrow from Italian opera, or from German lieder or from Russian folk-songs in order to impress or to entertain the congregation. We now understand that the prosody of our liturgy fits best the cadences of music whose roots go back to our own land and our own history.

So it has become with the marriage service. The strains of Wagner or Mendelson are as alien to a Jewish wedding as a Verdi aria is to Kol Nidre.

The immigrant generation may have felt a need to blend into the American culture as quickly as possible, so it was understandable that they permitted what their neighbors considered to be "traditional wedding music" to be heard at Jewish weddings. It was important for them to feel that their religious rites were not substantially different from those of the majority culture.

We are a long way past the melting-pot stage. Whatever else the social ferment of these last years has produced, one thing we have learned: Every man has the right, more, the responsibility to express himself in his own unique fashion. Young people call it "doing their own thing." and imagine they have discovered something new. The rabbis taught, centuries ago, the uniqueness and individuality of every man and the respect due this uniqueness from others and from himself.

Fortunately for us we have a four thousand year old, wide-ranging culture from which to draw our uniqueness. In addition, Jewish creativity in music is far beyond what our small number might lead one to expect, both in quality and quantity.

So, Wagner and Mendelson will not be missed. Bloch, Diamond, Adler, Weiner, Secunda, Kosakoff, Ellstein, Ben Haim, Fromm, Schalit, Bernstein and Milhaud - to name only a few - stand ready to take their place.

Artistry and Sincerity

There are those today who see elegance, style, wit, art and virtuosity as symbols of the decadence of our culture. In all fields of artistic endeavor there are those artisans (not artists) who are catering to this anti-beauty mood by reverting to primitive forms.

In the field of education this mood shows up in the demands of some students to decide who is to teach them; what and how he is to teach; firmly believing that their own lack of knowledge can be made up for by their sincerity.

In the synagogue this mood reveals itself in attempts to question the role which the choir, or even the professional hazzan takes in the service. The theory is that one who is knowledgeable, one who has worked at perfecting a sacred or musical craft, i.e., one who is "artistic" cannot possibly be as real or as sincere in prayer leadership as the less knowledgeable, less skilled layman, whose sincerity, somehow, is never questioned.

It might be relevant, in the fact of such a mood, to remind ourselves of the way in which previous generations looked upon hazzanic virtuosity. I draw your attention to such an appraisal which appeared, unsigned, in a recent issue of the "Adas Israel Chronicle" of Washington, D. C.

"When people attended services daily as well as Sabbath and Holidays, they actually welcomed variety.

"At periods of withdrawals from popular culture, and especially when prayer texts became fixed, interpolations were frowned upon, and sometimes with ample justification, for there were times when the additions may have vulgarized the service. It was in this period that the era of the virtuoso hazzan set in, whose purpose it was to clothe the routine text with skilled and imaginative variations. Music was a potent instrument in worship, and lent excitement as well as novelty to the service. The hazzan, by the beauty of his voice, the tuneful content of his chant, brought ecstasy to the recitation of the prayers. Thus, people would often attend two services on a given Sabbath or Holiday - once to fulfill their sacred duty; the second time to draw an added measure of inspiration through the medium of the cantorial chants.

"The length and verbosity of the traditional service, which was substantial, invited the need for variation and novelty. Since the text could not be changed, why not change the melody? Because of a cutting down in their traditional length, services in the contemporary synagogue have been more or less standardized. The need for variation, however, still exists."

What Goes On at a
Cantors Convention?

The inevitable questions came this week upon our return from the 23rd annual convention of the Cantors Assembly. Is there much singing? What do cantors talk about at a convention? Why do you open a professional convention to laymen?

Yes, there was a lot of singing not only at concerts, workshops, demonstrations and services, but you could pick up a new Hashkivenu or a Rosh Hodesh bentsh'n in the lobbies, the dining room, on the sundeck or even in the health club. One soon became accustomed, too, to some hundred or more hazzanim doing their daily vocalizing in the privacy of their rooms; the walls are thin and the voices strong. Singing is an art which demands constant practice. The layman is understandably puzzled by the bedlam of a hundred vocalizing hazzanim, but to the professional it is a good sign that his colleagues are concerned with the perfection of their art.

