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> A - Abraham Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Henry Holt), 1932: 244.
> B - Samuel Rosenbaum, "Congregational Singing"; *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Convention* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary), February 22, 1949: 9-11.

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FROM THE EDITOR:

THE NEO-HASIDIC REVIVAL AT 50

NUTS AND BOLTS

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MAIL BOX

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IN MEMORIAM

MUSIC
A Minyan of Niggunim for Our Time

The Issue of Niggunim in Worship: Too Much of a Good Thing?

> How does a Hasid achieve awareness of the joy and wonder of this world along with an abiding love for all God's creatures? Through singing the melody of his prayer with such intensity that it is as if his soul were ready to expire in longing for God, as it brought down the divine Emanation from the upper worlds.
>
> Solomon Zalman of Kopust,
> *Magein Avot*, ca. 1870.

For 200 years after their movement was founded by Israel Baal Shem Tov, Hasidim—with their fervid belief that the Heavenly Palace's gates open only to song—kept pretty much to themselves. Then their ranks were decimated halfway through the 20th century when over three million Hasidim perished in Eastern Europe during the Shoah. A scant generation later, by an unlikely coincidence the persistence of their undilutedly ethnic practices proved a godsend to North American synagogue practice, which had run out of ideas. A repertoire of Hasidic-style tunes, popularized through recordings of annual song festivals in Israel, were the catalyst; they gave Jewish worship worldwide a boost of adrenalin that has lasted into the next century and gives no sign of abating.

Even Reform worshipers felt an urge to join in the singing. But after a lifetime of prayer through English readings they were ill equipped to do so, a fact alluded to in a songster "conceived as the musical component of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Religious School Curriculum." One of its songs, *The People in My Synagogue*,[1] succinctly describes Reform worship as previously understood by the congregation (emphasis added).

> Oh, the *Rabbi* leads us all in prayer…
>
> Oh, the Cantor sings our songs.

Suddenly that formula was turned around; the *Cantor* was now the one who led prayer, and Reform worshipers hadn't a clue as to how they should follow. Latter-day niggunim came attached to unfamiliar Hebrew words that

1 *Manginot*, Stephen Richards, ed. (New York: Transcontinental Music), 1992: 195.

had been long since excised from the *Union Prayer Book*. Moreover, Israeli Rock-style niggunim demanded energetic participation, which was far removed from organ-accompanied hymn singing. To circumvent the difficulty, an alternate means of lay involvement was introduced: mass handclapping. It quickly spread to all the national movements and, in a strange turnabout, the only worship currently distinguished by a *lack* of clapping is Hasidic.

Once the tsunami of neo-Niggunim engulfed synagogues with pulsating waves of Rock-inspired rhythm, a significant portion of the old European-bred Hasidic-style congregational refrains like *V'-taheir Libeinu* or even the new Israeli imports like *Oseh Shalom* seemed to lose their freshness. After four decades of being sung on demand to syncopated finger snapping, the latest tunes prove no more effective than the old ones. If the traditional melodies—based on time-honored prayer modes—were felt to be too drawn-out, their replacements are so percussively offbeat that people can barely enunciate the syncopated torrent of syllables. The early Hasidim had done away with words altogether; their intent was to "break the vessels" imposed by a set rubric of prayer, to move beyond a fixed formula into the higher spheres of God's Presence. Their fervidly sung niggunim functioned as musical bridges between heaven and earth, melodies in space, via which they tried to ascend as many of the ten *sfirot* leading to *Ein Sof* as they were able.

> Niggunim are specifically set up as "journeys to the Infinite," composed to induce a spiritual transformation… The slow, meditative *d'veikut* niggunim sung by Hasidim are extremely powerful. Each of their sections contains its own experience, so you don't have to build up to a certain high point. You feel the pulse immediately… The melodies are written to express specific feelings, which become keys to unlock doors of what the Hasidim call *shefa*, which roughly translated means Godly benevolence.[2]

Sung with the right intention (*kavvanah*), *d'veikut* niggunim offered a potential means of realizing the Psalmist's recurrent dream (27: 4), "One thing only have I desired ... to behold the graciousness of God and to visit His Heavenly Palace"; they were never viewed as an end in themselves. Our religious leaders have failed to understand this; their ill-conceived abuse of niggunim for the sake of retaining control over worship has led to utter boredom. Worshipers are generally boxed into singing every section of every service to the same pounding beat, even though a third of all Hasidic niggunim—including the latest ones—are neither foot stompers nor table bangers. With all the current interest in relaxation as a stress reducer, we

2 David Sears, "A Conversation with Andy Statman," *Farbrengen*, Fall 2000.

might anticipate hearing at least one truly *meditative* niggun during a typical service. Sadly, this doesn't happen.

Potentially effective candidates for reflective treatment—*Adonai, S'fatai Tiftah*[3] (Eternal God, Open Thou My Lips), normally whispered as a private invocation prior to the Amidah) and *Al Sh'loshah D'varim*[4] (The World Stands on Three Pillars), meant to be sung reverently while the Torah scroll is dressed—are bounced into boop-a-doop rhythms better suited to the lyrics of a Broadway musical (*I'd like to coo with my baby tonight*[5]) or a campfire-cookout singalong (*I've Been Workin' on the Railroad*[6]). It is regrettable that niggunim which might have afforded contemporary synagogue goers a truly spiritual experience are being exploited as convenient excuses for congregational make-work whenever there is a lull in the service.

* * * * *

Our opening section—**THE NEO-HASIDIC REVIVAL AT 50—**examines liturgical after-effects of this phenomenon. It refers back to music's treatment in the *Zohar*, and looks at Rav Nahman the Bratslaver's understanding of music's role in approaching God. It reveals how Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi taught the use of niggunim in prayer to Ramah campers and rabbinic or cantorial seminarians (as a model for davening in Conservative congregations), and analyzes the phenomenon of Neo-Hasidic music as a genre invented by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. It spotlights how earlier hazzanic innovations of Leib Glantz and Pierre Pinchik had paved the way for the current revival—half a century ago. It documents the salvific power of celebratory dance from Biblical-Classical-Talmudic times through the ecstasy achieved by Hasidic *rikkud* niggunim—even in the Nazi death camps. It recalls the once-close ties between Hasidism and hazzanut, and documents recent changes—for better and worse—in that relationship. Finally, it compares the improvisatory approaches of Hasidism and Jazz, and chronicles the resurgence of world-class hazzanut among cantors of Hasidic persuasion.

NUTS AND BOLTS acknowledges another anniversary, the 50th *yahrtzeit* of Swiss-Jewish composer Ernest Bloch's death, and examines the role that biblical texts, sounds and images continue to play in Israeli popular song.

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3 *Gates of Song*, Charles Davidson, ed. (New York: Transcontinental Music), 1987.

4 *The Best of the Chassidic Song Festivals*, Velvel Pasternak, ed. (New York: Tara Publications), 1989.

5 From Cole Porter's musical, *Kiss Me Kate* (New York: T. B. Harma Music), 1948.

6 *Fireside Book of Folk Songs*, Margaret Bradford Boni, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster), 1947.

A LITERARY GLIMPSE offers Yiddish novelist Chaim Grade's poignant look at Hasidic and Mitnagdic life in Old Vilna.

MAIL BOX contains a Conservative composer's report on the Central European premiere of his song cycle on *The Trials of Leopold Hilsner,* a professor's invitation for Journal readers to avail themselves of the on-line recorded cantorial collection at Florida Atlantic University Libraries, one colleague's recollection of a well-placed niggun, and another's recapitulation of the past 33 years that he's spent serving the Jewish community of Stockholm.

REVIEWS cover the first new Reform siddur of the 21st century—*Mishkan T'filah*—that continues the movement's centrist trend of recent decades. It discusses a new biography—with recorded musical examples—of early-20th century Yiddish playwright S. An-Sky's ethnographical world, and a comprehensive celebratory volume—including two CDs—on the career of Hazzan Leib Glantz, produced by his son. It evaluates recent works of contemporary composers Aaron Blumenfeld and Michael Isaacson: Hasidic-style niggunim, and Jewish music seen as midrash.

IN MEMORIAM recalls three of our Assembly's most beloved and proactive members who passed away in 2008.

MUSIC offers a Minyan of Niggunim set to prayer texts that bring them well within the orbit of current liturgical-and-concert repertoire.

* * * * *

ERRATUM: We herewith reprint with apologies the final paragraph of Dr. Saul Wachs's article that appeared in JSM 2008—"Max Kadushin and the Distinctive Liturgy of *Yamim Nora'im*"—which contained a misleading typographical error:

> Finally, Rabbi Kadushin's idea of "Normal Mysticism" reminds us that a sense of God's presence is available if we are willing to take the time and invest the energy to seek that experience. Prayer services that see efficiency of schedule as the ultimate criterion of effectiveness rarely move people to the depths of religious experience. Intellectual preparation for worship through study of the liturgy, beautiful music and the opportunity to share in the singing of the prayers-teaching-and-preaching that challenges the mind and inspires the heart—all of these can awaken a sense of closeness to God. This is the challenge of *sh'lihei tsibbur*: to make of the prayer experience an opportunity for ordinary people to know that there is more to reality than what can be counted and weighed and measured and defined; i.e., to help people achieve an experience of Normal Mysticism. *V'-khein y'hi ratson.*

JAL

Music as a Spiritual Process in the Teachings of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav[1]

By Chani Haran Smith

> *There is a chamber which can be unlocked only by tears*;
> *and there is a chamber which can be unlocked only by music.*[2]

Introduction

According to Nahman of Bratzlav (1772-1810),[3] ordinary life can be sanctified by means of music. All human actions affect music and are affected by it. Whether in the ethical or sexual domain or in the domain of prayer and faith, music is a means of transformation. The unique qualities of music and its effect on the human soul also serve as a metaphor for spiritual processes that cannot be expressed in any other way.

References to music, both vocal and instrumental, are strewn across Nahman's entire literary corpus. They collectively extol the power of music

1 This article is adapted from section 2 of my PhD dissertation, *Tuning the Soul: Music as a Spiritual Process in the Teachings of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav,* submitted to University College, London, 2008. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Ada Rapoport-Albert for her numerous comments. I also wish to thank my friends, Dr. Ronit Meroz and Dr. Boaz Tarsi, who read the manuscript and made helpful suggestions. Published English translations, with some modifications, where these were felt to be necessary, have been used wherever possible. Biblical quotations follow the *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh,* Philadelphia, 1999. *Zohar* quotations follow, as far as it goes, Daniel Matt's *The Zohar,* Pritzker edition, 4 vols., Stanford, CA, 2004-7. Quotations from *Likkutei Moharan* (Nahman's magnum opus, hereafter *LM*), Part I, follow the Breslov edition, *Likkutei Moharan,* 11 vols., Jerusalem and New York, 1990-2006 (Part II is not available as yet). Other translations are mine. I would have liked to translate Nahman's language in a gender-inclusive way, but this would make the translation cumbersome and less faithful to the original, as it is safe to assume that Nahman was addressing an exclusively male audience.

2 *Tikkunei Zohar* (hereafter, *TZ*), Yehuda Edery, ed., Jerusalem, 1998, vol. 10, *Tikkun* 11, 26b.

3 For a comprehensive list of scholarly material on Nahman and Bratslav Hasidism, see Assaf, *Bibliographia Mu'eret, Jerusalem, 2000.*

to animate, heal and transform, to induce prophecy and to energise all life. Nahman's references to music stem from his personal involvement in it, mostly through singing and dancing. There were fine musicians among his followers, and Nahman regarded their music as a gateway to heaven.[4] From Nathan Sternhartz,[5] Nahman's disciple and scribe, we learn that Nahman was musically gifted and an exceptional singer.[6] Nahman himself spoke of the extraordinary effect of his music:

> The world has not yet tasted me at all. Were they to hear just one of my teachings [*torah*][7] together with its proper melody and dance, they would all reach a state of total annihilation, that is, the whole world, even animals and grasses and everything that is contained in the world, all of them would be nullified, for their soul would depart from the overwhelming delight they would experience.[8]

The present study does not deal with music from a musicological perspective; rather it attempts to explain Nahman's approach to music as a process that involves and transforms the 'spirit,' understood as a force that originates in God, animating all life. According to Nahman, the spirit encompasses the emotional and imaginative dimensions of human existence, while at the same time having an impact on cosmic domains.

Nahman explains that in order to attain holiness, one's spirit (*ru'ah*) must be purified by separating good from evil. The good spirit of holiness must be

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4 See Nahman's biography, written by Nathan Sternhartz, *Hayyei Moharan* (hereafter *HM*), Jerusalem, 1995, II, *Ma'alat Ha-Mitkarvim Eilav*, §331 (41), pp. 375-6.

5 Hereafter, 'Nathan.'

6 See *LM*, Jerusalem, 1975, vol. II, 104; *HM,* II, *Avodat Hashem,* §520 (77), p. 525. The first part of this book was originally published in Ostrog in 1798, and the second part was published in Mohilev in 1811, after his death.

7 Each of Nahman's teachings in *LM* is referred to as *torah* (plural *torot*) by both Nahman and his followers. This term, usually reserved only for the divine word as revealed to man, demonstrates that Nahman's teachings are treated as prophetically inspired, comparable to the Torah of Moses.

8 *HM,* II, *Ma'alat Torato U-S'farav,* §340 (1), pp. 382-3. This bold statement echoes the following midrash about Sinai (*bShab.* 88b): "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: at each and every word which issued from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, the soul of Israel departed, as it is said: 'My soul departed when he spoke' [Song. 5: 6]". In Nahman's view, the experience of hearing his *torah,* when it is enhanced by music and dance, matches that of the Sinai revelation. For the transformative power of dance in Nahman's perception, see Michael Fishbane, "The Jump for Joy: The Rites of Dance According to R. Nahman of Bratslav," *The Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy*, VI, no. 2 (1997): 371-87.

extracted from amidst the bad spirits of folly and depression that operate in one's psyche at all times. This is described in *Likkutei Moharan* (hereafter *LM*) I, 54: 6 and 282 as identifying the 'good points' in the human soul.

The 'good points' are an original, multifaceted and seminal concept in Nahman's teaching, which was developed over several years, and features mainly in three of his *torot*: *LM* I, 31; *LM* I, 54; and *LM* I, 282.[9] In *LM* I, 31, the first *torah* which mentions the 'good points', albeit without any link to music, Nahman develops the concept of the 'good points' and their connection to love, desire and loving kindness (and the *s'firah, Hesed*).[10] He explains that in the linguistic domain they function as vowel points that combine fragmented letters to create words and elevate speech.[11] Nahman first sets the concept of the 'good points' in a musical context in *LM* I, 54: 6, where it forms part of a long and complex *torah* dealing with many other topics.[12] The doctrine of the 'good points' becomes the main focus of *LM* I, 282, known by the Bratslavers as *Azamrah*, literally, "I will sing." This *torah* further develops the idea of the 'good points' as representing a core of goodness and holiness in every Jew, expounding on the role of the *tzaddik* and cantor in drawing and gathering the 'good points' from every person and composing melodies out of them.[13] The musical dimension of Nahman's doctrine of the 'good points' has received

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9 The date of *LM* I, 31 is not known. The Breslov commentary to *LM* [Breslov], vol. IV, p. 329, n. 1) suggests some time before 1806, because this *torah* is identified by Nathan as *l'shon rabbeinu* ("the words of our master"), indicating that Nahman had either dictated it to Nathan word for word or that it was copied from Nahman's own manuscript notes (after 1806, Nahman's teachings were all written down by Nathan). I suggest that *LM* I, 31 was delivered before 1804, the year in which *LM* I, 54 was delivered, because in *LM* I, 31, 'points' are interpreted as vowel points, while in *LM* I, 54 they are associated with musical notes, an association which Nahman continued to develop in *LM* I, 282. This *torah* was delivered on Hanukkah, December 1804. See *HM,* I, §59, p. 93. *LM* I, 282 was delivered in October 1807. See ibid., *Sihot Ha-Shayakhot La-Torot,* §33, pp. 53-4

10 See below, n. 15.

11 See *LM I,* 31: 6. On letter combination, see below, *n. 132.*

12 Zvi Mark devotes a whole chapter of his book to analysis of *LM* I, 54 in its entirety. Although I reach different conclusions about the essence of niggun in Nahman's writings, I am indebted to Mark's extensive and inspiring work on this subject. See Zvi Mark, *Mistikah V'-Shiga'on BiY'tsirat R. Nahman Mi-Bratslav*, Tel Aviv, 2004, pp. 177-256.

13 On the importance of *LM* I, 282 in Bratslav circles, see Mendel Piekarz, *Hasidut Bratslav*, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 37, n. 53.

only limited scholarly attention so far,[14] and deserves to be acknowledged as one of his central tenets.

This study focuses on the function of music in the spiritual processes of each individual mostly as presented in *LM* I, 54: 6. I have tried to expose Nahman's midrashic and kabbalistic sources, giving special consideration to the mystical allusions contained in the kabbalistic material. In Nahman's teachings, as in other kabbalistic texts, ideas and concepts are often linked to one another by virtue of alluding to the same *s'firah*,[15] which points to their esoteric meaning. To establish these underlying connections is therefore a crucial hermeneutic tool.

Purifying the soul—Beirur

In *LM* I, 54: 6, Nahman describes the procedure of purifying the soul by means of extracting the 'good points' from evil (*beirur*[16]) by analogy with

14 See Joseph Weiss, *Mehkarim B'-Hasidut Bratslav,* Jerusalem, 1975, p. 94; Arthur Green, *Tormented Master—The Life and Spiritual Quest of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav*, Woodstock, VT, 1992, p. 226; Piekarz, *Hasidut Bratslav,* pp. 37-8 and 207; idem, *Hasidut Polin, M'gamot Ra'ayoniyot bein Shtei Ha-Milhamot…,* Jerusalem, 1990, p. 128. Piekarz recognises the importance of the doctrine of 'good points,' but does not discuss its musical dimension. The following scholarly works refer very briefly to the 'good points' in connection with music: Hillel Zeitlin, *Rabbi Nahman Mi-Bratslav: Tsa'ar Ha-Olam V'-Khisufei Mashiah,* Yehonaton Meir, ed, Jerusalem, 2006, p. 60; Mark, *Mistikah*, p. 266.

15 *S'firah* (plural *s'firot*)—this relates to the kabbalistic doctrine of the ten *s'firot*—ten hierarchically arranged 'aspects' or manifestations of the divine light, starting with the transcendant aspect of God—the *Ein-Sof* (the 'Infinite') or *Keter* ('crown'), emanating via *Hokhamah* ('wisdom,' 'beginning'), *Binah* ('understanding'), *Hesed* ('loving kindness'), *G'vurah* ('power,' 'judgment'), *Tif'eret* ('glory'), *Netsah* ('eternity'), *Hod* ('splendour'), *Y'sod* ('foundation'), and ending with *Malkhut* ('kingship,' *Sh'khinah*). For the doctrine of the ten *s'firot*, see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, N.Y. 1967, pp. 211-30.

16 The concept of *beirur* is from Lurianic kabbalah, and relates to the doctrine of the 288 sparks of holiness, which are trapped in the material world and must be extracted from it and raised. I have translated the word *beirur* as 'extraction' when Nahman specifies what the extraction is from; otherwise, I have translated it as 'purification.' For the doctrine of 288 sparks, see Hayim Vital, *Eits Hayyim*, Jerusalem, 1985, I, gate 18, *Sha'ar 288 Nitsotsin*, ch. 1, pp. 170-78. On the doctrine of the 'breaking of the vessels,' ibid., gate 11, *Sha'ar Ha-M'lakhim*, ch. 5, p. 104; Isaiah Tishby, *Torat Ha-Ra*, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 39-45; Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah*, N.Y. 1978, pp. 135-40.

music, which is created in a similar manner.[17] By means of playing skillfully, the musician extracts particles of 'good air' (*ru'ah*), that is, musical tones, from the potential cacophony that a musical instrument can produce: "The essential beauty of the music is achieved through the purification of the *ru'ah* (this is the air from which the sound comes, as is known to those skilled in music)." In order to purify the soul, one has to subdue the negative aspects of the imagination, which, like music, is constructed out of various kinds of *ru'ah.* Music has the power to do that.

The term *ru'ah* has a wide range of meaning: spirit, wind, air, breath, and in kabbalistic literature it constitutes one of the three aspects of the soul.[18] There is an interplay of the various meanings of *ru'ah* in *LM* I, 54, which allows the musical and spiritual processes to mirror each other.

As well as in *LM* I, 54, Nahman explores the nature of *ru'ah* in *LM* I, 8. Fittingly, both *torot* were delivered on Hanukkah, two years apart. [19] Both *torot* explicate the positive and negative types of *ru'ah* and the process of separating them from one another. In *LM* I, 8 *ru'ah* (air) is identified as one of the four basic cosmic elements (fire, air, water and earth)[20] which, as Nahman explains, are rooted in the four letters of the divine name *YHVH*

17 For the identification of the 'good points' with the good *ru'ah* and with music, see below, at n. 95.

18 According to the Kabbalists from the 13th century on, the soul comprises three parts: *nefesh, ru'ah* and *n'shamah*. For the origin and development of this concept, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 155-8; Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, London and Washington DC, 1994, vol. II, pp. 684-98.

19 *LM* I, 8 was delivered in 1802. The theme of *ru'ah*–spirit–is connected to Hanukkah through the *haftarah* of the Sabbath during Hanukkah, which contains the verse: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit [*b'-ruhi*] says the Lord of hosts" (*Zech.* 4: 6). Nahman quotes this verse in LM I, 8: 8.

20 See *LM* I, 8: 5. The idea that the universe comprises four elements that constitute every aspect of the creation has its root in the Greek philosophers Empedocles (5th century BCE) and Aristotle (4th century BCE). See Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 13-68. For its articulation in medieval Jewish sources, see e.g., Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Seifer Ha-Mada*, Jerusalem, n.d., *Hilkhot Y'sodei Ha-Torah*, ch. 4; *Zohar Hadash* (*Midrash Ha-Ne'elam*), B'reishit, 6d. See also Hayyim Vital's *Sha'arei K'dushah*, 1: 1 (printed in *Amudei Avodah Tamah*, B'nei B'rak, 1973), where the body is described as being created from these four elements, and the soul as created from the corresponding spiritual elements represented in the four letters of the divine name. The idea that the four elements are rooted in the letters of the divine name is based on *TZ, Tikkun* 22, 68b.

[*yud-heh-vav-heh*]. In their source, these elements are divine and pure, but their descent into corporeality in the process of creation turns them into a mixture of good and evil:

> There are four fundamental elements: fire, air, water, earth. Above, in their transcendent root, they correspond to the four letters [of God's holy name] *YHVH.* But below [in our world], they are a mixture of good and evil.[21]

At its source, *ru'ah* is beyond the categories of good and evil, but in the human realm, it manifests itself as the various 'spirits' that coexist in every person's psyche. In its positive manifestation, "the spirit of holiness (*ru'ah ha-kodesh*) is a divine flow,"[22] a life-force that animates everything.[23] It is *ru'ah hayyim*—the spirit of life, associated with joy and prophecy.[24] Nahman identifies this *ru'ah* with the Northern Wind (*ru'ah tsafon*) that stirred David's lyre according to a talmudic legend.[25] Emerging from its hidden (*tsafun*) source in the human heart, the divine *ru'ah* breathes life into those who study Torah. Comprising five books, the Torah itself is comparable to David's lyre with its five strings:

> …this corresponds to the *ru'ah ts'fonit* (northern wind) that blows upon King David's lyre. King David's lyre had five strings, paralleling the five books of the Torah. The "northern *ru'ah*" which blew upon it alludes to "the *ru'ah* of God [that] hovers over the waters' surface."[26] This *ru'ah ts'fonit* corresponds to the *ru'ah ha-tsafun* (concealed spirit) in man's heart–this being the *ru'ah*-of-life.[27]

The spirit within the human heart can be accessed through the breath that contains it.[28] Nahman teaches that when a person becomes aware of

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21 *LM* I: 8: 5.

22 Ibid., 21: 3.

23 Ibid., 8: 1: "We find that the quintessential life-force of everything is its *ru'ah.*"

24 See ibid., 54: 6: "that he extracts the good *ru'ah*, which is in the nature of joy, in the nature of a *ru'ah* of prophecy..."

25 See *bB'rakhot*, 3b; *yB'rakhot* 1: 1; *TZ, Tikkun* 13, 27b-28a.

26 'Water' symbolises the Torah. See e.g. *Zohar*, I, 362a, *TZ, Tikkun* 36, 77b.

27 *LM* I, 8: 2. See also *TZ, Tikkun* 13, 28a: "behold the wind inside the heart, which issues from the left lobe of the heart, and it is the northern wind which struck David's lyre, and with that wind it struck the five strings of the lyre, which correspond to the five lobes of the lungs." The etymology of the word *tsafon* (north) connects it to the word *tsafun* (lit. 'concealed') since in the north the sun is concealed. See e.g., *Bahya* on Deut. 3: 27: "and it is called 'north' (*tsafon*) because the sun is concealed (*tsafun*) and hidden".

28 See *LM* I, 8: 1. Nahman bases this teaching on the similarity between the

his shortcomings and exhales a deep sigh of remorse, he extends his breath (*ru'ah*) through the act of sighing and draws the hidden spirit of life (*ru'ah hayyim*) upon himself from within.[29]

Opposite the good spirit, there exists an evil spirit (*ru'ah ra'ah*),[30] which induces depression and creates barriers between the individual and God. [31] Also referred to as a stormy *ru'ah* and a *ru'ah* of impurity, it serves as a life force for the wicked:

> The wicked receive their *ru'ah* from them [that is, from the Chiefs of Esau—the representative of the world of 'husks'—a kabbalistic term denoting the evil forces]. And this is the aspect of the *ru'ah* of impurity, the stormy *ru'ah*.[32]

In *LM* I, 54: 5-6, Nahman associates the evil spirit, whether distinct from the good spirit or mixed with it, with the faculty of the imagination (*koah ha-m'dameh*).[33] The imagination, he explains, is "in the nature of the husks, a disembodied spirit";[34] it is "an aspect of evil *ru'ah,* a foolish *ru'a*h that would blemish and confound the aspect of the good *ru'ah*, the *ru'ah* of prophecy."[35]

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words *n'shamah* (soul, spirit) and *n'shimah* (breath).

29 See *LM* I, 8: 1-2.

30 See I Sam. 16: 14.

31 See *LM* I, 54: 6.

32 Ibid., 8: 3. See also *TZ, Tikkun* 69, 107b.

33 Nahman's notion of the imagination reveals both ambivalence and a gradual change of attitude over the years. He was aware of the imagination's contribution to prophecy and faith, yet was wary of its potential for distorting the truth leading to disastrous consequences. See e.g., *LM* I, 25: 1-2; 54: 6; *LM* II, 61; 8: 7. For an extensive study of the imagination in medieval Jewish mysticism, see Elliot Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, New Jersey, 1994, esp. s.v. 'imagination' in the index, p. 444. For Nahman's complex notion of the imagination, see Mark, *Mistikah*, pp. 86-114; Green, *Tormented Master*, pp. 341-3; see also my dissertation, Smith, *Tuning the Soul,* pp. 62-8.

34 *LM* I, 54: 6. "Disembodied spirits" refers to the demons, which are thus described in the *Zohar* (I, 47b-48a: II, 155b). According to midrash *(mAvot* 5: 6), God created the demons on Sabbath eve. The *Zohar* explains that they remained bodiless because, when it was time to sanctify the Sabbath, God stopped their creation even before He completed it. Nahman identifies the imagination with two kabbalistic symbols of evil—the 'husks' and the demons. This unusual combination implies that the negative aspect of the imagination stems from external forces associated with the evil 'other side.' On 'husks,' see Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. II, pp. 461-4; for demons, ibid., pp. 529-32.

35 *LM* I, 54: 6.

Although the imagination is a mixture, "in the nature of an evil spirit mixed with a good spirit,"[36] so long as the good spirit is not extracted and the negative power of the imagination is not subdued, its defining characteristic is evil.

Nahman's explicit condemnation of the imagination in *LM* I, 54 may arise from the context of this particular *torah*, which stresses the need for retaining a state of mindfulness of the 'world to come'–an extemporal domain representing spiritual elevation. The imagination, being a mixture of 'spirits,' gives rise to fantasy and illusion, thereby obscuring the constant clarity needed for mindfulness. It leads to forgetfulness of the 'world to come,' and to the 'death of the heart,' that is, loss of connection with the divine. The balance of spirits in the psyche is precarious, and one's conduct can determine whether one stays in control of one's inner forces or becomes subjugated to them.

Music as Metaphor

The various texts examined here can be read on both the metaphoric and the concrete level. The latter will occupy us further on, but first we shall look at music as metaphor. Metaphors are ubiquitous in Nahman's tales and homilies.[37] As Ora Wiskind-Elper explains, "to metaphorize is to transfer, or carry, meaning from one element to another."[38] Metaphors often form part of Nahman's 'aspects' (*b'hinot*), a device that he uses extensively to present or explain new ideas, by transporting images and verses from one context to another. The term *b'hinah*, which is translated in this study mostly as 'aspect' or 'in the nature of,' depending on the context, could be described as a particular dimension of practically anything in the universe, which Nahman wants to introduce or highlight in connection with something else. He often connects things by stating that they either share an aspect with or are an aspect of something else, meaning that they are in the nature of one another.[39] Nahman regarded the concept of 'aspects' as central to his teachings, as

36 Ibid.

37 For Nahman's use of figurative language, including metaphors, see Ora Wiskind-Elper, *Tradition and Fantasy in the Tales of Reb Nahman of Bratslav*, N.Y. 1998, pp. 185-6 and 205-19.

38 Ibid., p. 185.

39 By way of association, often hinged on one word or image, Nahman connects biblical verses, midrashic and kabbalistic (mainly zoharic) passages, with the subject of his discourse. Shaul Magid explains *b'hinah* as "an associative tool enabling complex connections to be made instantaneously, but without substantiation." See his article, "Associative Midrash: Reflections on a Hermeneutical Theory in Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav's *Likkutei MoHaRaN"*, in Shaul Magid (ed.), *God's Voice from the Void*, N.Y. 2002, pp. 28-9.

quoted by Nathan: "I heard it from his holy mouth when he said: my Torah is entirely 'aspects.'"[40] This statement highlights his sharp awareness of the inter-relatedness of all that exists.

Nahman often compares concrete objects with abstract ideas when speaking of 'aspects,' in a manner which makes it difficult to determine which is the subject and which is the metaphor. Furthermore, on many occasions he presents a string of different 'aspects' associated with each other, which makes it unclear which of these 'aspects' is the focus of the discussion. A case in point is the musician's 'hand,' which Nahman associates with prophecy, joy and music by means of 'aspects,' and by quoting various prooftexts:

> The way to subdue the imagination is through the aspect of the hand, corresponding to "By the hands of the prophet I have been imagined" (Hosea 12: 11). And 'hand' is the aspect of joy, corresponding to "and you shall rejoice in all the effort of your hand" (Deut. 12: 17). This is also the aspect of the musical instruments that are played with the hand, by means of which prophecy could come to rest upon the prophets, as it is written, "get me a musician" etc. (II Kings 3: 15). [The verse concludes: "and as the musicians played, the **hand** of God came upon him," indicating prophecy].[41]

It should be emphasised that Nahman accords music a great deal of importance as a real, rather then metaphoric, tool or medium for spiritual transformation. Yet, precisely because music has such a powerful impact on the human body and soul, it can also serve him as a metaphor for religious processes. The concrete experience of playing music with the hand and the spiritual process of subduing the imagination mirror one another. It is therefore possible to speak of the spiritual process using musical language and vice versa. Music is simultaneously a method of serving God and a metaphor for it. When considering the metaphoric interpretation, each element of the musical imagery comes to represent a different aspect of religious experience.

Some of the ideas to be presented will also be mentioned in the context of music as itself a spiritual process, but for now, they will be briefly examined, to highlight their metaphoric significance.

As already observed, the struggle for domination between the two opposing kinds of 'spirits,' one representing the harmonious world of holiness, prophecy and joy, and the other, the destructive powers of folly and depression, takes place inside the imagination of every single individual.[42] In *LM* I, 54: 6,

40 *HM, Ma'alat Torato –S'farav*, II, §350 (11), p. 391.

41 *LM* I, 54: 6.

42 See ibid.

Nahman uses a musical instrument as a metaphor for the imagination. The imagination is susceptible, like a musical instrument, to the forces of both 'good' and 'evil' *ru'ah* (air, spirit) that coexist within it. By 'good air' Nahman refers—in a musical context—to air currents that are attuned to a melodious sound, while 'evil air' represents a mixture of uncontrolled air currents that produce a musical disonance.

The musical instrument can be interpreted as man's body, while his soul or spirit as the air that flows through the instrument and allows it to sound.[43] In order to contain both the divine and the evil elements within his soul, a

43 For a depiction of the human body as a musical instrument in other Jewish mystical writings, see e.g. the passage from Abulafia's *Imrei Shefer*, cited by Moshe Idel in "Conceptualizations of Music in Jewish Mysticism," in Laurence E Sullivan (ed.), *Enchanting Powers*, Cambridge, MA, 1997, p. 177, and n. 61; idem, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, Albany, NY, 1988, pp. 56-7. Liebes points out this image in the poetry of Judah Halevi and Ibn Gabirol; see Yehuda Liebes, *Torat Ha-Y'tsirah Shel Seifer Y'tsirah*, Tel Aviv, 2002, p. 122. This idea was integrated by some hasidic masters into their doctrine of *'bitul ha-yeish,'* where, by means of self-annulment, the individual is reduced to total passivity, which renders him fit, like a musical instrument, to be 'played on' by the Holy Spirit. See Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Ha-Hasidut K'-Mistikah*, Jerusalem 1968, p. 112; Joseph Weiss, "Via Passiva in Early Hasidism", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XI, 3-4 (1960): 137-155; Wiskind-Elper, *Tradition and Fantasy, p. 198; Amnon Shiloah,* "Symbolism of Music in the Kabbalistic Tradition," *The World of Music*, XX, 3 (1978): 59-60. Similar images of man as the wind-harp or lyre played by God were popular in the writings of romantic poets of the early 19th century such as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley, as observed by M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Oxford, 1971, p. 61. He cited Coleridge, who compared the harp to the thinking mind, moved by "one intellectual breeze, at once the Soul of each and God of all." Of particular interest is Shelley's reference to the lyre image in his "Essay on Christianity" (1815), which echoes Nahman's ideas: "There is a Power by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended, which visits with its breath our silent chords at will. […] This Power is God; and those who have seen God have, in the period of their purer and more perfect nature, been harmonized by their own will to so exquisite a consentaneity of power as to give forth divinest melody, when the breath of universal being sweeps over their frame"; cited in John Shawcross (ed.), *Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism,* London 1909, pp. 90-91. See also Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind": "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is: What if my leaves are falling like its own! The tumult of thy mighty harmonies, Will take from both a deep autumnal tone, Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce, My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!" cited in Lewis Rowell, *Thinking about Music, Massachusetts*, 1983, p. 64.

person has the responsibility to keep himself whole and perfect in the same way that a musician must keep his instrument in perfect condition.[44]

The musician's 'hands' represents the physical dimension of religious worship. Elsewhere Nahman teaches that the hands must be kept pure in order to fulfil their tasks.[45] The musician who knows how to "raise and lower his hand"[46] can ascend to heaven and return safely with the rising and falling melody.[47] The musician's skilful hands are a metaphor for the individual's skill and command of his spiritual condition achieved by taking charge of the imagination.

Tuning the Soul by Means of Music

The metaphoric and concrete dimensions of music are intertwined in Nahman's teachings. While the musical instrument, the beautiful melody and the musician's hand each symbolizes a particular aspect of the spiritual process of subduing the imagination, they are also aspects of the musical praxis, which Nahman presents as his preferred method for this process. The skilled musician can extract musical tones from the vibrating air (*ru'ah*) and actualise their potential music.

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44 The perfection of the body/instrument includes maintaining sexual purity and the study of Torah, which affects the clarity of one's singing voice, as Nahman explains in *LM* I, 27: 4-6. A pure voice has such immense power that God responds to it even when it is raised without words: "Now, when his voice is purified, then by making only his voice heard (even) without speech, the Holy One, Blessed be He, saves him at his time of affliction. This is as in (Ps. 106: 44), "He saw their affliction, when He heard them raising their voices (lit. 'singing')." Nahman's stipulation that the instrument (*k'li*) must be whole echoes the Lurianic notion of the 'broken vessels.' The Lurianic 'vessels' were receptors and containers for the divine light which emanated from God into them at the time of creation, but they could not sustain the light and shattered. For the doctrine of the 'breaking of the vessels', see Vital, *Etz Hayyim*, gate 11, *Sha'ar Ha-M'lakhim*, ch. 5, p. 104; Tishby, *Torat Ha-Ra*, pp. 39-45; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 135-40.

45 See *LM I, 56: 9.*

46 Ibid., 54: 6.

47 Ibid.: "'Who has gone up to heaven and come down?' (Prov. 30: 4)—This is the aspect of the musician. The musician goes up and down in the music." The movement from greater ('up') to lesser ('down') communion with God is described in Hasidic literature, using the words of Ezekiel (1: 14), as *ratso va-shov* (lit. 'running and returning'). Nahman explains that this reflects the human condition. A state of constant union with God is only possible after death, when the corporeal barriers between man and God are removed. See *LM* I, 4: 8.

What Nahman defines in the following passage as "the *ru'ah* which is a mixture of good and evil"[48] may be defined in acoustic terms as 'noise,' which is a mixture of undefined airwaves. Music is created out of tones–sounds that are attuned to a distinguishable pitch, quality and strength.[49] A constant frequency of airwaves produces a clear, 'pure' tone. Tones, which are the building blocks of music, have audibly discernible frequencies that distinguish them from noise. Drawing the melodious sound out of the instrument is the task of the skilled musician:

> For an instrument is a gathering of the *ru'ah,* which is a mixture of good and evil. […] The person whose hands play an instrument collects and gathers up with his hand the good *ru'ah,* the *ru'ah* of prophecy from within the *ru'ah* of depression. Thus he must be 'skilled at playing,' knowing how to collect and gather and find the components of the *ru'ah* one by one, in order to construct the tune, namely the joy, i.e., to build the good *ru'ah,* the *ru'ah* of prophecy, which is the opposite of the *ru'ah* of depression.[50]

Each musical note played on an instrument is a 'component' of the good *ru'ah* and a 'good point.' When the notes are joined together, they create melodies that generate joy, and the imagination is subdued: "We see then that by playing a musical instrument with his hand […] all this is the aspect of subduing the imagination."[51]

Nahman's correlation of music with both joy and prophecy is based on earlier sources. The Bible recognises the power of music to induce prophecy and to alleviate depression, while the Talmud adds that music creates joy, and the Kabbalists, especially of the prophetic-ecstatic school, elaborated on this further.[52] Nahman explains elsewhere that music issuing from a righteous musician derives from the *s'firot, Netsah* and *Hod*, which are the source of all prophecy. Nahman bases the affinity between music and prophecy on the similarity between the Hebrew words for cantor (*hazzan*) and for prophetic vision (*hazon*): "This is why a cantor is called *HaZZaN*, which is derived from

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48 Ibid., 54: 6.

49 This is based on the definition of 'tone' in the *OED* as "Sound, especially with reference to pitch, quality and strength"; *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford, 1964, p. 1362.

50 *LM* I, 54: 6.

51 *LM* I, 54: 6.

52 See e.g., I Sam. 10: 5; II Kings 3: 15; *bPes*. 117a. For music and prophecy in the ecstatic Kabbalah, see Idel, *The Mystical Experience*, pp. 53-71. For the same subject in Nahman's works, see Mark, *Mistikah*, pp. 88-92; Wiskind-Elpher, *Tradition and Fantasy*, pp. 195-8.

the word *HaZoN*, denoting prophecy, for [the cantor] draws his song from the same place from which the prophets suckle."[53]

The musician carefully tunes each individual note by applying the right amount of pressure with his fingers on specific places along the string (or by other techniques in the case of other musical instruments). Nahman stresses that the musician must be skilled in his art (*yodei'a nagein*),[54] "so that he may properly extract [the musical tones out of the 'air mixture', namely the various airwaves] and tune [*l'-khavvein*] the music to perfection."[55]

Nahman's choice of the verb to tune (*l'-khavvein*) in relation to tuning music is unusual for his time. To my knowledge, from biblical to hasidic literature, with one exception, *l'-khavvein* is never used in a musical context.[56] The exception is Isaac Arama's treatise, 'Music of the Cosmos', which I believe to have influenced Nahman's perception of music, as will be shown below.[57] Only in 20th-century Modern Hebrew does *l'-khavvein* assume the meaning of tuning an instrument. Until then, it had denoted, among other meanings, to establish, direct, straighten, intend, and had often been used to signify concentration and the direction of one's thought or heart to heaven. At first glance, it may appear that Nahman, too, instructs the musician to direct (*l'-khavvein*) his music towards heaven. However, from his depiction of music-making elsewhere, it becomes clear that he stresses the importance of correct tuning of musical notes, each one of which must conform to a specific measure:

> The musician goes up and down in the music, because he rises and descends according to the strings' [correct] measure (*middah*) in line with the meter (*mishkal*) of the melody.[58]

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53 *LM* I, 3: 1.

54 See I Sam. 15: 18.

55 *LM* I, 54: 6.

56 For the many other uses of this verb, see Eliezer Ben Yehudah, *Dictionary*, Jerusalem and Berlin, 1929, vol. V, pp. 2289-97. However, the verbs which have been used in reference to musical intonation are: *l'-takkein, la-arokh, l'-saddeir and l'-hashvot.* I thank Dr. Uri Melammed from the Academy for the Hebrew Language for his helpful remarks on this point.

57 See below, at n.164.

58 *LM* I, 54: 6: It is not entirely clear to what musical concepts Nahman is referring when he speaks about *middah* and *mishkal*. These terms, taken from Lev. 19: 35, signify fixed measures in the context of justice. From Nahman's application of these terms to the musical context, it seems that *middah* refers to pitch, since it is specifically related to the rising and falling of musical notes, while *mishkal* may

Nahman also uses the verb *l'-khavvein* in the sense of 'tuning' the voice in his tale 'The Seven Beggars.' The fourth beggar is described as a wonderful musician who is superior to all others because of his extraordinary ability to tune (*l'-khavvein*) his voice so as to mimic every sound that is heard in the world, and his power to project (literally to 'throw') his voice to far off places. By means of his special tuning skills he is able to restore to happiness the lovebirds that had been separated from one another in the tale, namely, he mimics each one of the birds, 'casting' the voice of one bird to the other, so that they can hear each other's song and are united by its sound.[59]

Music demands great skill and accuracy. Precise intonation is of paramount importance, for in the hands of a skilled musician the *ru'ah* can be purified and channelled, the 'good points'/musical notes extracted and joined together, so that beautiful music can emerge.

In a different context, Nahman expresses a similar idea about the need to control the force of the spirit [*ru'ah*] blowing in the heart. The hearts of the Jewish people, he explains, burn with love for God. The spirit, which is necessary to sustain this inner fire, must be maintained at the correct measure (*b'middah*), lest it turns destructive:

> "The *ru'ah* (spirit, wind) must blow with a moderate force (*b'-middah*– literally: "according to a specific measure") in order that the fire will burn in the heart at an even temperament."[60]

According to the *Zohar*, prayer, too, must be 'measured' if it is to ascend to God: "Prayer can only be accepted if it is based on strict measure."[61] Music, prayer, and the heart's devotion must all be performed in a controlled manner, that is, to be "tuned to perfection."

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refer to rhythm, pulse or accents. For the musical connotations of the Hebrew terms 'measure', see the index in Israel Adler, *Hebrew Writings Concerning Music*, Munich, 1975 (Hereafter *HWCM*), s.v. *'midah'* (p. 371), *'mishqal'* and *'miskelot'* (p. 372) and *'siur'* (p. 383). Measuring and weighing are fundamental aspects of divine creativity in biblical and mystical sources. See Job 28: 25: "He fixed the weight of the winds, set the measures of the waters". Man's control of his *ru'ah* mirrors God's. See also Hayman, *Seifer Yetsira*, §4 [source A], pp. 69-70; §19, pp. 100-01; *TZ, Tikkun* 70, 128a-b. For more on this, see Liebes, *Torat Ha-Y'tsirah*, pp. 132-7; 159-66. In Nahman's tale 'The Seven Beggars', the handless beggar tells of a man who had boasted about the great power of his hands, that when a tempest arose, he was able to contain it with his hands, by which he was able to "give the wind the proper counter-measure that was needed"; Arnold Band, *Nahman of Bratslav. The Tales*, New Jersey, 1978, p. 279.

59 See Band, *The Tales*, p. 273.

60 *LM* II, 9.

61 *Zohar Hadash*, 108b.

With the interpretation of *l'-khavvein* as tuning, Nahman imbues the concept of *kavvanah* (derived from the verb *l'-khavvein*) with an original meaning. *Kavvanah* may be understood as finding the 'correct measure and rhythm,' or the exact balance of forces, such as the exact tension of a tuned string. Alternatively, it can be understood as aligning oneself with a certain concept or power, the nature of which Nahman does not specify. Perhaps the mishnaic dictum which opens *LM* I, 282: "Know that you must judge every person according to the scale of merit (*mAvot*, 1: 6)," which Nahman cites as a means to finding and gathering the 'good points,' provides a clue as to the nature of that unspecified concept, which may be identified with some aspect or other of loving-kindness (*hesed*) itself.[62]

Where both musical instrument and strings represent certain aspects of a person, the act of 'tuning' each note clearly applies to the self. In playing music, one is effectively tuning one's soul. In addition to the rabbinic sense of *kavvanah* as the direction of one's heart towards heaven, Nahman invites every individual to focus his attention on the drama that takes place within his own soul, where 'spirits' of opposing natures struggle for dominion. Music enables the individual to align himself with the goodness within him to the exclusion of all else, and this enables him to overcome the evil spirit. Although Nahman's concept of *kavvanah* as it appears elsewhere in his teachings encompasses the rabbinic meaning of intention and concentration on the divine,[63] this ultimate aim is preceded by an interim stage of *kavvanah* in the sense of internal 'tuning to perfection' of one's inner core by means of music.