This year, hazzanim talked and argued about a wide variety of subjects. They were joined by seven rabbis, six composers, thirteen Eastman School of Music singers and instrumentalists, one rabbinical student (our own Seymour Rosenbloom) one cantorial student and one doctoral candidate in education. Among the topics discussed were, "Can the Sabbath Service Survive the Seventies?" "The Challenges and Responsibilities Which Composers and Hazzanim Share," "Another New Prayer Hook? An analysis of the new Mahzor soon to be published by the Rabbinical Assembly." The results: Scores of new questions to ponder, some answers, some new ideas and many more questions to be explored at future conventions.

Finally, we invite laymen because every man who prays with fellow Jews is, in a real sense, a hazzan. Hazzanut is the medium of Jewish prayer. No matter how limited his vocal skill, the davening layman must sing, or chant at **prayer**, on his own, or as he follows or joins with the hazzan. Ultimately, the success of the mission of the hazzan to lead Jews to prayer and in prayer lies with the congregation. If they join with him, his prayer is authentic and moving. If they sit silently as he "prays" for them all is lost. Hazzan and congregation are inextricably bound together every day of the year, why not at a convention where the ties that bind them together are under discussion?

If all of the foregoing sounds interesting, make a note. Next year's convention of the Cantors Assembly will take place at Grossinger's beginning Sunday, May 2nd.

A Horn By Any Other Name

In a learned and fascinating article in a recent issue of the "Journal of Synagogue Music," Dr. Alfred Sendrey, musicologist, author and music-historian points out a number of glaring inaccuracies in the way the Hebrew names of the instruments mentioned in the Bible have been translated, or better, mis-translated.

Our specific knowledge of the nature and sound of music in Biblical times is practically nil: almost no records from that time remain. But we did think, until Dr. Sendrey came along, that we had a fairly good idea of what the instruments used in those days were like and hence were able to deduce what the music might have sounded like.

The first translation of the Bible into English was made by John Wycliffe. This was followed shortly by a reputedly "improved" translation by John Hereford. Both men lived in the 14th century and based their work almost entirely on the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate translations of the Hebrew. There is little evidence that they were familiar with the original Hebrew.

These were followed by a number of additional translations which continued the glaring misconceptions of the earlier translators, at least as far as musical terms were concerned.

Some examples:

Ugab is almost universally translated as "organ." This error was probably due to the fact that in classic Greek all musical instruments are referred to as organum mousikon. What the translators did not take into consideration was the fact that such a complicated instrument as the organ could never have been constructed by the ancient Hebrews, just fresh from a long, nomadic existence. Sendrey selects "pipe" as being the accurate translation.

Take the word kinnor. It is alternately translated as "psaltery," "harp," "zither" or "lute." It was not until the newest translation of the Masoretic text appeared in 1962 that the kinnor was finally established as a "lyre." This news will probably be disconcerting to the Yiddish folklorists who always pictured David playing the violin. It will take some readjustment to replace fiddleleh (affectionate form for violin in Yiddish) with "lyre."

Even so familiar an instrument as the shofar gets translated in half a dozen different ways. Sendrey suggests we should settle for "horn" or "ram's horn."

Sendrey's article is filled with many more such examples of clarifying scholarship. I recommend you read it, either by borrowing the December issue of the "Journal of Synagogue Music" from the Temple Library or by subscribing to this interesting and informative quarterly. I will be glad to arrange the sidduch* for you.

Why So Little From Israel?

I am often asked why so little new sacred music is being created in Israel. One might expect that the Holy Land, whose Temple's songs inspired the entire ancient world and provided the roots for our own sacred music as well as that of the Church, might now be experiencing a renaissance. Scholars and musicians agree that the study of and the inspired use of Biblical cantillation modes could open the way to a new flowering of Jewish sacred music. There are others that feel that over the centuries Jewish music has been subject to pollution, assimilation and acculturation. There can be no revival of Jewish sacred music, they say, until it undergoes a thorough self-cleansing by knowledgeable scholars.

With these possibilities open both to creative artists and to Jewish musicologists it is disappointing that so little new sacred or cleansed music has come out of Israel.

A number of Israeli composers has shown interest in the Bible but more for its historical and national relevance than for the purpose of creating new liturgical music.

A few composers have been moved to create new liturgical music by commissions from this country, but unfortunately there is no one in Israel to ask or to encourage an Israeli composer to compose music for Israel's synagogues. Israeli composers are generally not synagogue-goers; most of them stand aloof from ritual and prayer.

The synagogue leadership has shown little inclination to attract musicians or a music-loving public. Paradoxically, it was the Socialist kibbutz movement which first encouraged poets and composers to create new literary and musical forms for the traditional Jewish festivals - Pesah, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot. Here, too, the emphasis was on the cultural and the ethical precepts of Judaism rather than on its liturgical forms.

The ban on instrumental music, so often interpreted as being derived from a spirit of national mourning for the ancient Temple was, in reality, based on the impulses of an art-suspicious period. The Church, in its early years, banned excessive music because it was reminiscent of the Jewish practice in King Solomon's Temple

Islam banned **music as a** detracting element from the core of its belief. We Jews found a sentimental reason. But now, with Jerusalem united and the Temple site once more in Jewish hands, the time for mourning a two thousand year old catastrophe should be at an end. Israel should lead the way to returning to the synagogue the deep spiritual meaning and the artful splendour that were the Temple's golden age of ancient Israel.

What About Israel?

A musical work is the product as much of the composer's own period and surroundings as of the creative faculties of the artist himself. While it is of little interest to search for nationalistic trends, for regional traits, or spiritual leanings in a work of art, it most certainly does belong to its period as well as to the place where it was created. Many are the examples in music history of composers who were voluntarily or involuntarily transplanted to a new environment where the musical climate was different from that in which they grew up originally. Flemish composers who emigrated to Italy in the early 16th century sought the warmer and livelier atmosphere of the sunny south, and their music composed in Italy took on a different character. Beethoven and Brahms exchanged their cold birthplace cities in Northern Germany and went to live in cosmopolitan Vienna. Hungarian-born Liszt felt best in the musical atmosphere of Paris. Chopin abandoned his native Poland for France, as did Russian-born Stravinsky some eighty years later. And though characteristic features of style and expression link the early works of all these composers and their mature musical creations, profound changes in musical outlook and style were naturally brought about by their adoption of a new country.

For these great masters of European music a change in domicile meant a new colouring of their works or a synthesis of various styles. For the Jewish composers who left their countries of birth to settle in the land of Israel, to find a new home, the situation was slightly different. Not only did they come to a new continent, so to speak, which had nothing of the civilization and cultural tradition in which they had grown up, but they also soon acquired the feeling that they were called upon to contribute, by their very creative work, to the upbuilding of the old-new country. Their previous notions seemed curiously out of place in the new surroundings. Acclimatization was imperative.

(More Next Week)

More About the Music of Israel

Israel received the bulk of its citizens in three aliyot. The first to come were the Russian-Polish Jews. These were followed, decades later, by Jews from Central and Western Europe, escapees from the Holocaust. Most recently Israel's cultural mosaic was enriched by the African and Asiatic immigration.

Each of these aliyot contributed equally to the basic trends in Israel's music of today, as far as the old and middle-aged composers are concerned. The composers hailing from the Eastern-European countries, in which a profound Jewish renaissance had come under way, developed in the spirit of Eastern-European art-music coupled with the feeling for Jewish values. The composers from Central and Western Europe had gone through the schools of modernism in the nineteen-twenties; their knowledge of Jewish folk music and Jewish life in general was much less developed than that of their colleagues from the east.