David the Skilled Musician and his Lyre

The religious path described in *LM* I, 54: 6 in musical terms is accessible to every individual and does not necessarily require musical skill. Nevertheless, the person chosen by Nahman to epitomise the path that is open to every person is King David, the "Sweet Singer of Israel,"[64] the skilled musician,[65] whose playing of the lyre to soothe King Saul's depression[66] manifests the

62 In Kabbalah, the concepts of the 'scale of merit,' 'love'and 'goodness' are all aspects of the *s'firah, Hesed*. See Moses Cordovero, *Pardeis Rimmonim* (hereafter *PR*), Jerusalem, 1962, II, gate 23, s.v. *'kaf z'khut,'* 23b; *'ahavah,'* 2a; *'tov,'* 19a.

63 See e.g., *LM* I, 2: 6; 9: 4; II, 95.

64 Classical rabbinic sources refer to David by this title based on II Sam. 23: 1: "The utterance of David son of Jesse […] the sweet singer of Israel."

65 See above, n. 54.

66 I Sam. 15: 23: "Whenever the [evil] spirit of God came upon Saul, David would take the lyre in his hand and play it; Saul would find relief and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him."

healing power of music and its capacity to subjugate the 'evil spirit.' Rabbinic tradition ascribes the authorship of the book of Psalms to David. This, together with the talmudic legend of his midnight playing on his extraordinary lyre, which is discussed below, and the extensive treatment of this theme in the zoharic literature, establish David as an iconic figure, representing prayer, music and poetry.[67] David's musical efforts underpin his victory over the darkness of midnight and evil spirits, enabling him to engage in Torah study, song and prayer.

In the kabbalistic literature, David is usually associated with the *s'firah, Malkhut*, which is sometimes characterised by its oscillation between good and evil.[68] This changeability makes David a fitting example for the ordinary man's struggles with the negative forces within his psyche. David/*Malkhut* is the last of the ten *s'firot*, closest to the lower world and humanity's gateway to the divine realm, while at the same time, it also symbolises the entire congregation of Israel (*k'nesset Yisrael*). By emulating David's midnight vigil, every person is called to overcome the evil within himself by means of his own music, and to rise in holiness.

The earliest two sources for the legend of David's lyre are *bB'rakhot*, 3b and *yB'rakhot*, 1: 1.[69] The opening tractate of the Talmud, *B'rakhot*, deals with prayer, and the first chapter discusses the exact time for reciting the *Sh'ma* in the evening. The *Gemara* establishes a connection between the Temple worship and prayer, defining the latter as 'service of the heart' (*avodah shebaleiv*), which replaces the Temple cult of sacrifices (*korbanot*). The root of *korban* (sacrifice) is *K-R-B*, meaning 'to draw near.' The purpose of bringing sacrifices to the Temple was to bring the worshipper closer to God, and prayer is understood as capable of fulfilling the same function. The rabbinic discussion of the nature of prayer, its prescribed time of day, and the relationship it establishes with God are the background to the legend of David's lyre.

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67 The distinction between music and poetry is not always clear in Hebrew texts. See, for example, the entry *shir* in Ben Yehudah, *Dictionary*, vol. IV, pp. 7069-73, meaning both poetry and music. David symbolises the prototype of both musician and poet.

68 Two zoharic symbols manifest the ambivalent and unstable nature of *Malkhut,* one being the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil'; the other is the waning moon. See e.g. *Zohar* I, 35a; 181a-b.

69 With minor variations, the same legend occurs also in a number of midrashic compilations, but these do not add any significant details to the talmudic sources. See e.g. *Ruth Rabbah*, 6: 1; *Lamentations Rabbah*, 2: 22; *Num. Rabbah*, 15: 16; *P'sikta Rabbati,* 17: 3.

The Babylonian Talmud reads:

> R. Aḥa, son of Bizna, said in the name of R. Simeon Ḥasida: A lyre was hanging above David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a North Wind would come and blow upon it and it would play of itself. He would arise immediately and would study the Torah till the break of dawn.[70]

The Jerusalem Talmud version consists of two accounts:

> [A] R. Pinḥas in the name of R. Eleazar, son of Menaḥem [said]: He [David] took a harp and a lyre and placed them under his head. At midnight he arose and played them in order that his Torah-companions will hear.[71] What did his Torah-companions say? "If King David is engaged in Torah study [at such an unlikely hour], how much more so should we [do the same]!"[72]
>
> [B] Said R. Levi: A lyre was hanging against David's windows, and the North Wind would blow in the night and set it swinging and it would play of itself. As it is written: "and as the musician played" [II Kings 3: 15]. It is not written here: "as the player played the instrument" [*k'-naggein b'-m'naggein*] but rather: "as the instrument played" [*k'-naggein ha-m'naggein*].[73] The lyre was playing of itself.[74]

Account A suggests that David made music in order to arouse his companions to engage in Torah study. This relates directly to the verse, "I arise at midnight to praise you for your just rules" (Ps. 119: 62), where "your just rules" is taken to be a reference to the Torah. By contrast, account B suggests (as in the Babylonian Talmud version) that the music was made by the North Wind that blew on the lyre at midnight.

Both the Babylonian Talmud version and the Jerusalem Talmud account B describe the lyre as playing 'of itself.' This unnatural phenomenon calls for further explanation. According to R. Levi (account B), the expression 'of itself' alludes to the North Wind that sets the lyre swinging without any human

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70 *bB'rakh.* 3b.

71 This corresponds to Ps. 57: 9: "Awake, O my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre, I will wake the dawn."

72 *yB'rakh.* 1: 1. It is interesting to note that in this story, playing music is equated to Torah study, as David is playing music but his companions hear him studying Torah. By contrast, in the Babylonian Talmud version, a distinction is made between Torah study and songs of praise: "Rav Ashi said: Till midnight he [David] occupied himself with words of Torah, and from then on with songs and praises."

73 *M'naggein*—here interpreted as the instrument. R. Levi's interpretation deviates from the literal meaning of the biblical verse, where *ha-m'naggein* refers to the musician.

74 *yB'rakh.* 1: 1.

intervention, which is why it could be said that the lyre played 'of itself.'[75] The Jerusalem Talmud version offers yet another explanation, based on the verse "and as the musician played" (II Kings 3: 15). The biblical context of this proof text is an episode involving the prophet Elisha and the Kings of Judah and Israel, who expected him to prophesy the outcome of an impending war. Elisha asked for a musician to be brought to him, in order to induce prophecy. The verse reads: "As the musician played, the hand of the Lord came upon him." The expression "as the musician played" (*v'-hayah k'-naggein ha-m'naggein*) is interpreted as indicating that the player and the instrument were one and the same. Had the verse been written "*v'-hayah k'-naggein b'-m'naggein*" (with the preposition *b'-* ['with'] replacing the definite article '*ha-*'), it would have suggested a distinction between the player and the instrument, but as the verse stands, the word *ha-m'naggein* signifies at once both the musician and the instrument.[76]

The identification of the musician with his instrument is echoed in a zoharic reference to the legend, which associates the North Wind with a concealed inner spirit blowing in David's heart, thus equating David's heart to a lyre. This interpretation is cited by Nahman in *LM* I, 8: 2, where he identifies the 'spirit of life' with the 'spirit of God' as well as with the 'spirit concealed in every person's heart.'[77]

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75 Many commentators speculated on this supernatural phenomenon. The first to attempt a scientific explanation was Rav Hai Gaon (d. 1038), who thought that there was a device using air or water pressure that made the lyre produce music at the exact time each night. He also suggested an alternative explanation based on the power of the north wind to cause the strings to vibrate. See *Otsar Ha-G'onim, B'rakhot, commentaries*, p. 4, as cited in A. Ehrman (ed.), *Talmud. Tractate B'rakhoth,* vol III, Tel Aviv, 1972, p. 50. Rashi comments on the Babylonian Talmud's version that the instrument had holes facing north, thus making it possible for the blowing wind to produce a sound. Following on from Rashi's comment, some 16th-century commentators speculated on the nature of the instrument that could produce a sound in this manner. R. Judah Moscato (Italy 1530-1590) suggests that the Hebrew term for lyre [*kinnor*] in fact referred to an 'organo'—a type of organ with wind pipes; see Adler, *HWCM*, p. 229. Abraham b. David Portaleone (Italy, 1542-1612) suggests that the instrument was an 'arpa' (harp), a string instrument with a hollow wooden sound box (called '*mezuzah*'!), which was able to catch the wind and produce a sound (ibid., pp. 268-9).

76 For more sources depicting man as a musical instrument played by God, see above, n. 43.

77 See *LM* I, 8: 2; *TZ, Tikkun* 13, 28a, and above, at n. 25.

David's lyre's supernatural quality is attributed in *Pirkei D'-Rabbi Eli'ezer* to its extraordinary origin. According to this midrash, the strings of David's lyre originated in the sinews (*giddim*) of the ram sacrificed by Abraham on Mount Moriah.[78] The ram was created along with a few other miraculous creations, such as Noah's rainbow or Balaam's ass, on the afternoon of the first Friday, just before the creation was completed.[79] The Maharal of Prague (1525-1609), after quoting this midrashic source, explains the lyre's 'divine' status:

> And so it is with David's lyre, which was unlike any other lyre. […] And as the lyre had become for him [i.e. David] a divine virtue, this lyre was supernatural.[80]

The *Gemara* sets this legend in the context of a talmudic discussion concerning the concept of 'night,' its definition and division into several *mishmarot*–'watches,' and more specifically, the precise time of midnight. Midnight, which splits the night into two halves, is the subject of numerous midrashic texts. It is regarded in the Talmud as a propitious time (*eit ratson*),[81] since auspicious events have taken place at midnight, such as the smiting of the Egyptians' first-borns (Ex. 12: 29)[82] and the meeting of Ruth and Boaz on the threshing floor (Ruth 3: 8).[83]

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78 *Pirkei D'-Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 31: 73 "R. Hananiah ben Dosa says: That ram, which was created at twilight, nothing that issued from it was wasted (…). The sinews of the ram's, they were the ten strings that David played upon." In antiquity, when most musical instruments where made from parts of dead animals (skins for drums, sinews for strings, tortoise shells for lyres and bones for flutes), it was believed that music originated in the voices of the departed animals. Music was therefore perceived as "conjuring spirits from the other world" which carry a supernatural power. See Martin West, "Music Therapy in Antiquity," in Peregrine Horden (ed.), *Music as Medicine*, Aldershot, 2000, pp. 52-3. See also the description of the burgher's son in Nahman's tale, *The Burgher and the Pauper*: "The burgher's son (…) he, too, could play musical instruments and knew the art of music. He chose trees that were fit for the making of musical instruments, and he made himself a musical instrument. From the sinews of animals he made strings, and he played and sang for himself"; Band, *The Tales*, p. 175.

79 See *mAvot* 5: 6.

80 Judah b. Bezalel Loew, *Gur Aryeh* on Ex. 19: 13.

81 See *bYev.* 72a.

82 The *piyyut* by Yanai, '*Vay'hi Ba-Hatsi Ha-Lailah,*' which forms part of the songs and poems that conclude the Passover Haggadah, lists auspicious events that occurred during midnight, as well as other parts of the night, according to both the biblical and the rabbinic sources.

83 See *Num. Rabbah*, 15: 16.

According to the *Zohar*, there is a clear distinction between the events that take place before and after midnight.[84] During the first half of the night when the soul departs from the body and ascends to heaven to be judged, the world is ruled by the harsh forces of judgement. At midnight a transformation occurs. God enters the Garden of Eden to delight in the company of righteous people of both the upper and the lower worlds.[85] When the children of Israel study Torah at midnight, God, together with the righteous in heaven, listens and takes pleasure. This "arousal from below"[86] affects the upper world: the powers of judgement subside and mercy increases, while the departed souls return to inhabit their bodies. The wailing, which dominates the first half of the night, gives way to songs of praise. Those who rise at midnight to study and give praise to God merit their share in the 'world to come':

> …so every single night souls of the righteous ascend, and at the moment of midnight the Holy One blessed be He comes to the Garden of Eden to delight with them.
>
> With whom?
>
> Rabbi Yose said, "With all of them, both those whose abode is in that world and those dwelling in their abode in this world. With all of them the Holy One, blessed be He, delights at midnight."
>
> Come and see: The world on high needs the arousal of the world below. When souls of the righteous leave this world, ascending above, they all clothe themselves in supernal light, in a splendid form. The blessed Holy One delights in them, desires them. […] Rabbi Yeisa said: "Even those on earth? How?"
>
> He replied, "Because at midnight all the truly virtuous awaken to declaim Torah and proclaim praises of Torah. As has been said, the blessed Holy One and all the righteous in the garden listen together to their voices, and a thread of loving-kindness extends upon them by day, as is written: 'By

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84 See Melila Hellner-Eshed, *V'-Nahar Yotsei Mei-Eiden: Al S'fat Ha-Havayah Ha-Mistit Ba-Zohar*, Tel Aviv, 2005, pp. 149-76; Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions*, Detroit, 1992, pp. 139-41.

85 According to the *Zohar,* the upper and lower worlds were created simultaneously. The two worlds match each other, and everything that exists in the one has its counterpart in the other. See *Zohar*, II, *Midrash Ha-Ne'elam*, 20a.

86 This is a basic kabbalistic precept denoting not only the effect of human activity 'below' on the upper worlds, but also a degree of dependance of the upper worlds on human initiative. See e.g. *Zohar*, I, 86b: "Rabbi El'azar said: We have observed that an arousal above only occurs when there is an arousal below, for the arousal above depends on the desire of the arousal below."

> day God directs his loving-kindness, at night His song is with me" (Ps. 42: 9). […] Come and see, David would rise at midnight."[87]
>
> At the onset of the first hour [of the night], as day expires […], the Masters of Wailing blow [their horns] and sob. […] Then, while human beings sleep, the soul goes forth, offers testimony, and is found guilty. But the blessed Holy One acts lovingly with that person, and the soul returns to her site. At midnight, when birds arouse, the side of the North[88] arouses in a wind. A sceptre from the side of the South[89] rises erect and strikes that wind, so it subsides, turning fragrant. Then the blessed Holy One arouses, following His custom to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. At that moment, happy is the share of the human being who rises to delight in Torah.[90]

The *Zohar* is full of similar descriptions of the events that take place in heaven during midnight, when the North Wind blows and God enters the Garden of Eden to rejoice with the righteous. Singing, praying and studying Torah at that time is extolled, and the angels are said to join in the singing.[91] These images contributed to the development of the custom of midnight vigil (*tikkun ḥatsot*) by the Safed Kabbalists in the 16th century.[92] These vigils involved rising at midnight to study Torah, sing the Psalms and make supplications (often in form of song).[93]

Naḥman advocates emulating King David's midnight ritual of music and study:

> "During the night I recall my song; I commune with my heart, and my *ru'aḥ* (spirit) searches (Ps. 77: 7)." The night […] is the main time for *hitbod'dut*: [94] secluding oneself with one's Master and speaking at length with the Holy

87 *Zohar* I, 82b; Matt, *The Zohar*, Vol. II, pp. 25-6.

88 The 'side of the north' is associated in the Kabbalah with the 'left side' of the sefirotic 'tree' and with the *s'firah, G'vurah,* representing harsh judgement and destructive forces. See *Tsafon* in *PR* II, gate 23, ch. 18, 37b.

89 South, on the 'right side,' symbolises the *s'firah, Ḥesed*, representing loving-kindness. See ibid., ch.4, 13a.

90 *Zohar* I, 92a; Matt, *The Zohar*, Vol. II, pp. 79-80.

91 See e.g. *Zohar* I, 207b; *Zohar Hadash*, 13a-b; 47b.

92 The ritual of *tikkun ḥatsot* originated in the geonic period. On this ritual before and after the *Zohar*, see Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, N.Y., 1977, pp. 146-50; Moshe Ḥalamish, *Ha-Kabbalah Ba-T'fillah Ba-Halakhah Uva-Minhag*, Ramat Gan, 2000, p. 328.

93 See Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions*, pp. 149-50.

94 The notion of private prayer–*hitbod'dut (*also translated as 'solitary devotion' by Fenton, and 'being alone with God' by Scholem, cited by Moshe Idel, *"Ha-Hitbod'dut K'-Rikuz Ba-Kabbalah Ha-Ekstatit V'-Gilgulehah," Da'at*, XIV [1985], p. 47, n. 68),

> One; speaking with one's heart and seeking the good *ru'ah*–i.e., the 'good points' one still has, so as to extract them from within the evil *ru'ah*, this being the above mentioned aspect of music.[95]

David's midnight devotion and his music serve as a paradigm of personal, intimate prayer. Playing music in the privacy of his night vigil is the quintessence of *hitbod'dut*—being alone with God. Nahman explains that midnight is particularly fitting for *hitbod'dut* because a unique aspect of holiness emerges from the music that is played at that time[96] and strengthens the individual's private endeavors to purify the *ru'ah* that resides within him:

> In other words, at midnight the aspect of sacred music drawn from the lyre of David is aroused, this being in the nature of extracting the good *ru'ah* etc., as explained above. That is the time, therefore, to intensify one's divine service: to awaken and then to engage in the service of God […] for it is mainly then that the above mentioned extraction occurs, which is in the nature of playing music on an instrument...[97]

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is central to Bratslav Hasidism. Nahman advocated this mode of personal approach to God specifically in Yiddish (or any other language of daily speech) rather than the Hebrew, the language of formal liturgy. It provides the opportunity for sharing one's innermost concerns with God, while at the same time serving as the arena for self-reflection, the separation of evil from good and the identification of one's personal 'good points.' It is also the occasion for playing music as a means for achieving these goals. Nahman recommends that this private prayer be conducted at night time, when the mind is free from worldly concerns and can concentrate on the divine. He explains that in order to 'return to one's divine root,' namely to be restored to holiness and be integrated in the divine, one has to undergo self-abnegation (*bittul*), which can only be achieved through *hitbod'dut* (*LM* I, 52: 3). See *LM* II, 25; ibid., 95-101; *Sihot Ha-Ran* (printed together with *Shivhei Ha-Ran*), Jerusalem, 1995, §§185, pp. 229, 227-34, pp. 270-76; *HM*, II, *Ma'alat Ha-Hitbod'dut*, §§436-443 (1-7), pp. 463-71. Cf. *Tsava'at Ha-Rivash* (ed. Shohat), N.Y., 1975, §82, p. 26. See also Idel, ibid., pp. 35-82; idem, *"Ha-Hitbod'dut K'-Rikuz Ba-Filosofiah Ha-Y'hudit"* in *Seifer Ha-Yoveil LiShlomo Pines*, I, *Mehkarei Yerushalayim B'-Mahshevet Yisra'el*, VII (1988): 35-81; Ze'ev Gries, *Sifrut Ha-Hanhagot*, Jerusalem, 1989, pp. 222-4, Mark, *Mistikah,* pp. 235-52.

95 *LM* I, 54: 6.

96 At about the time when this *torah* was said, in the fall of 1804, Nahman also instructed Nathan and his other disciples to observe the ritual of *tikkun hatsot*. See Nathan Sternhartz, *Y'mei MoHarNat*, Beit Shemesh, 2005, vol. I, §4, p. 425. Green pointed out that in this respect, Nahman was exceptional among other hasidic masters who abandoned the rituals associated with the Lurianic *kavvanot*. See Green, *Tormented Master*, p. 219, n. 43.

97 *LM* I, 54: 6.

The elaborate zoharic description of the heavenly transformation during midnight reflects the human transition from one state of consciousness to another, i.e., from sleep to wakefulness.[98] The Babylonian Talmud raises the questions of how David could know when to get up if he was asleep, and how he could determine the exact time of midnight, something that even Moses could not do.[99] The answer to both questions is that his lyre functioned as a musical 'alarm-clock.' Precisely at midnight, a North Wind would blow through it, and the resultant music would wake him up. The moment of transition is marked by music bursting from its hidden source, ushering in the dawn of a new day.[100]

North Wind, Darkness, Concealment and Creativity

The wind that blew on David's lyre, associated with the North (*tsafon*), has been interpreted as the spirit that is concealed (*tsafun*) in one's heart.[101] But what is the nature of this spirit, and how is it connected to music? The biblical 'north' has both negative and positive connotations. It is described negatively in, e.g., "A stormy wind came out of the north" (Ez. 1: 4), and "From the north shall evil break loose" (Jer. 1: 14), while being viewed positively as the source of riches in "From the north gold will emerge" (Job 37: 22), or of pleasant aroma in "Awake, O north wind, Come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden that its perfume may spread. Let my beloved come to his garden and enjoy its luscious fruits." (Song. 4: 16).

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98 Mark deals extensively with the significance of the night in relation to conscious and unconscious religious praxis. In reference to *LM* I, 54, he explains that music is a means of resisting the problematic loss of cognition and rise of the imagination associated with the night. It seems to me that Nahman recommends rising at midnight for the opposite reason. Rather than being fraught with danger, the night provides special opportunities. Elsewhere Nahman explains that night time is perfectly suited to spiritual activity because the mind is free from the worldly affairs which occupy it during the day. The peace and solitude that the night bestows, away from the hustle and bustle of mundane existence, provide the perfect conditions for the concentration that both music making and spiritual work demand. See *LM* I, 52: 3; Mark, *Mistikah*, pp. 225-56.

99 See *bB'rakh*. 3b.

100 In a number of variants of the legend of David's lyre, David is the one who brings in the day by his Torah study and music, and he is the one who 'wakes' the lyre up, as in the verse (Ps. 57: 9): "Awake, oh harp and lyre, I will wake the dawn." See *yB'rakh*. 1: 1; *Ruth Rabbah*, 6: 1; *Lamentations Rabbah*, 2: 22.

101 See above, n. 27.

Midrashic literature offers further comments on both potencies of the North Wind.[102] However, from the earliest kabbalistic writings of the 12th-century onwards,[103] *tsafon*–'north' is mostly associated with the 'left side' of the divine realm with its dark, potentially destructive powers, and with the *sefirah, G'vurah* with its quality of stern judgement.

The 'left side' and the *s'firah, G'vurah* are connected with music through the Levites—the Temple musicians, who are said to be rooted in "that [i.e., the left] side".[104] The *Zohar* raises the question of the incompatibility between the Levites' music, which is delightful, and its source in the harsh *s'firah, G'vurah,* and offers two conflicting explanations. According to one, the music that originates in the 'left side' must be joined by the 'right side' (*Hesed*—loving-kindness) to become joyous.[105] The other explanation endows the Levites and their music with the quality of humour, presenting them as a positive power that mitigates and brightens up the negative forces inherent in the 'left.'[106] It is precisely this quality that prompts the *Zohar* to describe the Levites as the "King's jesters":

> "Your priests are clothed in justice; your loyal ones sing for joy (Ps. 132: 9)." […] "Your loyal ones sing for joy"? It should say "your Levites sing for joy," for the Levites are the King's jesters.[107]

The *Zohar* explains that in both the upper and the lower world, the Levites' music connects and binds. For example, by singing David's Psalms of praise, the Levites arouse joy and love on high,[108] raising the *s'firah, Malkhut* to *Tif'eret*–her male counterpart–and bringing about their union,[109] while in the lower world, their music lifts the Temple sacrifices to heaven,[110] thus

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102 See *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eli'ezer*, ch. 3: 59; *Sifrei on Deut., §306; bYev*. 72b and Rashi's comment there: "North wind–moderate, neither hot nor cold." Cordovero concludes: "North […] this name sometimes has negative connotation and sometimes positive"; *PR*, II, gate 23, ch. 18, 37b.

103 See Daniel Abrams, The book *Bahir*, Los Angeles, 1994, §109, Joseph Gikatila, *Sha'arei Orah*, Jerusalem, 1996, vol. II, pp. 23-6.

104 See *Zohar* I, 103b; II, 143b.

105 See ibid., I, 230b-232a; II, 143b.

106 See ibid., I, 103b. For more sources on the mitigating power of the Levites' singing, see Moshe Idel, "Music," in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*. New York, 1988, pp. 638-40.

107 *Zohar* I, 148a-b: On this passage, and the creative function of humour in the *Zohar*, see Yehuda Liebes, "*Zohar V'-Eros*", in *Alpayim*, IX (1994): 80-85.

108 See *Zohar*, II, 131b.

109 See ibid., 238b.

110 See ibid., 259b.

drawing the human soul closer to its source on high. The Levites' capacity to connect is implied in their name, which derives from the root *L-V-H,* meaning to attach or to accompany. Levi's mother, Leah, had expressed her desire that through her son's birth, her husband Jacob would be joined to her in love: "This time my husband will become attached to me, for I have borne him three sons. Therefore he was named Levi."[111] The *Zohar* elaborates:

> Rabbi Judah said, "Why were the ministers below named Levites? Because they attach themselves and are united with the [ministers] on high, and whoever listens to them, their soul is attached and joined to the upper realm."[112]

With reference to this zoharic passage, Nahman adds that music's power to join together disparate things is the reason why music is played at weddings, assisting the union of bride and groom:

> This is what Leah said: "This time my husband will become attached to me" (Gen. 29: 34). At that time, Levi was born; through him, the aspect of melody and musical instruments came into the world.[113] Certainly, "this time my husband will become attached to me," for the joining of two things is by means of melody and musical instruments. Understand this. And this is the aspect of the musical instruments that they play at a wedding."[114]

The *Zohar* views all love and sexual passion as stemming from the domain of the 'left side',[115] the domain of *G'vurah* and the North, in which both music and humour originate as well. The 'left side' is clearly perceived as a powerful source of a mixture of creative forces with the potential either to establish unity and harmony or, in certain circumstances, to destroy.

Occasionally the *Zohar* refers to the blowing of the North Wind upon the lyre at midnight by resorting to the verb *B-T-SH* [lit. 'strike' or 'thrust'], suggesting a movement of great force, charged with sexual connotations:

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111 Gen. 29: 34.

112 *Zohar* II, 19a. This zoharic passage plays on the similarity between the words *sarim* (ministers), *shir* (song) and *m'shor'rim* (singers), establishing a connection between them. For more on this subject, see Liebes, *Torat Ha-Y'tsirah*, pp. 122-6.

113 According to the *Zohar* (II, 19a), the angels appointed to sing before God had to wait for Levi's birth before they could begin to perform their musical duties.

114 *LM* I, 237. On music as a means to unite the supernal bride and groom, see *Zohar,* III. 230b.

115 *Zohar* II, 173b: "[The Holy One, blessed be He] is aroused with the love from the left [side] towards the community of Israel, for no love exists but [that which is] from the left side."

> He [David] would study Torah, and at that time the North Wind would wake up and strike the strings of the lyre and the lyre would play.[116]

This echoes the zoharic depiction of the first creative impulse of the divine at the beginning of the emanation, when 'a spark of impenetrable darkness' (*butzina d'-kard'nuta*) struck and penetrated (*B-T-SH*) the air around it:

> "In the beginning" [Gen. 1: 1]. At the head of potency of the King, He engraved engravings in luster on high. A spark of impenetrable darkness flashed within the concealed of the concealed, from the head of Infinity […] Concealed of concealed struck [*B-T-SH*] its aura…[117]

The paradoxical concept of a 'spark of impenetrable darkness' which triggers the process of creation, encapsulates the connection between darkness, concealment and creativity, which is apparent also in the legend of David's lyre, where the depth of midnight, a concealed (*tsafun*) 'spirit,' and a certain creative impulse converge to make music.

The Aspect of 'Hands'

To reach the spiritual elevation associated with the 'world to come,' one must engage with music actively, by playing it with one's hands:

> By means of the aspect of music and joy, a person can remind himself of the 'world to come.' This is because the memory is preserved by means of making music with one's hand, which is in the nature of joy as mentioned above.[118]

As mental pursuit is bound up with physical action, mindfulness of the 'world to come' depends on the physical movement of the hands. The importance that Nahman assigned to the movement of hands is revealed in the number of *torot* he devotes to hand clapping.[119] Although the praxis of hand clapping in prayer was common among the Hasidim as a sign of ecstasy, it assumed a special significance in Nahman's thought and became

116 Ibid., *II*, 67b. The verb *B-T-SH* (strike) appears in a musical context also in the following zoharic passage: "The ten spheres (i.e., the *s'firot*) are alluded to by [the letter] '*yud*' (i.e. the first letter of the ineffable name of God, which has the numerical value of ten), and they are analogous to the ten fingers that 'strike' [the instrument when playing] music"; *TZ, Tikkun* 13, 27b.

117 *Zohar* I, 15a; Matt, *The Zohar*, Vol. I, pp. 107 and 109). On the meaning of *butzina d'-kard'nuta*, see Yehuda Liebes, *P'rakim B'-Milon Seifer Ha-Zohar*, PhD dissertation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1977, p. 145, Matt, ibid., pp. 107-8, n. 4.

118 *LM* I, 54: 6. For the connection between the 'hand' and joy, see below, at n. 142.

119 For this topic, see Mark, *Mistikah*, pp. 290-92.

a distinctive element of Bratzlav prayer, both private and communal.[120] Nahman ascribes to hand clapping various powers: to arouse the imagination and induce prophecy;[121] to annul heresy;[122] to cleanse the air from impurity and create a space filled with 'holy air' for the praying person;[123] to mitigate harsh judgements,[124] and more.

According to Nahman, when the hands become active, they emanate 'light'[125] and *ru'ah*: "The essence of existence is the aspect of hands, which are the tools of making, and there [in the hands] the aspect of *ru'ah* is revealed."[126] The "aspect of the hands," which features in many of Nahman's *torot*,[127] signifies the actualisation of potency, and the exposure of the concealed. Nahman explains that since the hands are an exposed part of the body, extending and coming into contact with the world, they correspond to the revealed Torah. By contrast, the legs are concealed with garments, and are in the nature of the concealed, esoteric teaching of the Torah:

> The Torah, too, corresponds to hands and legs. For the Torah consists both of revealed and concealed [teachings]. The revealed is the aspect of the hands, […] the hidden are the aspects of legs.[128]

In the context of playing an instrument, which is simultaneously a musical and a spiritual process, 'hands' represent that part of the body which actually gathers the good *ru'ah*. The musician's hand correlates to God's hand as the source of all human spirits: "'Who has gathered the *ru'ah* in his palms?' [Prov. 30: 4]—literally, 'in his palms,' which are the hands, because the root of the *ru'ah* is there."[129] Nahman explains that through playing music, the human hand draws down the divine 'hand,' so that divine inspiration comes to rest on the musician: [130]

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120 E.g., the Bratzlav Hasidim would burst into sudden rapid hand clapping during a silent *amidah* prayer. I thank Dr. Naphtali Loewenthal for this information. See also Mark, ibid., p. 290, n. 43.

121 See *LM* I, 45; 212.

122 See ibid., 10: 6.

123 See ibid., 44.

124 See ibid., 46.

125 See ibid., 10: 6.

126 Ibid., 54: 6.

127 See e.g. ibid., 10: 7; 22: 2; 24: 4; 56: 9; 66: 2. For more on the significance of hands in Nahman's teachings, see Wiskind-Elper, *Tradition and Fantasy*, pp. 193-8.

128 *LM* I, 10: 7.

129 Ibid., 54: 6.

130 In this context, it is interesting to note the biblical notion of God's 'hand'

> The main gathering and building up of the *ru'ah* of prophecy is by means of the hand, because the deposits of the *ru'ah* are there, as it is written (Ps. 31: 6), "into Your hand I deposit my *ru'ah*," and as in (Job 12: 10) "in Whose hand is the life of every living thing and the *ru'ah* of all human flesh." This is the explanation of "As the musician played, the Hand of God came upon him" (II Kings 3: 15). We see that by playing a musical instrument with his hand, a person extracts the good *ru'ah* from the evil *ru'ah*.[131]

The role that Nahman assigns to the hands echoes the depiction by the 13th-century Kabbalist, Abraham Abulafia, of the scribal practice of combining and permuting the letters of the alphabet (*tseiruf otiyot*), aimed at inducing prophecy and mystical transformation.[132] Although the permutation of letters was not a mainstream kabbalistic technique, it was known to the Safed Kabbalists in the 16th century, foremost among them Moses Cordovero. As Idel has shown, through Cordovero's writings[133] and some other kabbalistic texts, the doctrine of 'permutation' was transmitted to the Hasidic masters.[134]

Nahman's statement that the hands are "the tools of making" (*k'lei ha-asiyah*),[135] uses terms reminiscent of Abulafia, who calls the hands "the tools

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denoting prophecy: "And as the musician played, the **hand** of God came upon him" (II Kings 3: 15).

131 *LM* I, 54: 6.

132 The concept of combining letters is based on the talmudic statement (*bB'rakh*. 55a): "Betzalel knew how to combine the letters, with which heaven and earth were created." Letter combination and permutation is also the method by which God created the world according to *Seifer Y'tsirah* (see e.g. Peter A. Hayman, *Sefer Ysirah*, Tübingen, 2004, §19, p. 100; §31, p. 119). According to Idel, the idea that all languages are constructed out of letter combinations features in the writings of several medieval authors, including Shabbatai Donollo (10th century) and Azriel of Gerona (13th century), but was particularly prominent in the works of Abraham Abulafia. The process of deconstructing words in order to generate new permutations of letters that yield new words allows the human intellect to share in the experience of divine creation and to come in contact with the divine presence. See Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, New York, 1989, pp. 1-28; idem, *The Mystical Experience*, pp. 13-54.

133 See Cordovero, *PR*, II, gate 30, 68b-72a.

134 According to Idel, while most of Abulafia's writings remained unpublished (until fairly recently), both the anonymous *Seifer Ha-Pli'ah* (published in Koretz in 1784) and Cordovero's *PR* contain sections of text originating in the prophetic Kabbalah. Through these sources, many of Abulafia's ideas infiltrated Hasidism. For the transmission of Abulafia's techniques to the Hasidic masters, see Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, Albany, NY, 1995, pp. 53-65

135 See *LM* I, 54: 6.

of human action" (*k'lei ha-p'ulah ha-enoshit*). The hands are *keilim*–tools (or vessels) for the creation or reception of mystical experience, with the pen writing the letters representing an extension of the moving hand:

> All of the letters are but signs that can be perceived by the senses and are made by the hands, which are the tools of human action. The pen is a tool for writing, whatever shape it draws, as though it[136] was a finger that writes and draws the shapes of the letters, and as though it was the intermediary between two entities.[137]

The process of writing to combine letters into words is akin to the composition of a musical piece or to playing a melody on a musical instrument by combining musical notes to one another. Abulafia himself draws an analogy between these two processes. In his *Gan Na'ul*, he compares the permutation of letters and sounds:

> Know that the combination [of letters] is comparable to hearing [music], for the ear hears and the sounds are combined according to the form of the tune or the pronunciation. The proof is the [string instruments] *kinnor* and *neivel*; their sounds combine and with the combination of sounds, the ears perceive variation and changes in the pangs of love. The strings, which are struck by both the right and the left hand, vibrate, producing sensations which are sweet to the ears. And from them [i.e., the ears], the sound travels to the heart, and from the heart to the spleen.[138] In the meantime, joy is renewed through the pleasure of musical variation.[139]

A number of Abulafia's motifs are present in Nahman's teachings, and point to a possible influence on him. For example, the notion that the technique of permutations applies not only to letters, but also to sounds is common to both. Nahman's references to the letters being joined together by 'good points,'[140] or to melodies being created out of the combination of 'good points,'[141] correspond to Abulafia's notion of *tseiruf*–permutation. Similarly, Abulafia's depiction of the joy derived from music played by the hands is echoed in Nahman's correlation of hands and joy:

> 'Hand' is the aspect of joy corresponding to "and you shall rejoice in all the effort of your hand" (Deut. 12: 7). This is also in the nature of musical instruments that are played with the hand.[142]

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136 The Hebrew has the plural *heim* (them). I have chosen the singular (it) since the phrase seems to refer to the writing tool—the pen, not the hands.

137 Abraham Abulafia, *Hayyei Ha-Olam Ha-Ba,* Jerusalem, 1999, pp. 110-11.

138 For the connection between the spleen and joy, see *bB'rakh.* 61b.

139 *Gan Na'ul*, Jerusalem, 1999, p. 29.

140 See *LM* I, 31: 6.

141 Ibid., 54: 6; 282.

142 Ibid., 54: 6.

Of particular interest is Abulafia's reference to "pangs of love" in the context of musical permutations. Nahman, too, conceives of love and yearning as the driving force of permutations, albeit in the context of letters and vowels.[143] Lastly, a passage from *Sha'arei Tzedek*, written by a student of Abulafia's, Nathan ben Sa'adyah Harar, applies the praxis of letter permutation to the melodic vocalisation of holy names in various permutations, perceiving the musical dimension to be a second (presumably higher) level of permutation:

> … and how the letters transpose, change round, conjoin, separate and skip from the beginning through the middle to forming complete words, as well as the shape and combination of vowel points, determining their pronunciation. This carries over to the second level, which is the quality of the sound and the melody, to the point where the melodic sound produced resembles that of a *kinnor*, stirring one's soul to the subtlety of the melody and its variations.[144]

Abulafia's prophecy-inducing techniques were adopted by the Kabbalist Yehudah Albutini (in Jerusalem, in the early 16th-century), who cites him as his source for a preparatory ritual to be performed before embarking on letter permutation and vocalisation.[145] The ritual consists of sitting in a candle-lit darkened room (preferably at nighttime), dressed in clean, white clothes. In addition to Abulafia's instructions, Albutini recommends the playing of musical instruments: "Moreover, he should make music on any kind of musical instrument […] to refine the vital soul, which is common with the speaking and intellectual soul."[146] Following on from the instrumental music, the mystic embarks on the vocalisation of letter permutations of divine names. Albutini's addition of musical instruments prior to the vocalisation of letter permutations implies a certain hierarchy, where the instrumental music is subservient to the chanting. In contrast with Albutini, the playing of a musical instrument in Nahman's depiction of David's night vigil is itself the means for the mystical union.

The Music of the Cosmos

Nahman's concept of the skilled musician whose instrument is tuned to perfection is reminiscent also of Isaac Arama's ideas in his treatise *Niggun Olam*, 'The Music of the Cosmos.' The treatise features in Arama's book

143 See ibid., 31: 6.

144 Cited in Idel, *The Mystical Experience*, pp. 54-5.

145 See Yehuda Albutini, *Sulam Ha-Aliyah*, Jerusalem, 1989, p. 76; Abulafia, *Hayyei Ha-Olam Ha-Ba*, p. 121.

146 Albutini, *Sulam Ha-Aliyah*, p. 73.

'*Akeidat Yitzḥak*' (hereafter *AY*)– a collection of sermons on the weekly Torah portions,[147] first published in Salonica in 1522. The 'Music of the Cosmos' is an appendix to a homily delivered on *Shabbat Noaḥ,* and appears to be a late addition to the work.[148]

Arama (c. 1420-1494) lived in Spain until the Expulsion and finally in Naples, at a time when the Italian Renaissance was inspiring great developments in science and the arts, and Neo-Platonic ideas were influencing both philosophy and religion.[149] Naḥman was familiar with Arama's book, which he deemed 'kosher' for himself, although he included it in his 'black list' of philosophical books considered dangerous for his disciples lest they lead them to heresy.[150]

Of particular interest for this study are the writings of Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), a priest, musician, classicist and philosopher at the Platonic Academy of Cosimo de' Medici in Florence. He created a musical theology based on the congruity between the music of the cosmos (*musica mundana)*, the inaudible music created by the human body and soul (*musica humana),* and instrumental music (*musica instrumentalis).*[151] This congruity, according to Ficino, enables the human soul to vibrate in sympathy with the cosmos.[152] In 1489, he wrote the *Three Books on Life* (*De Vita*), bringing together astrology, medicine and music, and giving instructions on how to attain a direct experience of divine power and a life of harmony. Some of Ficino's ideas found their way into Arama's 'Music of the Cosmos,' albeit without acknowledgement. I

147 *Niggun Olam* is quoted in Meir Ibn Gabai, *Avodat Ha-Kodesh*, Jerusalem, 2004 (part 2, ch. 15, p. 122), and is also referred to in Moscato's *N'futsot Yehudah* (printed in Adler, *HWCM*, p. 229). The full text of *Niggun Olam* is printed in Adler, *HWCM,* pp. 93-5.

148 Isaac Arama, *AY*, I, gate 12, 92a: "Indeed, as we add to this [homily] another separate chapter, which is very fitting to the matters discussed in this homily, I have named it 'The Music of the Cosmos.'"

149 On the various influences on Arama, see Sarah Heller-Wilensky, *R. Isaac Arama U-Mishnato*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1957, pp. 37-48.

150 See *ḤM*, II, *L'-Hitraḥeik Mei-Ḥakirot*, §407, (1), p. 433.

151 The distinction between these three kinds of music was ascribed to Pythagoras. It remained influential through the works of Plato, Cicero, Boethius and others. See Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres*, London, 1995, pp. 31; 65; 121; Boethius, "The Three Types of Music," cited in Joscelyn Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic,* London, 1987, pp. 46-7.

152 See James, ibid., p. 122.

believe that Nahman drew some of his own ideas about music directly from Arama, and thus indirectly from Ficino.[153]

In the 'Music of the Cosmos' Arama likens the relationship between man (microcosmos) and God (macrocosmos) to the relationship between two identically tuned musical instruments.[154] When two instruments are tuned to the same frequency, sympathetic resonance can occur between them, when the vibrations of one instrument cause the other to vibrate in the same frequency.[155] This acoustic phenomenon, whose discovery was attributed to

153 The writing of Arama's book has been dated by Heller-Wilensky to the 1480s, while Arama was living in Spain (Heller-Wilensky, *R. Isaac Arama*, pp. 29-31). However, the influence of the Italian Renaissance is very apparent in 'The Music of the Cosmos,' and the ideas present in it are found also in the writings of Arama's contemporaries, Yohanan Alemanno and Isaac Abrabanel, as observed by Idel. Idel raises the possibility that Arama might have committed his sermons to writing after the expulsion from Spain, when he was living in Italy, and where he could have come under the influence of Florentine Renaissance Christian thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, who had contact with Jewish scholars, and had studied Kabbalah from Alemanno. See Moshe Idel, *"Ha-Peirush Ha-Magi V'ha-Teiurgi Shel Ha-Musikah B'-Tekstim Yehudiyim Mi-T'kufat Ha-Renaissance V'-Ad Ha-Hasidut,"* Yuval, IV, [1982], pp. 33-63; idem, *"Ha-Peirush Ha-Magi V'ha-Tateiurgi Shel Ha-Musiqah B'-Tekstim Yehudiyim Mi-T'kufat Ha-Renaissance,"* in *Mehkarei Yerushalayim B'-Mahshevet Yisra'el*, IV, Jerusalem (1982), esp. p. 64.

154 The concepts of micro-and-macrocosmos as representations of the relationship between God and man were influenced by Neo-Platonic ideas and occur in both Jewish and non-Jewish sources (Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, Tel Aviv, 1988: 44, 3; Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Jerusalem, 1972: 1: 72). See also Heller-Wilensky, *R. Isaac Arama*, p. 149, n. 2; Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, London 1964, pp. 95-9; R. Allers, "Microcosmos from Anaximandros to Paracelsus", *Traditio*, II (1944): 375-8. In Philo's writings is the idea that the cosmos is the 'divine instrument,' to which Moses' soul was attuned as he recited his final poem. See Philo, "The Death of Moses," from "*On the Virtues,*" cited in Godwin, *Music*, p. 57.

155 The phenomenon of acoustic resonance, though seemingly miraculous, occurs in nature. Every substance has a natural 'resonance frequency,' i.e., a frequency specific to it at which it vibrates when struck. In music, the ear's response to the frequency of the vibrations is perceived as the pitch (i.e., 'height') of each sound. Faster vibrations will result in a higher pitch and vice versa. Tuning an instrument changes its frequency of vibration and this alters the pitch. For example, stretching or shortening a string will result in faster vibrations and a higher pitch. When two instruments tuned to the same frequency are placed next to each other, and if one of them is caused to vibrate, the other will absorb those vibrations and will also begin to vibrate at the same frequency, seemingly 'by itself,' even though there has been no observable contact between them.

Pythagoras by the Greek philosophers, occurs also, according to Arama, in the relationship between man and God.

Ficino, similarly, compares the relationship between man—in his case, the musician—and the planets[156] to the relationship between "a string in a lute, trembling to the vibration of another, which has been similarly tuned."[157] Ficino's description of the resonance between the musician and the planets is expressed in almost identical terms to Arama's correlation between man and the cosmos, and can be assumed to be its source. Arama writes:

> This accounts for the close correlation that exists between them [i.e., man and the cosmos], which is comparable to the correlation that music theorists detect between two identical musical instruments tuned to the same pitch in perfect consonance [lit. 'same proportions']. When one set[158] [of strings] vibrates, the other reverberates in response to its sound, because there is a perfect consonance [lit. 'equal proportion'] between them.[159]

If man and the cosmos relate to one another as two musical instruments, then man as 'microcosmos' (*olam katan*) is 'a minor instrument' (*k'li katon*), while the macrocosmos ('*olam gadol*' or '*olam koleil*'), namely the universe governed by God, is the 'major instrument' (*k'li gadol*).

Arama explains that both man's heart and the cosmos are governed by the laws of Torah, which contain the 'secret of music,' that is, instructions on maintaining harmonious proportions between the two instruments. Elsewhere he elucidates that God's laws are engraved on the human heart as they are on the cosmos, and God activates them as if they were the strings of a musical instrument.[160] The 'secret of music' was handed down to the children of Israel together with the Torah.[161]

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156 Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life—A critical edition and translation with introduction and notes by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark*, New York, 1989, p. 361. According to Ficino, the first four of the seven planets in the solar system (Apollo, Jupiter, Venus and Mercury) create music, while the last three (Saturn, Mars and the moon) "have voices but not song."

157 Ibid.

158 Hebrew *tur*, which refers to strings or a range of strings. See Adler, *HWCM*, p. 387.

159 Arama, *AY,* I, ch.12, 92b.

160 Ibid., III, ch. 70, 154b: "For all of these laws are inscribed in man's nature (lit. 'inclination of man's heart') and in the totality of all that exists, and they are given to us, and it is within His exalted power to activate all the strings and to tune them (lit. to set them in the correct proportions) so as to [produce] a good melody as we have stated before."