The aliyot from these different zones brought many composers to the land. Almost none came from the African and Asiatic countries; at least, not as creators of musical art works as the West understands them. But all musicians from the ancient countries are composers. A melody or an instrumental tune is composed, that is to say, put together while it is performed, on the basis of most ancient formulas, and of handed-down schemes of elaboration, ornamentation and variation. Acquaintance with their singing and playing proved a welcome attraction to the western musicians with open ears and hearts, and while many among the public at large, accustomed to listening to Beethoven and Tschaikowsky, Chopin and Brahms, if not to the Beatles, dismiss genuine singing and playing of the kind as "non-European", "Primitive", "Monotonous", composers studying this music know they return to the roots of all musical art.

Those among Israel's composers - and their number is growing - who have absorbed something of these roots, have come to understand the power of expression, the attraction of variety, the intellectual as well as the sensual pleasure of singing and playing as the musicians of ancient traditions do. At last, a synthesis is being accomplished in some Israeli compositions, of East and West, of the traditional and the modern of the rule-bound and the experimental-free.

More on Israeli Music

The earliest attempts at coming to terms with the newly conquered world were, naturally, arrangements and elaborations of folksongs. Some of these attempts were doomed to failure, as the composers applied western harmony and composition technique to tunes demanding quite a different treatment.

And which were the tunes, really?

The first aliyot of Eastern-European immigrants brought material collected by members of the Jewish Folklore Society of Petersburg, hassidic tunes and dances, and liturgical nusschaot from their countries. There was little in them of genuine Jewish heritage. Slav elements had changed old melodies and rhythms.

The first Palestinian composers, men like Rosowsky, Engel, set poems by Bialik and other early poets to music in the vein of what they had known in their old lands and the modern Hebrew limped along in false prosody for a long time until the metric rules of the reborn Hebrew language were acknowledged.

Musically the next wave of immigration from Central and Western European countries brought children's songs and folktunes from countries with quite different musical traditions. Only in the late forties and early fifties did the African and Asiatic Jewish immigration acquaint the musicians and the public at large with folklore of really ancient heritage, being of, and belonging to Israel's geographical region and cultural climate.

(More next week)

Still More On Israel's Music

Some of the composers who have most successfully synthesized the styles and tradition of Eastern and Western music are Jacob Stutchewsky, Paul Ben-Haim, Joseph Tal, A. Boscovich, Menahim Avidom, Mordecai Seter and Odeon Partos. These composers, among others, have given impetus, direction, instruction and example to the younger composers.

An excellent example is the above-named Odeon Partos, who has most successfully blended tradition and modernism, East and West, in his creativity. His piece, "Yizkor" will be heard at the next Forum concert on Sunday, March 22nd.

Partos has thoroughly mastered the music of tone-rows, serial music, as practiced by most of the important composers of present-day western music, and he has learned of the deep-rooted parallelism between the Eastern conception of tone-rows and the most ancient tone - and melody-models known as raga in the Indian world and as magamat in the Arab Near-East. His instrumental compositions, like the Viola Concerto No. 2, the Quintet for flute and strings "Magamat", the "Images" for large orchestra, and "Visions" for chamber orchestra, are all proof of his talent to synthesize and combine Near-Eastern elements and modern techniques of elaboration.

Among the younger composers, we must mention Ben-Zion Orgad, Yehoshua Lakner, Abel Ehrlich and Yizhak Sadai - as musicians who have tried to come to grips with the musical world of the East. Still younger are Ami Ma'ayani, Noam Sheriff. And in the music academies of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv there is developing a number of composers whose names will probably soon be familiar to all of us.

No mention has been made here of the lighter side of musical composition, which, as may be expected, follows in a similar, although simpler vein. Best-known in the field of lighter symphonic music and oratorio is the late Marc Lavry, a master of his craft in his own right, whose works are often performed in Israel and in the world at large.

The Sound of Yiddish

The character and style of a people are often reflected in its language. With its determinedly precise convoluted construction, its guttural pronunciation and clipped prosody. German aptly mirrors the German people. On the other hand, French, fragile and elegant as it falls from the lips, evokes images of candlelight reflected in crystal, heady wine and beautiful women. Italians manage to sound apocalyptic merely asking for directions to the nearest bus stop.

If one had to capture the essence of Yiddish in a word, it would be musicality. More than any other language Yiddish lives and breathes on cadence, intonation and nuances of sound. This is hardly surprising when you consider how deeply music infiltrates Jewish life.

The names of Jewish children - Mireleh, Soreleh, Chaneleh, Avremeleh, Chayimel - sing with an inner melody all their own. How warm and lilting are words like Shabbesdig, mameh, licht-bensh'n, heilig, freiheit. How much better to be a kabtz'n -a word reminiscent of the clash of cymbals - than a pauper -a word which gives off the sound of pennies, dropping into a collection plate.

Or take the Yiddish one-syllable exclamation, Nu!

Spoken largo et sotto voce by an important ballebos at the synagogue's eastern wall it conveys an unmistakable warning to the rabbi or the hazzan to get on with it. Intoned in a mezzo soprano range on a descending melisma it could mean: "Well, why shouldn't he get the Maftir aliyah? After all he paid for the repair of the roof." In a soft addolcendo or addolorate it could convey, "What did you expect from him? He hardly learned Aleph Bes!" Two short staccato Nu's in succession convey pure disbelief or astonishment: "She will marry him?"

What brings all this to mind is the appearance last week of a new issue of "Jewish-Roots," a periodical devoted to preserving and spreading the music of the Yiddish word. Under the redaction of the award winning poet, Israel Emiot, the issue boasts a wide variety of Yiddish stories, poetry, articles and essays in the original and in translation. Among these is an article by Deborah Karp, a short story by Hannah Robfogel Fox and my own translations of three fables by the supremely talented fablist, Eliezer Steinbarg.

"Jewish Roots" is available at the J.Y. or at the Sisterhood Book Shop. Buy a copy and sing a little.

More On the Music of Yiddish

The recent column on the lyricism of Yiddish attracted an unusually large number of comments. I am particularly pleased with a note which I received from Hazzan William Belskin Ginsburg of Philadelphia, a regular reader of our Temple Bulletin:

"Dear Sam:

"I am taking time out from my normal "hum-drum" to tell you how much I enjoyed your recent article in your Temple Bulletin concerning the musical sound of Yiddish. Once in a great while I pick up a Yiddish newspaper and revel even in the advertisements. There is something about a mother tongue which evokes a warm nostalgia. Perhaps it is the music of the words as you suggest or their association with sweet bygone experiences. Too bad that most of our young people in this generation are interested in acquiring a few words simply as a vehicle for understanding jokes, as in Leo Rosten's "The Joy of Yiddish."

"I can remember the pompous Germanic Yiddish which our forebears used for "State" occasions - "Sie sind heftlich eingeladen tzu der hochzeit" etc. or "es is unz galungen tzu arrangeeren - dem hochgshetzten" etc., etc. - all smacking of cold formality, lacking the warmly responsive reaction to the diminutives you mention.

"This generation still uses an occasional Yiddish expression to remember a parent or grandparent "My father or grandfather used to say" etc. What of the next generation?

"Will you put a copy of "Jewish Roots in the mail for me?

Bill"

Those who may want more than nostalgia can still join the adult class in Yiddish held each Wednesday evening from 8 to 9.

A Touch of Brass

During the last two decades thousands of Israeli youngsters have spent uncounted hours in various wind bands and ensembles that have been formed since the establishment of the State, in big cities, development towns and agricultural settlements.

Wherever morale was low, as a result of terrorist bombings, border attacks, economic stress, one of the first steps taken for changing the atmosphere has been to build up a youth band; witness those at Beit Shaan, Kiryat Shemona, Maalot as samples. In the big cities, those youngsters who learn any instrument at all, choose a wind instrument. Most of the marching bands or wind ensembles come from the underprivileged neighborhoods where parents cannot afford high fees for professional music instruction.

There is something especially appealing about a band instrument. It is easier to get than a violin or piano. It is more fun to join a wind group, harmonize with friends, or perform before an audience as part of a large body of music makers.