161 See ibid., I, 93a.

This musical analogy is based on the theory that both man and the cosmos create music, a view which was widespread in the Greek and Roman worlds, and which was brought back to collective consciousness by the Renaissance thinkers.[162] Arama's 'Jewish' contribution to the development of this idea is the notion that the rules of musical harmony derive from the divine Torah. According to Arama, the music of the cosmos is in resonance with man's good conduct, and God's bounty is bestowed on the world in response to this resonance. The 'minor instrument' (man) must be tuned to the same proportions as the 'major instrument' (the cosmos) by following the Torah's laws, so that they will be consonant with each other and draw the desired response from God. When human beings transgress the laws of the Torah, they disrupt the cosmic harmony. In order to restore the harmony they must tune the strings of their 'lyres' and 'harps' and align themselves with the Torah:

> However, when as a result of sin, the underlying world order is corrupted and becomes aligned with evil, so that one of the curses mentioned in the Torah befalls on us, heaven forbid, all we have to do is to examine the

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162 The Pythagorean belief was that the celestial bodies rotate continuously at various speeds, which relate to one another in harmonious proportions that are also found in music. These revolutions were regarded as universal music, not audible to human ears. Plato describes the harmony created by the revolving heavenly spheres in *Timaeus* I, 6, and the music they produce in *Republic* X, 617. Of its well-established place in Jewish thought, see Maimonides, *The Guide*, 2: 8. Although Maimonides refers to a biblical verse (Ps. 19: 2-4: "Heavens declare the glory of God…") as a source for this theory and claims to have found midrashic sources for this theory, he nevertheless refutes it following Aristotle. While the verse quoted above, as well as another biblical verse describing celestial music (Job, 38: 7: "When the morning stars sang together") are to be read as poetic language, they were later used by Jewish medieval thinkers as sources for their theory of cosmic music; see e.g., Ibn Ezra on Job 38: 7; and Duran's comment in *Magein Avot* on Ps. 19: 2, cited in Adler, *HWCM, p. 133;* see also *Zohar Hadash, B'reishit, Midrash Ha-Ne'elam,* 5d-6a. The first Jewish philosopher to make many allusions to the concept of the music of the spheres appears to be Philo (first century CE), writing in Alexandria under Greek influence. See Louis H. Feldman, "Philo's Views on Music," *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy*, IX (1986-7): 45. On the prevalence of this idea in medieval Jewish philosophy, see Adler, ibid., s.v., "spheres, music (harmony) of the," p. 384. For a survey of this doctrine, see James, *The Music of the Spheres*, pp. 3-139; Angela Voss, "The Music of the Spheres Marsilio Ficino and Renaissance Harmonia," *Culture and Cosmos*, II, 2, (Autumn/Winter 1998): 16-38. See also Cicero, "The Dream of Scipio," cited in Godwin, *Music,* pp. 10-11.The notion of cosmic music was disseminated to the Italian Renaissance thinkers through Ficino's translations of Plato's entire work into Latin.

> strings of our lyres and harps and re-tune them properly, so as to align them with the Torah that we possess.[163]

To illustrate the importance of correct tuning for inducing resonance and sustaining the world through God's bounty, Arama gives the example of King David's lyre. He explains that David had to tune (*l'-khavvein*) his lyre very precisely, in order to achieve his task.

> Thus, the sages, blessed be their memory, explained [David's] words: "Awake my glory" [Ps. 57: 9], to mean that it was worthwhile for 'The Sweet Singer of Israel' [David], when playing music, to attune (*l'-khavvien*) [his lyre] to this particular measure. Now the macrocosmos is comparable to the first instrument, for it has a fixed order and measure in all of its ranges, [both] high and low, through which it accomplishes the task of sustaining the world and its conduct.[164]

King David is Arama's prototype of the 'perfect man,' whose task is to guard the cosmic order by keeping the musical consonance between the human and cosmic instruments.[165] His perfect personality combines musical skill, valour and righteousness:

> Therefore, when the perfect (*shaleim*) man is a man of valour who is skilled in music (*yodei'a naggein*),[166] he is called a righteous man (*tzaddik*), a foundation (*y'sod)* of the world.[167] He ensures that all these matters[168] are properly maintained in a just and lawful manner. Likewise, the disorder which can be found among the wicked disrupts this [good] order and destroys it."[169]

In *LM* I, 54: 6, Nahman shares a few motifs with Arama. Both speak of the musician's skill, and the perfection of the music that is achieved through perfect intonation. Arama is the only author I have found prior to Nahman's

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163 Arama, *AY*, III, ch. 70, 154b.

164 Ibid., I, ch. 12, 92b.

165 Moscato (1530-90) further developed the idea of the 'perfect man,' whose perfection is achieved by being attuned to musical proportions. However, for Moscato, it is Moses who represents human perfection, as indicated by his name–Moses, which is etymologically related to the word 'music.' See Moscato, *N'futsot Yehudah*, cited in Adler, *HWCM*, pp. 231-3.

166 This is almost identical to the portrayal of David in I Sam. 16: 18.

167 Prov. 10: 25. Unusually, in this text, David is associated with this verse, which commonly refers to Joseph, who is known as both *tzaddik* and the 'foundation' (i.e., the *s'firah, Y'sod).*

168 This refers to the correlation between man and God, achieved through man's 'tuning in' to God by means of the Torah.

169 Arama, *AY*, I, ch. 12, 93a.

time who employs the verb *l'-khavvein* in the same sense of 'tuning,' as Nahman uses it in *LM* I, 54: 6.[170] This points to Arama's likely influence on Nahman's perception of music.

There is, however, a difference of purpose between them as regards intonation. Nahman's emphasis on perfect tuning is not for the purpose of establishing harmony in the cosmic order nor for drawing God's bounty onto the world. His concern is to subdue the 'evil spirit' in the struggle between opposing forces in man's heart. As each sound is tuned correctly and joined together with another, it 'builds' music and joy, which enables the 'good spirit' to overcome evil:

> For he [the musician] has to raise and lower his hand on the instrument he is playing in order to tune [the notes][171] to build up the joy to perfection […] so that he can properly purify and tune the music to perfection. This corresponds to extracting the good *ru'ah*, which is the aspect of joy and the *ru'ah* of prophecy, from the *ru'ah* of depression, the *ru'ah* of evil, as explained above.[172]

Nahman stresses the importance of the instrument being perfect, whole (*shalem*), in a language that evokes Arama's notion of the perfect man. If the instrument is not perfect, he explains, the air that carries the tune will emerge from it as a mixture of good and evil 'airs,' producing a cacophonous sound. Furthermore, in order to construct the music, it is necessary to maintain the air that flows through the instrument over measured time. Exploiting the apparent proximity of the Hebrew terms *adamah* (dust) and *m'dameh* (imagine), Nahman explains that if a person cannot control the flow of air inside the instrument, the negative aspect of the imagination regains its driving force:

> Also the instrument on which he plays has to be perfect […] This is because the essential beauty of the music is achieved through the purification of the *ru'ah* (which is the air from which the sound comes, as is known to those knowledgeable in music).[173] In other words, the aspect of music is achieved essentially through the extraction of the good *ru'ah* from the evil *ru'ah*. But when one lets out the *ru'ah* all at once, it emerges out as it is: a mixture of good and evil. In such a case, the music and the joy do not materialise, and the imagination is not subdued. This corresponds to

170 See above, at n. 55.

171 "To tune" refers here to the intonation of every individual note of the melody, and not to the instrument.

172 *LM* I, 54: 6.

173 Although Nahman speaks about music in general, he refers specifically to a stringed instrument: "The musician […] has to go up and down on the strings"; *LM* I, 54: 6.

> "His *ru'ah* goes out; he returns to his *adamah* (dust)" (Ps. 146: 4). "To his ***adamah***" is the aspect of ***m'dameh.*** In other words, when all the *ru'ah* comes out, he reverts to the [power of the] imagination. This is because he has not subdued the imagination, since he is has not been able to gather and purify the good *ru'ah*, and as a result, all the *ru'ah* which comes out is a mixture of good and evil.[174]

Unlike Nahman, Arama does not refer specifically to the perfection of the instrument, but rather to the skill and perfection of the musician's personality (*ish hashalem*) and to the tuning of his instrument. In Nahman's text, the notion of perfection applies to both the instrument and the intonation, which are matched by the supreme skill of the musician.

Both Arama and Nahman identify David as the musician. Arama, however, further identifies David as the *tzaddik*, which Nahman does not. Elsewhere, Nahman establishes a connection between the *tzaddik* and music, but David is not the subject of that *torah.*[175] For Nahman, David represents every ordinary person.

Another aspect of Nahman's thought, which possibly owes its origin to Arama, is the connection he makes in *LM* I, 282 between the 'good points,' *mitzvot*, and the music which they engender. It is reminiscent of Arama's correlation of the rules of music with the laws of the Torah. According to Nahman, the core of goodness contained in every *mitzvah* performed constitutes a 'good point,' and when many such points are joined together, they create music:

> Nevertheless, how is it possible that this *mitzvah* or holy deed should contain not even a small element of good? For in any case, despite this, there must have been some good point in the *mitzvah* or good deed that he performed. […] Through the gathering and extraction of these 'good points,' […] melodies are created.[176]

Arama similarly links Torah with music by equating their mode of operation. Music is created by the same divine principles revealed in the Torah, and these can restore the human heart to perfection:

> When the divine Torah was given to the chosen people, the secret of this [cosmic] music was handed down to them, together with its mode of operation, [instructing them on how] to effect with it, first of all, the restoration to perfection of the [human] heart's inclination, which is by nature corrupted by evil (lit.: spoilt by a cluster of thieves).[177]

174 Ibid.
175 See ibid., 282.
176 Ibid.
177 Arama, *AY*, I, ch. 12, 93a.

According to Arama, one finds the secret of music with which one can overcome the evil inclination by means of adhering to the Torah.[178] Arama and Nahman share the notion that music is connected to *mitzvot* and good deeds, and can ultimately counteract the negative forces of evil. However, for Nahman the matter is more complicated. It is not enough to fight evil by simply observing the *mitzvot*. Evil has a psychologically negative power which weakens one's ability to serve God, and therefore it must first be fought internally with great determination.[179]

In spite of all the similarities, there still remain two fundamental differences between Arama's and Nahman's approaches to music. Arama uses musical resonance as an analogy to the mutual influence that exists between man and God. The notion of 'tuning' refers purely to man aligning his life in accordance with the divine Torah. By 'tuning in' to the Torah's 'wave length,' namely, the commandments, man can draw the divine flow down to earth:

> Now the macrocosmos is comparable to the first instrument, for it has a fixed order and measure in all of its ranges, [both] high and low, through which it accomplishes the task of sustaining the world and its conduct. In parallel to them, the strings of the microcosmos, which is part[180] [of the macrocosmos], are set out and tuned to receive their[181] influence (lit. 'actions') properly. Now when the minor instrument sets its ranges, its pegs and its strings in the correct proportions,[182] so that it establishes a correlation with the secret nature of all that exists, both in its totality and in all its parts, then, when it reverberates, the macrocosmos's ranges [of strings] respond to it. The two [instruments] co-operate, so that the one activates while the other is being activated in such a manner that all that exists[183] is perfectly conducted by both of them together in the most

178 Moscato, following on from Arama's ideas, equates the Torah with perfect music: "The type of music which is worthy of being played is this Torah." See Moscato, *Nefutsot Yehudah* (in Adler, *HWCM*, p. 235).

179 See *LM* I, 282: "It is known that a person must take care to be happy always and to keep far away from depression […] the Evil One wants to push him into depression and sadness…" Cf. *Tsava'at Ha-Rivash*, §44, pp. 14-5.

180 With the word "part" (*helki*), Arama gives us a clue as to the main difference between the macrocosmos and the microcosmos: the macrocosmos is a whole, a totality, while the microcosmos is but a part of it.

181 "Their" refers to the strings of the major instrument, i.e., the macrocosmos.

182 When the minor instrument (man, the microcosmos) is attuned to the same frequency/proportions as the major instrument (God, the macrocosmos), there is perfect consonance between them, which results in resonance.

183 Both micro- and macrocosmos.

fitting way. For the King of the Universe has established that the whole cosmos, both micro and macro, should be as one entity, whose extremities inter-relate and whose parts correspond to one another so that every part of a living creature [is necessary] for the benefit of the whole. Thus they join together to receive the [divine] flow from Him, Blessed be He. And this indeed is what He, Blessed be He, explained by means of the prophet when he said: "'In that day I will respond'—declares the Lord—'I will respond to the sky, and it shall respond to the earth. And the earth shall respond with new grain and wine and oil, and they shall respond to Jezre'el.'" [Hos. 2: 23-4]. He[184] said that "God, Blessed be He, is the one who responds first to the tune of the minor instrument and the beauty of its music, as is indicated by the verse: 'Before they pray, I will answer' [Isa. 65: 23]… "and [God] will respond[185] with goodness to the heavens which are the highest, most all-inclusive string by bestowing [on them] an abundant (lit. 'satisfactory') flow, and they will respond to the earth,"[186] which is the second string, by playing in harmony with its beautiful music. "And the earth will respond to the grain," which is the third string, "and the grain will respond to Jezre'el," which is the fourth string,[187] for this [name 'Jezre'el'] refers to the people who sow [*Z-R-A*] while trusting in God [*Eil*] and in His response in the manner mentioned above. But truly, this process is cyclical, for it is they [i.e., the people] who begin the music and [also they] who receive the response to it in the end, as is indicated by [the verse]: "Truth springs up from the earth, justice looks down from heaven" [Ps. 85: 12].[188]

Arama is not advocating the practice of music as a religious path, although he recognizes that David used his music successfully to induce resonance with the divine. Ficino, who must have inspired Arama's thinking, held that music is a real—even if 'magical'—power,[189] capable of harnessing heavenly

184 I.e., the prophet Isaiah.

185 In resonance.

186 By bestowing the flow on the earth.

187 Arama's notion of four strings is a deviation from the rabbinical view that David's lyre had seven strings, while in the messianic age it will have eight strings and in the 'world to come,' ten; see *tArakh*. 2: 4; *bArakh*. 13b. Arama may have been influenced by Ficino's view that only four out of the seven planets produce music; see Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, p. 361. Another explanation could be that he had in mind an *ud*–a four-stringed lute, which was a very popular and highly regarded instrument in the Arab world; see Idel, *The Mystical Experience*, p. 69, n. 60. On Nahman's reference to David's lyre comprising five strings and the zoharic source for this view, see above, at n. 25.

188 Arama, *AY*, I, ch. 12, 92b.

189 Idel defines the application of music as a means to affecting the relationship

powers, while for Arama, music is primarily a metaphor for the ideal relationship between man and God. This relationship is based on 'tuning' oneself according to the absolute laws of Torah. When this tuning is maintained, it has a magical effect that benefits the whole cosmos.

By contrast with Arama, and in line with Ficino, Nahman hails the concrete, transformative power of music. However, unlike both Arama and Ficino, his goal in *LM* I, 54: 6 is not 'magical', namely, to manipulate divine forces so that bounty will flow from heaven to earth, but rather to help each individual ascend in holiness:

> This is the explanation of "during the night I recall my song" (Ps. 77: 7). "I recall"–this is the aspect of memory, that a person has to be always mindful of the 'world to come.' This is the aspect of "my song"–that is, the aspect of music mentioned above.[190]

Through the physical action of playing an instrument, the musician purifies his soul, which enables him to adhere to the messianic aspect of the 'world to come' and achieve communion with God.

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between man and God, or processes taking place outside the Godhead, as 'magical' ("*Ha-Peirush",* p. 35).

190 *LM* I, 54: 6.

The Hasidic Niggun: Ethos and Melos of a Folk Liturgy

By Hanoch Avenary

Hasidism, the last of the Jewish mystical movements, created a characteristic wordless vocal melody which in Hebrew is called "niggun." These niggunim are often used as an extension of the existing liturgy, and serve as a prelude or postlude to the traditional prayers; there may even be devotional gatherings during which only these niggunim are heard.

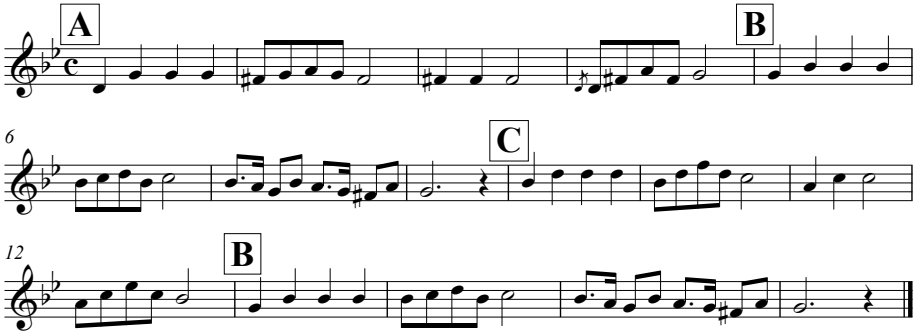
Hasidism originated in Eastern Europe about 1750. It spread quickly over the Jewish diaspora in the Slavic countries, and is still alive in many communities such as Jerusalem, Safed, London, New York and elsewhere. It is the latest, but not the sole mystical movement that attracted masses of people. Disastrous persecutions were often followed by a withdrawal of the Jews into an inner life beyond grim reality. After the fatal onslaught of the crusaders there arose, late in the 12th century, a sect called "The Pious of Ashkenaz"; the expulsion from Spain was followed by the mystical doctrines radiating from Safed in Upper Galilee; and the unbearable suppression of the Russian diaspora gave birth to Hasidism. All these movements differ from the more exclusive, speculative Kabbalah in stressing an esoteric way of life, and supplying practical guidance suited to everybody. They aim at a daily life brought to God by striving for joy in His service, and for a complete merger of personality in ecstatic prayer. These are the main motives for the preference given to musical expression. Words were regarded as a medium that was insufficient for grasping the secrets of Kabbalistic theosophy, and for the exalted feelings of union with the Endless and Absolute. There are sayings such as "Silence is better than words, but singing is better than silence," or "There are castles in the upper spheres which open only to song." An unbroken line of thought ranges from the medieval Pious through the tenets of Safed to modern Hasidism.

Hasidism developed its own manner of praying based largely on song. All this was a continuation of the ideas of medieval mystics, such as Y'hudah the Pious, who said: "Whoever is unable to arrange his words well, should express his supplication, praise or penitence by means of melodies, and especially by extended, melismatic tunes." The same author stressed that in prayer-song, aesthetic values are of no importance—devotion is what counts; therefore, nobody should feel ashamed of his poor vocal gifts. This idea is recapitulated in the Safed circles, and still holds true in Hasidism.

Such trends of thought offer a clue to many popular and folkloristic traits in the music of Jewish mysticism. "Offer your heart in chant just as it is, and

sing as well as you can though it be nothing but the rustic songs and dances of the countryside where you live in exile." There is a mystic idea that tunes are *also* in exile, and may be liberated by leading them back to serve a holy purpose. Consequently, all the doors were opened to the influx of foreign musical forms and styles, but they were remodeled. There is a tendency to suggest in song a gradual rise from the depths of this world to the higher spheres of the transcendent, to holy joy, enthusiasm, ecstasy. This may be achieved by gradually raising the pitch level of the same motive, by abrupt changes in, or continuous acceleration of, time, by obstinate repetition of short motives, by the introduction of unusual intervals, and so on.

The Hasidic niggun is most often sung without words, in short, filler syllables interrupted by exclamations of joy or grief: it aims to express the unexpressible, to give voice to that which is too intimate to be uttered in words. The numerous "turns" (inserted by the notator) represent portamenti, and the short appoggiaturas (the characteristic "broken voice" preferred by the Hasidim) are apparently meant to express a broken soul. Another characteristic is the undulating repetition of notes; it recurs again and again throughout two-and-a-half centuries of Hasidic song, and is generally intoned rather sentimentally (**Example 1.**).[1]



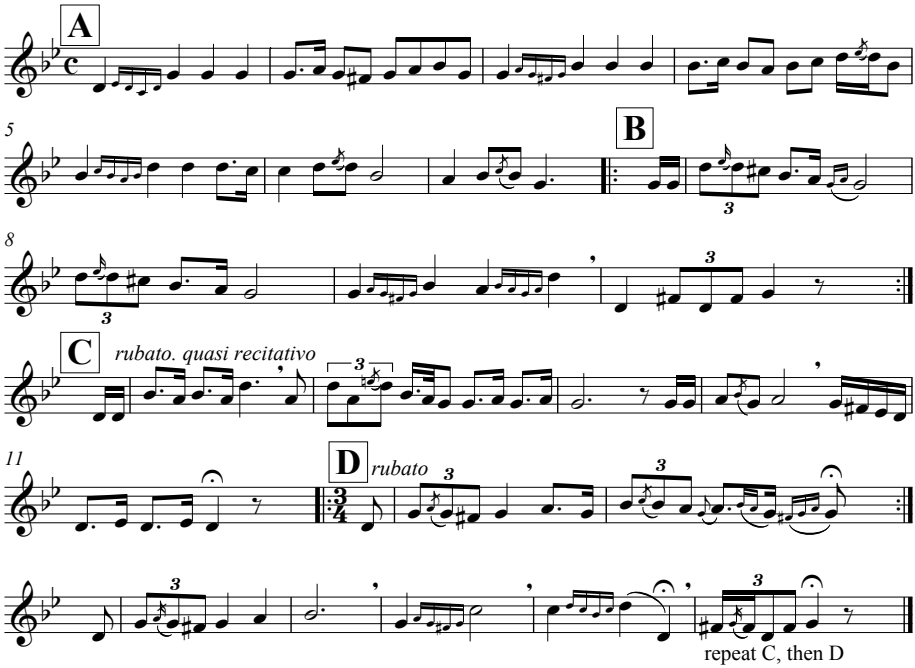
Example 1. Niggun by R. Shneur Zalman of Ladi (d. 1813).

There are three main classes of niggunim: First, the solo song of the Rebbe. This may be intended to reveal the deep, unspeakable mysteries of the Kabbalah, or to penetrate the upper spheres by the fervor of its supplication. The second class of melodies serves for the communion of the individual soul with its Creator. The third and most common type is the congregational song heard at meetings of the Hasidic fraternities. Legends tell how such niggunim changed and improved the character of the partakers—the *katharsis* of Plato.

1 Sh. Zalmanov, *Sefer HaNiggunim* vol. I, no. 3, Brooklyn, 1948.

The Hasid is taught that he should sing "not in order to affect others, but in order to affect himself." Thus the tunes of this secluded microcosm are not aimed at any audience, do not strive for external beauty, and cannot be measured by purely artistic standards. Only by means of participation can their ravishing, moving, exalting power be realized.

We now approach a niggun ascribed to Rabbi Michal of Zlotchov of the first generation of Hasidic teachers. The Baal Shem, founder of the Hasidic movement, said of Michal's musical capabilities: "He often enters the treasure-house of song in Heaven, and selects melodies for himself" (**Example 2.**).[2]



Example 2. Niggun by R. Michal of Zlotchov (d. 1781).

The structural idea of melodies like those in Examples 1 and 2 may be characterized as "the idea of ascent." The gradually rising sequences seem to trace out a rise in enthusiasm or the ascent of the soul, more urgent in Example 2, phrase A, and slower in Example 1, a more meditative melody.

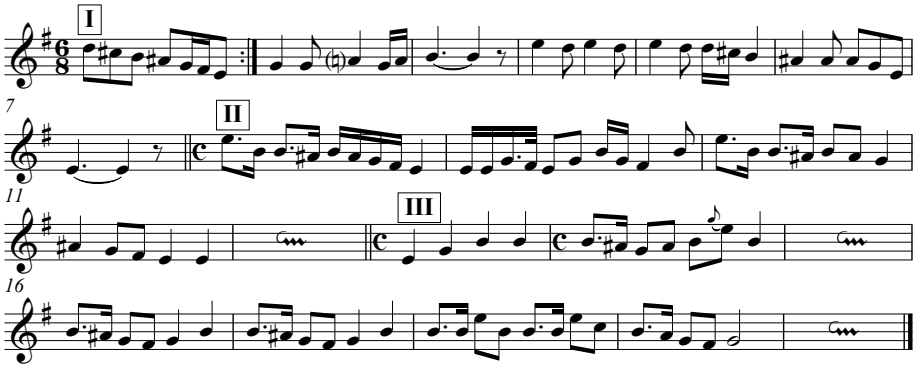
Example 1, from about 1800, has the familiar form of a European *lied*: two periods of eight bars with *Da Capo* ending. Instead of genuine Hebrew modal melodies we have here a popular form that offers no problems to musically un-

2 Ibid., no. 22.

sophisticated people. Remarkable is its climax (phrase C) in what appears to be a modulation to major; but in reality it is a half-clause on the minor Third degree, often found in early Hasidic melodies: an undecided, suspended turn of tonality which may be understood as an expression of the unworldly and mystical.

The formal structure of Example 2 is complex and sometimes irregular from a European point of view. Its first phrase (A, materializing the "ascent") turns out to be only an introduction, and the number of its bars is curtailed to seven. The main part of the work is composed of several short movements (B, C, D), woven into the repetitive pattern B, C, D, C, B. Following movements of Example 2 (C, D) hover in a sphere intermediate between strict rhythm and free recitative. Sometimes they suggest a discussion with an unseen partner: they appear to argue, persuade, convince–a speech without words (central movements C, D, C).

Phrase B of Example 2 starts with an unusual series of pitches resembling that of certain synagogue modes but actually peculiar to Hasidic melodies such as Phrase I of Example 3[3]—one of three by Hillel of Poritch. A.Z. Idelsohn described this series of intervals as mystical and ecstatic. It occurs only in descending form and is, perhaps, rather a modal motive than a scale; it also recalls the intervals characteristic of the Ukrainian *Duma.*



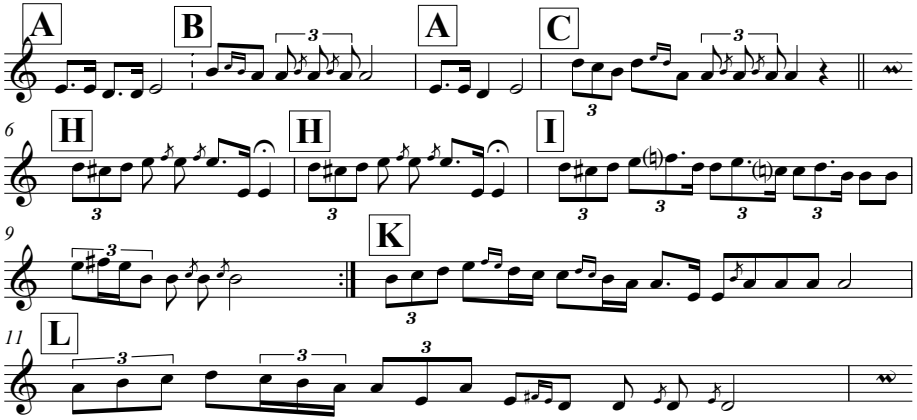
Example 3. Niggunim by Hillel of Poritch (early 19th cent.), Shmuel of Lubavitch (d. 1883), Shneur Zalman of Ladi.

It is worth noting that the Hasidic "talking melody" does not follow the patterns of the synagogue recitative. It sometimes imitates the speech-like character of certain Wallachian shepherd-songs. The Hasidic leaders became acquainted with them during their lonely wanderings, when they roamed the

3 (I) A.M. Bernstein, *Musikalisher Pinkes,* No. 210. Wilna, 1927; (II) M. Sh. Geshuri, *HaNiggun V'haRikud BaHasidut* I, p. 239,Tel-Aviv, 1955; (3) Zalmanov, op. cit., No. 5.

country searching for "the scattered sparks" of the Divine glory. They felt like redeemers when they recognized a Divine spark in a popular gentile tune, and would adapt it to a godly song. Thus the immense influx of foreign music into Hasidism has to be judged from the aspects of its mystical ethos.

Example. 4.[4] is a specimen of such an adapted shepherd-song: a Hasidic *Volokh'l* ("a little Wallachian"). We present here only some phrases of a piece from the late 19th century in order to exemplify the style. As a whole, it displays a well-ordered formal structure. Though modeled after foreign folksong, the melodic line has been adapted to that of the Yiddish spoken language. A phrase like H, for instance, with its octave skip, occurs in the recitative of Talmud study, and also in Yiddish songs that have a declamatory nature.

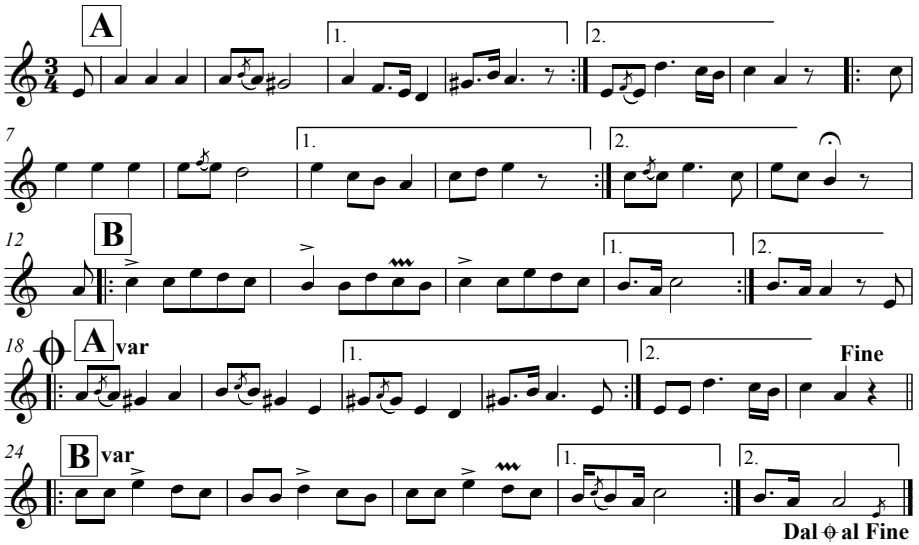


Example 4. Hasidic *Volokh'l*: Niggun based on a Wallachian shepherd-song.

The Hasidic assimilation of foreign elements may be exemplified by a congregational niggun (**Example 5.**)[5] It starts in a meditative mood (phrase A), turns abruptly to a brisk dance rhythm (B), and recapitulates this pattern with melodic variations of the first movements (phrases A-var., B-var.). Influences of Russian folksong make themselves felt in a return of the first motive in the higher pentachord (2nd half of A), or in the rhythms of the dance-like section. The technique of "variated repetition" applied here, however, comes from Old Synagogue tradition.

4 J.S. Weisser, *Cantors Manual* vol. I, supplement, "Hasidic Melodies," p. 142, New York, 1944.

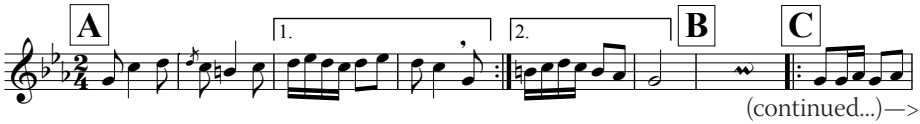
5 Ibid., p. 140.



Example 5. Niggun by R. Jacob Heber.

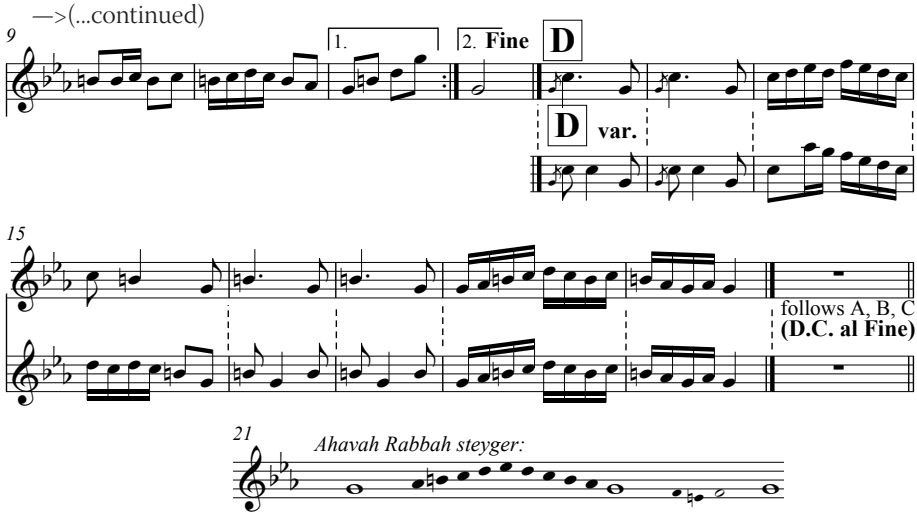
Dance in Hasidism is regarded like song, as a holy medium and a particular expression of devotional joy. The sacred dance of times immemorial thus enjoys a comeback in modern mysticism. We shall have a look at a dance-niggun, an authentic old specimen, recorded in writing before 1792 (**Example 6.**).[6]

This tune is in one of the synagogue modes (*Shteyger*) named after the opening of its signature prayer text, *Ahavah Rabbah Shteyger* ("mode of the Great Love of God"), and is often used for Hasidic niggunim. The features of dance are found in the taut rhythm, in the syncopations, and in the use of bridging bars to connect the various sections (first two bars of phrase D and D-var.). Such bridging bars are known from Polish dances such as the Oberek, from the Viennese Waltz, and the like. Specific Jewish tradition is at work not only in the mode, but also in the principle of variated repetition that is applied to phrase D.



Example 6. Dance niggun from a manuscript of Ahron Beer (c. 1792).

6 Manuscript of Ahron Beer, cited in A.Z. Idelsohn, *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz* vol. 10, no. 245, Leipzig, 1932.



Example 6. Concluded

This short survey has limited itself to basic information on the ideas underlying the use of music in Hasidism, giving a mere outline of some of the resultant musical forms.

At first glance, Hasidic song may appear to be but an odd mixture of modern and old, of Hebrew and gentile elements, of holy and profane. Although it sometimes may resemble "much ado about nothing," we must nevertheless give it credit for its ever-renewed attempt to bring about an unusual concentration of the individual's entire personality, and for its aiming at a spiritual tension which is resolved in self-denial. All this has to be achieved by musical means. Hasidic song often starts from the trivial, but is always directed toward the most uplifted exaltation. This "union of the upper and the lower worlds" is accomplished in the heart of the singers, and may easily escape the casual observer.

Special procedures of musical psychology will have to be developed in order to fathom the achievements of this very special type of religious music.

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Carlebach, Neo-Hasidic Music and Liturgical Practice

By Sam Weiss

The 50th anniversary of the release of *Haneshomoh Loch*, the first record album by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, is an opportune time to assess his musical and liturgical legacy. According to rabbi and musicologist Jeffrey Summit, writing in the year 2000:

> From the 1960s onward, Hasidic and Neo-Hasidic music influenced synagogue and youth music in all the major branches of American Judaism as well as in Israel… Neo-Hasidism, as introduced in the work of Martin Buber and… later writers… together with the music of Shlomo Carlebach, influenced all of American Judaism's mainstream movements in the past thirty years in their institutional attempts to find relevance and meaning in Jewish worship and ritual.[1]

The present article is an attempt to appreciate the above statement principally as it applies to current Conservative liturgical practice, with some attention to that of other Jewish groups as well.

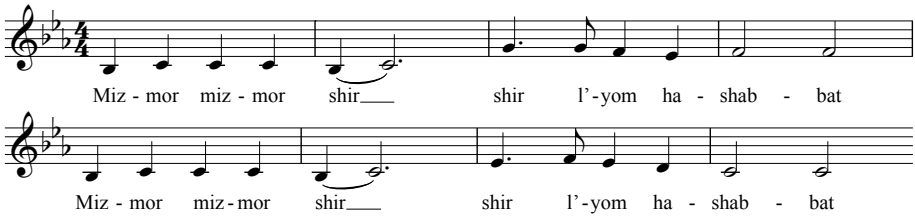
Biography

Shlomo Carlebach was born in Berlin in 1925; his father and forebears were Orthodox (non-Hasidic) rabbis. The family moved from Berlin to Baden, Austria, in 1930; they escaped from the Nazis in 1938 to Lithuania, and arrived in Brooklyn in 1939. There he continued his high school education and frequented the few Hasidic *shtiblekh* that were functioning in New York before WW II. A few years later, to the chagrin of his teachers in the Yeshiva of Lakewood, NJ, Carlebach took to composing and performing simple tunes to short Hebrew liturgical phrases in a style reminiscent of Hasidic singing. He was ordained as a rabbi and briefly held a pulpit, but he avoided the title, instead finding his calling among crowds of young people estranged from their Jewish heritage —to whom he was simply "Shlomo."

Through the early 1950s he taught his simple but infectious songs—along with his message of love, peace, self-respect, and spiritual connection—in cafes and on college campuses. At first he worked under official Lubavitcher auspices as the pioneering Chabad *shaliah* (envoy), but he soon found himself at odds with the *Rebbe*'s restrictions, so he charted an independent course that allowed him to get closer to his audiences and to place greater emphasis on his music-making, for which he learned to accompany himself on the guitar. He invented his own informal genre of co-ed (a novelty in Orthodox circles at

1 Jeffrey Summit, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land* (Oxford University Press), p. 95.

that time) social gatherings for young Jews of all persuasions, which he called a *Kumzitz* (Yiddish for "come-sit"). His was an independent course that lasted 30 years, during which time his Neo-Hasidic genre and its offshoots became the predominant form of Jewish vocal music worldwide. His songs quickly entered the public domain and from there the melodies were absorbed into synagogues (and even some churches) all over the world, often under the rubric of "traditional" (**Example 1.**).



Example 1. ***Mizmor Shir L'-Yom HaShabbat***—a Carlebach melody now considered to be "traditional."

In 1959 he produced the first of approximately 25 albums—not counting the many unauthorized recordings that were produced during and after his lifetime. In all, he recorded only a fraction of his compositions, estimated to total upwards of 1,000 (Carlebach himself was not sure of the number). In the early 1960s he sang in venues large and small throughout America, as well as in Jerusalem, London, Amsterdam, Paris, and Rome. His 1966 performance at the Berkeley Folk Festival was a landmark event that broadened Carlebach's conception of his musical mission; two years later he founded a synagogue and homeless shelter in San Francisco called The House of Love and Prayer. There, for a decade, the "Singing Rabbi" tended to the physical and spiritual needs of runaways, drug addicts, and sundry "Flower Children," even as he absorbed some of their dress, manner, and free spirit.

Concurrently with his California activities, in 1967 he inherited the joint leadership (with his twin brother Rabbi Eli Chaim Carlebach) of the New York congregation formerly served by his deceased father, and maintained an international musical ministry through his concert schedule. He performed wherever there were new hearts to touch: in communes, ashrams, synagogues, concert halls, prisons, and hospitals. In 1970 he visited Russia for the first time, uplifting oppressed Soviet Jews with one of his most famous songs, *Am Yisrael Hai*.[2] In 1976, a year before closing his San Francisco center, Carlebach brought several dozen of its members to a settlement near the

2 *Am Yisrael Hai* had been composed five years earlier for the Freedom for Soviet Jewry movement. The brief lyrics of this song were reputedly the first Hebrew words ever heard by Soviet dissident and, later, Israeli politician Natan Sharansky.

biblical city Modi'in (southeast of Tel-Aviv) where a new community of his disciples was eventually established. He maintained his international concert schedule right up to 1994, when he succumbed to a fatal heart attack on a plane enroute to a concert.

The lure of Carlebach's songs

Their rapid embrace can be explained in part by the musical and spiritual vacuum in the general Jewish population in the post-Holocaust years. More importantly however, the structure of the songs made them easily sung and remembered, and their logical melodic lines tapped into the folk styles of many different traditions, further advancing their global popularity. Western, Oriental, Sephardic, and Ashkenazic Jews as well as non-Jewish audiences found his gently rhythmic melodies strangely familiar upon first hearing. Many of Carlebach's songs lend themselves to endless repetition, and in concerts he and his audiences would sing them to the point of exhilaration or exhaustion. This might be preceded or followed by a bit of spiritual wisdom or an elaborate and moving Hasidic or personal story, and the pattern would repeat with the next song.

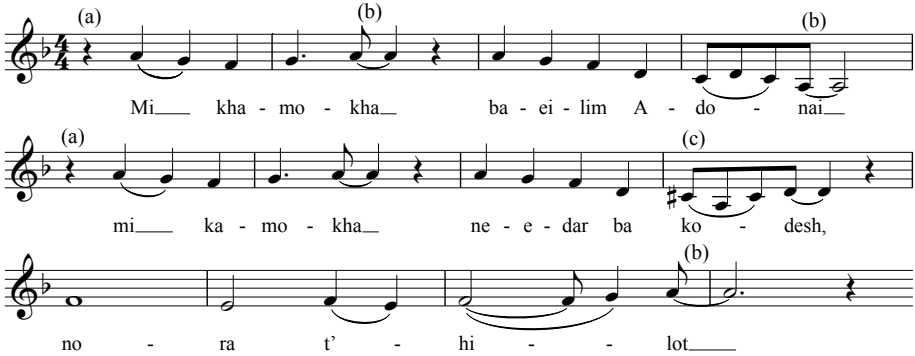
Carlebach's charismatic personality earned him an immense and devoted following throughout his career, as teenage fans later became adult disciples. After his death his influence grew exponentially. There is a worldwide fellowship that still sings his songs, retells his stories, and trades hagiographic tales about the noble ways of their "*rebbe*." There is also, among the many complex streams in today's "post-denominational Judaism," one which unselfconsciously calls itself "Carlebachian."[3]

While his spiritual and musical heirs can be found across the spectrum of Jewish society, the esteem—bordering on veneration—for Shlomo Carlebach's *niggunim* among Orthodox Jews beginning several years after his death is especially remarkable. Carlebach's controversial lifestyle caused him to be generally shunned by the Orthodox during his lifetime; but with the passing years those controversies faded, to be replaced with an understanding of Carlebach's legacy in outreach towards unaffiliated and disaffected Jews, and of his seminal role in popular Orthodox Jewish music via his early influences

3 Its members are defined by Frumster.com as "individuals who are Shabbat- and Kosher-observant and tend to embrace a more spiritual and relaxed observant lifestyle." The "hard-core" Carlebachians (such as those who emerged from the Modi'in community) will also sport identifiable clothing and hairstyles. The term Carlebachian is also sometimes applied to bands that emulate Carlebach's musical style, like "Reva l'Sheva," "Soulfarm," and "Moshav Band."

on such stars as The Rabbis' Sons, The Diaspora Yeshiva Band, Mordechai Ben David, and Avraham Fried.

Outside of Orthodoxy as well, Carlebach's historic musical and spiritual importance is incontestable. His Neo-Hasidic song style meshed with the styles of American folk groups like Peter, Paul, and Mary to inform Jewish songwriting across the entire Jewish religious spectrum, beginning with such 1970s artists as Debbie Friedman and Craig Taubman, and groups like Kol B'Seder and Safam. All of this popular Jewish songwriting, in turn, exerted a strong influence on the development of synagogue music to our day. Of course, one cannot easily tease apart the effects of Neo-Hasidic music from the effects of the general popular musical culture; nor is this exercise necessary, given the fact that the nature of Neo-Hasidic music itself has kept broadening and developing as it partook of general popular music (**Example 2.**).



Example 2. Debbie Friedman's ***Mi Khamokha.*** American folk/popular musical features that distinguish this genre from Carlebach's compositions include rests on initial downbeats (a), anticipations of downbeats (b), and raised leading tones (c).

One of the most striking aspects of Carlebach's liturgical legacy is the steadily growing international network of "Carlebach Minyanim" (at one time also called "Happy Minyanim") which are usually populated not by "Carlebachians" per se, but by Modern Orthodox Jews who are drawn to the musical and spiritual experience of a "singing service," particularly on *Erev Shabbat*. The hallmark of these prayer groups is a "wall of congregational song" punctuated by the occasional solo line from the *sh'liaḥ tsibbur*. The congregational singing, moreover, is based on a uniformly programmed selection of *niggunim* predominantly composed by Shlomo Carlebach, although this style and sequence are not attributable to him. The fervently participatory worship style of the Carlebach Minyanim has also strongly influenced the "Independent Minyan" movement, whose members mostly come from a

Conservative background. The success of the Carlebach Minyanim has also changed the character of the Friday night services in many mainstream Orthodox and Reform institutions, but it is among Conservative congregations where such change has been the strongest.

As the leadership in various Conservative synagogues longed to recreate the participatory spirit of an intimate Carlebach Minyan in the context of large sanctuaries that do not easily support it, they looked enviously to the mass participation in such popular Friday night services as in New York City's nominally Conservative Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. Key to its successful participation was the the playing of musical instruments on the Bimah combined with the "constant flow of *niggunim*" mode, helping to transform a uniformly programmed selection of congregational singing into a program of synagogal concert sets. B'nai Jeshurun served as a model for many East Coast Conservative congregations in this endeavor, which also crystallized on the West Coast as the "Friday Night Live" and "One Shabbat Morning" series of services developed by Craig Taubman. But significant as the Carlebach Minyanim may have been in the development of today's worship styles, to focus unduly on this relatively recent trend would be to miss many of the underlying fundamental influences of Neo-Hasidic music on our liturgical practice.

The term Neo-Hasidic

The citation from Jeffrey Summit's book that was quoted above—a passing observation that is not really fleshed out in his work—is refreshing for its forthright use of the term Neo-Hasidic music without gratuitous quotation marks or disparaging qualifiers.[4] The term Neo-Hasidic was first used in reference to the early 20th Century philosophy and revivalist religious teachings that followed from the writings of Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. The label was later borrowed to describe what was to become the most prevalent form of Jewish song in the last 50 years; as such, "Neo-Hasidic music" has flustered many a scholar of contemporary Jewish music. Euphemisms for the genre range from the neutral "Hasidic-style" to the tepid "ostensibly Hasidic"[5] to the rather hostile "faux-Hasidic" and "faux Shtetilism."[6]

Why this hesitant if not unsympathetic attitude towards the notion of Neo-Hasidic music? One reason is the fact that with the exception of Carlebach

4 Quotation marks for clarity cannot be avoided, as in the present discussion.

5 Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 2003: 141.

6 Michael Isaacson, *Jewish Music as Midrash: What Makes Music Jewish?* (Encino, CA: Self-published), 2007: 245.

himself, Neo-Hasidic singers, musicians and audiences until well into the 1980s evinced little meaningful relation to the philosophical movement of Neo-Hasidism which preceded it by two generations. The term Neo-Hasidic music, therefore, may have an air of pretentiousness that some find objectionable. Admittedly, the early consumers of Carlebach's *niggunim* were not necessarily connected to neo-Hasidism as a religious philosophy. In this century, however, the spiritual intensity often associated with Neo-Hasidic singing in liturgical or para-liturgical settings among non-Orthodox Jews truly converts such music into a primary component of a rediscovered Jewish populism and a re-attachment to Jewish prayer by a new class of devotees, i.e. a Neo-Hasidism. Many impartial writers and participants have described this type of singing as being the first time that they experienced "true prayer" or "true spirituality in prayer." Such singing constitutes a religious act that closely parallels the singing of contemporary Hasidic and Yeshivish populations for whom similar musico-religious experiences are elemental, with nothing "neo" about them.

Another reason for the uneasiness is the role played by this genre in contemporary liturgical practice. It is a role that engenders resistance, if not anxiety, among certain theoreticians, composers and practitioners of liturgical music struggling to integrate the new popular-based synagogue song within the old paradigms of *Nusah Ha-T'fillah*. Cantors who have still not completely come to terms with the effects of the "Camp Ramah phenomenon" on the character of our worship services will understandably be confounded by the nature and popularity of services built upon one song following another. Boaz Tarsi, an important scholar of synagogal modes and liturgical music, makes no attempt to hide his frustration and antipathy towards the "phenomenon of creeping Hasidism" in the synagogue,[7] whose primary contribution has been the "flattening and discombobulation" of the Ashkenazic synagogue's modal framework, and whose "pseudo-Hasidic" songs have caused the "loss of directivity" and even "complete disintegration" of Jewish liturgical space.[8]

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7 Boaz Tarsi, "Congregational Singing as a Norm of Performance within the Modal Framework of Ashkenazi Liturgical Music," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Fall 2005, vol. 30: 82-92. In his zeal to identify the roots of such "creeping Hasidism," Tarsi supposedly traces its effects all the way back to the *ai-ai-ai* vocables traditionally inserted by Ashkenazic hazzanim in the High Holy Day *Ashamnu* confessional and the *dukhenen niggunim* sung during the *Birkhat Kohanim* ritual. In this he mistakenly confuses the genre of hazzanic *niggunim* with that of Hasidic *niggunim*. Cf. Eric Werner, *A Voice Still Heard* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 1976: 173.

8 Tarsi reserves his strongest condemnation for the Carlebach Minyanim, of

Yet another source of misunderstanding regarding Neo-Hasidic music is the appellation itself, which sounds like it refers to something that has supplanted an earlier period of simply "Hasidic" music—on the model of such genres as Neo-Klezmer music and Neo-Classical (or neoclassical) music. Since music-making among today's Hasidim has obviously not come to an end, this terminology can indeed be troubling.

Neo-Hasidic music

What, then, do we mean here by this term? In the absence of a watertight musicological description, our working definition will embrace all of the following:

(a) settings of short biblical or liturgical texts (in any language) to simple melodies sung (and often composed) by Jews who do not formally identify with any Hasidic group;

(b) these melodies or similar inspirational tunes sung to vocables with or without occasional words;

(c) any worship music or para-liturgical music intended to invoke the mood or spirit of the songs described in (a) or (b).

Part (c) above underscores the fact that Neo-Hasidic songs—despite their liturgical texts—were once normally sung only in non-worship environments.[9] Nevertheless, even in a concert or other secular surroundings there was always a palpable religious undercurrent to this music. Then with each passing year more and more of the songs found new audiences in synagogues as these liturgical texts, now clothed in popular melodies, made their way to the lips of congregants who heretofore might never have uttered them. Thus one of the greatest impacts that Shlomo Carlebach and the ensuing culture of Neo-Hasidic singing had on Jewish music was to minimize the functional distinction between popular music and religious music. This is particularly relevant to the experience of Conservative Jews, whose exposure to Neo-Hasidic music is predominantly in a liturgical or para-liturgical environment.

Part (a) points out that the prefix "Neo-" for this musical genre may in fact be misleading. Unlike Neo-Klezmer and Neo-Classical, which imply a revival of an outdated genre, Neo-Hasidic music has not replaced Hasidic music, but has grown alongside and even influenced the music of Hasidim. As in the political designation Neo-Conservative, Neo-Hasidic music suggests a

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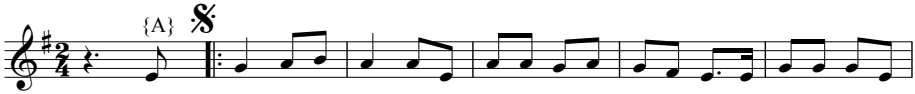
which he writes: "…the disintegration of the musical structure in essence renders this kind of service an apostasizing from the liturgy itself." op. cit., p.91, n. 48.

9 This is equally true of Hasidic songs. See Weiss, "Congregational Singing In Hasidic Congregations," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Fall 2005, vol. 30: 96-101.

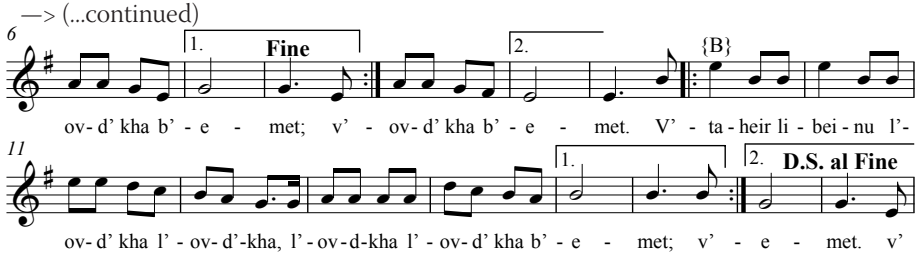
change in characteristics, constituency, and development in relation to Hasidic music. Let us now examine some characteristics of Neo-Hasidic music as exemplified by Shlomo Carlebach's songs, and compare them to Hasidic music. If we scrutinize part (a) we might assume that by deleting the word "not" from the phrase "not formally identify with any Hasidic group" we will arrive at a good definition of Hasidic music. While this assumption is fairly common (and reasonably inferred from the name "Neo-Hasidic"), it is in fact only a back-formation that misrepresents the bulk of Hasidic music before Shlomo Carlebach's era. Simple settings of short liturgical texts are but a minor category in classical Hasidic song; they are more characteristic of the genre known as Yeshiva songs. "Yeshiva" refers here to the actual study hall environment, and more generally to the Orthodox non-Hasidic population.

The traditional Hasidic *niggun* is without texts. Where texts do occur, they are often incidental (becoming attached to a pre-existing *niggun*) and/or variable over the life of the *niggun*. The typical text in such *niggunim* will be of considerable length. Examples are complete *piyyutim* like *L'kha Dodi* and *Eil Adon* on Shabbat or *V'-Ye'etayu Kol L'-Ovdekha* on the High Holidays, any of the z*'mirot* for the Shabbat table, complete psalms like *Shir HaMa'alot* or *Mizmor L'-David*, or full liturgical paragraphs like *Atah V'hartanu* or *Atah Ehad V'-Shimkha Ehad*.[10] The distinction between the shorter texts in a Yeshiva song or a Neo-Hasidic song and the longer texts in a Hasidic song is not inconsequential. It underscores an important melodic advantage of the latter compared to the former, i.e. an arc of logical musical progression and development that provides a fuller emotional experience upon first hearing. In a liturgical or para-liturgical context, this stronger sense of development will translate into a more powerful spiritual experience. In the following two examples, compare the musical effect of the phrase *V'-Taheir Libeinu L'-Ovd'kha Be-Emet* in the shorter "Yeshiva" A-B version (**Example 3.**) which has survived and flourished well into the Neo-Hasidic era, with the more authentically Hasidic A-B-C-B version (**Example 4.**) in which these four words are prefaced by section A, considered in section B, expanded upon in section C, and then reconsidered in section B.

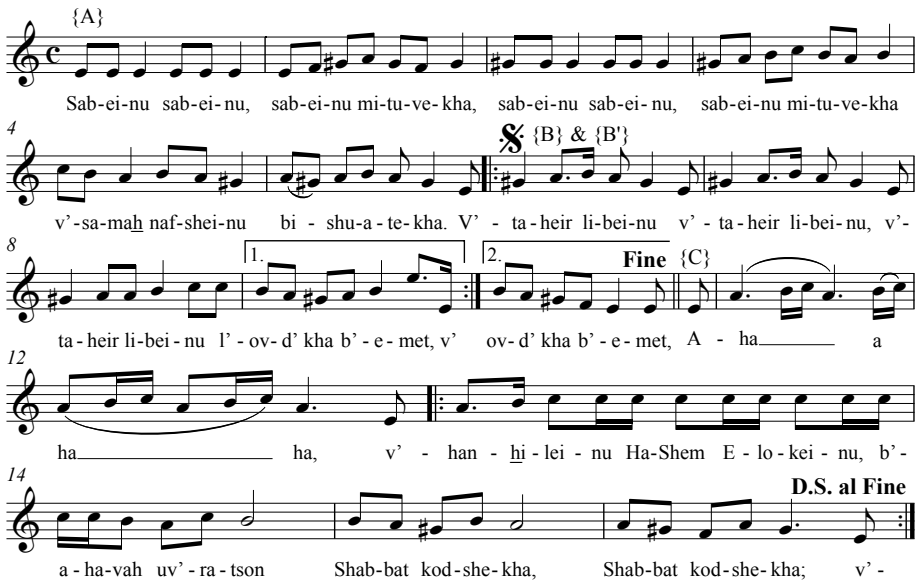


(continued...)—>

10 The last two examples will usually find their way into—and derive further longevity from—the *z'mirot* for Festivals and Third Shabbat Meal, respectively.



Example 3. The phrase *V'-Taheir Libeinu* in a shorter **A-B "Yeshiva" song.**



Example 4. The phrase *Sab'einu…V'-Taheir Libeinu* in an authentically **Hasidic A-B-C-B song.**

I emphasized "upon first hearing" in the previous paragraph because there are ways to simulate the fuller emotional/spiritual experience of a Hasidic *niggun* even with songs that lack its compositional features, and Neo-Hasidic music often avails itself of them. One of these ways is through many repetitions of a song, which, with a suitable state of mind, can yield increased intensity. Another method is by encouraging total audience participation, whereby the heft of massed voices compensates for the relative musical lightness of the song. Another way is to enhance the melody by involving the body, be it through grimacing, fist-clenching, handholding, swaying, clapping, stamping, or dancing. Thus Hasidim typically reserve *niggunim* of the short A-B format for their *rikkud* (dance) repertoire, as illustrated by the "endless loop" that one associates with Example 3.

The Carlebachian touch

Yet another means of eliciting a stronger emotional response from a simple song is via the "setup," a contextual subtext that underpins and lends meaning to the singing.[11] The undisputed master of setting up a song and extracting all the emotion that it could yield was Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. His introductory personal anecdotes and Hasidic stories uniquely synthesized the two most powerful devices in Hasidic culture, the *maiseh* (tale) and the *niggun.* He spoke his *maiselekh* in a bardic semi-chant, and used his *niggunim* to frame cantorial chants within the accepted *nusah* for that particular prayer text.

Besides integrating the simplicity of the short liturgical Yeshiva song with the deeper emotional involvement of the Hasidic genre, Carlebach's songs and concert presentations used synthesis in other ways: While we often associate Carlebach songs with Hasidic-style vocables like *lai-lai-lai*, actually very few of his songs are wordless *niggunim* per se. Instead of distinguishing between songs with texts and those without, any Carlebach song was a candidate for temporary or extended conversion into a *niggun* at the appropriate moment. Similarly—albeit with many examples of clearly devotional or dance songs—the two categories of "slow song" and "fast song" tended to fuse into one song-type that was subject to slowing down or speeding up in order to generate moods of introspection, excitement, or something in between.

By all of the aforementioned means, Shlomo Carlebach and his followers transformed a simple song into a vehicle of rich emotion, and the very act of group singing into a communal religious experience. It was a small step, then, for such vehicles and experiences to find a home one day in the synagogues of America and beyond. Borrowing popular melodies for use in the sanctuary has a long and broad history, and in this respect there would be nothing remarkable in using a Shlomo Carlebach or Debbie Friedman tune in a service. But the effects of Neo-Hasidic music on the synagogue were more pervasive than what had come before, as we shall see below. For now, we'll briefly survey the development of this music after and alongside Carlebach.

A group of Yeshiva students calling themselves The Rabbis' Sons played an important role in expanding the genre by consciously grafting the American folk-music idiom onto Carlebach's Neo-Hasidic model. This was accomplished in part through fresh melodic and harmonic ideas, but primarily through a vigorous emphasis on guitars as rhythm instruments. Their first recording was released shortly after Israel's Six-Day War victory in 1967, and pride in that

11 This is why, for example, even a ditty like "Happy Birthday" suddenly gains deep meaning when sung to one's one-year-old child or ninety-year-old father.

victory helped propel this hybrid "new traditional sound"—with its Hebrew lyrics and contemporary folk feel—to audiences who might otherwise have felt estranged from that musical culture. This included adults meeting for worship in the newly popular *Ḥavurot* (small, independent prayer groups), and youngsters inspired by this music in Conservative and Reform youth groups and summer camps.

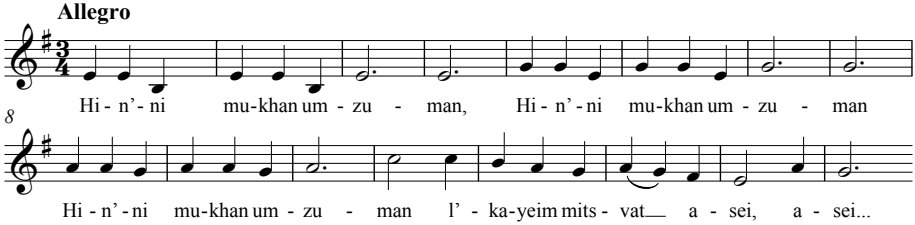
The 1970s also brought Neo-Ḥasidic music to American audiences from the State of Israel. The trajectory from Ḥasidic to Neo-Ḥasidic music in Israel was different from the American route embodied in Carlebach's early career. The Ḥasidic songs and stories on the hit soundtrack album of the 1968 Tel Aviv musical show *Ish Ḥasid Hayah* ("There Was Once a Ḥasid") sparked a national interest in things Ḥasidic, and within one year an annual "Chassidic Song Festival" had been established. The selections in the festivals were, of course, Neo-Ḥasidic rather than Ḥasidic, including Carlebach compositions like *V'-Ha'eir Eineinu* and *Od YiShama*.

During the same period in the United States, the Neo-Ḥasidic rhythm section took on even greater importance among the 1970s "Simcha bands" like Ruach Revival, The Messengers, and Neginah Orchestra, groups whose Neo-Ḥasidic repertoire reached new audiences in the form of wedding and bar-mitzvah entertainment as well as recordings and concerts. Slowly but surely, songs with a strong beat were becoming the most palatable form of Hebrew singing among ever-expanding Jewish audiences. As up-tempo liturgical songs like *V'ha'eir Eineinu* and *Oseh Shalom* passed from the dance floor and concert stage into the synagogue service, they naturally slowed down to a more dignified tempo. At the same time they lost some favor in the Neo-Ḥasidic (or "Ḥasidic") entertainment industry, and were supplanted by a newer breed of instrumentally heavy songs variously dubbed Ḥasidic pop, Ḥasidic rock, or Ortho-pop. Meanwhile, the earlier Carlebachian folk-flavored Neo-Ḥasidic music—whether as entertainment or worship—blossomed and grew in new directions among the more liberal segments of Judaism.

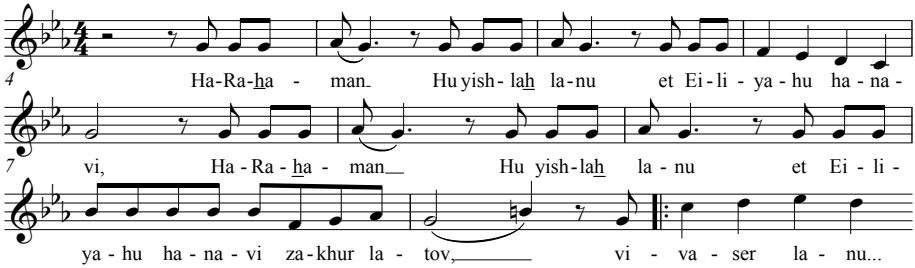
The proliferation of Neo-Ḥasidic songs

Understandably, the songs that gained the most widespread liturgical use were those that invited direct incorporation of both text and tune. This is perhaps best exemplified by the near-universal singing of the passage *HaRaḥaman Hu yishlaḥ lanu et Eiliyahu HaNavi…* ("May the Merciful One send us Elijah the prophet, harbinger of good tidings"; **Example 5b.**) in *Birkat HaMazon* to the popular song composed by Haim Kirsch. This Neo-Ḥasidic interlude is often nicely bracketed by a Ḥasidic prelude to *Birkat HaMazon* in waltz

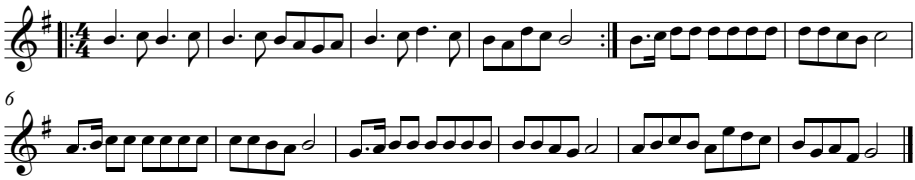
time: *Hin'ni Mukhan U-M'zuman…* ("I stand prepared and ready to perform the commandment of reciting Grace after Meals"; **Example 5a.**), and a table-thumping Hasidic postlude at the final paragraph *Yir'u Et Adonai K'doshav…* ("Fear Adonai, God's holy ones"). As befits this authentic *tish* ("table") *niggun*, it tends to be sung with gusto on vocables after the text runs out at *…et amo va-shalom* ("...may God bless His people with peace"; **Example 5c.**). While on the subject of food and songs, it is worth noting that short Neo-Hasidic songs supplement—if not edge out completely—the traditional corpus of *z'mirot* at many communal Shabbat tables.



Example 5a. Hasidic prelude to *Birkat Hamazon*—***Hin'ni Mukhan***.



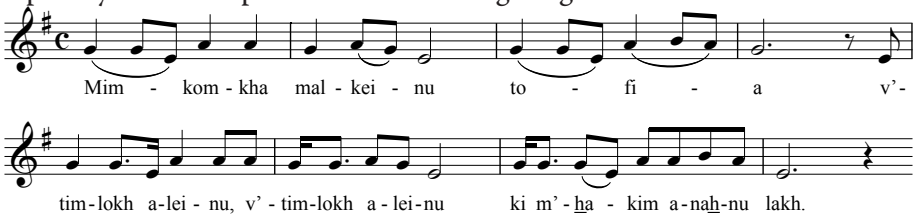
Example 5b. Neo-Hasidic interlude within *Birkat Hamazon*—***HaRahaman*** .



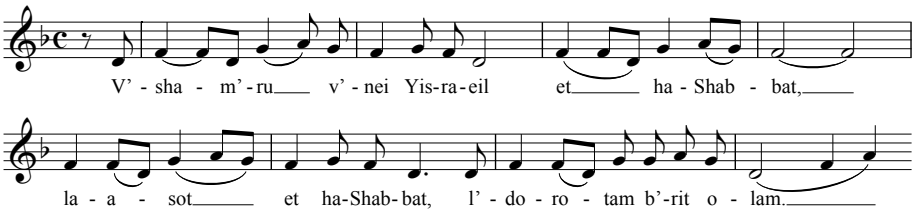
Example 5c. Hasidic *niggun* as postlude to *Birkat Hamazon*—(following ... *et amo va-shalom;* Haim Kirsch, composer).

In Conservative synagogue practice there are many examples of such easily assimilated songs: the aforementioned *Oseh Shalom* by Nurit Hirsh and *V'ha'eir Eineinu* by Shlomo Carlebach, the latter's *Hallel* settings of *Yisrael B'tah Bashem* and *Pit'hu Li*, as well as his *Mizmor Shir L'yom Hashabbat* and *Ein Keiloheinu*. Sometimes a melody of this type doesn't fare well in its original

liturgical location but finds a new home when shifted to another *t'fillah*, as in the case of Carlebach's soulful *Mimkom'kha Malkeinu* tune for Shabbat morning (*Songbook*, 1980: **Example 6a.**), which is heard more often on Friday nights at *V'-Shamru* (common practice; **Example 6b.**). Ad lib contrafacts of popular melodies for short passages or complete *piyyutim* like *L'kha Dodi* or *Eil Adon* constitute another category of modern synagogue music. Finally, the many new liturgical settings in Neo-Hasidic style which are composed expressly for worship round out this liturgical genre.



Example 6a. Carlebach's ***Mimkom'kha Malkeinu*** for Shabbat morning.



Example 6b. Carlebach's ***Mimkom'kha*** melody applied to Friday night ***V'shamru***.

All these types of liturgical borrowing from popular song may seem no different from long-standing synagogal practice. After all, hazzanim have always utilized tunes that might be familiar to the congregation from another context and, more to the point, have imported *niggunim* when matching texts seemed to call for it (often from the category designated above as "Yeshiva" songs, e.g. *V'-Kareiv P'zureinu*, *V'Tehezenah Eineinu*, *V'-Taheir Libeinu*). Nor is there anything new about including an occasional metrical strain within a chanted passage. In reality, however, the last two generations of Neo-Hasidic influence on the synagogue have significantly altered the liturgical soundscape and the worship experience of many Conservative congregations. To be sure, not all congregations are alike, and these influences occurred in synergy with other cultural, liturgical, and general musical trends; nevertheless, the quantitative and qualitative marks left by Shlomo Carlebach's legacy are manifest.

Quantitatively, the proliferation of short, rhythmic, easily sung tunes in Conservative and Reform congregations over the last forty years is analogous to the steady rise in congregational singing among many New York Orthodox

congregations beginning in 1912. In that year the nascent Young Israel movement sought to democratize the prayer service by moderating the role of the cantor and increasing the role of the congregation. As its name implies, the major goal of Young Israel was to attract younger Jews to the synagogue by making them feel like it was "their" service.[12]

While the goal of increasing synagogue attendance is a present-day concern as well, the exponential increase in congregational singing in our own times has been driven by additional forces which include a general disengagement from the traditional prayer experience even among those who do attend services, a resistance towards looking into a Siddur in favor of singing a few memorized words at a time, and a redefining of what it means to "participate" in a prayer service. The classic distinction (even if subjective and unspoken) between a "real" (i.e., statutory) *t'fillah* and a sung metrical *piyyut* has been turned on its head: In the minds of many congregants the "real prayers" are the ones they hear each other sing; everything else disappears into a mystical void comprehended only by the ḥazzan.

The impact of Neo-Hasidic songs upon the ḥazzan

Whereas in an earlier era a ḥazzan might introduce a tune to fill a gap in the ongoing *nusaḥ* or to break the monotony of a longer passage, today the liturgical fate of a text may depend entirely on the availability of a Neo-Ḥasidic or other familiar tune to differentiate it from a neighboring text. In many *Kabbalat Shabbat* services only the sung verses *L'khu N'-Ran'nah… Yism'ḥu HaShamayim…* and *Or Zaru'a…* (and perhaps *Rom'mu Adonai…*) survive from the five psalms (95-99, 29) preceding *Mizmor L'-David*; large swaths of the Shabbat morning *P'sukei D'-Zimra* before and after "*Mi ha'-ish he-ḥafeits ḥayyim…*" (Ps. 34: 13-15, popularized by a Rabbis' Sons melody) fall into silence; and the softly sung *Oseh Shalom Bimromav…* may be all that registers from the Amidah after *L'-Dor vador* in this age of the *Hoykhe Kedushah* (*Avot* through *Kedushah* recited "aloud"—generally by congregation in unison with the ḥazzan—the remainder of the Amidah read silently, with no repetition by the ḥazzan).[13]

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12 See Macy Nulman, "The Role of Liturgical Music in the Young Israel Movement" in *Concepts of Jewish Music and Prayer* (New York: Cantorial Council of America at Yeshiva University), 1985: 91-92.

13 Via a process of "niggunic osmosis" certain texts with no melodic particularity of their own are fortunate enough to survive by taking on the melody of a famous neighboring text. Thus in Psalm 118 of the Hallel, the commonly sung fifth verse *Min hameitsar karati Yah…* ("From the depths I call upon God") or Carlebach's setting of Verse 19, *Pit'ḥu li…*("Open for me the gates of righteousness") may lend its melody

Instead of a simple moderation of the cantor's role, as occurred in the early part of the twentieth century, recent generations have seen a radical transformation of the cantor's principal musical function—from liturgical soloist to liturgical song leader. As such, the cantor more literally "leads" the congregation in prayer, inspiring them perhaps by some of the devices mentioned earlier for eliciting emotion from a simple song. The interchangeability between the concepts of "song" and "prayer" in this context is an important ingredient in the transformation: it corresponds to a confusion between these two terms long heard from the mouths of b'nai mitzvah students (who refer to all the prayers they are learning as "songs") and quite a few adult worshipers as well. Needless to say, liturgical musical awareness and understanding of such terms as *nusaḥ*, chant, *niggun*, recitative, and cantillation have long fallen by the wayside—everything that emanates from the cantor's mouth is a "tune."

Key to the inspiration that is expected from the modern cantor is the spiritual uplift that each worshiper feels from being bound in the same "song" with fellow worshipers. The performative value of the ḥazzan's office has not diminished; it is only weighted more towards selecting, leading, modulating and perhaps composing the congregational singing. As the medieval European *payy'tan-ḥazzan* was influenced by the culture of the German minnesingers and French *trouvères*,[14] today's ḥazzan is his counterpart of sorts who, instead of authoring new hymns, reaches out to his or her congregants by tune-smithing or tune-setting a liturgical passage here and there in the musical idiom favored by the congregation. With fewer and fewer congregants paying attention to the printed page at all, the total reliance on a ḥazzan for the prayer texts certainly recalls earlier epochs; and the analogy to a minnesinger or *trouvère* is even more pertinent in cases where the cantor is accompanied by one or more musical instruments.

There is a palpable connection between this turn of events and the Neo-Ḥasidic musical culture—beyond the fact that many popular song leaders temporarily adopt a cantorial role "on demand" or eventually transition into that vocation. A Neo-Ḥasidic concert is typically an "outreach" event; the performer teaches the sacred words and their melody—interlacing them with commentary and perhaps English lyrics—and inspires the audience with the message of the song. Here too, even more inspirational than the singer is the wave of group singing that carries the audience. Shlomo Car-

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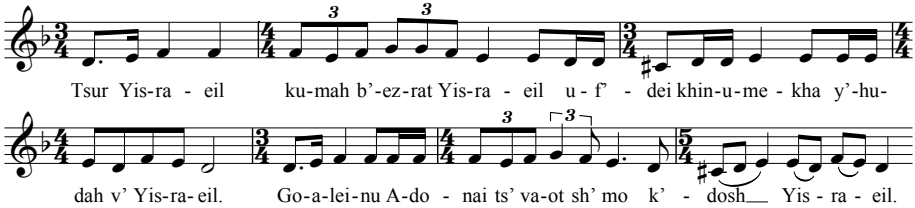
to one or two subsequent verses, or either of these melodies might reappear in the responsively sung *Ana adonai hoshi'a na…* ("Save us, Adonai").

14 Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 35; p. 291, note 18.

lebach, the progenitor of this kind of spiritual musical performance, was a rabbi. Unsurprisingly, among today's Neo-Hasidic recording artists there are many cantors and rabbis; and in synagogues as well, it is not only cantors but rabbis who lead their congregations in singing. This leads to the following Neo-Hasidic musical equation: Jewish musical entertainment = religious inspiration = liturgical music = Jewish musical entertainment. Viewed from this perspective of musical spirituality, we have yet another model for the modern cantorate—the hazzan as a "Neo-Hasidic musical *rebbe*."

Qualitative features of Shlomo Carlebach's liturgical legacy

When compared to the "Young Israel legacy" of congregational singing, the Neo-Hasidic musical corpus clearly reflects its Hasidic heritage in that it is decidedly melogenic, i.e. its melodies "have a life of their own" in relation to the words that are being sung. Carlebach said of his own songs that "the melodies came to him first, and only then did he scan the prayer book or the Bible to find the words to fit them."[15] In the older metrical settings of the liturgy, by contrast, the melodies are derived from the cadence of the words and—like the *nusah* of plain *davenen*—the melodic lines will "breathe" along with the text. Some of these settings (like the cantillated *V'-Ahavta* or the uniform *Avot* chanted by the congregation) are little more than "*nusah* in unison," while many others may be metrical or only quasi-metrical stylizations of *nusah* (A.W. Binder; **Example 7.**).



Example 7. ***Tsur Yisrael*—**a quasi-metrical stylization of *nusah*.

According to an extensive study of the American cantorate in the 1980s conducted by Mark Slobin for his book *Chosen Voices*, the most standardized congregational melody reported at that time was the anonymous early 20th-century setting of *Tsur Yisrael*. Slobin transcribed six of the many variations of this "standard" melody, none of which is notated metrically.[16] Example 7

15 Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," *American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 101, 2001: 100.

16 Mark Slobin, *Chosen Voices* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 1988: 201-206. Slobin notes that some attribute the tune to cantor and composer Zeidel Rovner (1886-1943).

is based on the notation of *Tsur Yisrael* in *Zamru Lo: The Next Generation*, a 2004 compendium of congregational melodies.[17] In spite of the bar lines, the seeming metricality is belied by the constant shifting between triple and duple time signatures. These signatures are omitted in *Zamru Lo* but are included in our notation. The many different versions of a single prayer contained in *Zamru Lo* makes this a very useful reference book; in the examples below we refer the reader to the page numbers in that volume.

A quintessential Neo-Hasidic composer for the synagogue is Sol Zim. Atypically among Neo-Hasidic performing artists who are also prolific composers, Zim's settings are primarily conceived for the synagogue even if they may migrate to the concert stage. His syncopated setting of *Magen Avot* which appears on p. 112 of *Zamru Lo* is complete with neo-Hasidic vocables that are integrated into the composition. The Goldfarb and Lewandowski versions of *Magen Avot* that appear on pp. 109-110 exemplify the older *nusah*-based style of congregational melodies; their free-flowing character would be clearer if the notation reflected the fermatas and tenutos that are heard in actual performances.[18] The setting arranged by Lawrence Avery (p. 106) recalls the classic Hasidic genre of the *d'veykus* ("meditative") *niggun*. As in the *nusah*-based genre, to properly perform a *d'veykus niggun* an occasional fermata or ritardando is in order. Occupying a middle ground between the latter variety and the energetic setting by Sol Zim is a gentler Neo-Hasidic composition by Gerald Cohen (p. 107).[19]

A comparison of the time signatures in these five *Magen Avot* selections brings us to the next distinctive feature of the Neo-Hasidic musical genre: it favors melodies in duple or quadruple meter, often in a bright tempo, as represented by the Zim and Cohen settings—in contrast to the three melodies

17 Jeffrey Shiovitz, ed., *Zamru Lo: The Next Generation* (New York: Cantors Assembly), p. 166. As a testament to the remarkable entrenchment of this tune, Shiovitz's monumental collection of Shabbat melodies offers only one alternative setting of this prayer, a more recent composition by Gerald Cohen that is clearly strophic and melogenic (p. 169).

18 The close affinity of these melodies to *nusah* is highlighted by the practice in many congregations (especially Orthodox) that use either of these two settings: the hazzan repeats the entire *Magen Avot* prayer as a solo, chanting it exactly as was sung by the congregation.

19 Rounding out the *Magen Avot* settings in *Zamru Lo* is the one by Robert Solomon (p. 111). Although it shares some of the harmonic language of Neo-Hasidic music, its intricate melody sets it apart from that congregational genre, and makes it more suitable for solo performance.

in an older style which are in triple meter.[20] Perusing the 21 versions of *L'kha Dodi* included in *Zamru Lo* yields similar results. Only six of these melodies are notated in 3/4. One is a traditional *niggun* of the Breslover Hasidim (p. 22), two are by Lewandowski (p. 29) and Sulzer (pp. 25, 34) and three are venerable *MisSinai* melodies used as seasonal motifs (p. 35).

Of the remaining 18, three are Neo-Hasidic tunes notated in 6/8, all of which retain the flavor of the Hasidic waltz genre in 3/4 time, on which they are modeled (pp. 21, 32, 39). Illustrative of the allegiance to a traditional sound inherent in the latter song-type[21] is the fact that among the earliest Neo-Hasidic tunes broadly adopted for worship by Orthodox congregations was Nachum Portnoy's gentle waltz *Eits Hayyim Hee* ("It is a Tree of Life"; p. 300).[22] In fact, the first modern Hasidic "hit" (which has also thrived as a Neo-Hasidic "crossover hit") is the setting in triple time of Psalm 23 by Ben-Zion Shenker,[23] which was recorded three years before Carlebach's *Haneshomoh Loch* album (**Example 8.**).

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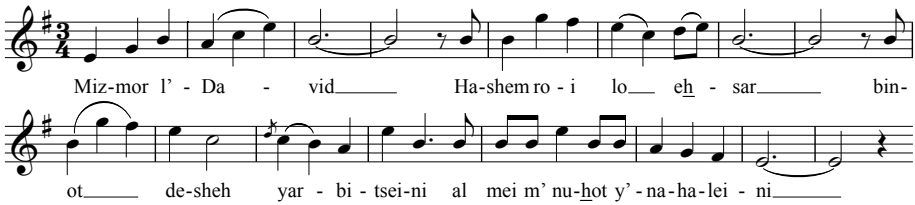
20 The decision to notate the Goldfarb version in 12/8 does not take away from the four triple pulses felt in each measure.

21 A Neo-Hasidic liturgical innovation of many Orthodox congregations was to adopt the Hasidic custom of singing *Y'did Nefesh* prior to Kabbalat Shabbat. (Some Conservative congregations eventually followed suit, though they rarely sing the complete *piyyut*.) The practice is interesting—and remains controversial—considering that changes to the Orthodox liturgy are not made lightly. The appeal of the melody (*Zamru Lo,* p. 10) undoubtedly facilitated this innovation. This melody, moreover, has been adjusted over time from the notated version in 2/4 time to the Hasidic prototype in 3/4 time (Ehud and Sarah Zweig, *Zamru Lo II*, vol. 1: 12).

22 There is a group of Neo-Hasidic songs in slow quadruple time that is related to the Hasidic genre in 3/4 time via the "long-short-short" rhythmic pulse they have in common. The *d'veykus* feel of these melodies is illustrated by Carlebach's *Mimkom'kha Malkeinu* (Example 6). In fact, *Zamru Lo* (p. 86) contains the version of *V'shamru* that is based on this *Mimkomkha* with a 3/4 time signature!

23 A high-school classmate of Shlomo Carlebach, Ben-Zion Shenker (b. 1925) was a fellow aficionado of the music of the Modzitzer Hasidim, one of a handful of such groups who had established a small presence in America before the great migrations following the Holocaust. Shenker's 1956 10" LP *Modzitzer Melave Malka* was the first commercial recording of Hasidic niggunim. Shenker and Carlebach were the two trailblazers whose example was followed by countless subsequent American Hasidic and Neo-Hasidic recording artists.



Example 8. Ben-Zion Shenker's ***Mizmor l'David—***the first modern Hasidic "hit" and Neo-Hasidic "crossover hit"—predating Shlomo Carlebach's initial album by three years.

For a perspective on the effect that the "Neo-Hasidic lively 4" metrical shift has had on the synagogue soundscape, consider that in the classic cantorial recitative literature a change from non-metrical chant to metrical singing is almost always indicated by the appearance of a 3/4 time signature. We need only cite three iconic liturgical songs that belong to the Ashkenazic folk musical patrimony—*Eliyahu Hanavi*, the last stanza of *Avinu Malkeinu* and Sulzer's *Sh'ma Yisrael*—all of which are in triple meter.[24]

While there exist many older congregational melodies in duple meter, they tend to be in a slower tempo, e.g. Dunajewski's *Av HaRahamim* (*Zamru Lo*, p. 269), Rovner's *Bei Ana Raheits* (p. 272), and Sulzer's *Eits Hayyim* (p. 302). Alternatively, a brighter duple melody may suggest a stately march, as in the settings of *L'kha Adonai* (pp. 274-275). Among the traditional melodies of the *Hotsa'at HaTorah* service (pp. 268-275) 4/4 and 3/4 live in close proximity; yet there is a perceptible "congregational lift" that takes place when the meter in these stately strains changes to triple time at *Ki-Mitziyon*. For the reverse effect, listen to the universally sung *Aleinu* as it shifts from the opening section in three to the *Shehu Noteh Shamayim* section in four: A bit of musical grace departs from the prayer even for those who are not reminded by it of *The Teensy Weensy Spider* (*Fireside Song Book of Birds and Beasts*, 1972).

Lasting effects of Neo-Hasidic songs on the way we worship

Perhaps a change in emphasis from musical "grace" to musical "*ru'ah*" in and out of the synagogue is a way of encapsulating the gradual transformations wrought by Neo-Hasidic music. Every Jewish community and religious denomination has been enriched and enlivened in manifold ways by the spirit of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. Reform worshipers have more Hebrew on their lips and in their Siddurim than ever before; Hasidic children are excitedly in touch with the ins and outs of favorite recording artists on their MP3 players; Jewish Renewal devotees chant Breslover Hasidic *niggunim* with greater

24 One way of measuring the musical health of an Ashkenazic congregation—to see if it still has a Jewish musical pulse, as it were—is by whether these three songs come readily to their lips.

kavvanah than do many Breslover Hasidim; Orthodox shuls resound with lusty harmonies as each singer imagines himself to be a member of the latest a cappella group; Conservative congregations transform their Friday night services into Friday night concerts and each additional congregant who enters the sanctuary is celebrated and counted with the assiduousness of a gigging musician whose livelihood depends on a percentage of the gate.

It is worth reflecting on the merits of this transformation from the point of view of liturgical musical structure and history. There was a time when synagogue musical traditions constituted the lodestone for those actively involved in Jewish liturgical music. Today's mental reference points are popular Jewish music discographies and concert schedules. Jewish liturgical moments are no longer dependent on clergy nor are they confined to the synagogue; they may happen wherever two or more Jews who can carry a Hebrew tune are gathered, be it at a baby-naming, a Havdalah gathering, a wedding, a Shabbat meal, a study group, a camp reunion, etc.

This sense of open boundaries and personal enthusiasm carries over into contemporary synagogue experiences as well, and it behooves us as synagogue musicians to comprehend its ramifications. To take the example of a genuine Carlebach Minyan: Somewhere in between the hagiography of Carlebachians and the worried deprecation of Boaz Tarsi—who sees in such a Minyan nothing more than the destruction of the Ashkenazic synagogue's modal framework—lies a better understanding and accommodation that will necessitate rethinking and stretching that framework. For instance, we might modify the notion of "*MiSinai* melodies" (*Niggunei MiSinai*; "tunes from Mount Sinai") supposedly handed down by God to Moses along with the other 613 commandments. Actually a family of related motifs—originally limited to Bible cantillation—that date back to 11th-and-12th century Jewish Rhineland communities in Northeast France and Southwest Germany, in ever-varying combinations they have been a feature of Ashkenazic synagogue practice ever since, appearing throughout the liturgical year but most extensively during High Holiday services.[25] Now, well into the Neo-Hasidic era, we can broaden the term *MiSinai* to include any iconic tune to which a congregation has formed an emotional attachment and an expectation that it be sung. The ebb and flow of spiritual and musical energy at a *rebbe's tish* or other Hasidic gathering contain powerful liturgical forces that have little in common with the East-European cantorial traditions—but are obviously at work in a Carlebach Minyan.

25 Joseph A. Levine, *Synagogue Song in America* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Publishers, Inc.), 2001: 44-46.

As implied earlier, moreover, the route to understanding the aesthetics of today's synagogue experience may lie in the aesthetics of a concert program—and the time may have come for a new liturgical modal framework that combines the synagogue and concert stage models. Perhaps today's global fluidity of Jewish communities is a signal for us to cut the Ashkenazic cord and form broader musical connections. In the Western Sephardic model, for example, there is little sense of *makam* (mode) or *nusaḥ*, and the fixed congregaional melody reigns supreme. Even within our own tradition and history, the canon of Ashkenazi *nusaḥ* has never been closed. It remained porous enough to absorb such comparatively recent innovations as the *Ahavah Rabbah* and *Mi SheBeirakh* modes; perhaps it also has room for syncopation, I-IV-V-I progressions, and a lot of *ya-na-nai-na*.[26] In sum, if Shlomo Carlebach found room in his *Yekkeshe*[27] heritage for Ishbitzer Ḥasidism and a guitar, maybe our liturgy can find a proper place for the music of all of his "holy brothers and sisters."

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26 As a footnote to our discussion of the neo-Ḥasidic musical impact on recent congregational melodies, we should note the remarkable paucity of melodies in *Ahavah Rabbah* and *Mi Shebeirakh*, a phenomenon which directly mirrors the scarcity of these modes in the Neo-Ḥasidic musical repertoire. This stands in sharp contrast to the repertoire of the other Jewish musical populists of our generation, the Klezmer musicians, which strongly favors both of these modes.

27 German-Jewish; from the short jacket—*jäckel*—they wore, pronounced "yekkel"

The Glantz / Pinchik Conundrum

By Joseph A. Levine

His son Jerry saw Cantor Leib Glantz (1898-1964) as representing "the end of an epic, not a new beginning; he left no followers, not even imitators."[1] Yet, the cantor most like him in pouring the flame of Hasidic fervor into new musical vessels, his fellow Ukrainian Pierre Pinchik (1895-1971), enjoyed that sincerest form of flattery from the beginning, and continues to do so. Why should this be? Why did Glantz's hazzanut, whose excellence equaled Pinchik's in every respect and actually exceeded it in vocal brilliance, lead to a dead end while his rival's style inspires copycats to this day, over a generation after they had both departed this world?

* * *

They were born three years apart at a time when Judaism's mystical stream had been reduced to a trickle, until the Yiddish playwright Shin Anski opened its floodgates with his dramatic legend, *The Dybbuk*, in 1920. An eyewitness reported on its opening night at the Eliseum Theater in Warsaw:

> It became pitch black. Before me I saw an old *Tallit* (prayer shawl) soaked in tears. In the thick darkness I saw a tall young Hasid, with a prayer book and a candle. He looked afar off, there where nothing comes to an end. When the second curtain rose in the prayer house, I heard broken, torn sounds, an unclear melody; notes which moan; ecstatic communing with God; notes which are drawn from generations and generations, slowly, very slowly. They sing slowly and rock with nervous speed. This lasted quite a long time, before they spoke the first word. It was almost like a big overture, but without an orchestra. And I must admit that no orchestra in the world and no composer could draw one in, into the mystical Hasidic atmosphere, better than did the movements and the torn notes of these Jews.[2]

This was the atmosphere in which Pierre Pinchik and Leib Glantz grew to young manhood. They both arrived in the United States in 1926, and almost simultaneously achieved international fame; Pinchik with his recording of *Rozo D'-Shabbos* (The Mystery of Sabbath) and Glantz with his recording of *Sh'ma Yisrael* (Hear, O Israel), both on the RCA Victor label. Glantz's *Sh'ma Yisrael* was the first of the two compositions to be published, in 1949, while Pinchik's *Rozo D'-Shabbos* waited another fifteen years before it appeared in

1 In a retrospective on his father's career, marking the 100th anniversary of Glantz's birth. *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Jubilee Convention* (New York: Marriott at the World Trade Center), 1998: 18.

2 Yiddish operetta composer Joseph Rumshinsky (1881-1950), cited in Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars* (New York: Harper & Row), 1977: 219.

a book of his recitatives in 1964. *Sh'ma Yisrael* was published first because it is the most accessible—and therefore the most frequently performed—of all Glantz's works. It is also more familiar sounding and less exotic (read: Hasidic) to American Jews. As a part of the Musaf K'dushah (Sanctification prayer of the Additional service) on Sabbaths and Festivals, its text in the Glantz recording is the standard Ashkenazic, non-Hasidic version.[3]

Pinchik's rightly celebrated *Rozo D'-Shabbos*, which Glantz admired greatly,[4] is a setting of the mystical Aramaic preamble to Friday Night Ma'ariv proper. It proclaims the union of God's "Presence" (Sh'khinah), with the Holy One in the Heavenly Kingdom, simultaneous with Sabbath's arrival in the mundane world. Its text, from the *Zohar* (Book of "Splendor," Jewish mysticism's primary source)[5] appears in the Hasidic rite that Glantz and Pinchik knew from childhood. Pinchik specifically chose it as his entrée to a worldwide audience, including the ultra-pious. The music, as well as his performance of it, treat each word with the respect due a visionary insight into the profound meaning of being at One: through our welcoming the Sabbath, "below," the Glory Throne is prepared for the One Above. In *Shema Yisrael*, on the other hand, Glantz set forth his own exquisitely musical interpretation of a laudatory modal chant pattern (nusah) that his fellow-cantors had been singing for decades and still do, in traditional synagogues. In effect, his recording "froze" that version,[6] making it common coin for generations of hazzanim to use at auditions, concerts and worship services.

The perception of Glantz's and Pinchik's lyric tenor voices by audiences did not vary that greatly. If Pinchik's voice was sweeter in tone, Glantz's was wider in range. If Glantz's could produce a more shattering fortissimo, Pinchik's could melt stone with its pianissimo. If Pinchik's could move you to fear of

3 The Hasidic variant beginning after *Hu Moshi'einu* (He is our Savior) and used by Sephardim as well, actually makes more sense than the Ashkenazic version because it spells out what is being promised in the phrase that follows in both rites, "He will again proclaim on our behalf" —*v'-Hu yashmi'einu*: *Hu yoshi'einu v'-yyig'aleinu sheinit* (He will again redeem us) *v'-yashmi'einu b'-rahamav l'-einei kol hai leimor* (and will mercifully proclaim the following before all living beings, "*hein ga'alti etkhem aharit k'-reishit*" (Behold, I have redeemed you in the end as I did in the beginning").