A few Israeli municipalities have the vision to understand the sociological as well as cultural benefits from supporting instruction in band instruments and wind ensembles. They make provision to provide some funds. Most other communities are not so fortunate. Another difficulty is procuring good instruments, any instruments for the youngsters. Prices in Israel are three times as high as in other countries. On instruments sent by benefactors from abroad, recipients have to pay a 200% custom tax and other charges which makes it impossible for them to accept the instrument.

The Music Foundation for Youth Music Projects in Israel is a non-profit organization with a multi-faceted program for furthering music education in Israel through schools, camping projects, seminars, etc. They are currently engaged in procuring instruments for needy Israeli children. Through a special arrangement with the Israeli government instruments brought into the country by the Music Foundation go without charge to the eager young musicians.

The Music Foundation is asking all American Jewish communities to begin a campaign to search out basements and attics for unused but playable wind instruments of all kinds which can be contributed through the Music Foundation to an eager and needy child in Israel.

To highlight this campaign, the Eastman School's world famous "Wind Ensemble," under the direction of Donald Hunsberger, will present a concert in the Eastman Theater on Sunday afternoon, April 20 at 3:30. Open to the entire community, admission will be by the contribution of a usable instrument, or by a gift of \$5 or more. Gifts, whether of an instrument or of money, are tax deductible, and a tax deductible statement will be given to every contributor.

Here is a painless and rewarding way in which to help Israeli children to make use of instruments that have long lain silent and to make a tax deductible contribution to a good cause all in one act. We urge parents and children to search their homes and their consciences and to contribute unused wind instruments to this worthy project.

The Cantorate as a Career

Music and song occupy a very special place in Jewish life. **These** are not **art** forms which are tacked on to life but integral parts of life itself. The Jew worships and studies with song. He sings at times of rejoicing and, although sadly, he sings in time of sorrow.

From the synagogue's earliest days the hazzan has been both the creator and custodian of its music. Jewish tradition holds that the Synagogue modes and special tunes descended with the Commandments themselves; as if to teach that they are as sacred, as vital and **as** inviolable as the Law itself.

In the past quarter century the American hazzan has expanded his interests, his skills and his efforts to include among his responsibilities every aspect of Jewish melos, from the nursery tunes of little children to the most complex choral and orchestral works.

Nevertheless, the hazzan remains now, as always, first and primarily a sheliah tzibbur, the emissary of the congregation in prayer before the Holy Ark. Standing there, his awesome responsibility is to illuminate and to illustrate the words of prayer and study in order that those who worship with him may experience new insights into their own lives and into the faith and ideals of the Jewish people.

The hazzan's job does not end there. The nature of the American synagogue affords him additional challenges and opportunities. These center around the synagogue's function as a Bet Hamidrash, a house of study, for young and old. The hazzan may become involved in teaching Jewish music, cantillation, choral singing and folk songs to students of the religious school and to adults enrolled in the synagogue's adult education program. Most hazzarim today also have the responsibility for the instruction of Bar and Hat Mitzvah candidates.

The hazzan also shares with the rabbi the responsibility of visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved and officiating at joyous occasions. A number of hazzanim have distinguished themselves in varied fields of Jewish endeavor while maintaining their posts as hazzanim. These men are making contributions to Jewish life as composers, concert artists, poets, writers, educators and innovative program-planners. A number of them are pursuing advanced

Jewish study and research. Such opportunities are open to all hazzanim. They are limited only by a man's talent and vision.

A career in the cantorate can be a rewarding, a fulfilling and a constructive one.

The Research Center

We have had occasion previously to refer to the great work being performed quietly by the Jewish Music Research Center of the Hebrew University. The Center exists primarily to collect and study documents relating to the musical tradition and the musical life of Jewish communities during their historical development and in the fostering of musical and scholarly research and publication in this field.

From a recent Research Report of the Jewish Music Research Center we glean the following nugget of information on the subject of the original appearance and sound of the Biblical instrument described as a "nebel." A recent study by Dr. B. Bayer of the Jewish Music Research Center aimed to locate all mentioned sources of the instrument to the end of the period of the Second Temple, to arrange them as precisely as possible in chronological order and to interpret them by strict criteria of evidential value.