4 Ezra Glantz, *Cantors Assembly Proceedings*, 1998, p. 16.

5 Compiled by Moses ben Shemtov de Leon in the 13th century (part III, Book of Exodus, *Parashat T'rumah*: 135a-135b.

6 For this telling analysis of the long-term effect that definitive cantorial phonograph recordings of universally used texts—by star cantors like Glantz, had on hazzanic creativity—I am indebted to Henry Sapoznik, curator of the Cantorial Recordings Collection at YIVO in New York; private communication, November, 1985.

Heaven, Glantz's' could stir you to fear of sin. If Glantz's could induce you to feel shame, Pinchik's could raise you to a state of exaltation. If Pinchik's could inspire you to regular Torah study, Glantz's could convince you that prayer is heard. And if we reversed every component in the foregoing equations, the analogy would still ring true—like the sound of their voices.

Pinchik and Glantz both held aloft the torch of Hasidism as they stood before the *Amud*,[7] yet they guarded its flame differently because of their individual temperaments. In prayer, Glantz was passionate and intense,[8] never officiating without the accompaniment of a choir.[9] Pinchik appeared more gentle and withdrawn, preferring to guest-officiate alone on Sabbaths, while keeping worshipers on the edge of their seats by constantly thwarting expectations through the element of surprise.[10] When people attempted to touch the Torah with the corners of their prayer shawls as he carried it from the Ark at the front of the synagogue to the centrally situated *Bimah*,[11] he would shroud the scroll with his own extra-large *Tallit,* as if protecting it from harm (in seemingly calculated re-enactment of Mark Chagall's painting, *Rabbi with Red Torah*).[12]

Glantz, a stickler for propriety, used less dramatic methods. He'd catch a congregation unawares through sudden changes of mode rather than with eye-catching theatrical gestures, and he achieved the same end: maintaining the momentum of worship. Away from the *Amud*, he researched and taught. The instructional material he compiled for students at the cantorial school he established and directed in Tel-Aviv[13] offers countless examples of this subtle musical legerdemain. **Example 1**[14] shows a passage from the third of three modes that Glantz wanted students to learn as variants of basic nusah for chanting the Friday night Ma'ariv service. This excerpt from *V'Sham'ru* ("Let the Children of Israel observe the Sabbath throughout their generations") moves the natural-minor mode *Magein Avot* ("Our Forebears' Shield") on D (Glantz calls it a "Choral major" mode), to the lowered-7th major mode

7 Prayer lectern.

8 Ezra Glantz, *Cantors Assembly Proceedings*, 1998, p. 15.

9 Akiva Zimmermann. *B'-Ron Yahad*, Itzhak Alfassi, ed. (Tel-Aviv: The Central Cantorial Archive), 1988: 217.

10 The writer's impression of Friday night and Shabbat morning services that Pinchik led at the Stone Avenue Talmud Torah in Brooklyn, NY during the spring of 1957.

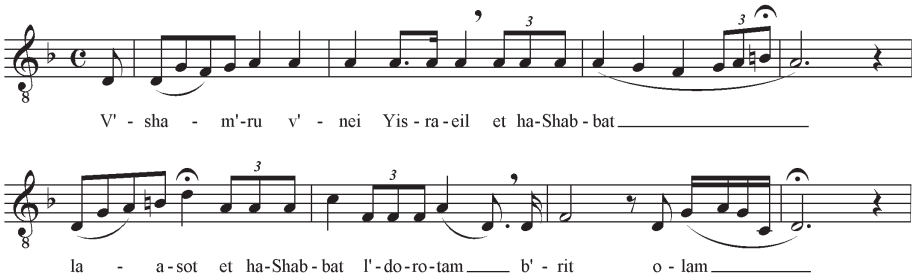
11 Reading platform.

12 Painted in 1930, now hanging in the Diaspora Museum, Tel-Aviv.

13 Institute of Jewish Liturgical Music, founded in1961.

14 Leib Glantz. *Rinat Ha-Kodesh*, Yehoshua Zohar, ed. (Tel-Aviv: Israel Music Institute), 1965: 48.

Adonai Malakh ("God Reigns") on D, to *Adonai Malakh* on G, to *Adonai Malakh* on F, and back to *Magein Avot* on D—all within eight measures. For a musician like Glantz, hearing his students seamlessly execute passages like this one was a dream come true; for the students, attempting to get it right must have been a nightmare.



Example 1. The opening of Glantz's *V'Sham'ru* for Friday night, in "Choral major" mode.

It wasn't the way Glantz (or anyone else) would normally chant *Arvit L'-Shabbat* in real life, but rather, a theoretical construct that he came up with "after years of searching, examination, and striving to find the musical truth."[15] Built on "two competing modes, the Aeolian and the Dorian"[16]—one with a flatted 6th degree and one with a natural 6th degree—Glantz labels it "*Nusah* from Sinai…established melody that no cantor has the right to alter in any way whatsoever."[17] Still, the music of Example 1 is unclear. Its key signature indicates that the 6th degree (B) should be flatted. Yet, of eight occurrences in the whole piece, the B is raised six times when ascending, flatted once when ascending and flatted once when descending. Where, then, does the Aeolian mode (B-natural) end, and the Dorian mode (B-flat) begin? And what specific nusah from Sinai is the one that dictates when exceptions are to be made?

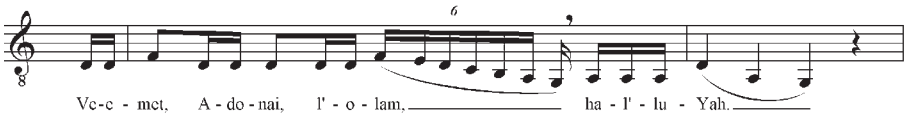
Glantz maintained that the Mixolydian (the segment G to the octave of a diatonic scale) and the Pentatonic (a 5-tone scale to the octave, having no semitones—and starting on different tones, yielding five different modes) are the chief scales of our nusah. He offers what he claims is the "traditional" Festival *hatimah* (cadential motif) as proof (**Example 2,** *Ve-Emet Adonai* ("God's truth is forever," Hallel Psalm 117).[18]

15 Leib Glantz. *Hallel & Three Festivals*, David Loeb, ed. (Tel-Aviv: Institute of Jewish Liturgical Music), 1968: 13.

16 Ibid. p.18.

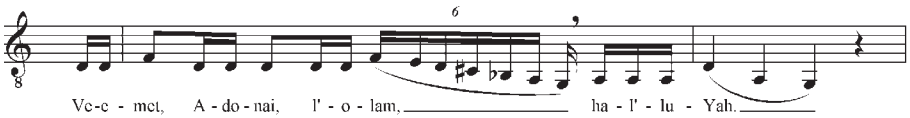
17 Ibid. p. 15.

18 Ibid. p. 14.



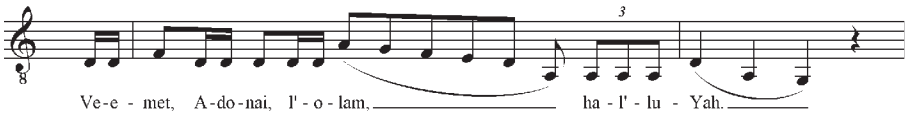
Example 2. Glantz's "traditional" Festival *hatimah* motif from Hallel.

Most authorities who cite this Festival ending for blessings or paragraphs do so as follows (**Example 3**).[19]



Example 3. The Festival *hatimah* motif as cited by most authorities.

Other authorities avoid the argument by omitting three critical notes of the motif's descending melismatic[20] run, including its final one (**Example 4**).[21]



Example 4. The Festival *hatimah* motif—with melismatic run—in partial form.

Motifs, after all, are the building blocks of our nusah;[22] scales were derived *from* them much later, as a means of categorization. The C# and Bb (raised 7th/lowered 6th degrees in a natural minor mode on D) in Example 3 may also appear in any other liturgical passage, no matter in which of the three Principal prayer modes it is being sung: *Adonai Malakh*; *Magein Avot*; or *Ahavah Rabbah* (major, with lowered 2nd and 6th degrees). For the sake of convenience I have elsewhere labeled any similarly altered passage as *Ukrainian/Dorian*, which I categorize as one of three Secondary prayer modes.[23] One might

19 H. Weintraub (1859: #116b), L. Lewandowsky (1871: #73), A. Baer (1877: #791), M. Wodak (1897: #404), A. Friedmann (1901: #250), S. Sulzer (1905: #195), A. Z. Idelsohn, Vol. VIII (1932: #102), B. Z. Hoffman (ca. 1960: 58), S. Ravitz (1964: 136), I. Alter (1979: 33), A. Y. Weisgal (Levine 1981: #408), N. Schall (1990: 53-54).

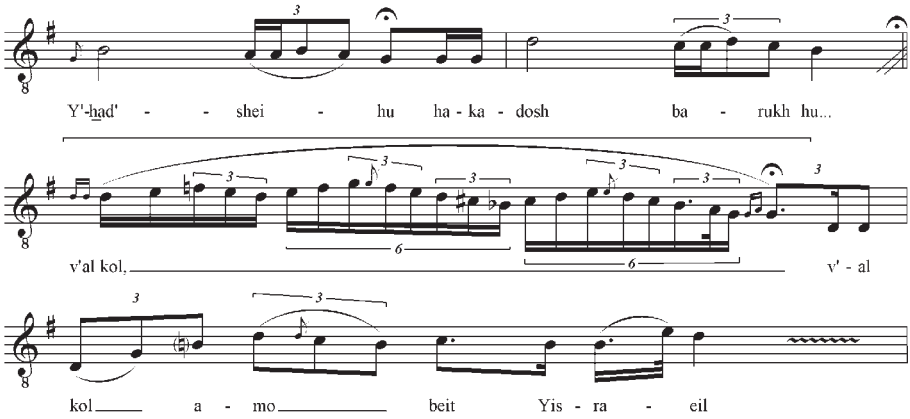
20 Melismatic—a group of notes sung to one syllable of text.

21 A. Berkovitch (Kalechnik; ca. 1900: 86), G. Ephros (1948: 174, 1.), A. Katchko (1952: #195), M. Nathanson (1974: 40).

22 Abraham Z. Idelsohn. "Songs of the Babylonian Jews," in *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, Vol. II (Berlin: Benjamin Harz), 1923: 27-28).

23 Joseph A. Levine. *Synagogue Song in America* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 2001: 112-115.

also define *Ukrainian/Dorian* as an augmented-4th Dorian mode.[24] Its characteristic motif—the melismatic run of Example 3—generally starts on the 5th degree in *Adonai Malakh*. **Example 5**, *Y'Had'sheihu* ("May the Holy One bless this new month;" from the Sabbath Morning Torah Service)[25] shows the *Ukrainian/Dorian* motif (bracketed) in a run that will be expanded by moving up to the octave from the 5th degree in *Adonai Malakh* on G, before descending all the way down to the tonic, in virtuoso style.



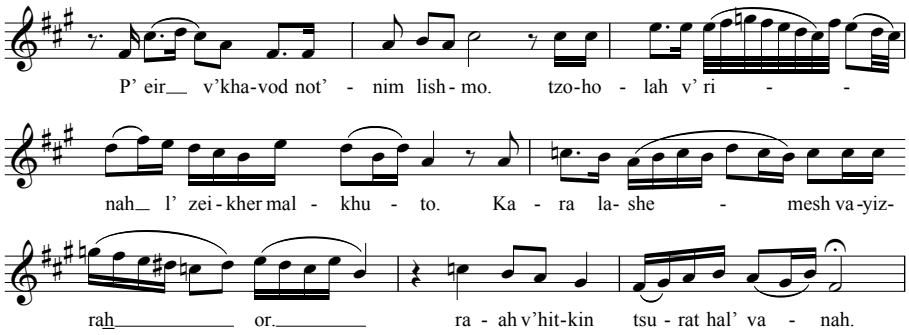
Example 5. Zavel Kwartin's *Y'Had'sheihu* in *Adonai Malakh* mode: bracketed Ukrainian/Dorian motif expanded from 5th up to octave and down to tonic.

Example 6, *P'eir V'Khavod* ("God is acclaimed in beauty and glory," Sabbath and Festival Shaharit)[26] in the second Principal prayer mode–*Magein Avot*—on F-sharp, shows the *Ukrainian/Dorian* (bracketed) motif starting on a 5th degree that's been temporarily lowered for the sake of a passing modulation, rising a fifth to the supertonic that's also been temporarily lowered, and then descending to the supertonic.

24 Sholom Kalib. *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I, part 1 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 2002: Example 133b.

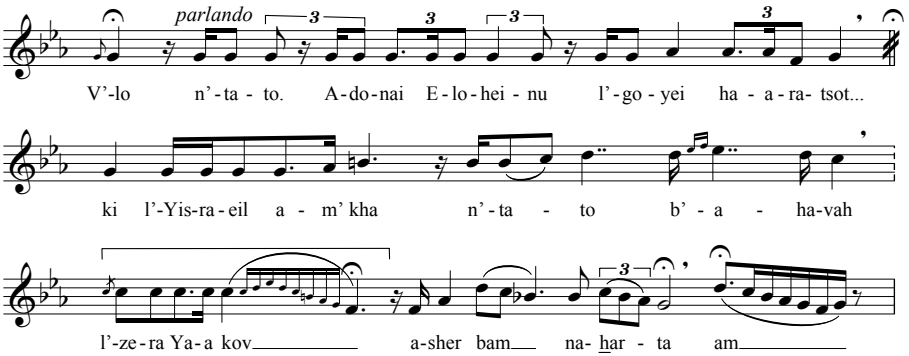
25 Idem, citing Zavel Kwartin, "Y'-Had'sheihu," *Shiroth Zebulon* (New York: self-published, 1938: 40).

26 Eliezer Gerovitch. *Schirei Simroh* (Rostow on Don: self-published), 1904: #19.



Example 6. Eliezer Gerovitch's *P'eir V'Khavod* in *Magein Avot* mode: bracketed Ukrainian/Dorian motif starting on lowered 5th and supertonic degrees.

Example 7, *V'Lo N'tato* ("You gave the Torah to Israel," Shabbat Shaharit Amidah),[27] shows the *Ukrainian/Dorian* motif (bracketed) in *Ahavah Rabbah* (God's Love for Israel is Great), last of the three Principal prayer modes, also identifiable as major-third Phrygian, i.e., a G-Ab-B-C-D-Eb-F-G scale.[28] Here, the *Ukrainian/Dorian* motif rises from 4th-to-6th degree and descends to the subtonic—a replica of the classic version by most authorities (Example 3), but in a different mode.



Example 7. Salomon Sulzer's *V'Lo N'tato*: classic Ukrainian/Dorian motif in *Ahavah Rabbah*, from 4th-to-6th degrees and down to subtonic.

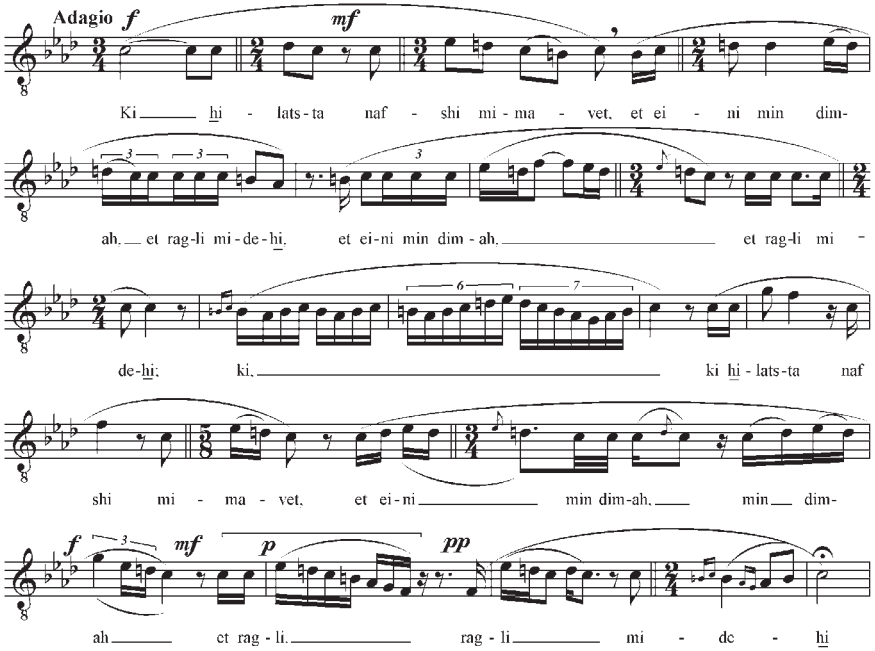
We now return to Leib Glantz's understanding of the *Ukrainian/Dorian* motif. In defending his unique version of it—the same notes that we have come to expect but without a raised-4th and lowered-3rd degree—he decries

27 Salomon Sulzer. *Schir Zion*, Joseph Sulzer, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann Verlag), 1922: #87.

28 Sholom Kalib. *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I, part 2 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 2002: 133-134.

the fact that "almost all cantors sing the passages of *Hallel* in the harmonic minor…the peak of melancholy."[29] The melancholy harmonic minor to which Glantz alludes is, of course, none other than our poignant *Ukrainian/Dorian* motif. In Glantz's usage—Example 2—it displays all the color of an albino in a snowstorm. A dab of C-sharp and a touch of B-flat would have imparted a shade of longing to the chant, an emotional highlighting of the Psalm text it purports to tone paint—our people's most universal aspiration—that the day speedily comes when all nations will praise God, Whose truth will last beyond the end of time. Halleluyah!

Any song expressing that hope needs all the yearning we can give it—until it becomes a reality. It's not as if Glantz himself never used the *Ukrainian/Dorian* mode/motif/coloring in Hallel, where, according to him, it doesn't belong. **Example 8**,[30] *Ki Hilatsta Nafshi Mi-Mavet* ("You have delivered my soul from death," Hallel Psalm 116, cites the motif repeatedly: three times partially and once (bracketed) in full.



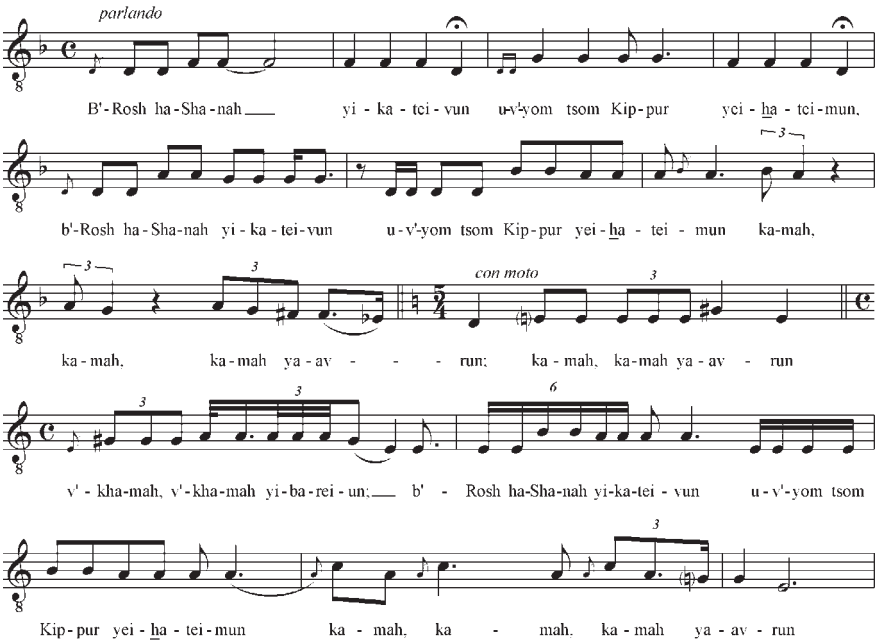
Example 8. Glantz's use of Ukrainian/Dorian (bracketed): *Ki Hilatsta Nafshi Mi-Mavet* from Hallel.

* * *

29 Glantz, *Hallel & Three Festivals*, 1968, p. 14.

30 Ibid. pp. 78-80.

Glantz's rival, Pinchik, never felt the need to teach nusah or to enter into a discussion of its theoretical underpinnings. Nor did he ever hold a full-time position after his six years of serving as Chief Cantor at the Great Synagogue in Leningrad from 1920 to 1925. The Communist authorities granted him the privilege of that high religious function so long as he agreed to set anti-religious song lyrics to music. Typically, he chose well-known synagogue melodies like *Atah Ehad* ("You are One," from Shabbat Minhah) and *Tikanta Shabbat* ("You ordained the Sabbath Day," from Shabbat Musaf).[31] Tiring of this game by 1926, he migrated to the United States where, from his arrival he concertized widely, recorded extensively and officiated regularly as a guest hazzan. When he raised or lowered modal degrees he usually did so in order to change key, and he executed the transition so swiftly that it was virtually undetectable. **Example 9**,[32] *B'-Rosh HaShanah* ("On New Year the decree is



Example 9. The opening of Pinchik's *B'Rosh HaShanah***,** showing four swift and almost imperceptible modulations.

31 Zimmermann, Akiva, *B'-Ron Yahad*, 1988, pp. 371-372.

32 Recorded anonymously at a High Holiday service that Pinchik led in the mid-1950s at an unknown location, transcribed by Sholom Kalib, presented at the Cantors Assembly's annual convention in 1999 and published in a subsequent article, "*Nusach* in the Eastern European Synagogue: Its Diverse Elements and Interdependence with Chazzanut," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Fall/Winter 2000: 24.

written"), from High Holiday Musaf, modulates almost imperceptibly from D *Magein Avot* to D *Ahavah Rabbah*, to E *Ahavah Rabbah*, and to E *Magein Avot*, in its opening fourteen measures.

Leib Glantz could command the rapt attention of a worshiping congregation just as effectively, without modulation, by reiterating a figuration similar to Pinchik's *B'-Rosh HaShanah Yikateivun…* in a single key but with a steadily increasing amount of embellishment. In addition, he intuitively sustained a quasi-psalmodic parallelism[33] in his phrasing, whereby he himself "answered" each musical thought in the antecedent half of a verse by its slightly varied "echo." He often did this in sections where he wanted the freedom of moving rapidly without having to wait for choral replies. Inevitably, worshipers *davening*[34] along in an undertone would fill the gap with impromptu hums or harmonized words. This type of solo call and unrehearsed response very much resembles the antebellum Gospel "Callers" in black churches, who could inspire worshipful cries of "Amen," "Halleluyah" or "Tell it, Brother" from the pews, by example alone.[35] Moreover, Glantz achieved this effect even in the versions of his compositions that he condensed, simplified and transposed downward for his students. **Example 10**, *Shomeir Yisrael* ("Guardian of Israel"), from the *Tahanun* section of Weekday Shaharit and Minhah services, gives the opening five phrases of his famous recording.[36] Each phrase sounds as if it could be part of a learning session between master and pupil, in conformity with the Talmud's advice concerning teaching techniques: Pose the question according to subject; give the answer according to rule.[37] I've therefore transcribed them in psalmodic half-verses with semi-bar lines and no fixed meter, the rhythm to be determined solely by stresses and number of syllables. Verse segments are marked 1a / 1b, 2a / 2b, etc.

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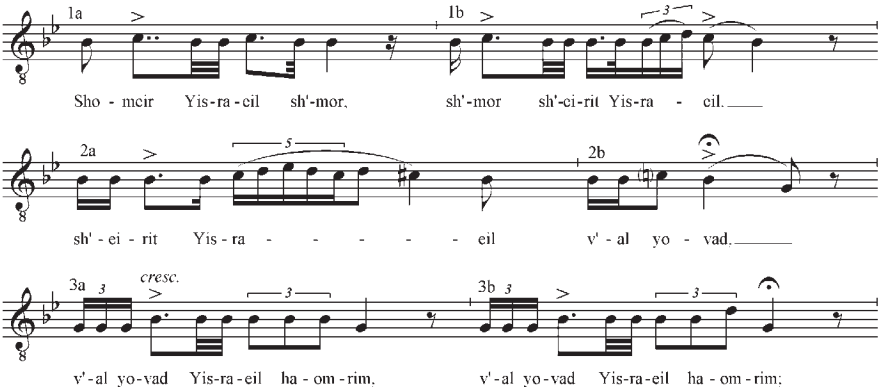
33 Levine, *Synagogue Song in America*, 2001, pp. 7, 29, 34.

34 This anglicized verb developed from Yiddish *daven'n*: "praying"; half aloud, half to oneself.

35 Nat Hentoff, "The Joyous Power of Black Gospel Music," citing David Stowe, *How Sweet the Sound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2005; *Wall Street Journal*, March 29, 2006.

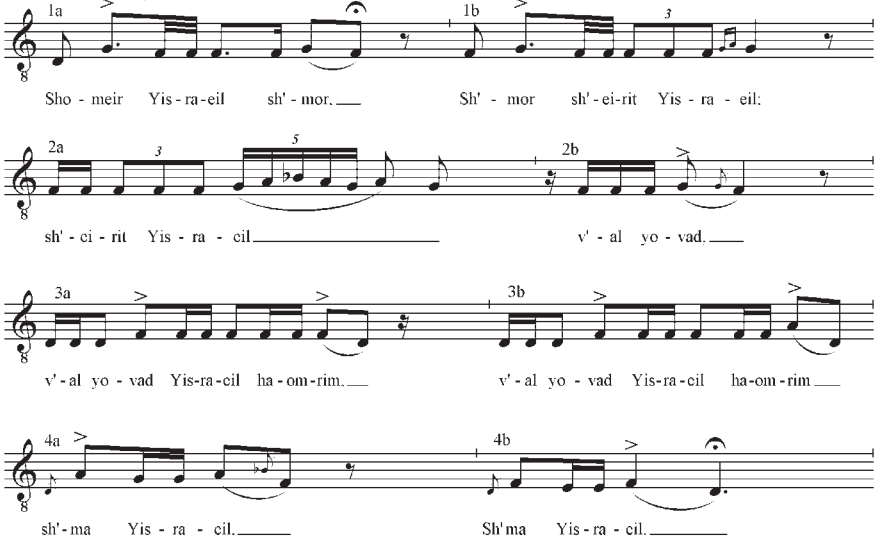
36 Leib Glantz. *Shomeir Yisrael*, Hebraica Records (RCA Camden Label, ca. 1930) LPZ-H70P 3658, side 2, track 4.

37 *Sho'eil k'-inyano, meishiv ka-halakhah*; Mishnah *Avot*, 5: 10.



Example 10. The opening of Glantz's *Shomeir Yisrael* recording, transcribed as psalmodic-style half-verses with no fixed meter; rhythm to be determined by stresses and number of syllables. Verse segments are marked 1a / 1b, 2a / 2b, etc.

For a version that novices could manage comfortably, Glantz pitched the recitative a 4th lower, in D min, reduced the number of verse-equivalents from five to four, streamlined the coloratura runs and condensed the number of notes from ninety-one to seventy-two. Notwithstanding these simplifications, **Example 11**[38] retains the balanced parallelism of its fuller recorded prototype, along with the tension that's needed to hold every pair of phrases together in a kind of dynamic reciprocity.



Example 11. The opening of Glantz's student-version *Shomeir Yisrael,* still transcribed as parallel psalmodic-style half–verses marked 1a / 1b, 2a / 2b, etc.

38 Glantz, *Rinat HaKodesh*, 1965, p. 18.

* * *

It's been said that "the originality of Hasidism lies in the fact that mystics who… had discovered the secret of true *d'veikut* [closeness to God] turned to the people with their mystical knowledge… and undertook to teach the secrets to all men of good will."[39] By the same token, the uniqueness of Hasidic-born Cantors Pierre Pinchik and Leib Glantz lay in their having taken the raw emotion of the Hasidic *shtibl* (prayer room), preserved its essence through their innate musicality and brought it to mainstream synagogues in a form that was at once musically accessible and aesthetically impeccable. They not only mined the ore of their childhood; they refined it into pure gold!

For over thirty years Leib Glantz's father had served as *Ba'al T'fillah* (prayer leader) in the *Beis Medrash*[40] of the Talner Hasidim, and his grandfather and great-grandfather before that. The Talner dynasty was known for its joyful niggunim—melodies requiring no words—the part of Hasidic lifestyle most emulated by Jews of other persuasions. Almost every great European-born hazzan of the 20th century was either reared in a Hasidic environment, or familiarized himself sufficiently with its musical practice to imbue his own singing with the same infectious spirit when it was required. And should a hazzan have been reared in Northern Europe's more austere Lithuanian centers of Jewish learning where they studied Talmud "with two thumbs"—as it were—he would still have spent a significant part of his childhood singing *z'mirot*, quasi-liturgical hymns of Hasidic flavor around the family table on Sabbaths and Festivals.

As a child, Leib Glantz had imbibed the dual nature of Hasidic song: meditative, in order to attain *d'veikut*; and ecstatic, in the form of *rikkud* (niggunim that lent themselves to frenzied dance). In his middle years (1931-1947) he set to music a poem that Israel's third president, Zalman Shazar, had written in his youth. In it a young Hasid speaks of his love for Dvoirele, a girl he has only glimpsed at a M'laveh Malkah.[41] He knows that his feelings can never come

39 Gershom G. Scholem. *Major Trends in Jewish Myticism* (New York: Schoken Books), 1941: 342.

40 Technically, a "study hall" adjacent to the synagogue where daily learning and prayer took place. During cold weather, which prevailed most of the year—October through May—in Eastern Europe, people in small towns prayed in the *Beis Medrash* on Sabbaths and Festivals as well, since it was heated. On the High Holidays and possibly the Shavuot festival, which fell during the warmer months, services were held in the unheated synagogue.

41 "Ushering out of the Queen," the community's bittersweet leave-taking of the Sabbath—with food, drink and song. In Hasidic circles it was often held in the Rebbe's

to fruition—the Rebbe[42] has matched her with another—still, he fantasizes over what might have been. Shazar, a man of letters[43] who had been raised in a Hasidic family, poured memories of an earlier personal disappointment into the poem.[44]

Glantz began his setting of the poem with a typical melodic invention in Hasidic style—*mah'shavah shel n'ginah b'-hasidut*[45]—a *d'vei'kut* niggun. The Arabic world knows this genre of mystical, non-rhythmic prelude as a *tartil*,[46] and although Glantz keeps it wordless until near the very end, the music sings its own three-part fantasy of a love that might have been. Part A, hushed and anticipatory, imagines the Hasid's first encounter with the beloved. Part B tone-paints an unrestrained outburst: his declaration of devotion to her. Part C, sublime and blissful, envisions the consummation of their love. The last part could well serve as a paragon of *Ukrainian/Dorian* "poignancy" coloration, against whose use in *Hallel* and the Three Festivals (see Example 3) Glantz so vehemently objected (**Example 12**).[47]

Nothing in Pierre Pinchik's Hasidic oeuvre compares with Leib Glantz's *Dvoirele* in emotional range and power. Pinchik's characteristically muted palette and restrained dynamic bear a much closer resemblance to Glantz's fourteen Hasidic settings of texts from Sabbath table songs and High Holiday penitential pleadings, in musical idioms such as Bratslaver, Lubavitcher, Talner and Israeli. The collection, *Chassidim B'Rinah—Hasidic Spirituals*,[48] presents an ideal artistic blending of the gentleness and exuberance that is endemic to the Hasidic *métier*. By composing the settings in this manner Glantz returned to his roots after years of overturning mountains with his more bravura style.

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home.

42 Rebbe–Hasidic spiritual leader akin to a rabbi—and often ordained as such—but more charismatic.

43 Most notably through an autobiographical memoir, *Morning Stars*, Shulamith Schwartz Nardi, tr. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 1967.

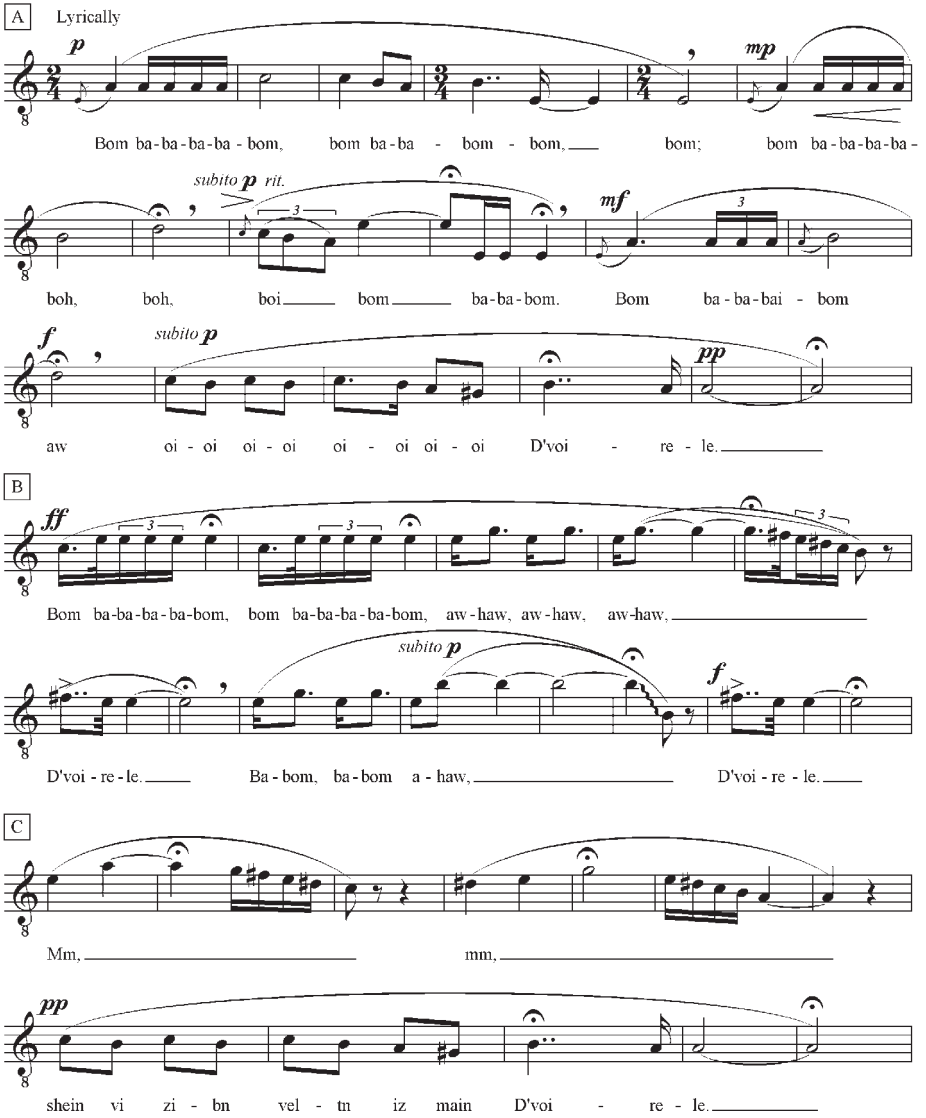
44 Zimmermann, Akiva, *B'-Ron Yahad*, 1988, p. 220.

45 A description I've borrowed from the musical imagination of another Hasid at heart, Hazzan Abba Yosef Weisgal (1885-1981), whose *"Niggun Abba"* closely resembles Glantz's niggun from his song *Dvoirele* (Joseph A. Levine, *Emunat Abba*, New York: Cantors Assembly, 2006, #250).

46 Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt & Co.), 1929: 25.

47 *Cantor Leib Glantz: Songs Sacred & Secular Hebrew Spirituals/Hassidic Ecstacy (Recorded 1931-47),* Musique Internationale, cassette CM 514, 1988, side 1, 2nd number.

48 Hebraica Records LP J08P-2731-20732 (New York: RCA Victor), 1948.

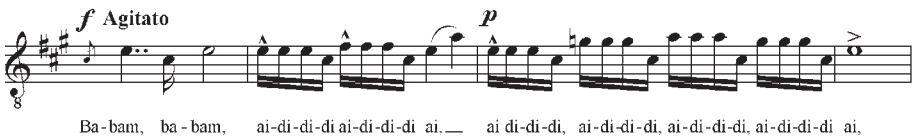


Example 12a. The introductory three-part *D'veikut Niggun* from Glantz's song, *Dvoirele.*

A case in point: he lavishes upon a cheerful little ditty of a *z'mirah–D'ror Yikra* ("On the Sabbath, God frees each of us from toil")[49]—the same lyrical inventiveness shown in any of his more grandiloquent works. He even manages to incorporate the filler syllables preferred by Talner Hasidim: *ai-dee-*

49 Ibid. side 2, track 3.

di-dee, ai-dee-di-dee, ai; but he organizes the material into a classic A-B-A song form. That is different from habitual Hasidic practice with niggunim set to liturgical words. These are always sung after the service is over (to avoid *hafsakah*, the interruption of prayer).[50] Usually, a selection is repeated over and over again, climbing a half-tone in pitch and several decibels in volume with each succeeding chorus until the singing becomes too high and too loud for comfort, whereupon it drops an octave and the noise abates so that the process can begin all over again. Glantz treated *D'ror Yikra* as an art song, to be sung and not danced, although its melody could be construed as that of a *Rikkud*. It's certainly too sprightly for a *D'veikah* niggun, and therein lies the challenge. It needs to be performed while standing perfectly still—*as if* one were moving! **Example 13**[51] gives the melody line of its middle (B) section, which features filler syllables preferred by the Talner Hasidim.[52]



Example 13. The middle section of Glantz's *D'ror Yikra*, featuring filler syllables preferred by the Talner Hasidim.

Pinchik's treatment of the Musaf prayer *Uv'-Yom HaShabbat* ("On the Sabbath Day")[53] comes closest to Glantz's *D'ror Yikra*, in that both of these dance-like settings are the only ones in which either composer allowed himself the liberty of using filler syllables in a published liturgical text. Granted that Glantz had limited his use of *ai-di-di-di, ai-di-di-di , ai*, to a *z'mirah* that is sung at home or in a concert hall; Pinchik took the process beyond quasi-liturgical texts, and potentially, into the synagogue itself (**Example 14**).

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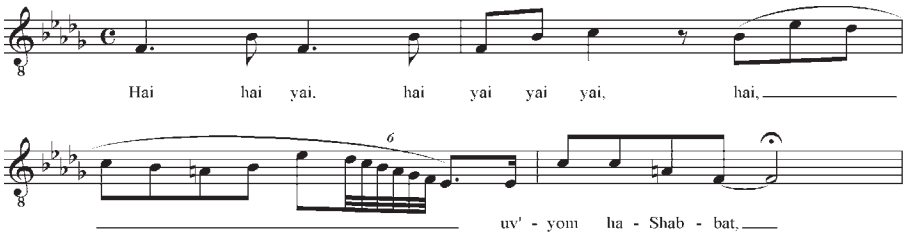
50 Sam Weiss, "Congregational Singing in Chasidic Congregations," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Fall 2005: 100.

51 Glantz, *Chassidim B'Rinah*, 1948, side 2, track 3.

52 The singing of niggunim by filler syllables rather than through words stems from a Hasidic belief that the soul speaks directly to God through melody, whereas words only serve to interrupt its emotional outpouring. Furthermore, words limit the melody's duration; when they run out, it is over. But wordless melody—sung to non-semantic filler syllables—can go on endlessly (according to the early Hasidic master, Shneur Zalman of Liady, cited in Abraham W. Binder, "Jewish Music," *Jewish Encyclopedia Handbooks*, New York: Central Yiddish Cultural Organization, 1952).

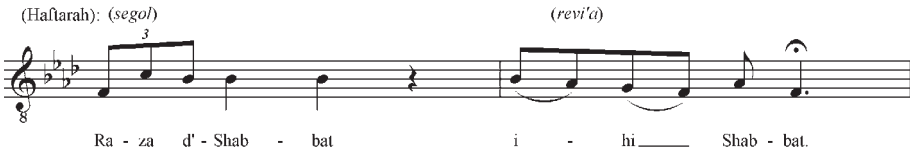
53 Pierre S. Pinchik, *The Repertoire of Hazzan Pinchik, Vol. I—Hazzanic Recitatives with Piano-Organ Accompaniment* (New York: Cantors Assembly), 1964: 56.



Example 14. Pinchik's filler syllables in *Uv'Yom HaShabbat*—a liturgical text that could potentially be sung during worship.

* * *

Another area in which Pinchik and Glantz pioneered was the judicious sprinkling of leitmotifs throughout their compositions, melodic figurations in the voice and in the accompaniment that permanently fixed the piece's theme in listeners' minds. The leading motifs were adapted either from Bible-reading tropes (*Ta'amei HaMikra*) or from age-old synagogue chants. **Example 15** quotes the leitmotif of Pinchik's *Rozo D'Shabbos*,[54] a combined paraphrase of two *t'amim* for chanting prophetic readings (Haftarot): *Segol* and *Revi'a*.[55]

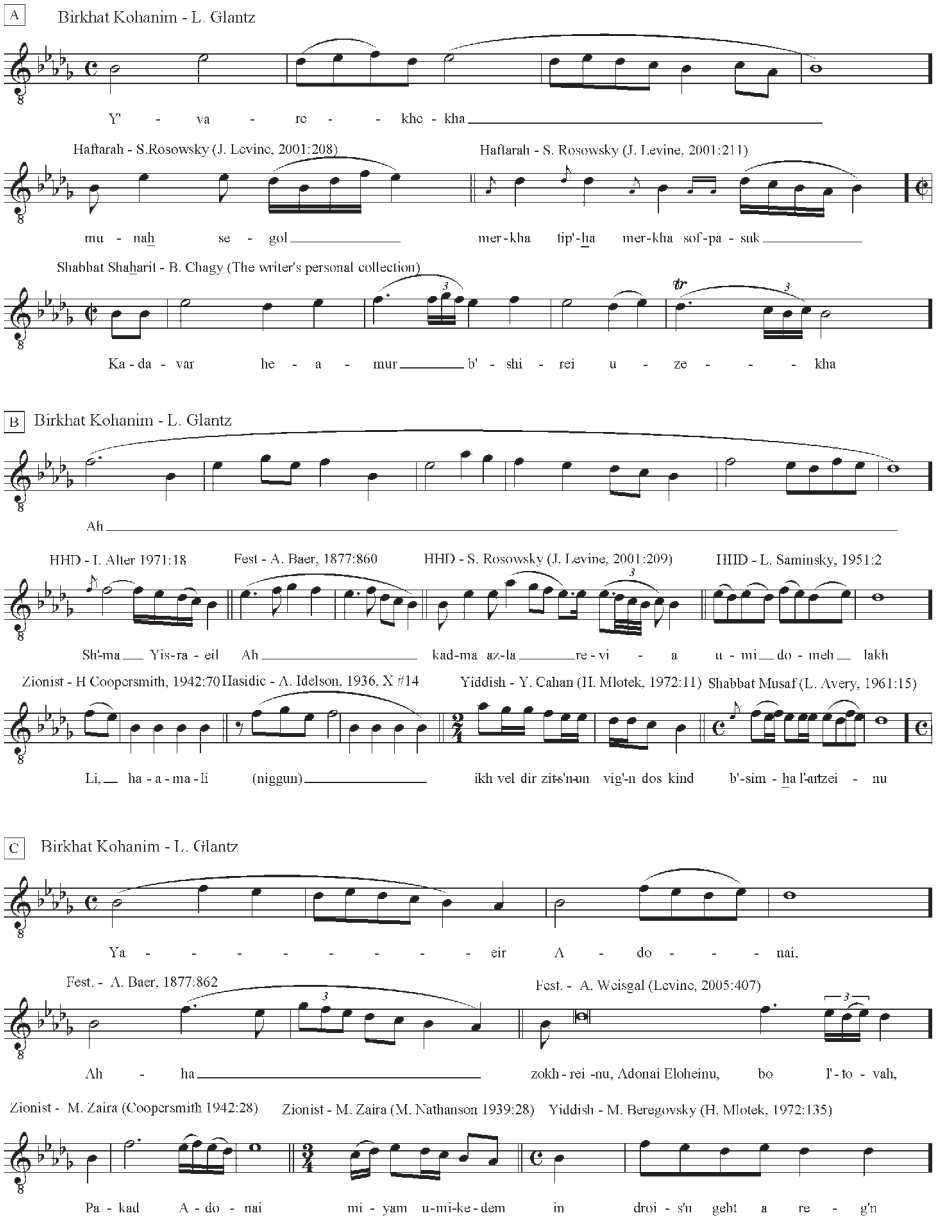


Example 15. The derivation of Pinchik's *Raza D'Shabbat* theme from two Haftarah tropes.

The underlying theme of Leib Glantz's *Birkhat Kohanim* (Priestly Benediction) simulates the lengthy wordless refrain that worshipers sing along with the cantor in Traditional synagogues, after the Kohanim conclude each section of their tripartite blessing. The sources from which Glantz may have derived inspiration for his own noble four-part creation are documented in **Example 16.** None of these sources approaches the grandeur, solemnity and "rightness" for the occasion that Glantz has achieved in adapting them for his elaborate leitmotif. He plucked fragments of nusah from the liturgy, biblical cantillation motifs from *ta'amei ha-mikra*, idiomatic turns of phrase from Yiddish folk songs and Hasidic niggunim. All of these elements he combined—whether consciously or intuitively—with "Mediterranean-style" Zionist paeans to the Land of Israel that were being written in the 1930s by pioneer settlers in Palestine under the British Mandate. Glantz had always been an ardent and supportive member of Tse'irei Tsiyon, a Labor Zionist

54 Ibid. pp. 78-80.

55 Levine, *Synagogue Song in America*, 2001: 81, Example 5.2, b.



Example 16. Glantz's leitmotif for *Birkhat Kohanim*—with possible sources appearing under each of its four parts.

organization that promoted *aliyah*,[56] and their hymns may have provided the seed that begat his old/new chant for *Birkhat Kohanim*.[57]

* * *

At a 1960 Executive Council meeting of the Cantors Assembly that took place in New York, Pinchik and Glantz happened to arrive at the same time as two-dozen other attendees. Glantz went to one side of the room and sat down; Pinchik seated himself as far on the other side as possible. For two hours neither took cognizance of the other's presence, and when the meeting broke, they left without even a nod of mutual recognition.[58] Perhaps this shared disdain, at least on Glantz's part, stemmed from disapproval of Pinchik's bachelor lifestyle[59] that he felt did not measure up to what a cantor should be: "an intellectual, a scholar, a model for the congregation, a spiritual leader."[60] In fairness it must be noted that Pinchik as well had good reason for keeping his distance, as his repeated attempts to contact Glantz went unanswered.[61]

Sigmund Freud seems to have been correct in assessing the biblical injunction to love one's neighbor as oneself, as "a commandment which is really justified by the fact that nothing else runs so strongly counter to the original nature of man."[62] Among countless similar examples, witness the American Civil War of 1860-1865 or the Iraq-Iran War of 1980-1988 for proof. Contemporary realist painter David Hewitt, who views the world as an increasingly global school, has given us a hint for understanding the "conundrum" of this essay's title. In his 1989-1992 series, *Between Cultures*, Hewitt makes

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56 "Going up" to live in the ancestral homeland; Akiva Zimmermann, *B'-Ron Yahad*, 1988, p. 218.

57 *Rinat HaKodesh*, Hebraica Records (RCA Camden) LPZ-H70P 3658, side 1, track 5.

58 I thank my lifelong friend Solomon Mendelson, a past president and program chairman of the Cantors Assembly, for this historical footnote.

59 A fact the writer can attest to, having interviewed Hazzan Pinchik in his Manhattan hotel room in May of 1948, for *The Elchanite*, at that time the monthly magazine of Yeshiva University's Talmudical Academy High School.

60 Ezra Glantz, in a personal communication, April 2006.

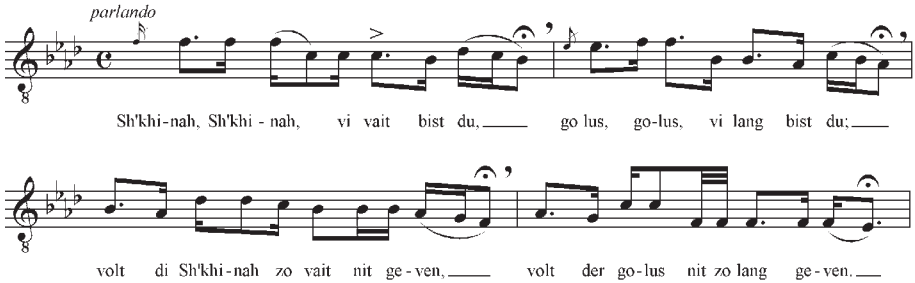
61 Idem.

62 Sigmund Feud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, translated from the German & edited by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton), 1961: 59.

the point that we are more comfortable with our neighbor if he or she does not get too close.[63]

Pinchik and Glantz may have kept a comfortable distance between them, but historically they came very close to participating in a modern miracle: the revival of Jewish worship through Hasidic niggunim. Towards the very end of their lives, by an unlikely coincidence, the example of their unabashedly Hasidic practices at the *A'mud* and on recordings would prove a godsend to North American synagogue practice, which had run out of ideas by the late 1960s. The current ongoing neo-Hasidic revival started when a Tel-Aviv theatrical troupe semi-staged an hour-long medley of niggunim that had been provided with vernacular lyrics. The song genre was invented late in the eighteenth century by Rabbi Yitzkhok Ayzik Taub of Kalev (1751-1821),[64] who so loved the pastoral ballads of his native Hungary, that he would adjust their words and melodies to sound more Jewish.

An ode to the wild woods, to a far-away ***Rose*** [65] became:
A plea to the ***Sh'khinah*** *so far away,*
*To end the long Exile this very day (*Example 17*).*[66]



Example 17. Yitzkhok Ayzik of Kalev's Judaized Hungarian pastoral ballad.

During its adaptation, the wistful Hungarian folk melody was rewritten in a mode normally used for studying Talmud,[67] and its words transformed from a shepherd's longing for his beloved Rose, into a Jew's yearning for God and

63 Quoted in Edward Rubin, "Reconstructing Reality," *Art & Antiques*, April 2006: 43.

64 Known as "the Sweet Singer of Israel," he was the first Rebbe in Hungary to compose numerous popular Hasidic melodies. Often he adapted Hungarian folk songs, adding Jewish words. He taught that the tunes he heard were really from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, lost among the nations over the years, and he found them and returned them to the Jewish people.

65 Abraham Z. Idelsohn, "Songs of the Hasidim," *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, vol. X (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister), 1932, #192, I.

66 Idem, #192, II.

67 The *Ler'n Shteiger* or Study Mode; Levine, *Synagogue Song in America*, 2001: 117-119.

the long-awaited final Redemption. Israeli composer Dan Almagor borrowed Rav Yitzkhok of Kalev's Judaized version along with a dozen other fervently devotional dialogues with God that were cut from the same mold. He strung them together as a series of dramatic tableaus, wedding niggunim—with and without lyrics—to a story line told by alternating narrators. The premiere performance of *Ish Hasid Hayah* ("Once There Was A Hassid") proved so irresistible that a recording of it was released,[68] and within a year, Jewish theatrical companies began staging their own productions all over North America.

Cantors quickly appropriated the underlying idea, and used it to enliven their repertoire of congregational refrains with Hasidic bits and pieces. They soon realized that such tired old Hasidic standbys as *V'taheir Libeinu* ("Purify Our Hearts") were no longer sufficiently upbeat in comparison, so they commissioned new ones to be written to folk-rock rhythms. Israeli songwriters, eager to supply the mushrooming demand, complied with a complete list of neo-Hasidic niggunim over the ensuing decades. Recordings and sheet music of annual Chasidic Festivals sold briskly all over the world, and especially well in the United States and Canada. These were followed by live performances featuring several generations of young Israeli artists who unknowingly helped pay off countless sponsoring congregations' mortgages through benefit concerts. Very quickly, cantors discovered that many of their formerly jaded congregants were spontaneously singing along with the new refrains. Hasidic-style tunes (set to rock rhythms) were the catalyst; they gave late-20th century American worship a boost of adrenaline that has lasted until this writing and gives no indication of slackening. To circumvent the difficulty encountered by Reform parishioners who could not follow the unfamiliar Hebrew lyrics, an alternate means of lay involvement was introduced: mass handclapping.

In a strange turnabout, the only synagogues now distinguished by a lack of handclapping are Hasidic ones, where such activity—along with dancing—is reserved for after worship (see note 50). A visit to almost any other type of service, including Modern Orthodox—is liable to include not only rhythmic applause but also stomping of feet and grabbing of shoulders, particularly in the uninhibited atmosphere of Southern California. I once wandered into a Friday Night Conservative "happening" in suburban Los Angeles, which bore

68 *Once There Was A Hassid*, LP AP-332 (Tel-Aviv: Yaakov Agmon, 1968); text reproduced by the Hebrew Cultural Council of Philadelphia, 1969.

an eerie resemblance to the Solidarity Service envisioned some sixty years earlier by novelist Aldous Huxley.[69]

> Men and women…ready to be made one, to lose their separate identities in a larger being. The first Solidarity Hymn was a brief haunting melody, repeated plangently to a pulsing rhythmic accompaniment, and visceral in its effect… Ultimately the participants form a dancing circle with hands on the preceding person's hips, shouting in unison and beating the insistent refrain.

In addition to these elements came the rhythmic applause that an electronic organ reinforced until the hip-hugging circle snaked its way out of the sanctuary and into an adjoining auditorium where a roaming accordion took over.

Leib Glantz and Pierre Pinchik did not live to witness all of this excess. Like a first-stage rocket, the power segment that supplies initial thrust for the entire voyage, their journey came to an end just as the neo-Hasidic revival entered outer space and began to circle the Jewish world. Other factors would enter once the movement had attained orbit speed: Klezmer, Reggae, Fusion, Rap, etc. But it all began with an Israeli composer rediscovering a niggun written by a Hungarian Hasid 200 years before, and seeing possibilities in it.

What if that Israeli composer—Dan Almagor—in search of niggunim before his big breakthrough, had dropped by for M'laveh Malkah inspiration in a certain Rebbe's *Beis Medrash* in Tel-Aviv, where Pierre Pinchik—grey-haired in retirement and wearing his favorite beige cardigan, blue shirt and red tie—sat and quietly regaled the gathered Hasidim with *z'mirot*? Surely, one of the niggunim Pinchik sang that Saturday night could have been the meditative refrain in Hasidic style that he had used as a leitmotif whenever he led the Weekday Ma'ariv service (**Example 18.**).[70]

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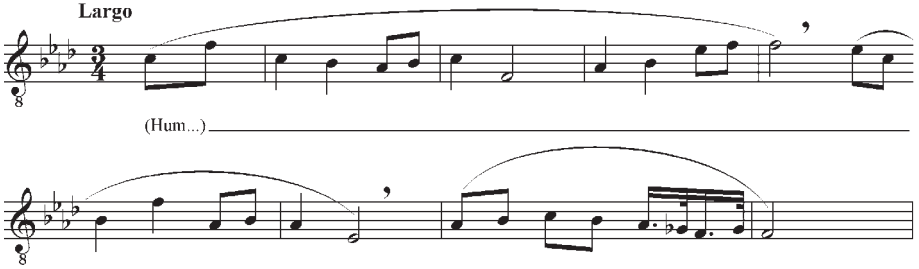
69 *Brave New World* (1932), cited in Joseph A. Levine, *Rise and Be Seated—The Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 2001: 167.

70 The writer's approximation of a melody that he—and others—had heard Pinchik sing with the congregation before the *hatimah* of every blessing in a concert Weekday Ma'ariv. Pinchik had followed Glantz to Israel, albeit for a much shorter visit of several months. *Yedi'ot Aharonot* of September 3, 1956 reported:

The noted Hazzan P. Pinchik had arrived from the United States and remained incognito until the Lovers of Hazzanut (*La"Ha"N*) organization persuaded him to break his silence and agree to officiate at a Friday night service on May 23rd, at the Shavuot morning service on May 25th, and a concert sometime in June—all at the Magreb Theatre's Auditorium— before returning home.



Example 18. Pinchik's meditative refrain in Hasidic style for Weekday Ma'ariv.

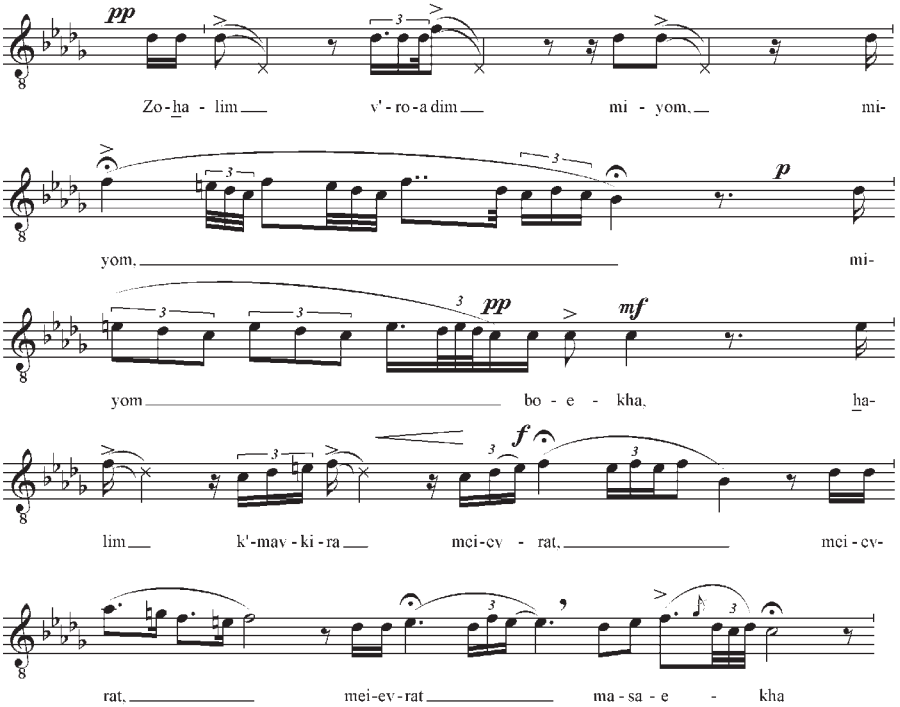
Or suppose that Dan Almagor, in search of ways to spotlight the niggunim he'd rediscovered, had heard Leib Glantz—reinvigorated since resettling in the Land of Israel—*daven* the Midnight S'lihot service before Rosh HaShanah in Tel-Aviv's Tif'eret Zvi Synagogue? There, the idea already forming in Almagor's imagination—to dramatize a series of Hasidic God-dialogues—would have been validated as doable by Glantz's one-on-one with the Creator in the fourth strophe of *B'Motsa'ei M'nuhah,*[71] the S'lihot service's centerpiece.

Zohalim v'-ro'adim mi-yom bo'ekha,
Halim k'-mavkira mei-evrat masa'ekha.
(Groaning like one in travail,
Thy children remain helpless before Thee.)

Glantz tone-painted the opening words over and over, with each "repetition" minutely varied so as to evoke the doomsday fear that Jews customarily felt during this curtain raiser for the annual Day of Judgment. It was the liturgical equivalent of Yitzkhok Ayzik of Kalev's *Sh'khinah, Sh'khinah*: at first a trembling acknowledgement of personal inadequacy before the Throne of Justice, then a halting presentation of legal precedents, and finally a heart-in-hand plea for divine relief on behalf of the entire folk. **Example 19**[72] cites the opening portion of that musical brief.

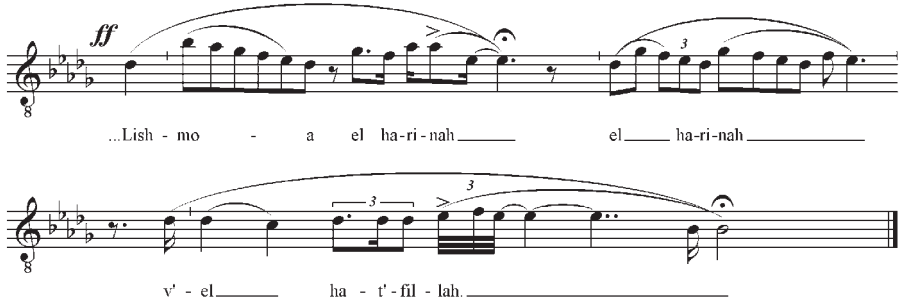
71 An anonymous alphabetical acrostic, as in *Selihoth*, edited by Louis Feinberg (New York: Behrman House), 1954: 15.

72 *"Selihot* 1958," *Cantor Leib Glantz—High Holiday Moods*, (Chicago: Musique Internationale), cassette CM 516, 1993: side B.



Example 19. The opening section of Glantz's *Zohalim V'Ro'adim* from S'lihot.

With each succeeding stanza, Glantz's case of petition before the Heavenly Tribunal gained in confidence until, with the cadence of his final refrain (**Example 19a)**—*Lishmo'a El HaRinah V'-el HaT'fillah* ("Hear our song and our prayer")—he stamped the emotion-laden argument with his own idiomatic cantorial "signature" and brought the entire congregation into joining a beloved cadential phrase in the proper "*Nusah* from Sinai" (see note 18).



Example 19a. *V'el HaT'fillah,* the cadential "Nusah from Sinai" phrase of Glantz's final *Lishmo'a El Ha-Rinah* refrain.

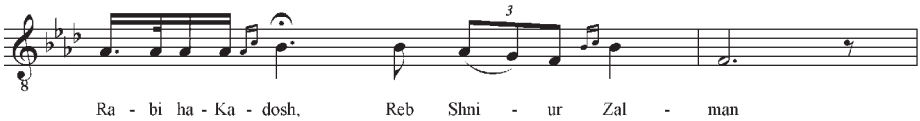
It was precisely the kind of ritual moment that Dan Almagor would successfully replicate on the stage of the Israel Teachers Union Building in Tel-Aviv

less than a decade later and thereby open a door that has yet to close. There may be no direct link between the high hazzanic art evidenced in Glantz's and Pinchik's *D'veikut* niggunim and the neo-*Rikud* hits that poured forth from Israeli Hasidic Festivals during the next quarter-century. Yet the affinity between Pinchik's Meditative Refrain from Weekday Ma'ariv (Example 18) and Yitzkhok Ayzik of Kalev's *Sh'khi'nah, Sh'khinah* (Example 17) is undeniable.

So is the kinship of Glantz's Cadence "From Sinai" for the final *Lishmo'a* with Almagor's *Michtav La-Rabi* ("A Letter to the Rebbe"), the finale from *Ish Hasid Hayah* (**Example 20**).[73]

L'felah Mohilov, la'ir Ladi, la-Rabi ha-Kadosh, Reb Shneur Zalman

(To: Mohilov district; City: Liady; For: the Holy Rabbi, Shneur Zalman.)



Example 20. "A Letter to the Rebbe," the finale from Almagor's *Ish Hasid Hayah.*

Along with the 1950s' example of old-time piety that Hasidic survivors[74] of the Holocaust set for an American Orthodoxy that had gone Modern,[75] the 1960s' nostalgia for our great-grandparents' Eastern European folkways[76] as depicted by philosophers Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel,[77] the 1970s' desire of small prayer groups (havurot)[78] for the warmth of Hasidic worship, the continuing popularity of the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof*[79] and the lasting influence of guitar-strumming Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach,[80] Leib Glantz and Pierre Pinchik played no less a role in rescuing late-20th century synagogues from the lingering Victorian rationalism that

73 *Once There Was A Chasid*, 1968, Side 2: 12.

74 Levine, *Rise and Be Seated*, 2001: 149-151.

75 Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and Reconstruction—the Transformation of Modern Orthodoxy," *Tradition*, Summer 1994: 65-130.

76 Mark Zborowsky & Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People* (1952), New York: Schocken Paperback, 1962, throughout.

77 Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim*: *The Early Masters* (New York: Schocken, 1947); *The Later Masters* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Young, 1948); Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Earth Is the Lord's* (New York: Harper), 1966.

78 Bernard Reisman, *The Havurah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations), 1977, passim; and personal communication, October, 1995.

79 Book by Joseph Stein, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, music by Jerry Bock (New York: Sunbeam), 1964.

80 Liner notes for CD, *In the Palace of the King* (Santa Monica, CA: Vanguard), 1965; Jeremy Gaisin, "The Immortality of Shlomo Carelbach & His Music," *Commentator* (New York: Yeshiva University, November 25, 2002.

had been strangling it. This, I believe, is their true legacy, the one by which history will judge them. The less-traveled road they took—before its time had come—also leads to an answer for this essay's opening question: why is Pinchik still imitated, and Glantz not?

It has to do with a changing zeitgeist in America, from acquiescent patriotism to anti-establishment activism, which occurred at the height of protest against the Vietnam War. Its watershed was reached in the summer of 1968, when national TV cameras caught police in a particularly bloody reaction against young people demonstrating outside the Democratic Party Convention in Chicago. Overnight, respect for authority evaporated all across the cultural horizon, including the foursquare religious anthems that a generation of parents who grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930s had been singing during worship. Rock rhythm was about to cross the threshold of America's churches, and Hasidic *Rikkud* niggunim were set to approach the Holy Ark in American synagogues.

Decades before, Glantz and Pinchik had spread a red carpet of *D'veikut* niggunim that Israeli folk-rock settings of liturgical refrains would now follow—straight to the hearts of congregants tired of being told what to do and how to do it during services. Their elders had sat and listened as Pinchik and Glantz's generation of star cantors performed on their behalf. Glantz's sky-high pyrotechnics had proved daunting even for his professional colleagues; Pinchik's down-to-earth approach lent itself much more easily to emulation by amateurs. As illustration: Pinchik's gentle *Maoz Tsur* in Hasidic style,[81] though singable by everyone back in the 1930s, had still been lively enough to provide a missing link with the syncopated new ballads from Israel, beginning with the very first Chasidic Song Festival prizewinner, *Oseh Shalom*.[82] Because it gave worshipers an organic part to play in the service (singing as a community to conclude the Amidah or the Readers Kaddish), that groundbreaker literally took the process of Hasidifying the liturgy a dance-step beyond anything that Glantz or Pinchik would have dared attempt in their day.

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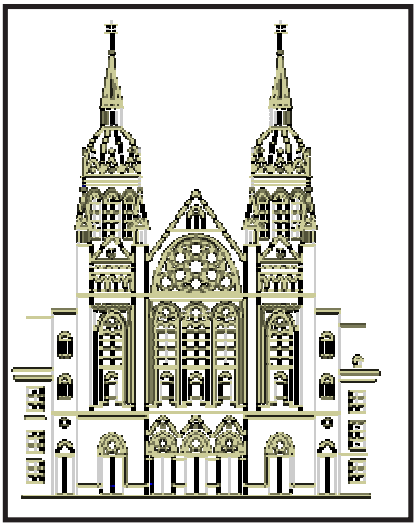
81 *The Repertoire of Hazzan Pinchik*, vol. 1 (new York: The Cantors Assembly of America), 1964:114-119; *The Art of Cantor Pinchik*, cassette GRC 234 (Brooklyn, NY: Greater Recording Company), 1973, B: 3.

82 Nurit Hirsh (1969), *The Best of the Chasidic Song Festivals*, compiled and edited by Velvel Pasternak (New York: Tara), 1989: 53.



Kaiserin Elisabeth Tempel,Vienna[1]

The Hasidified World of Hazzanut Seen through the Eyes of an Analytical Cantorholic

By David R. Prager

The Question

Sholom Secunda poses an age-old question in his famous Yiddish song, *Freygt die Velt a Kashe*[2]*—Farvos Zingt a Khazn?* ("The world asks a question—why does a cantor sing?"). He answers: "It is because a khazn loves to sing." He then poses the supplementary question, "Why does he love to sing?" He proceeds to answer circularly: "It is because he is a khazn!" In the song, Secunda charts musically the life of the communal hazzan, singing in happiness, in sadness, on yomtov, at weddings, at bar mitzvahs, sometimes managed by pleasant shul officials, other times by tough shul officials and still singing even at times of peril. Finally, in moments of special pleading to G-d, Secunda has the hazzan close with a heaven-piercing, intricate-but-traditional rendition of the Sukkot prayer—*Hoshana* ("Save us").

1 Kaiserin Elisabeth Tempel, Neudeggergasse, Vienna, where the brilliant young cantor Zevulun (Zavel) Kwartin (1874-1952) served as hazzan from its opening in 1903 to 1908, was then arguably the number one destination worldwide for cantorholics. Few places witnessed hazzanut at its zenith like that synagogue. Tragically it was closed just 35 years after being built, its interior destroyed by the Nazis on Kristallnacht 1938 and the building totally demolished in 1940.

2 Yiddish vernacular pronunciation of the Aramaic *kushya*, a rabbinic question.

However, one party to this musical repartee is missing: *the listeners*. So let us ask the question, are they really missing—do not you, the readers of this article—represent the "missing" listeners? This article analyses that conundrum in true Talmudic fashion, with another question: what *drives* the love of the cantorial aficionado for *listening* to hazzanut? In so doing we will arrive at informed conclusions as to the characteristics of the successful *velt-khazonim* (world-class cantors) and what it is within us, *der Oylem*, that feeds the desire to soak in the varied but easily recognizable sounds that constitute traditional Eastern European hazzanut.

The Writer

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. Equally, appreciation of hazzanut is to some extent personal but objectively subject to evaluation by a discerning ear in terms of quality of composition, quality of singing/interpretation and innate voice properties. At the outset let me state my own perspective. I was born in 1952 to a middle-of-the-road traditional Jewish family living in South Manchester, England. My mother was a doctor and my father an economist. I was the third of three boys. Later I studied chemistry and became the managing director of a chemical company.

In early childhood I was exposed to the sedate chanting of the Russian-born, Viennese-trained baritone cantor of our synagogue, sometimes assisted by his choir. Occasionally, in forays to North Manchester, the epicenter of Manchester Jewry, I heard the emotional Eastern European hazzanut of Cantor Perlman of the Great Synagogue, and this chanting mesmerized me from the age of three onwards. In later childhood, one of my brothers started to pursue an ultra-Orthodox path and this brought me into closer contact with those for whom hazzanut was a familiar medium of religious and cultural expression, albeit for whom the draw of cantorial melody was deemed somewhat unworthy, to be resisted because of its acceptance of "illegal" repetition of words in prayers, its possible cultivation of worshipers' concentration on the personalities of great cantors and being distracted from devoting all their extra-synagogal time to talmudic learning. Furthermore, the worlds of opera and professional voice coaching were deemed far too secular and debased to be areas of acceptable pursuit for *an eydeler yiddisher bokhur* (a noble-minded Jewish youth).

The Product

There are definable characteristics, which those who appreciate hazzanut—including myself—instinctively look for and recognize in memorable cantorial renditions. What are they? How do they arise? How can they be characterized?

How is it that people not only travel far and wide to hear the best cantors and invest considerable sums to amass collections of cantorial recordings, videos and DVDs but that they also are able to spend many a happy hour listening to their favourites and discussing intensively with fellow *m'vinim* (aficionados/experts), the subtleties of this compelling phenomenon?

Here we are concerned with synagogal chant and similarly styled religious-themed Yiddish folk song emanating from Eastern Europe in the 100-150 years preceding the Holocaust. We are also concerned with the manifestations of this mode of composition and singing across Europe, the United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia up to the present day. More specifically, we are concerned with the bravura performances of talented cantors, which encompass solo and choir-accompanied renditions in synagogue and musically accompanied performances on recordings and at concerts. The generic term *Hazzanut ha-Regesh*, (*gefiel khazones* in Yiddish or "hazzanut of feeling" in half-English) is nowadays used to describe this type of prayerful music.

Its antipode, *Hazzanut ha-Seder* (orderly prayer), pertained to a well-regulated so-called *Khorshul* (Choral Synagogue) service supported by choir. In *Fishke the Lame* (1869), Yiddish novelist Mendele Moykher Sforim describes differences between the home-grown khazn of his his small-town prototype, Glupsk, and the cosmopolitan conservative-trained *oberkantor* of the big-city prototype, Odessa. Essentially, Mendele was defining the dichotomy between *Hazzanut ha-Regesh* and *Hazzanut ha-Seder*.[3]

The Background

To understand the cantorial world, it is necessary to be acquainted with aspects of Jewish history from the 18th century to the present day. At that time, discrimination and pogroms were widespread against the Jews in the Russian Empire; much milder discrimination prevailed in Austria-Hungary. Memories of the terrible Chmielnitski massacres of the mid-1600s across the Ukraine underlay the atmosphere surrounding the cradle of hazzanut. This atmosphere—of fear from unfair persecution of a defenseless and innocent population—was exacerbated by the Czarist government's overt anti-Semitism and its instigation of pogroms from the late 1800s through the early 1900s. After the Russian revolution, the situation of the Jews was arguably physically improved but in practice, the chaos succeeding the Russian revolution and the First World War led to extensive ongoing attacks against—and misery for—Eastern European Jewry. The advent of affordable means of emigration

3 Cited by Mark Slobin, *Tenement Songs: the Popular Music of the Jewish Immi*grants (Urbana: University of Indiana Press), 1982: 20.

from the late 1800s onwards carried with it the transfer of Eastern European Jewish culture westwards in Europe and to North and South America as well as South Africa. During World War II, the Holocaust destroyed the old seedbed of cantorial art along with the human soil that had nourished it.

In the 1700s, the East European Jewish world was dividing into:

> **Hasidim**—enthusiastic followers of the Baal Shem Tov and his pupils, stressing mysticism and allegiance to Hasidic clans headed by charismatic and saintly *tzaddikim* (saintly ones) at first, and *rebbes* (rabbis) later on; and
>
> **Mitnagdim**—followers of the Vilna Gaon's textual-analysis style and expertise in talmudic learning, coupled with focus on ethical studies and practice.

The border of the Russian Empire with that of Hapsburg Austria-Hungary after successive partitions of Poland late in the 18th century was an important one for the Jews. Borders, of course, moved with political and military developments but as a rule of thumb, Lithuania was Mitnagdic territory whereas the Ukraine and swaths of Byelorussia and (Austro-Hungarian-controlled) Galicia and Hungary were more Hasidic. Free-flowing, expressive hazzanut flourished more easily in Hasidic environments where mystical dance and march-melodies had well-established places in communal song. Nevertheless, many exceptions prove the rule. In Lithuania, the careers of numerous great hazzanim were nurtured. We must not forget the German-speaking areas of Austria, the Czech lands and Germany itself. Here, albeit to a lesser extent, *Hazanut ha-Regesh* also developed a number of excellent interpreters.

In *Legendary Voices*[4] one of the last khazonim with insider access to the Golden Age greats, Samuel Vigoda (1894-1990), traces the development of "modern" hazzanut to early centers of expertise in the Ukraine and Bessarabia of two hundred years ago. He also records the exceptional popularity of the Vilner Balabeisel,[5] a super-talented prodigy cantor in Vilna, Lithuania who, in the pursuit of fame, left his family and community and died in ignominy.

You can be forgiven, dear readers, for thinking hazzanut was a Russian/Polish/Lithuanian expression originally, for that is what Samuel Vigoda seems to be saying. Yet he has no adequate explanation for the wide spread of hazzanut from the Black Sea to the Baltic by the 1800s. The mystery is made somewhat more complex because the (changing) geographic borders didn't always align with linguistic/cultural boundaries—especially so for the Jews. Hungarian and Slovakian Jewry offer prime examples. They included many

4 Samuel Vigoda, *Legendary Voices*, (New York: M.P. Press, Inc.), 1981.

5 Cantor Yoel Dovid Loewenstein-Strashunsky (1816-1850).

Hasidim and many non-Hasidim, some of whose families had migrated to Hungary from other parts of the Hapsburg Empire, e.g., Austria, Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia as well as from Russian Poland and the heartlands of the Russian Empire.

In the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century, German, Hungarian, Slovakian and Yiddish-speaking communities in Hungary and Slovakia also nurtured the talents of young Easterners like Kwartin (1874-1952) and Rosenblatt (1882-1933). That set the stage for a whole galaxy of great 20th-century "Hungarian" khazonim, some of whom were native born and others who migrated to the then thriving communities of Hapsburg-controlled Hungary and Slovakia: Samuel Vigoda, Israel Tkatch, Yehoshua Wieder, Moshe Preis, Joszef Fisch, Salomon Stern, Naftoli Freilich, Moshe Stern, Reuven Berkovits and Leib Gluck, to name but a few.

The growing confusion as to which of the most accomplished contemporary khazonim are Hasidim and which are non-Hasidim is well founded. Haym Soloveitchik, a teacher of Jewish History at Yeshiva University, stresses a phenomenon he'd observed as early as the 1980s: "the melding of Hasidic and Mitnagdic ways of life, as the two joined forces against modernity. The Hasidim have adopted the mode of Talmudic study and of the Mitnagdim. In turn, the Mitnagdim have adopted some of the dress of the Hasidim."[6]

Evidence that the Mitnagdic Litvaks (Lithuanian Jews) have enjoyed hazzanut at least for the last two centuries is their love of the aforementioned Vilner Balabeisel in the early 1800s and their later appointment of *velt-khazomim* like Mordechai Hershman (1886-1940) and Moshe Koussevitzky (1899-1966) to the major post of *Shtot-Khazn* (City Cantor) in Vilna. The Hungarian Jews were no less cantorholic. In his phenomenal Yiddish autobiography, *Main Leben*,[7] which displays extraordinary self-awareness and human understanding, Zavel Kwartin made it clear that the "naughty" temptation for the ultra-Orthodox to listen to hazzanut was not uncommon in Budapest in1908 and onwards. He recalls *frumeh* ("religious ones") coming into the so-called *Neolog*[8] synagogue to hear him daven. They chose Maariv (evening) services when it was dark so no one would see them going in. The polarization of the

6 Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy," *Tradition* 28: 4, Summer 1994, page 95.

7 Zavel Kwartin, *Main Leben* (Philadelphia-New York: S. Kamerling, Printer), 1952.

8 In the sense of proposing a new theological doctrine…a synagogue similar to that of the original American Conservative or the German *Liberale* (Liberal), often with organ and/or mixed choir, but not always with mixed seating.

frum community seems to be more pronounced nowadays. A decade ago I met a 95-year-old Hungarian, a former Sochatchover Hasid, at a concert in a retirement home in London and asked him if he had ever heard Kwartin "live." He said, "Yes, at the *Tabaktempel*."[9] (I showed incredulous surprise because by the 1990s it would have been almost inconceivable for a Hasid to attend a Conservative service.) I said, "but that was Conservative!" He looked at me as if I were simple-minded and said: "Yes, of course… if you wanted to hear Kwartin, you went to his shul."

Nor have Hasidim been immune to the "forbidden" pleasures of listening to a *velt-khazn* hold forth at the *amud*. During the 1950s and 60s, I am told that American Hasidim arrived in droves at noon and crammed into the last few rows at Orthodox Temple Beth El of Borough Park, New York in time to hear Moshe Koussevitzky's Musaf service after they'd finished davening in their own *shtiblekh* (Hasidic prayer halls). At Conservative Temple Emanuel a block away, Hasidim did likewise. There they went up to the balcony, which was used only during the High Holidays, to hear Moshe's brother David officiate from the same *amud*—facing the congregation—where Zavel Kwartin had stood a generation before (1920-1926).[10]

The Modern Era

In passing, it is worth noting that the formal western musical notation and composition/harmony education of cantors and Ashkenazi choirmasters and composers in Western Europe from the 1800s onwards—particularly in Vienna, Berlin, Paris and London—led to the publication and performance of harmonized, majestic choral works meant to beautify services (increasingly with mixed choirs in synagogues). Nonetheless, the sophistication and attractiveness of the music on offer in the leading Choral Synagogue services of the Russian Empire should not be underestimated. The works of Eastern European choirmasters and cantors—which included cantorial solos involving *Hazzanut ha-Regesh*—were also in some cases published and were probably more compellingly magnetic for the local Jewish populations.

Biographies of the great *velt-khazonim* will be well known to many readers (they can easily be found at www.chazzanut.com). Leading figures among them were Kwartin, Rosenblatt, Hershman and Pierre Pinchik (1899-1971),

9 Tabaktempel in Budapest was where Kwartin moved after his brief St. Petersburg stint during 1908. He remained there till after World War I. *Tabak* ("tobacco") is *Dohany* in Hungarian, the synagogue being located on Dohany Street.

10 Told to me as I was preparing this article by Joseph A. Levine, who attended services in both synagogues on many a *Shabbat M'vorkhim* as a young cantorholic, and witnessed this unlikely phenomenon on a regular basis.

all of whom became superstars in the U.S. in the early 20th century. There is an especial wealth of information on Kwartin and Rosenblatt as a result of the publication of Kwartin's autobiography and the loving biography of Yossele by his son, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Rosenblatt.[11]

The Recipe for Greatness

What did these *velt-khazonim* have in common to create such a wide and devoted following?

- All came from religious, hasidic-influenced backgrounds, and received thorough groundings in Jewish practice
- The above four were all born in the Ukraine and had Yiddish as mother tongue
- All absorbed traditional, *nusah* (prayer modes) from early childhood
- All suffered tragedies early in their lives
- All had the blessing of naturally beautiful voices with extremely pleasant tone and flexibility apparent even before they pursued voice culture or musical studies
- All had private tutors who helped polish their innate gift and prepare them for professional cantorial life

I immediately sense, dear reader, that you are marshalling other characteristics to rank their genius and that may be the first characteristic of the *meivin*. OK, let us pursue that thought process because it calls out key essentials relevant for capturing the essence of attractiveness of *Hazzanut ha-Regesh*.

- compositional imagination to create singable melodies within recognizable limits of nusah
- balance of improvisational skill and ability to stick to the music as written
- breathing technique able to support the longest phrases
- clarity of diction
- understanding of text and phraseology
- control of tonal colors across the entire range/size of voice
- facility in coloratura
- facility in falsetto
- musicianship sufficient to give dignity and form to every rendering
- personality traits—bravery/generosity/self-discipline/modesty

11 Samuel Rosenblatt, *Yossele Rosenblatt, A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young), 1954, republished by the Cantors Assembly in 2004, as *The Eternal Cantor.*

- interpersonal empathy/gravitas/leadership qualities/stoicism
- depth of Jewish learning/religiosity
- capacity of intellect
- capacity of memory

We quickly see that no particular set combination of characteristics is essential for success; some elements, particularly regarding voice quality and technique are *de rigueur* but others such as compositional ability can be optional. Nevertheless, the gift of brilliant compositional power certainly adds weight to our respect for a *velt-khazn*, as does breadth of range.

The Voice-types

Personal tastes in preferences for differing qualities of voice quickly emerge in conversations among *m'vinim*. Let us quickly review the popular cantorial voice types. Generally, basses and bass-baritones are less popular than high baritones and tenors. (Religious law ruled out female voices from the Orthodox cantorate.) Among the high baritones, one can differentiate between varying degrees of lyricism. My high baritone preference is for a golden edge and less harshness of tone if possible. Among the tenors, I again favor a rounded tone even at the expense of losing a note or two around top C or D. This preference set is reasonably common amongst *m'vinim*, and accounts for the dazzling popularity of Kwartin and Rosenblatt who additionally were able to maintain absolute robustness of tone across lower, middle and higher registers.

Regarding flexibility, I find the ability to deliver controlled, fast-flowing coloratura as well as an appropriate sprinkling of lachrymose notes essential elements of an emotionally attractive rendition (here, the tenor Mordechai Hershman was a particular master). I guess I have become accustomed to expecting the beautiful and flowery falsetto when hearing many of Rosenblatt's compositions but mentally relegate this to being of secondary importance next to the degree of emotional arousal felt in respect of the piece overall. At the same time, if a cantor sings a Rosenblatt piece and avoids the difficult falsetto, *m'vinim* will feel a definite sense of loss/disappointment.

Elements that add to the excitement are:

mood setting through steady building plus progressive mode changes and the apposite introduction of Hasidic melodies, for example, before a dramatic ending.

Expectation is thwarted when a master composer has demanded a large vocal range and a cantor sings the piece in a manner calculated to avoid the extremities of pitch or moves into head voice instead of full voice at

the top end. This is despite voice teachers stressing that beauty of tone and avoidance of strain should be the key factors.

The Personal Preference

In terms of compositional pleasantness of impact, the overwhelming majority of *m'vinim* will prefer traditional use of *shteygers* (prayer modes), and where the cantor is accompanied, then the choice of chords should be sympathetic and not avant-garde. A general sweetness of tone, an appropriate whiff of nasality, a flowing and forward-moving coloratura coupled with judicious octave jumps juxtaposed against the gentleness of "otherworldly-journey" falsetto moments–for me—these are the elements of which traditional hazzanut is made.

One major caveat in describing normal personal preferences in hazzanut is that one's feelings on hearing an item are not determined just by the composition or the cantor but also by one's surroundings, condition and mood. For me, the shriller nature of the famous cantorial high tenors' renditions including Moshe Koussevitzky's recordings of Bezalel Brun's *U-Mipnei Hato'einu* and William Bogzester's *Habeit MiShomayim* or David Kusevitsky's recording of David Eizenstadt's *Ve-Khol Ha-Hayyim* or Simcha Koussevitzky's recording of Zavel Zilberts' *Havdoloh* become more meaningful to me when I am feeling more reflective or melancholy, because the more piercing high-tenor sound seems less easy to relate to when I am in a buoyant frame of mind.

The Event

I would now like to describe the thought processes impacting upon a traditional hazzanut fan of my era as the date for an announced cantorial concert drew near. Just as for Italians opera is more than simply what happens on stage, the whole experience of going to a cantorial concert is a gradually unfolding ritual for Jews. It begins with the anticipation, getting dressed for the evening, coming to the synagogue or hall and then entering the place where the main event is going to happen.[12] Typically, in Manchester in the 1950s/60s, if a great cantor were coming to town to concertize in aid of a local Jewish charity, the first communication of this would be posters in the Jewish shops and advertisements in the Jewish local press. These would be adorned with photographs of the star, often in impressive full bobble hat, silver-collared woolen tallit and clerical gown regalia. As the concert date drew near, the frisson of excitement would increase: if one hadn't ever heard

12 After John Berendt, *The City of Falling Angels* (London: Penguin), 2005: 102-104 (describing architect Giovanni Battista Meduna's grand design for the Venetian opera house, *La Fenice*).

this hazzan before, one would wonder what his voice sounded like. One would also wonder what he might sing. When the day finally arrived, one would go to the concert hall excitedly. There the foyer would be buzzing with the animated pre-performance mixed chatter of a social gathering and musical—even spiritual—experience.

It is interesting how hazzanut unifies a diverse public. Who attends these concerts? The answer is a unique mixture. The ultra-orthodox attendees include—inter alia—Hasidim in black *kapotes* (long sash-belted gabardine coats) with white shirts buttoned up to the neck without ties and wearing a variety of hats dependent upon their particular affiliation, and Mitnagdim in broad-brimmed black hats often partially revealing a black velvet yarmulke (skullcap) underneath. At the other extreme are non-Jews, and those in between run the gamut from socially charitable to *m'vinim*—occasionally to be seen with a smuggled-in small tape recorder. The young and the old, male and female, are present, the rich and the poor, the locals and the out-of-towners.

Not infrequently, the proceedings would start late. Then the master of ceremonies would call the accompanist and the cantor to the stage. Again, more often than not, it would become unfortunately clear that the length of time for cantor and pianist to rehearse had been rather short and one's enjoyment of the rendition would be tempered by nervousness for the cohesiveness of cantor and pianist. Nevertheless, Manchester of the 1960s was blessed with the presence of the great choirmaster and accompanist, Fabian Gonski, who invariably triumphed in these demanding circumstances against considerable odds. Occasionally, the cantor would bring his own favorite accompanist with him.

The Program

Here a balance had to be struck between the demands of the social audience and the *m'vinim*. Accordingly, almost invariably the selections would commence with a lighter item and then maybe an Israeli or Yiddish song before arriving at the meat of say a Kwartin's *Ve'al Y'dei Avodekho* or a self-composed cantorial gem. Sometimes the best local choir would be on hand to perform items without—and then with—the guest cantor as soloist. As finale, it would be fitting to have a major dramatic liturgical work sung by choir and cantor. Too much light content would inevitably be seen as disappointing by the *m'vinim,* but the cantor and organizers had to recognize that too prayerful a program could be seen as rather heavy for the general public. The printed

program sequence often did not reflect the exact final items actually sung, and this tradition seems to have extended to the present day!

The biographical notes were always matters of intense interest to the aficionados. How old is he? Where was he born? Is he related to other famous khazonim? What about his education? Did he go to music conservatoire/yeshiva/either/both/where? From whom / where did he learn hazzanut? Is he a Hasid or a Mitnaged? Which *shteles* (cantorial posts) has he held? Oftentimes, naturally, many of the answers to these types of personal questions were missing. Following a quick scan of the program one would ask oneself: which pieces do I recognize? How secure is his performance going to be? Will he make the high B? Will he do the falsetto trill? If it was a return visit after many years—has his voice aged? If so, how? Will he sing an item involving audience participation? If so, will the key be impossibly high, thus prohibiting a lusty general sing-along? I have seen only one example of encouragement of improvised audience humming along with dramatic hazzanut, but maybe this could catch on more widely if encouraged.

The Performance

Of course, live appearances are dangerous things, and singing accidents—cracked high notes, getting lost in long coloraturas, head-voice breaks, the choir failing to keep up, even forgotten phrases—happen. If indeed there were accidents, one would feel intense empathy for the soloist's courage in risking his persona under such circumstances. The visual drama is also of importance: what does he look like while he's singing; what gesticulations does he make, what are his facial expressions; how is his stance at moments of intense musical/religious fervor; how is he dressed ?

As a boy, I remember disappointment at the appearance of the cantor at the first concert I attended. He wore normal lay clothing rather than the clerical robing on the imposing photograph. One notable memory was seeing Cantor David Kusevitsky stride onto the stage of the Manchester Opera House clad in formal attire including tail-coat—most impressive!

If the lights were not dimmed, watching the reaction of the audience was an education. I have sat next to non-Jewish folk who were moved to tears without understanding the text, context or nusah issues. Then one would see the experts smiling in recognition yet simultaneously deeply and seriously involved. Too often there was an irritating person close by, humming along, not necessarily in tune or in sync with the artist.

Only a small minority of those present would typically be able to take in the performance at all levels—be familiar with the prayer, the musical mo-

dalities employed, the vocal technique displayed, appreciate the intrinsic/innate voice quality issues, know about the life and times of the composer, accurately assess and judge the accompaniment/timings, judge evasions of difficult elements (just touching into high notes, improvising easier paths) etc., etc. However, undoubtedly many present at a good quality *khazonishe* rendering are fundamentally moved to a degree not available from other forms of aural stimulation. Of course those present are self-selected and arguably I am biased, however, I was strongly reassured on this point by a widely experienced, elderly Zavel Kwartin asserting time and again throughout his memoirs that the thirst of the Jewish population for a traditional Jewish niggun (tune) needed to be recognised as fact. You might say that he was also biased, but it is hard for anyone to deny the vast interest in klezmer music based on the same modes as hazzanut[13] or the ability, even in recent times, for cantorial concerts at major venues to attract capacity crowds.

Listening to reactions during the intermission was always good fun—and instructive. It seemed that lack of musical/cantorial knowledge did not always inhibit a strident opinion but usually one could pick up consensus on what was good or bad. One could also discern a sprit of competition, maybe created by the audience, when attending multi-cantor concerts.