The nebel (in Greek, nabla, in Latin, nablium) is mentioned, in addition to 27 Biblical references, five times by Creek writers through the Third Century B.C.E.; twice in the Apocrypha; three times in the Dead Sea Scrolls; three times in the works of Josephus and six times in the Mishna.

Dr. Bayer concludes that it is probable that the nebel came into use in the Kingdom of Israel at the end of the Eighth Century B.C.E. and at approximately that time in Judea as well.

After the Restoration, the musician-Levites of the Second Temple instituted a string orchestra of kinnorot and nebalim in imitation of the Mesopotamian court orchestras. The nebel seems to have been in use in Phoenicia, Alexandria, Greece and Rome as well. The instrument was a relatively large one, inelegantly shaped, (for the Greeks) with a deep and somewhat raucous tone. Dr. Bayer believes that it contained more than the twelve strings of the kinnor, that they were thicker in texture, plucked with the fingers, and that the nebel functioned merely as an accompanying instrument. The accepted impression which identified the nebel as a type of harp is not supported by the evidence which seems to indicate quite definitely that it was a special type of lyre, Dr. Bayer conjectures that it is a nebel which is imprinted on the ancient coins of Bar Kokhba.

KOL NIDRE:
Golden Melody for Tarnished Words

The Kol Nidre ritual continues to fascinate me. There are probably more myths and legends woven around its melody than almost any other liturgical theme heard in the synagogue. Most synagogue music falls into the category of what musicians call "program music." That is, music composed to express a theme, an idea, to tell a story, or to enhance the text of a prayer. Actually, the primary task of the hazzan is to make the words of the liturgy more meaningful, more moving, more relevant. It was and is considered vulgar to use a melody which has no integral relationship to the text merely to introduce a lovely tune.

Kol Nidre is the outstanding exception to that rule. It is the melody that stands out, that touches the heart, that moves the worshipper. The words add absolutely nothing to its mystical attraction.

What do the words actually mean?

As we approach Yom Kippur we are reminded of our past errors for which we hope to receive forgiveness from the Almighty. And we shall ask for forgiveness with words. But words are not always infallible nor are they always pure and contrite. We are led into most of our pitfalls with words misspoken, poorly chosen, inappropriately delivered, improperly deceptive. How can words alone bring us the forgiveness we seek?

The words are nothing more than a dry, legal formula which need careful thought and interpretation to make them meaningful and binding. But any melody that would attempt to translate them faithfully into song cannot possibly be moving, or even interesting. Obviously, the strength and longevity of the Kol Nidre melody comes from association with poignant moments in the Jewish past, and draws upon our memories, our longings and our hopes as Jews.

The Kol Nidre text was already in use in the 9th century. It, therefore, evolved well before the Spanish Inquisition. What's more, many Sephardi communities, which are much closer to the Spanish Jewish tradition than those of European Jews, did not recite Kol Nidre at all. So we can be quite certain that Kol Nidre did not originate, as the legend has it, as a ritual of absolution for Marranos who wanted to be forgiven their oaths to be faithful Christians so that they might join their Jewish brothers in prayer.

Another legend, less known, also involves the Marranos but concerns the music and not the words. It proposes that the Kol Nidre tune originated as a series of phrases used as a code for Marranos. When a Marrano attempted to enter one of the secret Yom Kippur services he was made to pass from one watchman to another. He would chant a phrase and would receive the next phrase in response. He would then be directed to the next watchman until he reached the actual service and joined his fellow Marranos who were risking their lives to be Jews again on this holiest of days.

Though this story is quite attractive it has not won wide support since in those Sephardi communities where Kol Nidre is now chanted, the melody which we all love so much is not used at all. However, the legend is important for another reason. It proposes that the melody is built up out of separate musical phrases. Even a cursory inspection of the melody would seem to bear this out.

The opening phrase of the Kol Nidre tune was originally sung without words as a sort of overture, as though the hazzan, in awe and trepidation, was timidly knocking at the Gates of Mercy. Such introductions, or overtures, as quite common in the Jewish liturgical tradition. The major section of the high holy day Shaharit service is introduced by the word "Hamelech," the King, which is sung without words before it is actually articulated. This is also true of the first word of the Amidah when chanted by the hazzan in his repetition.

Musicologists have analyzed each phrase and have clearly identified them. Originally, it is thought that these phrases were patched together according to the taste and preference of the hazzan. The combination which we know now was probably not formalized until the late 18th century.

Whatever its origin, it is almost impossible to explain the melody's mystical attraction. This is the Jewish song par-excellence and it achieves its grand status without any help from the words. For more than two centuries this melody has been linked to the holiest day of the Jewish year. It has become the song of the soul seeking God, the melody of a people striving to be like Him.

When Hazzanim Gather

Take it from those who have attended the annual conventions of the Cantors Assembly, they are unique. By comparison they make the conventions of all other Jewish organizations seem pale, drab and downright boring.

The Cantors Assembly is the only professional organization in the Conservative Movement that invites laymen to attend. The reasoning behind this philosophy is simple: the sacred work of hazzanim has to do with people, with motivating, with teaching, with inspiring and with leading. Issues and problems, challenges and goals which hazzanim face are in a real sense shared by the men and women of the congregations they serve.

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Convention will be held at Grossinger's from Sunday, April 23rd through Thursday afternoon, April 27th. Those who have been to previous conventions know that one never lacks for music from early morning to late at night; formal and informal concerts, recitals, workshops and just plain singing for the fun of it can be heard throughout the hotel. This year, in addition to the over four hundred members of the Assembly and probably an equal number of lay people the list of lecturers and artists reads like a page from Who's Who: Dr. Bernard Mandelbaum, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Dr. Jacob Neusner, Professor of History at Brown University, Dr. Eugene Borowitz, noted lecturer, publisher and student of contemporary Jewish life, a number of distinguished rabbis, the Children's Chorus of the Metropolitan Opera House, Zvi Zeitlin, internationally famous violin virtuoso, four young stars of the New York City Center Opera Company, the Columbus Boys Choir, a large chorus from the Eastman School of Music under the direction of Professor Samuel Adler, and many musical surprises.

April is not too far away. If you would like to avail yourself of a rare opportunity to attend a convention of hazzanim now is the time to plan for it. A special convention rate will be offered to guests and members alike. For further information and for reservation blanks, please call Hazzan Samuel Rosenbaum.

I Could Have Told Them

Directly after completing his singularly successful concert in our synagogue last month, talented, peripatetic Zvi Zeitlin left on a two month tour which took him half way around the world. Ten days ago he wound up in Israel for half dozen performances with the Israel Philharmonic. Although now a citizen of the United States, Zeitlin's heart belongs to Israel, having come there with his parents at a very early age and having made his reputation as a child prodigy there. Always popular with Israeli audiences Zeitlin looked forward to a warm welcome and to adding new critical acclaim to his international reputation.

But he reckoned without the legendary stubbornness of the Israelis. He had programmed for his appearances with the orchestra the Schoenberg Violin Concerto; admittedly a modern work, but one which Zeitlin had already played some thirty times with great success and without protest all over Europe. After two well received performances, the orchestra management reported that it had received complaints about the concerto from subscribers who were scheduled to attend the remaining concerts. Frightened at the possibility of an audience strike the management persuaded Zeitlin to perform the Mendelsohn Concerto in place of the Schoenberg in his remaining appearances.

After one "safe" performance, the management had second thoughts about its timidity and rescheduled the Schoenberg work.

The entire affair became the subject of an avalanche of letters to the Israeli press, pro and con Schoenberg. Even that arch-conservative, Yohanan Boehm, Music Editor of the Jerusalem Post, voiced his embarrassment at those Israelis who categorically refused to give the work a hearing. This would be sad enough were it to happen in old-fashioned places like Paris, London or Vienna but for Israelis, who snap up every new invention, every new technique and gadget, who have shown the world a new approach to living, and who have rewritten the book of modern warfare, to turn a deaf ear to a new piece of music is shocking.

It may have been a shock to Boehm, or even to Zeitlin, but hardly to me: I still bear the scars of En Kelohenu,