The Situation a Generation Ago

Just to illustrate that the provincial English city of Manchester of my youth was not such a cantorial wilderness, I list below the names of some of the luminaries who held cantorial positions or visited to concertize there during the 1950s, 60s and 70s: Reuben Berkovits, Philip Copperman, Peter Feigenblum, Leib Gluck, Simon Hass, Benjamin Hass, David Hass, Solomon Hershman (brother of Mordechai), Abraham Hillman, Moshe Korn, Shmuel Lerer, Joseph Malovany, David Kusevitsky and Moshe Preis. (In the 1930s, the legendary Russian tenor Misha Alexandrovitch had graced the reading desk of the Manchester Central Synagogue). My experience list is extended by inclusion of those I heard later, on moving 200 miles south, to London. Together with the further inclusion of those I heard during travels to Israel and America from time to time, the list expands to encompass most of the famous *khazonim* in the world during my lifetime. Furthermore, to qualify even as a minor *meivin*, one also needs to count all of one's seeing/listening experiences from videos, DVDs, cassettes, 78s, 33s, CDs and numerous electronic/internet files. In reviewing 50+ years of cantorholicism, I should

13 See, for documentation of this point, Mark Kligman, "Klezmer and Hazzanut," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Vol. 31, Fall 2006, pages 147-157.

record those moments etched in my memory as the most moving ones: the memorable singing by Benjamin Muller of Hershman's *Zorim Omrim* (1980s London); Philip Copperman's singing of Brun's *U-Mipnei Hato'einu* (1960s London) accompanied by the London Jewish Male Choir; and Moshe Preis' singing of his own composition, *Sim Sholom* (1960s Manchester). One unashamedly had tears in one's eyes at those moments.

In terms of sourcing cantorial records in the UK in the 1960s/70s to build a collection, one had to rely on a combination of some supplies from local Jewish shops plus catalogue purchasing from the USA. I have to say that at the time it was a fairly lonely pursuit. Most of those close to me, including my parents who were from the sophisticated musical city of Vienna, found my interest in cantorial art past and present—but mostly past—to be a gainless hobby related to a primitive genre and the ongoing listening to cantorial masterpieces in my bedroom which I shared with a brother (now a Rabbi) to be of zero benefit to my education or development. Better I should be interested in medicine in accordance with family tradition. In no way were my piano lessons, membership in the shul choir or occasionally davening for the *amud* (leading services from the reader's prayer stand) supposed to encourage interest in hazzanut!

The Situation in Modern Times

In the second half of the 20th century, the pervasive presence of cantors singing *Hazzanut ha-Regesh* at many synagogues has strongly declined. Similarly, the frequency and scale of cantorial concerts diminished markedly from the 1950s to the 1990s. Nevertheless, aficionados were well served even in the last 30 years by the international performances of a number of widely concertizing virtuosos including—but not limited to—Chaim Adler, David Bagley, Asher Hainovitz, Moshe Stern, Chaim Eliezer Herstik, Naftali Herstik, Joseph Malovany, Ben-Zion Miller; Yaakov Motzen and Benjamin Muller. Interestingly, in the former Soviet Union, the geographical birthplace of this music, a series of concerts by this generation of khazonim re-ignited an awareness of Jewish culture. Films showing audiences' faces demonstrate the phenomenal emotional chords struck by these performances. My rabbinical brother lectured on Jewish subjects in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. After one talk, he was confronted by an elderly Jewish gentleman who said to him in Yiddish: "*Rebbe, dos nekste mol, kent ihr unz shikn a khazn?" (Rabbi, next time, could you send us a cantor?)*

More recently there has emerged a veritable wave of highly gifted, mainly Hasidic cantors, some trained in Israel as a result of the devoted work of

teachers such as Eli Jaffe and Naftali Herstik.[14] The new cantorial stars include Yitzchok Meir Helfgott whose fame enabled him recently to fill New York's Metropolitan Opera House, Yaakov Yosef Stark, Zalman Wurtzberger, Yechezkel Klang, Yaakov Rosenfeld, Zalman Baumgarten, Yehuda Niasoff, Yaakov Lemmer, Tzvi Horowitz, Yitzchak Steinwirt and Yehoshua Samuels. Their appearances, often in Hasidic garb with full beards and *peyes* (sidelocks), coupled with their traditionally authentic East European pronunciation of Hebrew, seem to generate an additional natural affinity with the cantors of old.

Modern aficionados are helped by relevant internet sites which include cantorial videos and sound recordings as well as blogs which have created a sense of community, spanning the diverse set of those infected with—or benefiting from (depending on your viewpoint)—this incurable interest. Israeli maestro Dr. Mordechai Sobol has also contributed strongly to the resurgence of *Hazzanut ha-Regesh*. His pioneering work in writing and conducting high quality orchestral and choral accompaniments to the famous cantorial recitatives of the Golden Age enable one to enjoy the old pieces with more sophistication at modern cantorial concerts on a level unseen since the heyday of American musician Abraham Ellstein who worked with the Jewish cantorial/opera stars Jan Peerce and Richard Tucker over half-a-century ago. Furthermore, utilizing modern sound technology, Sobol has released re-recordings of the old East European masters themselves singing their most famous items, fused seamlessly with modern Israeli orchestra and choral accompaniment in a series of remarkable CDs entitled *BaYamim HaHem BaZ'man HaZeh* (In Those Days At This Time). Turning full circle, hazzanut is also returning to its pre-World War II roots in Poland, making a most popular come-back each year at the Cracow Festival of Jewish Culture where the major concert by leading cantors is pre-eminent amongst all the other cultural and klezmer offerings to a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish audience.

What are the textbooks for a course on "cantorology"? Answer: not so easy to find. However, the qualified *meivin* needs to be conversant with all the biographical/historical books previously mentioned plus *Cantors of the Golden Age*,[15] as well as the biographies of D. Werdyger,[16] S. Secunda[17], M.

14 Those interested further in this aspect should consult—www.taci.org.il—the website of the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute.

15 Velvel Pasternak & Noah Schall, *Cantors of the Golden Age* (New York: Tara Publications), 1991.

16 Duvid Werdyger and Avraham Yaakov Finkel, *Songs of Hope* (New York-London-Jerusalem: CIS Publishers), 1993.

17 Victoria Secunda, *Bei Mir Bist Du Schön* (Weston: Magic Circle Press), 1982.

Koussevitzky[18] and the recollections of M. Yardeni.[19] Further desirable reading matter includes music tomes—or at least the narrative introductions to those tomes—of the great Ashkenazi synagogue compilations from Sulzer onwards.

The world of Jewish music is broad. The world of Ashkenazi synagogue music is narrower. Within this relatively small space we must now focus down much further to travel to our target. We bypass the world of increasingly sophisticated, modern (mainly North American) synagogal choral works and eschew the pervasive (Modern Orthodox and Conservative) trend to *daven* (pray) in *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew). Now we must make a further diversion around inclusive, nusah-dilute, *ba'al tefillah*-led Hasidic pop services that are increasingly popular among the Modern Orthodox. We must also probably rule out most of those places where congregants and/or boards of management demand that services end before noon on Shabbat/Yom-tov, as well as those locations forbidding word repetition due partly to the increasing stringency of the Mitnagdic Yeshivah world. We are left with a very small envelope.

Few congregations are inclined to invest in the expense of a (probably Hasidic) cantorial luminary in addition to rabbinical clergy. Few communities seem to be able to generate the enthusiasm/communal priority to maintain a traditional choir to assist a traditional hazzan.(The competing tugs of The Simpsons/computer games/baseball/school tests etc., etc. versus "Simon; Go with Danny to choir practice at the shul for a couple of hours tonight!" may make such a prospect almost hopeless.) I have to say that I actually enjoyed the generation-mixing and educational 8:00 PM-10:00 PM rehearsals on Thursday nights with the choir when I was a teenager, in an era when our shul had a highly talented bel-canto-style traditional, Orthodox cantor.

It is also likely to be challenging nowadays for a traditional hazzan and his family to live long-term, comfortably within a modern community even if said community were able and willing to afford, nurture, cherish and respect him. Now, more than ever, a talented and intelligent, young, traditional potential hazzan is likely to pursue a career in another profession because of the perception and probable reality of better financial prospects elsewhere, coupled with a desire to raise a family in an atmosphere ethnocentrically close to his own upbringing. Even the giants of old had *tsores* (problems) with the Respect issue! Yossele Rosenblatt left Munkacz apparently because of an argument about the provision of a suitable choir, and Zavel Kwartin was extremely disenchanted with the prospect of the congregational Rabbi's drive

18 Akiva Zimmermann, *I Remember Him Still* (Tel Aviv: Shaarei Ron), 1999.

19 Mordechai Yardeini, *Words and Music* (New York: Yiddisher Kultur Verband), 1986.

for modernization of the services at his synagogue in Brooklyn, New York in the 1920s, which would have wiped out or massively reduced the liturgical texts for his beautiful Hebrew recitatives.

The Future Prospects

The conflicting pressures in congregations seem to have generally militated against the wide survival of traditional hazzanut in modern services. A combination of factors has assured that most congregations faced with the choice between solely rabbinical leadership versus joint rabbinical and cantorial leadership have opted for the former. This trend has been assisted by the general improvement of economic circumstances evidently having made prayerful, emotionally pleading renditions anachronistic to the majority. Additionally, a further influence might possibly be different "industrial organization"—use of structural ecclesiastical authority by the rabbinical establishment.

In this context it is important to note the strange paradoxical point cited by a leading contemporary American Cantor, Moshe Schulhof,[20] as follows. In the ultra-Orthodox world, decisions of halakhic authorities such as Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky (1863-1940) of Vilna, Rabbi Yonasan Steif of Budapest (1877-1958) and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) of New York–"the Great Ones of Their Generations"—were adhered to with intense zeal. Nevertheless it was in the main Othodox synagogues of Vilna, Budapest and New York where *Hazzanut ha-Regesh* with its florid repetition attained its zenith from the lips of Hershman, Preis and Koussevitzky, apparently without objection being raised by the three aforementioned authorities. Fans of hazzanut suggest therefore that the anti-repetition strictures imposed upon modern-day Orthodox hazzanim have less-balanced origins than the decisions of those earlier rabbinic authorities who accepted the genre naturally.

I have strenuously avoided mentioning the difficulty of maintaining smooth employment interaction with those of an artistic temperament because I am biased on the side of the hazzan—but in a comprehensive article such as this, one cannot avoid at least a hint of a mention of this point which may underlie at least some of the cases of discontinuation of cantorial posts. Last but not least, we must remember the Secunda song verse from *Farvos Zingt a Khazn*, regarding the pressures of the sometimes difficult work environment of the communal servant operating in the public eye. These pressures are linked to the relationships with boards of management and members of

20 "Put Cantors Back Where They Belong," The Jewish Ministers Cantors Association Website, Article 3.

the community, which even for some great hazzanim, have been stressful from time to time.

Still, one must not be pessimistic. To properly answer the question posed at the beginning of this article I must emphasize that despite all, aficionados of hazzanut love to listen because it gives them a unique and deep emotional boost linked to tone, melody, the personality of the hazzan and mode of the particular prayer. The variety of pieces available guarantees a connection, no matter what the mood or situation of the listener. Away from synagogue or concert hall the very subject matter of "cantorology" also provides a complex and fascinating area for study at different levels to suit individual taste, and enables an added sense of community when exchanging views on it with like-minded people from a wide variety of backgrounds, who are sharing a noble common interest.

To end on an even brighter note, the relatively modest resurgence of traditional hazzanut and the emergence of orchestra-accompanied arrangements, albeit not as mass appeal an item as in the Golden Age, mean that we can certainly look forward to a continuing era of wonderful concerts and moving prayer experiences. These include the re-introduced traditional cantorial/choral midnight *S'lihot*[21] and *Sh'vi'i* (seventh day) *shel Pesah* Ma'ariv service with *S'firah*[22] at a limited number of locations, as well as the New Era phenomenon of digitally enhanced recordings of the greats of yesteryear, the emergence of phenomenally gifted younger khazonim and yes—even regular cantorial cruises on top-class ocean liners. Welcome aboard!

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21 Penitential prayer service held at midnight on Saturday of the week before Rosh HaShanah.

22 Counting the Omer service on the seventh night of Passover .

"Don't Conduct!"

By Velvel Pasternak

In 1962 I was approached by Benedict Stambler, a collector of Jewish music and a pioneer in the field of Hasidic recordings in the United States, to arrange and conduct a chorus of Lubavitch Hasidim for the first in a series of HaBaD recordings. Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanoff, editor of both volumes of *Sefer HaNiggunim* (anthology of transcribed Lubavitch melodies) was appointed music consultant for this recording. He selected the songs and chose the Lubavitch Hasidim who were to sing in the chorus. Neither Stambler nor I had anything to do with the selection process. This was the "hand-picked chorus" that I would train and record.

At our first meeting, a copy of *Sefer HaNiggunim* was given to me and I was asked to play while the group sang through the program of melodies to be recorded. Because these Hasidim sang so many of the songs differently from the printed musical transcriptions, I found it necessary to rewrite most of the niggunim. Correct transcriptions were necessary for the backup singers and instrumental ensemble that would accompany the Hasidim. After the printed niggunim were corrected, I set about arranging them with simple harmonies.

Our first rehearsal took place in a basement in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and I was forced to quickly address an interesting problem. My rather forthright instruction that the chorus must begin and end together was met with very quizzical looks. "Hasidim always begin and end together," they objected. It took me a little time to realize that the members of my chorus did most of their singing during *farbrengen* (special Hasidic gatherings) that took place several times a year at Lubavitch Headquarters. The format of a Lubavitch *farbrengen* was constant. Hundreds of hasidim gathered at 770 Eastern Parkway, and for several hours listened raptly to a discourse by Rabbi Menachem Mendl Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, punctuated at various times with the singing of niggunim by the entire gathering. A designated Hasid who took his cue when the Rebbe motioned with his hand, began a niggun that was taken up by all assembled. The singing ended when the Rebbe motioned once again. Every eye focused on the Rebbe as he continued his discourse.

For a young conductor to inform these singers that they needed to start together and end together served only to insult them. It took great effort to convince them that a taped recording of a *farbrengen* would prove beyond doubt that the beginnings and endings of the niggunim were ragged and far

below the musical standards needed for a professional recording. When they finally agreed, I had won my first pyrrhic victory.

After several months of weekly rehearsals during which they learned to watch my hands, sing *legato* and produce some elementary shadings of tone, I found that try as I might to teach them, none of the Hasidim were able to sing the harmonies that I had written. This was not due to the arrangements' level of difficulty; the Hasidim were simply unable to concentrate on anything but the melody. With permission from Lubavitch I hired three "ringers" (professionals") to sing the harmonies. The rehearsals then went well. After several more months, when I felt I had taken the group musically as far as it could go, I asked that a recording date be scheduled.

I was told that the recording session must take place either on Monday evening after dark or on Tuesday before dark. This was in keeping with the belief among traditional Jews that Tuesday, the third day of the week, is a day of *mazel* (good luck). In the Book of Genesis it is written that God looked out each day and "saw that it was good." Only on the third day are the words "saw that it was good" repeated a second time. Tuesday therefore became a "doubly good" day. Whenever possible, Jews choose Tuesday to announce an engagement, move to a new house or apartment, hold a wedding ceremony, open a new business, etc., all in the belief that this day holds good luck for those endeavors. In keeping with this idea the Lubavitch Hasidim requested that their first recording session be held on a Tuesday, the day of good luck.

According to the Jewish calendar, a new day begins with the preceding evening—Monday after dark is already considered to be Tuesday. The producers promised that they would schedule a recording studio and an engineer for "Tuesday." When a studio was obtained and a final recording date (actually, a Monday night in early Spring) was announced, Rabbi Zalmanoff instructed us that on the Saturday night before the recording we were to gather for a "mini *farbrengen*." When I asked the reason I was told that, as Hasidim performing a task for Lubavitch, they needed an evening of good fellowship in which to wish each other luck with the recording. Dutifully, the producers and I arrived at the home of one of the singers an hour after Shabbos was over. Upon entering we found tables filled with refreshments, drink and spirits. For the first time since the rehearsals began, I was afforded the opportunity of listening to each of my Hasidim sing solo. Some of them, on the merit of their vocal abilities, would never have been permitted to sing in any chorus. At the end of the evening, however, we left full of good cheer and spurred on to the forthcoming Lubavitch recording.

The producers had been able to rent a studio on Eighth Avenue near 57th Street in Manhattan. A well-known sound engineer, David Hancock, was engaged. Hancock had been one of the first sound engineers to transfer old seventy-eight r.p.m. recordings of the great cantors of the 20th century to magnetic tape for the Collectors Guild Record Company. In the process, much of the static and other extraneous noises were eliminated. Through this rather time-consuming and tedious work Hancock, who was not Jewish, became very familiar with—and developed great fondness for—Hebrew liturgical music. He looked forward to a live recording session of Hasidic music. His admonition to me was to get the "Lubos" (his endearing term for the Hasidim) into the studio no later than 7: 30 p.m. At the then going rate of $45.00 per hour, the studio was quite expensive. I made sure that each of my singers and "ringers" knew the cost and importance of being on time.

I was at the studio by 6: 30 p.m., discussed microphone set-up with our engineer, arranged placement of the chorus and instrumentalists, and set the order in which the selections would be recorded. At 7: 20 p.m. Hancock asked, "Where are they?" Looking for my singers, I opened the window onto Eighth Avenue. The location of this studio happened to be a center of Rock 'n Roll music, and the area was full of hippies, many of whom wore beards. To locate my bearded Hasidim was like looking for a needle in a haystack. At 7: 25 I repeated the action and leaned far out of the window in order to get a better view of the street. This time I saw what looked like my Hasidim a block away. As they approached I noticed that there were far too many of them. I could only assume that my Hasidim had encountered another group of Hasidim in the subway and they were walking together up Eighth Avenue. I believed that at the entrance to the studio the group would split, and my Hasidim would enter the building while the others would continue to their destination.

Was I wrong! After the elevator disgorged its fifth load, there were more than sixty people in the studio. Only twenty-four of them belonged to my chorus and orchestra; the others were older Hasidim, women and children. Before I had a chance to vent my anger, two men began removing bottles of soda from a crate, and several women unpacked baked goods that included honey cake and sponge cake. Finally, for the *pièce de résistance*, a Hasid opened two brown paper bags and revealed four bottles of "*zeks un ninetsiger*" (192-proof vodka). When he started passing filled shot glasses to all the singers I could no longer contain myself.

"What is going on here?"

"We're going to have a *farbrengen*," one of the Hasidim responded.

"Here? Now? Why?" I asked in chagrin.

The Hasidim tried to calm me down. I was informed again that they were not professional singers. They could not simply approach a microphone and sing. Because they were doing the bidding of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, it was necessary for them to "warm up" both physically and spiritually. This could only be accomplished through a *farbrengen*.

"How long will this *farbrengen* last?" I asked rather timidly. "This *farbrengen* will last as long as it lasts, not one minute longer," came the reply.

A Hasid took out a photograph of the Rebbe and attached it to the wall with a thumbtack. The cake and the spirits were passed around, with soda for the women and children. Each singer toasted the Rebbe in absentia, and wished the others good luck in the duty they were about to perform. As the conductor, I was asked to join in the *l'-hayyim* (toast) and was given a small glass filled with vodka. Never having drunk alcohol of this strength, I imagined that the effect was similar to drinking Draino, the special liquid touted in commercials as "unclogging everything on its way down."

The producers and sound engineers looked on from the control room in amazement. "I don't believe this. We should get a reporter and a camera man from the entertainment newspaper *Variety*, because no one will believe that this scene happened unless it is documented."

My singers and the other Hasidim took their time–fifty minutes in all. When the *farbrengen* ended, the soda, the vodka and the cake were whisked away. All those not performing were shunted to the sidelines of the studio and my sixteen singers and three "ringers" stepped up to the waiting microphones. One Hasid proclaimed, "Now we are ready to do the bidding of the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

I finally felt that I had control of the situation. However, just before I gave the downbeat to the orchestra, Rabbi Zalmanoff approached me.

"Before we begin I need a small favor from you."

"Certainly," I replied, what is it?"

"It's a small favor," he repeated. "Please don't conduct."

"Please what?" I asked in astonishment. "What do you mean, 'don't conduct?'"

For some reason, he must have thought I was having trouble with his English.

"Don't make with the hands," he said. "Sit down, you'll get paid anyway."

"What do you mean, 'sit down'?" I retorted. "I spent six months of my life rehearsing this group to get them ready for this recording, and now you tell me not to conduct? Please, tell me—what is the problem?"

"I see that you are a difficult man, so I will tell you the truth. You can conduct, but nobody will watch you."

"Why will they not watch me?"

"Because if they watch you, it will get in the way of their *kavvonoh* (concentration)," he replied.

There it was, out in the open. I moved toward the chorus and gave the downbeat. The instrumentalists picked up the introduction while sixteen pairs of eyes closed on me. I could have been in another state as far as my singers were concerned. They sang with joy and fervor and the intensity of their singing permeated the entire studio. I realized that at the very least I had prepared them well enough to be able to sing their own melody and keep time with the instrumentalists.

Thus began our recording session. We moved along briskly until approximately 10 o'clock, when something unexpected occurred. Like most recording studios, ours had a light outside its door. Since any movement or noise can be picked up by the sophisticated recording equipment, the sound engineer would turn on the light when actual recording–rather than rehearsing–took place. It is the rule in all recording establishments that when this light is on one does not move around, enter or exit the studio. We began rehearsing the well-known *U-Foratsto* ("Israel shall expand in all directions").

In his celestial abode, God often creates truly interesting *shiddukhim* (matches) on earth below. Our main recording studio was attached to a secondary studio, which had access to the hallway and restrooms only through ours. The smaller studio had been rented for the evening to a troupe of ballet dancers who rehearsed clad in skintight leotards. One of the young female dancers, needing to use the outside facilities and noting that the light was not on, quietly entered the main studio and made her way to the hall. Because I was busy conducting the instrumentalists I did not notice her, nor did I see what transpired behind me in the studio. Suddenly, I was brought up short by a cry of "cut" from the control room. I looked back and discovered that my singers had disappeared.

Where are they?" I shouted.

No one seemed to know. I ran into the hallway and found it empty. I quickly took the elevator down to the street level. Outside, on Eighth Avenue, I found my Lubavitch chorus.

"What are you doing out here?" I asked trying to restrain myself.

"You did not see what happened up there in the studio?"

"What happened?" I asked.

"A girl in almost no clothing came into the room as we were singing *U-Foratsto*," they replied.

"So?" I asked in bewilderment.

"So we left," said a Hasid."

"So you left?" I demanded, trying to control myself.

"Yes," the Hasid replied. You see, Rabbi Pasternak" (Hasidim sometimes grant honorary ordination to people who work for them, and although I did not have a degree in rabbinics, I was nevertheless awarded the title), "you do not understand who we are. Suppose for a minute that we were in the middle of prayers in the synagogue and a scantily dressed woman walked in. What would we do? We would simply close our prayer books and leave the synagogue. The same thing is true here. You have thought of us all along as a group of singers. The truth of the matter is that we are not singers; we are Hasidim, here to do the bidding of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. For us this recording is similar to a worship service. So in a situation like this, we must do exactly what we would do in a synagogue."

I felt the blood rush to my head. I said to them in disbelief: "The age of miracles is not past. I, who had my eyes open, did not see the scantily dressed girl enter the room; but you, who had your eyes closed, were able to see her?"

"All right, Rabbi, no jokes."

"Okay, it's over. Let's get back to the recording," I responded. I was told that unless the dancers were moved to another studio, my singers would not return.

"How am I to change their studio?" I asked.

"You are a bright man. We're sure that you will find a way."

I took the elevator up to the office and looked for the manager. "We must change the studio of the ballet dancers," I said.

"Impossible!" said the manager.

"Do you know who my people are?" I asked.

No, and frankly I don't care," replied the manager.

"They are a group of Amish from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and they are here with their spiritual leader to record their music," I explained. "And if

they can't finish tonght, it will be a financial and spiritual disaster for them." The manager hesitated. After all, for Amish one should have respect even if one doesn't fully understand their lifestyle. He was thoroughly convinced, however, when I offered the remains of a bottle of 192-proof vodka. While I went to get the bottle, the manager found a different studio for the dancers.

There is an expression in Yiddish: *men lakht mit yashrishkes* (loosely translated as, "you laugh on the outside but with heartache on the inside"). Although when looking back I find the incident quite comical, it did not seem funny when it happened. To the credit of the Lubavitch Hasidim, they were right and I was wrong. They were handpicked Hasidim, instructed to present to the world the first recorded music of Lubavitch, at the bidding of the Rebbe. As such, they treated the project with much more religious conviction and feeling than I had.

But singers come in many varieties. Among these are singers who sing flat (pull down from the tone) and those who sing sharp (overshoot the tone). Given the choice of either of these types, a vocal coach would probably choose the one that sings sharp. He might conclude that this singer, in an attempt to reach the correct tone moves above it, whereas the singer who sings flat is not aiming at all.

During the Lubavitch recording session described above, a major problem could not be resolved. When the Hasidim sang three *dveikus* (meditative) melodies attributed to the first Rebbe of Lubavitch, the pitch began to rise a quarter-tone, a half-tone, and finally a full tone in each song. In music, this is quite a distance. Because they were untrained singers I assumed they were not hearing the instrumentalists positioned in front of them. The solution, I thought, would be to take the musicians playing portable instruments and place them next to the Hasidim. I positioned the violinist, clarinet, trumpeter and flautist each between two Lubavitch Hasidim, so that the instruments were only several inches from the singers' ears. For a few moments the singing was steady, but soon it again began to rise. No matter how many times we tried, the results were the same. I finally came to realize that, although the Hasidim were ostensibly singing these songs for me, their conductor, they were really directing their songs to God on high. As they strove to lift the melody heavenward, the pitch kept rising.

The recording of these three songs could not be salvaged. Consequently, the Hasidim were brought back to the studio several weeks later, to record the three *dveikus* niggunim *a cappella* (unaccompanied). After they left, the sound engineer overdubbed an accordian accompaniment to the vocals. When the pitch of the singers rose, the engineer adjusted the recording speed of

the accordion to match the new pitch of the Lubavitch Hasidim. Thankfully, the songs were saved and included on the recording. When it was released, a critical review in the *London Jewish Chronicle* proclaimed this to be one of the finest recordings of authentic Jewish music ever made.

Several months later, the producers received a call from Leonard Bernstein's office in New York city. They were told that the world-famous conductor had come across the Lubavitcher recording and wanted to use one of the selections for a program of religious folk music. Truly flattered, and at the same time awed by the knowledge that this great musician would even listen to Hasidic music, they gave permission. Fifty years later, their ensuing embarrassment can be revealed. Yes, the selection was played–on Christmas Eve–which in that year happened to fall on a Friday night.

Velvel Pasternak, a noted ethnomusicologist, has worked over four decades to capture and transmit the musical traditions of world Jewish communities. His ten recordings and twelve books of Hasidic music are acknowledged as definitive studies in their field. Since 1971 he has served as editor for Tara Publications. A gifted lecturer, he brings the joy of Hasidic music to audiences throughout North America and Israel. This article is reprinted, with permission, from ***Beyond Hava Nagila****, the 1999 retelling of his music projects with Hasidim.*

Hasidic Dance

By Samuel Abba Horodetzky

Dance, in general, is the heritage of nations everywhere and throughout the ages. The ancients were quite familiar with it, many of them circle-dancing before going forth to wage war against their enemies. That type of dance symbolized victory, a priori. Others danced to ward off evil spirits, storms, plagues and various illnesses.

Dance was also very important in the life of early Hebrews during the biblical epoch, in two ways. The first was to celebrate military success: after the Egyptian debacle at the Reed Sea ("And Miriam the Prophetess took up the timbrel, and all the women followed her with timbrels and dance;" Exodus 15: 20). After Jephtha's triumph over the Ammonites, "his daughter went forth to greet him with timbrel and dance;" Judges 11: 34). When the Philistines were defeated, "the women came forth from every city of Israel in song and dance to greet King Saul" (I Samuel 18: 6).

The second role that biblical dance played was a religious one, characterized by great ecstasy. We find it when David brought the Holy Ark from Hebron to Jerusalem. So unbounded was his religious fervor that he danced "clad only in a linen loincloth" before the entire people (II Samuel 6: 14). On Festivals the daughters of Israel would dance: "There is a yearly feast for God [when] the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance" (Judges 21: 19; 21). According to a Talmudic statement, the daughters of Israel would dance in the vineyards on the fifteenth day of Av and on the night of the tenth of Tishrei, once the shofar had been sounded to end Yom Kippur (BT, *Ta'anit* 26b).

Another aggadah relates that at the Water Drawing celebration on the seventh night of Sukkot, the notables of Israel would dance with flaming torches in hand and singing psalms of praise. So joyous was this annual religious ceremony that Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel was said to juggle eight torches while singing and dancing, with no two of them ever touching (BT, *Sukkah* 51a). The Book of Psalms attests to religious dance having taken root as an accepted form of worship in biblical Israel: "Praise His name in dance;" "Praise Him with timbrel and dance" (Psalms 149: 3; 150: 4).

Dance continued as a fixture in Jewish religious observance after the Temple's fall, as evidenced by the Talmudic Schools of Shammai and Hillel debating the issue of how one should dance before the bride (BT, *K'tubot* 17a).

Further proof is offered by the rabbinic prohibition against (secular) dancing on Shabbat[1] (BT, *Beitsah* 36b).

In the Midrash, dance is bundled with song as a symbol of the most sublime pleasure. "God only created the world for the sake of song and music; the heavens whisper song and the oceans murmur music" (*Alfa Beita d'-Rabi Akiva*, section 2). "And it shall come to pass at the end of days that the Holy One will host a dance for the righteous, and thousands upon thousands of ministering angels shall stand before them playing lyres, harps and cymbals, and God Himself will dance with them, surrounded by the sun, the moon and all the stars of the firmament" (BT, *Ta'anit* 31a).

The Kabbalah never forbade religious dance. To the contrary, it made the achievement of ecstasy—as a means of cleaving to God (*D'veikut*)—its foundation stone. And the road to ecstasy was paved with dance. In Safed, the Galilean center of mysticism from the fourth through the sixteenth centuries, a group would go out to visit Jewish homes on Motsa'ei Shabbat with song and dance (see my *Torat Ha-Kabbalah Shel Rabbi Moshe…Cordovero*, 1924: 19). Throughout the dark Medieval period in Europe, with its unrelenting animosity toward Jews, even the elderly would engage in *Rikkud Shel Mitzvah* at weddings and other positive life cycle events.

The Hasidic Doctrine of Israel Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760) elevated religious dance to its highest pinnacle; only through its fiery excitement could one's soul climb heavenward unimpeded. The view that dance depended upon music as the source of its blessing was expressed by the Baal Shem Tov's great-grandson, Nahman of Bratslav (1772-1811).

> Everything in the world has its own melody, including atheism. It is in music's very nature to involve listeners in every figuration of its melody, to stir their souls and win them over completely. Even more so will a dancer be guided by music, for the movements of one's torso, head and extremities must reflect the melody's measured movements and become as one with it. Anyone who is privileged to experience this one-ness, this losing of oneself in the music and the dance, will recognize it as the most incomparable pleasure of all (*Likutei MaHaR"aN* 82: 26).

Hasidic dance is not limited by time or space; as on holy day celebrations, so at memorial commemorations. The Yahrzeit of a Tzaddik is marked by dancing and singing: *Hillula Shel Rabi*. In addition, Bratslaver Hasidim habitually go outside of the synagogue to dance after Shabbat and Yom Tov services.

1 As a *shevut* or action which, while not belonging to the category of forbidden labors (BT, Sabbat 73a), was suspect because it did not conform to the spirit of Shabbat as a complete rest: *m'nuhah sh'leimah*.

Like the dancing, their prayer is marked by intense joy and spirit. On Rosh HaShanah it is their custom to gather from far and wide around Rav Nahman's grave in Uman, near the Ukranian capitol of Kiev, in order to pray together in his company as he requested. This gathering is distinguished by the same blend of awe and happiness that permeates their dancing following prayer services. It is truly the modern reincarnation of our people's age-old religious dance as recorded in the Hebrew Bible, Aggadah and Kabbalah.

Dr. Samuel Abba Horodetzky (1871-1957) was an historian of Hasidism who edited ***Ha-Goren****, an annual on Jewish scholarship, and authored numerous monographs on Hasidic doctrine, including* ***Yahadut Ha-Seikhel V'ha-Regesh*** *(Tel Aviv: 1947). This article is excerpted and translated from M. S. Geshuri,* ***La-Hasidim Mizmor*** *(Jerusalem: Ha-Tehiyah, 1945), pages 69-74 [JAL].*

M'sirat Nefesh: Dancing in the Face of Death

By Duvid Werdyger

Many Holocaust survivors are reluctant to speak about their experiences; the memories are simply too painful for them to recall. However, there are many people today who, unable to believe the gruesome facts of the Holocaust, are simply turning their backs on the truth; some even deny that it ever occurred. It is therefore the solemn duty of every Holocaust survivor to tell the world what Germany, the incarnation of Amalek, has done to the Jewish people. The world must remember the millions of innocent Jews that were tortured, terrorized and massacred, and pay tribute to the holy souls that were brutally taken from us. And above all, we must tell our children of the countless prisoners who went to their deaths with *Sh'ma Yisrael* on their lips.

It is incumbent on me to convey my story for posterity, in the spirit of *v'-higad'ta l'-vinkha* (*Sh'mot* 13: 8), the Torah's directive which commands us to tell our children about their past. Moreover, it is written, *Zakhor eit asher asah l'-kha Amalek*–"Remember what Amalek did to you" (*D'varim* 25: 17). That *parshah,* which speaks of Amalek's cowardly attack, ends with the words *lo tishkah*–"you must not forget."

Now, as we, the survivors, enter our twilight years, our hope rests upon our precious grandchildren who are the promise of the future, the replacement for the thousands of holy martyrs whose lives were snuffed out. Their unwavering observance of Torah and *mitzvot* will avenge their ancestors' blood and eventually triumph over all forces of darkness.

In *Parshat Ha'azinu,* HaShem proclaims, "If I crushed, I will heal" (*D'varim* 32: 39). Although our people have been injured, maimed and killed, HaShem, in His compassion, is binding our wounds. The spiritual re-awakening that is evident in today's burgeoning Torah institutions, the worldwide movement of *t'shuvah,* the resurgence of the *Hasidic* movement and the proliferation of *koll'lim* in Erets Yisrael and America are all signs that HaShem is comforting us and restoring the glory of His people.

The Rebbe of Alexander would often quote the *pasuk* in *Y'shayahuu* (55: 12), *Ki v'-simhah teitsei'u*–"For you shall go out with joy." A person who is always joyous, he explained, can overcome all afflictions and tribulations. This was the thought that sustained our hopes in the darkest hours and nurtured our spirits when our bodies were racked with pain and hunger…

Despite the torturous circumstances, there were many instances where Jews did resist. In the Warsaw Ghetto, for example, on the first night of Pesah, April 19, 1943, a small band of heroic Jewish fighters battled bravely, sending a heavily armed German unit fleeing for their lives.

And even more important, the most crucial form of resistance was our tenacious clinging to HaShem, His Torah and the *mitzvot.* With unwavering faith, we actually triumphed over the vicious beasts that tried so hard to annihilate us.

While most of the Jewish community in my own city of Cracow lived in constant terror of the daily roundups and unrelenting persecution, a hundred *yeshivah bahurim* risked their lives each day to carry *G'marot* and other *s'farim* to an underground cellar. Following in the footsteps of their 1st-century forebears who studied Torah in hidden caves in defiance of the Roman oppressors' edicts, these young men immersed themselves in the Talmud, studying with incredible *hatmadah* and intensity, oblivious to the mortal peril that threatened them should they be discovered. At all times, a *bahur* was posted outside as a guard to warn of approaching SS men.

Late one evening, returning from a day of heavy forced labor and beatings, I stopped at the cellar where the *bahurim* were learning by the light of one bare bulb. Taking a seat, I was suddenly overcome with agonizing sadness. I burst into tears and wept uncontrollably. Gently, one of the *bahurim* tried to console me and strengthen my *bitahon.*

Imo anokhi b'-tsarah, he quoted—"HaShem is with us when we are in distress. If we cry out to Him, He will answer. *Al shahal vafesen tidrokh*—On the lion and the viper you will tread—Just have *bitahon*, and be *b'-simhah*. The day of vengeance will come."

His soothing words calmed me and lifted my spirits. Afterwards, I learned that the *bahur's* name was Mattes, and that he had come to Cracow from Vienna in 1934. Born into a non-religious family, he felt drawn to Torah and made his home in the Gerer *shtibl*. He grew a beard and *pei'ot,* studied assiduously and within a few short years, became an outstanding *talmid hakham*. Inspired by his selfless dedication, the brightest students in the *shtibl* gathered around him, recognizing him as their leader. People called his followers "the Mattes Brigade." In the days of Nazi terror, these "Mattes troopers" exhibited great *m'sirat nefesh* in saving people's lives and helping the needy, often in total disregard of their own safety. While darkness was descending on the Jews of Cracow, the spirit of Torah was shining brightly in the hearts of these young *bahurim*.

Unfortunately, their secret haven of Torah was not to last very long. One day, in a house-to-house search, the Germans discovered the underground *beit midrash* and arrested all one hundred *baḥurim* while they were engrossed in studying *G'mara*.

The young men were taken to the Plaszow concentration camp and told to line up in front of a battery of machine guns manned by 55 men. When the *baḥurim* realized what their fate was to be, some began to falter, but Mattes heartened them.

> "*Ḥevrah*!" he called out. "We are going to give our lives *al kiddush HaShem*, like Rabbi Akiva and the *Asarah Harugei Malkhut*! Let us be *b'-simḥah* that we are *zokheh* to this. *Ashreinu mah tov ḥelkeineu*. We are fortunate, how good is our portion! *Sh'ma Yisrael . . .*"

At that, the *baḥurim* spontaneously began to sing and broke into a joyous *rikkud*. The infuriated Germans let loose a hail of machine gun fire, frustrated at the obvious elation of their victims. As the shooting intensified, the young men danced on and on, singing HaShem's praises until the last one fell silently to the ground.

These were the real heroes of the ghetto. We will never forget them.

Duvid Werdyger settled in the United States after the war. He occupied a number of cantorial positions and his fame as a ḥazzan spread. Over the years he produced many popular albums of Ḥasidic music. His son, who records under the name Mordechai ben David, has become one of the brightest stars in Contemporary Jewish Music, and his grandchildren are also entering the field. This excerpt is adapted from his autobiography, ***Songs of Hope*** *(New York: C. I. S. Publishers, abridged edition, 1994, pages 20-21, 36-38).*

Music Subjects in the *Zohar*

By Amnon Shiloah,
assisted by Ruth Tene

Introduction

This work assembles 196 passages from the *Zohar, Zohar Hadash* and *Tikkunei Zohar.* It seeks to put before the scholar and the educated lay reader as comprehensive an anthology as possible of material in the Zoharic literature that is connected, directly or indirectly, with music and the science of music. Intensive study of this material is obviously a prior condition for any analytical description or serious discussion of the place of music in the concepts and ideas of the *Zohar*.

The process of selection revealed a problem arising from the nature of the material: the musical topics are so interwoven with kabbalistic themes that it is frequently difficult to distinguish between them, and besides, in no passage is there a discussion of music for its own sake. In order to avoid an arbitrary selection that might have led to the exclusion of material relevant to the total picture, it was decided to include all passages that mention musical terms or concepts (such as *niggun, zimrah, shirah,* i.e. both vocal and instrumental music), instruments (including the *shofar)* and even cantillation accents and the superscriptions to the Psalms.

The material collected contains hardly any reference to actual music, and only occasionally are there indications of specific ideas that possibly have a bearing on musical practice prior to or contemporary with the author. Thus, for example, two passages from the *Tikkunei Zohar* (nos. 190-**191**) refer to ten categories of the pulse beat: a contemporary medical theory held that one of the categories was connected with music. In various passages dealing with the ten types of hymns created by David, there are hints of theory of the musical significance of the superscriptions and other musical terms found in the Psalms. This is also true of matters dealing with Levites, their function, task and singing (passage no. **49**).

191

תקוני הזהר, תקונא שתין ותשעה (106א)

עשרה מיני דפק שבתורת הרפואה, כנגד "קול דודי דופק" שהוא התעוררות ה"דפק" בזמן הגאולה. הרוח היוצאת מן האזן השמאלית של הלב היא הרוח הצפונית המנשבת בכנור דוד המנגן מאליו.

49

ויחי (א, 249א-ב)

"צהלי קולך..."[1]. זוהי פניה לכנסת ישראל לשבח בקול. "צהלי" משום שכל מי שנקרא לשבח לקב"ה בקול חיב להיות בעל קול נעים שיערב לאחרים המקשיבים לו. שאם לא כן לא יקום להרים קול. לוי (הבא מצד השירה, צד שמאל) חיב לעזב את עבודתו בגיל חמישים[2] משום שקולו נעשה נמוך ואינו ערב עוד לאזן. הקבלה בין צבא הלויים למטה לבין צבא המלאכים למעלה. כשבני ישראל משבחים ומזמרים לקב"ה כנסת ישראל מקשיבה.

[1] ישיעהו 30 :10 [2] במדבר 25 :8.

In passage no.138 there is a reference to real life. It is related that R. Akiva was preaching on the mystic text *Ma 'asei Merkavah*: the ministering angels were assembled like guests at the celebration of a wedding; the groom and the bride (symbolic representations of the *s'firot—Tif'eret* and *Malkhut)* are to the right and left, respectively. In their procession to the bridal canopy the people of Israel sing various songs and inspire the bride and groom in the same way that they arouse *Tif'eret* and *Malkhut* with songs and praises. Passage no. 5 deals with the cantillation of the biblical accents, and despite the extensive symbolism it clearly refers to the actual singing of the cantillation signs and their function. Other discussions of this topic relate solely to the symbolic level.

Among such texts demonstrating musical praxis or ideas concerning music current at the time of the composition of the *Zohar,* passage no. 193 is of interest. It refers to Yaval, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle and grow rich, whereas his brother Yuval was the father of all those who handle harp and pipe, who play different kinds of melodies. The text makes the important distinction between vulgar worldly music and music for divine worship. It is possible that the origin of the distinction can be found in the idea that everything which existed potentially before the creation of man became actual with his creation, including song and praises (passage no. **22**).

22

וירא (א, 96א-ב)

"עת הזמיר הגיע"[1]. כל מה שהיה בכח לפני בריאת האדם יצא לפעל עם בריאתו. השירה והשבח לקב"ה לא נמצאו עד שנברא האדם.

[1] שיר השירים 2 :11

Music created contemporaneously with the world, which is for divine worship, is distinguished from music created by man (since Jubal), which is associated with worldly vanities. The distinction is possibly based on frequently repeated idea that music derives from the north, that is the left, the

side of Judgement, whereas speech derives from the right, the side of Mercy. However, another conception exists of the source of song, differing from this generally accepted view. In an exegetical treatment of the verse "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever" the question is raised whether song derives from the side of Mercy, that is the right side; the answer is that it is included in the right-hand aspect of the left side (passage no. **48**).

Various fundamental zoharic concepts provided an impetus for the enhancement of the musical significance of certain prayers and hymns such as *Kedushah [Keter], Nishmat Kol Hai,* and these in turn influenced the development of liturgical music. The idea that the *Kedushah* achieves its full effectiveness only when it is sung on high (passage no. 48), or that the angels participate in every *Kedushah* recited on earth by the people of Israel (passage no. **65**), contributed a great deal to the importance of this prayer on the Sabbath and Festivals, reflected in numerous sophisticated musical renderings. Both the context and the structure of the *Keter* were conducive to the development of an interesting antiphonal rendering—the depiction of the situation is sung by the cantor, and the angels' response by the congregation. The same applies to the *Song of the Sea* and *Nishmat Kol Hai* (passage no. 78) that are solemnly sung by cantor and congregation.

65

תרומה (ב,131ב-132א)

עם בוא הבקר, על הצבור להמצא בבית הכנסת ולשיר שירים ותשבחות של דוד כדי להעיר אהבה למעלה ולמטה וכדי לתקן תקונים. הלויים מעוררים אהבה וחדוה למעלה באותן שירות ותשבחות. בשעה שבני ישראל מתכנסים לומר שירים ותשבחות בבית הכנסת מתכנסים גם המלאכים לאותה מטרה. מלאכים אלה מתחלקים לשלשה מחנות. מחנה ראשון: מלאכים האומרים שירים ותשבחות ביום יחד עם ישראל (להבדיל מהמלאכים האומרים שירה בלילה). מחנה שני: מלאכים המשתתפים באמירת כל קדושה הנאמרת על ידי בני ישראל למטה. מחנה שלישי: העלמות העליונות, שהוא המחנה העליון על כלם. הן מתקנות את המטרוניתא (מלכות) בשירה כדי שתוכל לעלות לפני המלך (תפארת). כאשר בני ישראל שרים ומשבחים המלאכים מצטרפים אליהם. כך גם כאשר מחנות המלאכים מזדמנים (שרים ומשבחים?) בני ישראל מצטרפים אליהם. (בקטע כלו מודגשת ההקבלה בין שירת עליונים ותחתונים). המחנה הראשון מצטרף אל בני ישראל באמירת פסוקי דזמרה (מזמורי תהילים של דוד). כאן נזכרים חלקי התפלה הבאים אחרי פסוקי דזמרה. בהקשר של שירת הים נאמר שמי ששר אותה כראוי יזכה לאמרה באחרית הימים.

Many sections (fourteen altogether) deal with the topic of song at midnight. At this hour, when the Holy One Blessed Be He enters the Garden of Eden to delight with His righteous ones, the north wind knocks and awakens the leaders of chant who burst into song (passage no. 12). At the same time the trees of the Garden of Eden join in the music (passage no. **28**). This concept was probably influential in the development of the midnight vigil *(Tikkun*

Hatsot) as well as on the nighttime singing of various associations (e.g. Watchers of the Dawn *(Shomrim la-Boker)* and the singing of *bakkashot* in some communities.

28

ואלה תולדות יצחק (א, 135א)

על שלמה נאמר "וידבר שלשת אלפים משל ויהיה שירו חמשה ואלף"[1]. בכל מכל ומשל היה אלף וחמשה טעמים. אם במשלי שלמה שהוא בשר ודם כך על אחת כמה וכמה במלות דאורייתא שמר הקב"ה. שבכל מלה ומלה יש בה (בתורה) כמה משלים כמה שירים כמה תשבחות כמה רזים עליונים, כמה חכמות, ועל זה כתוב מי ימלל גבורות יי.

[1] מלכים א', 12 :5.

The major theme that emerges from this collection is the *shofar,* and about a quarter of all the passages presented deal with this instrument, its form, the material from which it is prepared, the sound it emits, and its various functions: it appears as softening Judgement and fighting against the forces of Evil on the New Year; as a symbol of the world-to-come; as bringing the people of Israel to God and as a major force in the Redemption and the End of Days, etc. There can be no doubt that these various views on the *shofar* had a great influence on subsequent generations and are still current today.

A favorite theme of the author is the song of the angels: "Their main task," writes I. Tishby, "is to praise and glorify the Holy One Blessed Be He in song and melody." The song of the angels, in the three watches of the night, as against the three daily prayers of the Jews, is a favorite theme, repeatedly described in various versions. In their song, the angels seek to unite with their Lord, but the proximity of the *Sitra Aḥra* ('the other side"; demonic and satanic powers) interferes with this aim and they have to drive him away by trickery" *(Mishnat ha-Zohar,* part I, pp. 449-450).

Not only the angels sing: the stars, the spheres and the *Merkavah*, the trees in the Garden of Eden and their perfumes, indeed the whole universe sings before God. The great power of this song, and the fact that the people of Israel sing below in parallel with the Divine music, makes the Jews' singing exercise an influence both on the supernal song and on the Divine world itself. In addition, this singing is powerful in the struggle against the *Sitra Aḥra* and the power of Evil. Twelve passages deal with this topic. It is stated that Psalm 91 is effective in driving off the *Sitra Aḥra* after the Sabbath is over. As the forces of *Sitra Aḥra* are ineffective on the Sabbath, and only after it is over does their power return, the Havdalah service is designed to drive them into the desert and nullify their influence over Israel.

One more major topic should be noted: the connection between music and happiness. At the end of days, which is "a time for laughter," the people

of Israel shall sing (passage no. 25), and when the firmament shall move, all the bands of angels shall rejoice and engage in song and praise (passage no. **80**). This topic is discussed in 16 passages; traces of its influence can be found in the Hasidic world.

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ויקבל (ב, 212ב-213א)

כאשר נוסע הרקיע כל מחנות המלאכים שמחים ומעלים שירות ותשבחות. קול נעימה של מחנות המלאכים עולה מכל הצדדים.

These are only some of the topics included in the material collected from the *Zohar, Zohar Hadash* and *Tikkunei Zohar.* It is hoped that the material assembled will provide a springboard for further comprehensive studies.

The editions from which the 196 citations were taken are: 1) *The Zohar,* ed. R. Margaliot, Jerusalem, 1964; 2) *Zohar Hadash,* ed. R. Margaliot, Jerusalem, 1953; and 3) *Tikkunei Zohar,* Tel-Aviv, 1948.

Amnon Shiloah is Professor of Musicology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A well-known scholar of Arabic and Jewish music and musical theory, he is author of ***The Theory of Music in Arabic Writings, The Musical Tradition of Iraqi Jews, Jewish Musical Traditions, The Dimension of Music in Islamic and Jewish Culture, Music in the World of Islam****, and many other works. This Introduction to his* ***Music Subjects in the Zohar—Texts and Indices*** *(Jerusalem: Yuval Monograph Series V,* 1977*) is reprinted with permission of The Jewish Music Research Center at the Hebrew University, Dr. Edwin Seroussi, Director.*

Two Dialogues with Zalman Schachter-Shalomi:

1) The Hasidic Approach to Song and Its Application to Camp Ramah

Interlocutor: William Berkowitz

William Berkowitz: A long time ago, a man who had been wandering through a forest for several days—not knowing the way out—found himself at nightfall enveloped in the darkness of the woods. He was alone, frightened, and lost. Then he saw a glimmer of light in the distance. His heart grew lighter as he caught sight of a traveler carrying a lantern who was slowly approaching him.

"Well, now I shall certainly find out which is the right way out," he thought as he went to meet the approaching stranger. When he neared the man with the lantern he asked, "Tell me, which is the right way out of the woods? I've been roaming about in this forest for several days."

The other man said to him, "My friend, I do not know the way out, for I too have been wandering about this forest for several days. But one thing I can tell you, do not take the way I came. That is definitely not the way, for it will lead you astray."

"So why are you walking around with a lantern?" the first man asked him. He said: "If I cannot find the way, maybe somebody will see my lantern and come find me."

This story is from a different century, from a country and a climate vastly different from ours. Nevertheless, the parable has meaning for the modern Jew. It speaks of the Jew of today with more insight and understanding than do many of the long volumes on present-day Judaism. The forest is our world of today and the two lost travelers are the present generation of our people. Like the lost travelers the modern Jew has not found a way out of the forest of confusion that might lead him to a clearly patterned existence of Jewish living and Jewish commitment. He does not know what kind of Jew to be. He has not decided what kind of synagogue he should belong to—Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Hasidic, or any at all. He is not certain whether he wants his children to learn Hebrew, or his wife to kindle the Sabbath candles. He has not made up his mind whether the people of Israel are really a chosen people or if the Bible is indeed the word of God. And finally, he does not know whether he should believe in the power of prayer and in the efficacy of the Torah itself with all its commandments.

In short, the modern Jew is lost in a forest of doubt, confusion and consternation. The way to an acceptable pattern of Jewish living and thinking is not clearly before him.

One of the answers to this confusion of our day and age, of finding the right road, is the answer given by Hasidism. Stemming from an ancient, powerful and still vital mystical stream, Hasidism is part of our Jewish civilization. It not only teaches us; more importantly, it gives us a way of living. We tend to think of Judaism as traditional, unchanging and, in a sense, unadaptable to modern life. We are continually faced with day-to-day problems that seem to force us to choose—very often against our desires or feelings—ways of living that seem contrary to our beliefs. Too often we feel that our spiritual life is out of joint with the times, or that we are not modern enough. We fail to recognize that in our dualistic society it may be the other way around. Perhaps our religion, culture and tradition have truths that can and should change our way of life.

It is for this reason that we have chosen to discuss a Jewish discipline about which most Jews have little real knowledge, particularly its emphasis on the element of joy in living the godly life. Can you tell us something about one of the fundamental factors in achieving the element of joy in Hasidism: niggun, song.

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel coined some beautiful phrases in a book called *The Earth Is the Lord's*. He gave a number of beautiful definitions. One is a niggun: a tune flowing in search of its own unattainable end. I think one of our grave problems has to do with the fact that we do not sing enough. A Jew has to sing. Do you remember when a Maggid, a preacher, came to town and began to preach in a singsong? "Once upon a time there was a king. And the king, *nebekh*, had a son and the son did not go in the proper way and the king had to send him into exile." Pretty soon there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

A niggun is very important. Without the niggun, the words do not take on all the harmonies that they can take on. When Hasidim sit down, they have to have a niggun. There are all kinds of niggunim. Sometimes there is a drinking song borrowed directly from Ivan next door, which says, "Don't worry, fellows, as soon as we reach the end you can get all the vodka you want."

Now, why would Hasidim sing a song like that? *Es iz nit sheyn*—"It is not nice." So they sing it with a change of words: "As soon as we get to Lubavitch, we can get all the Hasidism we want." This is a dancing song—a *rikkud nig-*

gun. Then there is a niggun that is known as a *tish niggun*—a "table niggun." A rebbe conducts a table with people sitting around it, and the rebbe begins: "*Da, da doy, doy, doy, doy, doy*," and the Hasidim would go, "*M, m, m, m.*" And the rebbe would go: "*Day, da-di da da-dum*," and he would begin a hymn like the one for Friday night by Reb Eliezer Askari—"Oy, *yedid nefesh*"—"Beloved of my soul, Merciful Father." This is a *tish niggun*. Then, there are *daven'n niggunim*, and among *daven'n niggunim* you can find some beautiful marches.

Go into an average Galitzianer *shtibl* on *Shabbes* morning and you will find somebody who will start, "*Tra, tra, tra din ta, ta, tum, pom pom*" with a march tempo that will out-Sousa Sousa, and then go on to *Eil Adon al kol ha-ma'asim*—"God, the Master of all creation!"

Today you can enjoy these niggunim in the privacy of your own living room with its hi-fi. There are volumes of Lubavitcher niggunim and the niggunim of every other dynasty, and you can get Hasidic music everywhere, including on the Internet. It has become almost a byword for cantors and music directors; when they speak of music that has a *ta'am*—"flavor"—they call it Hasidic."

William Berkowitz: I know that you have worked with young people at a Camp Ramah, which is one of many in the network of camps established by the Conservative movement. You have also worked with teenagers at the Camp institutes sponsored by the Reform movement. What motivates the Hasid to mix with Conservative Jews and Reform Jews?

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: As long as there are Jews, a Hasid will not recognize the divisive definitions. It is very important that I "cover the waterfront," and the waterfront is as big as American Jewry. This means that if there is a camp such as Ramah in which a need can be filled, the need is not to make people daven necessarily out of an Orthodox siddur, but to *teach them how to daven in their own siddur*. It is a question of how to deal with that to which they are already committed, how to translate that into life.

At Ramah we were very much concerned with the "re-entry" problem, with what happens to kids when they come back from camp, back to the home congregation. Whatever skills they have acquired, whatever insights they have acquired, have to be shared with other people. One of the big problems with summer camps is that they offer a great, great experience. Then somebody asks the camper, "So, what was it?" and the answer is, "I cannot tell it to you. You have to go there yourself." We were very much concerned about how the youngsters bring their experience back to their own youth groups.

William Berkowitz: What did you do with the children while they were in camp?

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: What can one do with these kids? First of all, I had to listen. One has to listen very carefully to what they are saying, and also to what they *mean* when they are saying words. You have heard the expression—kids use it very often—"and all that jazz." Do you know what it really means? It means that they are afraid of feeling. The moment that there is material with a rich-feeling tone, kids do not want to quite admit that they are warm. Today you "gotta be cool," and so what they say is: "and all that jazz."

The kids wanted to find out what daven'n "and all that jazz" is all about. If you listen carefully, and you are not offended by the words that they use, and if you really know that they are groping underneath the words that they are using, there is a great deal that can be done.

But naturally, it has to be done with patience. It is very difficult during a camp experience to isolate a group of kids, to sit at the *shabbesdiker tish*—the Sabbath table—with them. If you have ever been in a camp dining room, you know what happens. Yet on Shabbat we found a place where we could sit, sing some *z'mirot*—Shabbat table songs—and give them a model to take back to their homes.

There is a great deal of material that is transferable. The problem is, of course, with the person who does the transferring. Is he satisfied to transfer only part of his material, or does he have to sell all his *s'khoyre*—his merchandise? Part of the mandate that we have from the [late Lubavitcher] Rebbe is to sell as much as we can sell, and not to try and push all the *s'khoyre*, because it is a buyer's market in this situation.

William Berkowitz: We have had the privilege of talking with a very deep and spiritual Hasid, but with a man who is also very "hip," and I think that is important to the modern adult Jew and youngster alike.

The Hebrew alphabet has the letter *shin*, which Jewish tradition has interpreted as representing the name of God—*Shaddai*. The *shin* is on the Mezuzah affixed to our doorpost. It is etched on the arm of the Jew wearing Tefillin. In a novel, Shai Agnon tells about a Hasidic rabbi, Yudl, who, when he stood in prayer before God, lifted his hands over his head so that his two uplifted arms and his head made up the letter *shin*—all of him symbolizing the name of God.

I believe this rabbi can serve as the ideal of Jewish life to which we are summoned this day and to which we should commit ourselves—to hold up our hands for God, for Torah, and for Israel. I believe that all of us must ourselves become the living embodiment of the faith we hold, the witnesses

upon earth of the God Whose name we bear.[1] So long as each of us lives our life in an exemplary way, and thereby ennobles the Jewish community as a whole, as does our inspiring guest, I believe Judaism will live.

William Berkowitz, who died in 2008, was a past president of the New York Board of Rabbis and served for 33 years as spiritual leader at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan. There he instituted and conducted a Dialog Forum Series of interviews—in depth—with scholars of all religious denominations.

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, better known as Reb Zalman, was born in Poland, raised in Vienna, and ordained in New York as a HaBaD rabbi. He is the pioneering father of the Jewish Renewal movement, founder of the Spiritual Eldering Institute and an active and original teacher of Jewish mysticism. A professor of world religions, Reb Zalman frequently draws on the "spiritual technologies" of traditions around the globe and relishes "dialogues of devotion" with fellow God-seekers of any faith.

This dialogue is excerpted with permission from a two-part feature article, "The Joy of Judaism," that appeared in the ***National Jewish Post & Opinion****, January 16 and 23, 2002.*

1 "When the priests say My name upon the children of Israel, it is I who will bless them." (Numbers 6: 27; postlude to the Priestly Benediction, which Sephardic worshipers append to their response: *kein y'hi ratson; v'-samu et-sh'mi al b'nei Yisra'eil, va-ani avar'kheim* (*Book of Prayers*, David de Sola Pool, editor and translator, New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1941: 68).

Two Dialogues with Zalman Schachter-Shalomi:

2) The Amidah and *Atsilut*

Interlocutor: *Shoshana Brown*

Shoshana Brown: Reb Zalman, I have been an avid student of your teaching on "Four Worlds Davvenen" through reading what you have written on this subject, and by watching the video-taped *shiurim* you have given on this topic. You speak of davening *Birkhot haShaḥar* in the World of *Asiyyah*; *P'sukei d'Zimra* in the World of *Y'tsirah*; the *Sh'ma* and its blessings in the World of *Bri'ah*; and finally the *Amidah* in the World of *Atsilut*.[1]

I have to say that—with the possible exception of the *K'dushah*—I have never experienced the *Amidah* in this "heightened" way. It seems like hard work, trying to focus on the contents of the *b'rakhot* while thinking of the ancestors, the needs of Israel, the needs of the planet, etc. In fact, the *Amidah* feels more like a combination of the other three worlds (*Asiyyah*, *Y'tsirah* and *Bri'ah*): a little about doing, a little about feeling, and a lot about the mind. There are just so many words! They weigh the spirit down. Here is the question: how do you do it? How do you daven the Daily or Shabbat, the *Yom tov* or *Musaf Amidah* in this "celestial" way? I feel extremely earthbound when I get there.

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: For most people, going into *Atsilut* for the *Amidah* is not a reality; we have too big a shopping list! And when you start

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1 Jewish mysticism speaks of the unfolding of Creation as the emanation of four "worlds," or realms, of spiritual energy. Drawing from Ḥasidic teachings on prayer and meditation, Reb Zalman teaches that we human beings, as living vessels of consciousness, are capable of "traveling" in these worlds in our davening and/or meditation, connecting with our source in the Divine—and in so doing we may tap into these energies so that they flow freely in our lives.

Asiyyah is the realm of our physicality, where we are most aware of our bodies.

Y'tsirah is the realm of feelings, where our emotional being is attuned.

Bri'ah is the world of the intellect, where we are commanded to exert ourselves to know and to reach the very edge of what is thinkable and understandable, and in so doing to love the ONE with a love that partakes of the will and intellect, beyond mere "feelings" of love.

Atsilut is the realm "of intuition, of being a spark of God's fire. Here, an individual's I-AM is identical with the cosmic I-AM."

(Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, "Introduction: Davvenology and the Four Worlds" in *Paradigm Shift*, Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1993: 195-202.)

looking at all the things that we have to ask for–how could we be in the intuitive place when we have so many concerns that we have to bring to God?

So let me tell you that in the ideal situation, I would be saying: *Adonai s'fatai tiftah, u-fi yagid t'hillatekha*, and then I would wait, and try and still my mind, and reach the place of intuition. I'd then try to hold on to that "All-ness" to that One-ness, as much as I can—but not with a cramp—in a gentle, surrendering way.

But in reality my mind wanders and begins to tell me something about how my body feels. So I want to take this up with God and say, "please help me have a *r'fuah*"; or, "please help me pray for somebody sick whose name has come up," and so on and so forth.

The shopping list is something that comes to people when they are trying to still their mind–and all these concerns have a way of floating up. So the *bakkashot* are coming to make room for that. But then one must go back again to the quiet place. How do we do that? I'd like to say to you: Try this once. Don't worry so much about the words of the *Amidah*; go into that silent place and see what happens. And when a concern comes up–for anything–turn it into a *bakkashah* and be done with it, and then go back to that stillness. That's one possibility.

The other possibility is to say: That kind of quiet prayer of the heart is what I can do on *Shabbat* when I'm by myself, but most of the time I'm too concerned with the state of the world, with the state of my *mishpahah,* and I have to bring up all of these things to God. So when we speak of the *Amidah* being in *Atsilut*, it is very much a hope and an ideal, but I don't think that people get to that ideal so easily. Take a look at what we're asking for: *shanah tovah*...an end to *galut*...we're asking for the eradication of the *malshinim*...

Shoshana Brown: Exactly.

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: So all these things are on our shopping list; and the *Hakhamim* have made it possible for us. So then Schneur Zalman[2] and other Hasidic teachers come and they teach us that when we say those words that the *Hakhamim* have "coined" or if you prefer, set up, for us to say as part of the *Amidah*, it has the sense that the Divine concern makes itself present to our petitions. It already goes straight into *divine* and not *created* universe known by the Kabbalists as *Atsilut*, because *Atsilut* "lowers itself" to hear us. So when we say as a prelude to the *Amidah*: *HaShem s'fatai tiftah*—"O God, open up my lips"—the realm of *Atsilut* places itself in our mouth—*u-fi yagid t'hilatekha*—"that my mouth may speak Your praise!" Do you get the

2 1745-1813, founder of Habad Hasidism, and author of the *Tanya*.

idea? It becomes a sort of *Deus ex machina*[3] according to the Kabbalah, but it's not necessarily [the case] that we achieve it in our personal experiential awareness.

Shoshana Brown: That's what you mean by "God praying through us?"

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Yes–but remember, halakhah is a very strange thing. Once I accept halakhah on the basis on which it presents itself, then it isn't something that's separate from God, it's God's will. And where God's will is, there God is, you know? So by having a sort of *Ol Malkhut Shamayim* and *Ol Mitzvot*, we are making the halakhah *act* for us. And that becomes... in Latin you would say, *ex opere, operandum. Just by doing it, it happens* that way, despite the fact that we don't personally experience it that way.

Shoshana Brown: That would go for *all* the *mitzvot*, wouldn't it?

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: All the *mitzvot*, right. Because where do the *mitzvot* come from? They come from higher than *Hokhmah*, they come from *Keter*.[4] How do they come from *Keter*? I'll give it to you in the language of gematria.[5]

There are 613 *mitzvot d'oraita*, and seven *mitzvot d'rabbanan*;[6] that adds up to 620. The letters *khaf-tav-resh t*hat make up the word *Keter*, also total 620. And *Keter* is the "highest" of the ten *sefirot*. So you see, they have a way in which they work this out.

But you know–here I'm talking to you like a *davener*-friend, and I want to say: Never mind the achievements and attainments. If you can be talking like a friend to God in the *Amidah*–pouring out what you're really concerned about, that's so much better!

Of course I bring in *my* shopping list, you see–it's such a wonderful opportunity I have to be able to do that. Now that I have a Palm Pilot–I can do it in this high-tech way. But before, I used to have an index card, on which I had written all the categories of the *Amidah*. One had to do with consciousness, one with *t'shuvah*, one with forgiveness, one with redemption, etc. And whatever occurred to me as a source of concern during the day, I would mark down my concern under that category. At *Minhah*, I would take out the card,

3 Referring to the phenomenon in ancient Greek drama whereby a god unexpectedly appears to unravel a seemingly insoluble dilemma (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1985: 346).

4 *Keter* is the "highest" of the ten *sefirot*, associated with *Ein Sof,* the totally transcendent God.

5 Hebrew numerology.

6 *D'oraita* ("from the Torah"); *d'rabbanan* ("from the rabbis").

or now I take out my Palm Pilot, and have in front of me all the things that happened during the day that I want to take up with God.

So this is a much humbler way of dealing with it. And that's what I would suggest to you, because that's just how *I* do it.

As for *the Sh'ma*: There are times when I don't know how long I can hold the *Ehad* inthe *Sh'ma*. Sometimes I feel diverted from my focus by going, after *Ehad,* right into the *V'-ahavta* and then skipping into the *Ezrat Avoteinu*. To tell you the truth, I often skip from *Ehad* until I come to *HaShem Eloheikhem, emet*. Then I say, "*Mi she-ga'al et-haAvot*, *Hu yig'al et haBanim*, *Barukh atah HaShem, ga'al Yisrael,* and I go right into the *Amidah*. I don't want to have to be drawn from where I was in the *Sh'ma* and have to go back into the story of *K'riyat Yam Suf*, and all these texts. I find them to be too distracting.

I wish I could add something really super-duper-fancy, but I think that's about all I have to say.

Shoshana Brown: Well, I was talking with a friend about this, and I said, "I can understand it being as if I were entering a palace. I want to see the king; and I'm on the way down this long hall, maybe I'm doing prostrations along the way—this is a very Oriental palace! So that's *Asiyyah*, the physical, embodied realm. And then I come to some intermediate place where I sing the king's praises–so there is *Y'tsirah*—the world of emotions. And then I get to the inner court where the king is, and—as in the *Bar'khu*–I'm bowing, I'm so grateful that the king is going to see me. But I am still feeling a little fear; perhaps that's like the *Sh'ma*, in the world of *Bri'ah*, the realm of the intellect. And then finally, besides being allowed to be there, the king asks me: "What is your problem? What is it that you need to say? What is it that you need to ask?"

–No, I'm saying it wrong! In the *Sh'ma*, actually, we're hearing *God* talk to *us*; God says, "*Sh'ma…* " etc. God says to this petitioner, "Come closer, you can approach Me," and then—by the end of the blessings after the *Sh'ma*—when I get closer, God comes off the throne and sits with me like a *mensch*, and says, "Okay, let's have a chat."

So there is the intimacy. And I can understand cutting through all that baroque, oriental protocol, and getting down to actually talk, as it were, person to person. I can understand that state, even though it looks the most humble, as being the most exalted state of consciousness of all. And yet in my practice, when I get to the *Amidah*, my mind is still too active and too busy—in a certain sense, trying too hard—for me to feel that kind of relaxed

state. Perhaps because it's the longest prayer, it's not just having fun singing *T'hillim*—where I'm always trying out new tunes...

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Rav Ya'akov Emden's *Siddur* has the whole thing planned out as if you're going into the *Beit haMikdash*. He has the *davenen* laid out in such a way that you're coming from the *hatseir* (court) on the outside, and in the *Amidah* you can enter into the *Kodesh haKodoshim* (Holy of Holies).

Shoshana Brown: Great!

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: That is a little bit more exalted than dealing with the king in the palace–you become the High Priest going into that most holy space. And that's a beautiful way, too. But I don't think it's workable for us who are in the world. We can't spend five to six hours davening to be able to say, that in about the fourth hour we're going to come into *Atsilut*!

Shoshana Brown: [laughing] Finish with *Shaharit,* time for *Minhah*!

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Yes, so what I'm saying is, we're people who need to be able to finish our *davenen* in twenty to twenty-five minutes; if we can't do it, then somehow, there's a sense that we are not in the right place, we can't afford it. So that's why I would want us to do something much humbler than what usually goes on with the *Amidah*.

Shoshana Brown: So were you suggesting earlier that–say, at the beginning–this is when I am by myself, not with the *kahal*–for the first three *brakhot*–that rather than worry about all of the words, that I just be silent, maybe just say the *hatimot*?

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Well, at times, I'm not even doing that. There are times—for example, when I come to *Magen Avraham*, *hatimah* of the first *Amidah b'rakhah*, the *Avot*— when in my mind I just go back to the beginning of Creation, and have a glance at all the evolution, and all this intermediate *being*, and I thank God for that. It's not spelled out in words, it's just in the *mahshavah*—my imaginative inner thoughts. So that's the longitude. And then I go to the latitudinal, and say, "*Oy, Ribbono shel Olam*, here's life and death, and the whole cycle of seasons," and so on and so forth, "*Thank You!*" I don't stay there very long, either. Then I say, "God, since you have decided to be Zalman for another day–how can I give you a good ride?"

Shoshana Brown: [laughing] Right!

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: Because I feel myself as Zalman, and I make the affirmation, and say, "Dear God, if You want to be Zalman again for another day, I'll do as much as I can to give You a good ride, to honor You, to serve

You, to increase Your glory, Your standing, Your reputation in the world, to make You feel good. I enjoy this ice cream–here God, have a lick!"

[**Shoshana Brown:** [laughs.]

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi: I'm saying this is *so important*—to get to a basic "body-humble" with that.

I want to say: "*Kol ha-kavod*" for raising the question. It shows that you're doing *Avodat HaShem*, and that you're serious about it, that you're grappling with it, and so what can I say? I want to give you a hug over the phone!

Shoshana Brown: *Todah rabbah*!

Shoshana Brown serves as cantor at Simchat HaLev in Syosset, New York. She is enrolled in the Cantors Assembly Cantorial Internship program, and as a student in the cantorial program of the Alliance for Jewish Renewal. Her book reviews and articles on Parashat HaShavua appear regularly in ***The Jerusalem Report****. This phone dialogue with Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi took place on July 3, 2007. The author wishes to thank Rabbi Marcia Prager, dean of the Aleph Rabbinical and Cantorial Ordination Programs, for her help in editing the material and providing explanatory notes. Shoshana's most recent Journal article,* ***"Nothing New under the Sun: What's Still Wrong with Our Synagogues?"*** *appeared in the Fall 2008 issue.*

Point / Counterpoint:

1) The Hasidic World's Attitude towards Hazzanut

By Akiva Zimmermann

This is a subject worthy of further study, yet with a few broad strokes I hope to demonstrate how the ambivalent stance that today's Hasidim take vis à vis hazzanut and hazzanim stems from similarly divergent positions held by tzaddikim of the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries as opposed to rebbeyim from the mid-19th century to the present.

Tzaddikim and hazzanut

In almost every tzaddik's court a hazzan functioned, often an accomplished cantor/composer steeped in the secrets of musical art. Some of the tzaddikim themselves fashioned prayer melodies as they stood before the Ark, notably the Modzitzer dynasty's spiritual leaders. The court of Gur (or Ger, as it is popularly pronounced) could also boast of exceptional musicians, and continued to do so until a generation ago, in the person of the late Yankel Talmud.

Meir Shimon Geshuri, who did extensive research in Hasidism and Hasidic music, stated that the Seer of Lublin (Rav Yaakov Yitzhak, d. 1815) was the first tzaddik to appoint individuals to serve as hazzanim in various communities. Rav Nahman of Bratslav (1772-1810) put great value on cantorial function in his book *L'shon Hasidim* ("The Language of the Righteous").

> The *sh'li'ah tsibbur* is indispensable, for he elevates communal worship when he prays to heaven on behalf of the worshipers. His only aim is to bring Jews closer to the Divine Presence, neither to glorify himself nor to afford others earthly pleasure. Then his prayers rise to the highest heights, building a path upon which the community's prayers may travel upwards.

Rav Nahman is also quoted on this subject in *Likkutei Moharan* (a collection of his sermons, Jerusalem, 1874).

> When standing at the Reader's desk a *sh'li'ah tsibbur* must possess a higher sensitivity in order to discern and gather the good points of every one of the worshipers. These good points will be counted to his credit, and with all this accumulated goodness he will stand and pray. Fortunate is the community that is privileged to have such an emissary pray on its behalf.

It should be noted that in early Hasidut this positive attitude toward the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* was often conditional on his being the tzaddik himself, as demonstrated by Rav Z'ev Wolf of Zhitomir in the Ukraine (*Or HaMe'ir*, Korets, 1787; Jerusalem, 1964, 704b).

> It is known that the prayer leader represents the mystery of "the Tzaddik who is the Foundation of the World... " Even when the impression made by the congregation has come to an end and is no more, he should still strengthen himself to the utmost of his capacity and with great awakening, in order to bring the flow of the whole congregation's prayer to the Sh'khinah… The congregation commits a great sin when the prayer leader cuts short his melody and wishes to complete a portion of his prayers while they prolong their prayers and thus prevent him from bringing down the flow of grace. If he has to wait until the congregation have finished their prayers, his intellectual powers become weak in the meantime and he can no longer succeed even in bringing the flow to the Sh'khinah.

Rebbeyim and hazzanut

When rebbeyim succeeded tzaddikim as the spiritual leaders of Hasidut, this positive attitude toward the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* unfortunately turned negative. Thus we find Rav Hayyim Halberstam of Zana in Galicia admonishing an anonymous elderly president of a community within his jurisdiction (*Divrei Hayyim*, 1864, part 2, *Orah Hayyim*, nos. 17 & 18).

> I have heard that in the Hasidic synagogue of your community a hazzan with a choir has been appointed and I am greatly astonished. What can they have been thinking of? Our forefathers struggled so hard until they succeeded in removing this scab from the children of Israel. Thank God that in most Hasidic congregations there are none who pray accompanied by an arrangement of song and pleasant melody as in the theater. Rather do they choose a worthy man who pours out his heart in the presence of the Holy One… I want to urge you, therefore, to recall the days of old when you used to hear the prayer of tzaddikim whose words entered your heart. Now, too, let the fear of God be awakened in your heart to smite the crown of the wicked and to drive out from the house of the Lord the hazzan and his helpers.

In the doctrine of HaBaD (a Hebrew acronym for Wisdom-Insight-Knowledge, the rational branch of Hasidism), song still took pride of place until recently, and some contemporary Hasidim still identify with this understanding. Sadly, the later leaders of HaBaD have related negatively to professional hazzanim. Thus the late Lubavitcher Rebbe (Menahem Mendel Schneerson, 1902-1994) stated that

> a *ba'al t'fillah* stands on the threshold; in his hands lies the ability to either exonerate everyone present with his prayers or to implicate them (*Sefer ha-Sihot*, his collected talks, p. 96).

In the late Rebbe's *Sihot ha-Shavua* ("Weekly Talks") we found the following distinction between a lay *ba'al t'fillah* and a professional hazzan.

> A *ba'al t'fillah* for the most part brings out the best in worshipers, whereas a hazzan for the most part causes them to sin.

Nonetheless, it was an accomplished professional hazzan—Joshua Weisser, 1888-1952, who edited the anthology —*Niggunei Hasidei HaBaD* ("Melodies of the HaBaD Hasidim," New York: Niho'ah, 1951).

A lot has been published on this topic; one series of pro and con articles appeared a century ago in the Warsaw periodical *Die Shul un die Khazonim Velt* ("The Synagogue and the World of Hazzanut"), written by Mordechai Shtrigler, who at one time edited the New York daily newspaper, *Forverts*. Additional relevant material is hidden in the literature of *musar* (Judaism's Ethical movement), Hasidut, and *d'rush* (biblical commentary). We hope someday to deal with it in greater detail. With the widespread disappearance of hazzanim from contemporary synagogues, most of what's waiting to be discovered is no longer relevant. Still, such material belongs in the history of hazzanut, a once storied profession—in contrast to its impoverished present status.

Hazzanim today are no longer *sh'lihei tsibbur* in the sense of representing one specific community before God. The best of them—the trendsetters— "officiate" once a month in New York, then fly to Los Angeles, São Paolo, London or elsewhere for the other three *Shabbatot*. In between they concertize—in opera houses, theaters and sports arenas—anywhere but in synagogues. And who are these itinerant cantorial luminaries? In a stunning turnabout, the four most popular hazzanim of the early 21st century—Isaac Meir Helfgott, Ben Zion Miller, Benjamin Muller and Yaakov Motzen—are Hasidim, whereas fifty years ago their 20th-century counterparts' names all began with the letter K. The brothers Moshe, David, Yaakov and Simcha Koussevitzky stemmed from a family of intellectually oriented Mitnagdim, formerly the mortal opponents of Hasidism. How this phenomenon came about is not easy to explain—except for the fact that Hasidut has always championed emotion over intellect—and that's what hazzanut is all about.

A much sought-after lecturer and journalist, Akiva Zimmermann has published over 500 articles, reviews and essays on the history and performance of Jewish sacred music, for numerous periodicals and in several languages. This article is translated and excerpted—with permission—from his recent 70th Birthday celebratory publication ***Alei Ayin****, ed. Naftali Hershtik (Tel-Aviv: Institute for Hazzanut), 2006: 121f.*
Editor's Note: In Akiva Zimmermann's most recent Journal article, "R'shuyot for the Sh'li'ah Tsibbur—Customs and Melodies" (Fall 2008), a mistake appeared. On p. 73—the setting attributed to the Jerusalem hazzan, Zalman Rivlin, is actually ***Heyei Im Pifiyot****—not Ohilah La-Eil. We deeply regret the error* [*JAL*].

Point / Counterpoint:

2) Hazzanut in a Hasidic Court between the Wars

From The Yizkor Book of Czortkow[1]

The Cantor, Haim Manish-Lahis

By A. S. Achila, translated by Sara Mages

Reb Manish Khazn ("Master Manish the Cantor") was a renowned name in the wide circles of the Hasidic Jews in Galicia and the Ukraine. He was born in 1863 in Tulchin, Ukraine. His father, Reb Moshe Lahis, was a cantor in the town. Reb Moshe was a loyal and dedicated Hasid, a follower of the righteous Rebbe, Dovidl, in Talnoye. When Manish grew up, his father took him on one of his visits to Talnoye, hoping that the young man's soul would connect with the Rabbi's holiness. But the young man's heart followed the Rabbi's *cantor*, Reb Hershel Yoshkes. Reb Hershel recognized that the young man was musically talented, gifted with a great singing voice and invited him to join his choir. Manish stayed in Talnoye and very soon became the central pillar of the choir. A new and wonderful world opened for him. His soul was like a plugged spring that suddenly burst open and music started to flow. He excelled in his singing and could not rest until he started to create his own music. His music lessons with Reb Hershel were not enough for him; he wished to study the foundations of the art of music. The music conservatory was foreign to his world and he ended up studying music by correspondence with the scholarly Cantor Eduard Birnbaum of Königsberg (1855-1920).

After his marriage he was accepted as a cantor by the Rebbe of Spikov, where Manish organized a choir and where his music was appreciated by a large audience. Hasidim who came to visit the Rebbe's court from near and far memorized Manish Khazn's melodies from spending time with his *m'shor'rim* (choristers). They then brought the tunes back to their home towns, where the music was played with enthusiasm and devotion at Hasidic celebrations by Manish's many admirers.

After fifteen years of fruitful work in Spikov, Manish Khazn moved to Berdichev were he took a position as cantor in one of the synagogues, but not for long. The town of Tchortkov's Hasidim—who hailed originally from

1 (Yiddish: Tchortkov) Galicia, Western Ukraine; *Sefer Yizkor l'-Hantsahat K'doshei K'hillat Tchortkov,* Yeshayahu Austri-Dunn, ed., published by The Former Residents of Tchortkov in Israel, n.d.; (parenthesized page numbers refer to where these excerpts appear in *The Yizkor Book).*

Berdichev—decided that this cantor belonged in their Rebbe's court in Tchortkov, and did not rest until they were able to bring him back there.

This famous court, a Mecca for thousands of Hasidim during the High Holidays and Pilgrimage Festivals, served as a source of inspiration for Manish Khazn's musical creativity. During his tenure in Tchortkov he wrote many important compositions: hundreds of Hasidic niggunim, different versions of each for Shabbat and for the holidays. He wrote choral compositions for the High Holidays and different ones—for choir and orchestra—based on the Book of Psalms. In Tchortkov he was given the opportunity to create his own choir into which he brought many musically talented young men. A few of his sons joined the choir, among them his son David who had sung for a few years with the Royal Opera in Vienna. The performances of Manish Khazn and his choir always left a deep impression on Tchortkov's Hasidim, who disseminated his compositions through hundreds of villages and towns in Eastern Europe.

If Reb Manish Khazn's work were ever published, it would have formed a complete library of original Hasidic music. It is unfortunate that his compositions—so carefully thought out, well organized and transcribed, were never submitted for publication. With destruction of the European Jewish world, the voice of this most famous Hasidic cantor was also silenced. All of his compositions, stored in his home, were destroyed. Only a few fragments of his niggunim survived, and I am sure that these were inadvertently distorted by the very hands that tried to preserve them. Nonetheless, we have to be thankful for these few remnants because they perpetuate, however imperfectly, the memory of one of the most important Jewish musicians in the history of Hasidut (page 151).

* * * * *

Tchortkov—the City of Hasidic Music

By Y. S.

Here are some details about the cantors and *ba'alei t'fillah* who served in the Rebbe of Tchortkov's court. Their influence spread beyond its borders to the point where we can see signs of their influence in the Hasidic cantorial music of today [1971].

Among the *ba'alei t'fillah*, we remember Shaya Khazn who had a high and beautiful voice. At the age of eighty he still led the early morning prayers.

Aharon Khazn led the evening prayers. The two were well known in Tchortkov for their originality and as the creators of the special nusah (version of chant) that was well known around Galicia as "Tchortkov Nusah." We can categorize it as a delicate and cultured way of singing cantorial music, deep from the heart, without sudden ear-piercing outbursts. We can understand why the "Tchortkov Nusah" was so close to the heart of the worshipers in Galicia.

The most talented cantor in the world of Hasidic music was the genius, Reb Manish Khazn. He trained his own choir and led it to great success. Later on, when his *m'shor'rim* emigrated to different parts of the world, many of them became very famous.

The most important among them was Reb Dovidl Soroker, a dwarf with a controlled voice. He possessed the best musical talent in Manish Khazn's choir. Dovidl Soroker emigrated to New York and became a teacher and advisor to the greatest cantors of those days. As disseminated by Soroker and other of Manish Khazn's former *m'shor'rim*, the "Tchortkov Nusah" thus influenced cantorial music in North America.

Among these other students of Reb Manish Khazn Lahis were Ya'akov Rapaport, long-time president of the Jewish Cantors Ministers Association (Khazonim Farband) in the United States, and the composer Zisi Harar, who was familiar with the hidden secrets of liturgical music, and served as chief cantor in Lemberg's Great Synagogue (Pages 152-153).

* * * * *

Reb Manish Khazn and his choir

Memories of a m'shorer

When I was nine years old I visited the home of Reb Manish for the first time. I was warmly welcomed and given a cup of tea with milk. The Khazn listened to my voice and tested it. After I repeated a few sounds he decided that my voice was worth training, and invited me to come and visit him twice a week. There were two reasons for those visits; to develop my voice and to teach me how to read music notes. I did not show a lot of scholarly interest, and therefore the music-reading lessons did not last long. But there was a lot of improvement in my singing. Reb Manish was able to develop my alto voice so well that it rang like a silver bell.

Every year, starting on first day of the month of Elul, the choir would gather at Reb Manish's home five evenings a week to practice for the High

Holidays. In the choir there were two bass singers, one of whom was named Feder. Edelstein's voice was a lyric Tenor, Zavel Augenstein had the dramatic tenor voice, and Hayyim Shorr's voice was in between the two. The children who participated in the choir were Avremele Lichtenholz and later on, Vili Golinger and myself. During the holidays there were a few changes in the choir. Reb Dovid, one of Reb Manish Khazn's sons, came to our city and joined the choir. I will always remember the sound of his voice— like a French horn—mellow and perfect. When I listened to its magical sound, I felt as if the delicate springtime scent of the forest was embracing me.

Reb Manish Khazn's voice was strong, deep and full, and when he sang with the choir he kept its volume at an even level with everyone else's. His range was tremendous; he could sing an octave lower than the basses, and in the highest register he was able to pass the highest of the tenors. His voice never seemed too loud—it simply had a bright metallic "ring" to it. As powerful as it was, it never sounded unpleasant. The sound of his voice rang from the Great Synagogue and carried in one direction through the streets and nearby alleys. In the other direction it spread throughout the adjacent park.

During breaks in rehearsals, Reb Manish's wife gave us tea with milk. While we were drinking our tea, Reb Manish practiced the parts where we only accompanied him with a soft hum. I remember that one of the parts was *B'-Rosh HaShanah Yi-Kateivun*. After the choir finished singing all the sections of *U-N'taneh Tokef*, Reb Manish began *B'-Rosh HaShanah Yi-Kateivun* while we hummed chords.

Once during the High Holidays when we reached that part, we suddenly realized that the program had unexpectedly changed. After we were done singing *U-N'taneh Tokef* we started to hum *B'-Rosh HaShanah Yi-Kateivun* the way we had practiced. Suddenly, Hayyim Shorr started to wave his hands frantically. It looked like he had suddenly gotten scared and was signaling us to stop humming. I looked around me and saw all the singers standing frozen in their places.

Reb Manish was praying extemporaneously from his heart in a religious ecstasy. I realized that we were witnessing an original musical improvisation, created on the spot by an experienced composer who had a natural music talent. Here was a cantor who expressed his religious feelings, who poured forth the sorrows of his heart and created—without planning—a moving *gebet* (supplication) that pierced my heart. A shiver passed from my feet to my head. I turned my head away slowly as a show of respect and saw that our Hebrew teacher, Zalman Shechter, of blessed memory, was standing in the aisle along with many others who had come from other synagogues to listen

to this wonderful cantor. Tears were running down his cheeks from emotion. I am sure that he also felt the impact of the prayer that was being created in front of us at that moment (pages 154-155).

* * * * *

Tchortkov and Jewish Music

By Tzvi Orenstein, translated by Sara Mages

I must tell the story of Rabbi Mendel Rosenzvaig, who was also known by the name of "the violinist." He was a nursery school teacher by profession. The students in his *kheyder* (religious elementary school) were the children of the *Shapirantiki* (followers of Rabbi Shapira). Considering the time and place, the children's parents were well advanced in their ideas, for the *kheyder*'s curriculum was unique. Their children studied a wide variety of subjects: grammar, the Bible with translation, Talmud that was sometimes explained in a scientific way, and European languages like German, French and English.

Rabbi Mendel Rosenzvaig's real talent was in teaching music. In his *kheyder* the children were taught how to read musical notation, play the violkn, harp and piano. His two sons were known by the affectionate names of Abramtchik and Yisroeltchik. Both were enthusiastic music teachers who contributed greatly to the music education in Tchortkov. When they recognized talented students or students who showed interest, they would give them free music lessons.

The Hasidim told many exaggerated tales on how Rabbi Mendel Rosenzvaig became a musician. He was nicknamed "the violinist" because he was the first to bring a violin to Tchortkov. Like his rabbi and teacher, Rabbi Y'shaya Meir Shapira, of blessed memory, Rabbi Mendel Rosenzvaig was a God-fearing Jew. He observed all the religious laws from the simple ones to the most restrictive ones. His home was a meeting place for the most religious Jews. But his *kheyder* was avoided by Hasidic students. Although they wished to study music with him, most of them kept away, fearing that if they joined his classes they would fall into bad ways.

Moshe Orenstein was one of the first to be enticed, and he was welcomed with open arms at the home of Rabbi Mendel Rosenzvaig. Well known in the city by the name "Moshe Israel Sara-Merm's," Moshe Orenstein had a kind soul and a musical ear. He was the son of an honorable Hasidic family who were related to the Rabbi. In those days Rabbi Mendel was already advanced

in age, and his two sons Abramtchik and Yisroeltchik were Moshe Orenstein's soul brothers and teachers.

Later on, Moshe Orenstein became one of the most important musicians in Tchortkov. Many Hasidic students studied music at his home. Among them were H. Mayerowitsch who became cantor at the Rothschild synagogue in London. Mayerowitsch also served as president of the cantors' association in London and published many articles about Jewish music. [2]

This is how the home of my father, Rabbi Moshe Orenstein, turned into a music center not only for Tchortkov but also for the whole area. It was here that the famous Hasidic choir of Tchortkov was established. Moshele Orenstein was its spiritual director and instructor. The choir was a recognized name in the Hasidic world. The thousands of pilgrims who visited the Rabbi's court in Tchortkov spread its name throughout the Jewish communities of Poland and neighboring countries.

At the home of "Moshe Israel Sara-Merm's," not only Jewish music written by famous cantors like Zeydl Rovner, Yerukhom Hakoton and Nisson Belzer was taught. The famous "Hallelujah" written by Handel was also taught; in Tchortkov it was called "Hallelujah of the Christians," because it was written by a Gentile for the Church of England. In Handel's oratorio the word "Hallelujah" is repeated over and over again (In Hebrew the word ends with the letters *Yad-Heh*, meaning God). The Hasidim were not sure if they were allowed to repeat the word *Yah* so many times. The choir was careful not to sing the composition in the Rebbe's synagogue in front of a large audience. They decided that it would be appropriate to sing it in the study hall (*beis medrash*), only on weekdays, for the Rebbe and a small group of his intimates. During the High Holidays, however, the choir did sing it in the Rabbi's synagogue. The choir also sang many classic compositions written by Schubert, Mozart, Beethoven, Meyerbeer and others.

Schubert's songs were very popular among the young Jewish people and were sung frequently. Somehow they also reached the Rebbe's court.

I remember one occasion when an enthusiastic young group organized a benefit concert to take place on Hanukkah. All the proceeds would be donated to help refugees who passed through Tchortkov on their way from South Russia to different parts of the world. The court in Tchortkov allowed

2 Ed. note: H. Mayerowitsch co-arranged the musical versions of Torah and Haftorah cantillation that appear on pages 1045 and 1047 of the Hertz *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino Press), 1962.

us to use the Municipal Wind Instrument Orchestra in the synagogue. It was a great success, and a first in the city's history.

I also want to mention the story of Reb Rovaleh Khazn, who was hoping to get a job as cantor in the nearby town of Rimlov. The community leaders in Rimlov wanted to know if Rovaleh could sing with a choir. Reb Rovaleh approached the Hasidic choir in Tchortkov and asked them to help him by coming to Rimlov and performing with him. After a lot of deliberation, the choir traveled to Rimlov, and the performance left an enormous impression, so much so that Reb Rovaleh Khazn was awarded the position as cantor.

It is important for me to mention that the garments worn by Tchortkov's Hasidim were considered too elegant in the eyes of the "Rimlovim." Tchortkov's Hasidim wore a fabric hat instead of the traditional Hasidic fur-trimmed *shtrayml*. They also wore their collars up instead of down. These deviations from the norm were serious enough to make Rimlov's Hasidim wonder if the Tchortkov Hasidim's *peyes* (side-curls) were really hair (pages 156-157)!

The Journal is indebted to Helen Winkler, an avid student of Jewish folkways, and webmaster of ***Helen's Yiddish Dance Page: Dances of the Jews of Eastern Europe****, for submitting the above memoirs as a Counterpoint to Akiva Zimmermann's article, "The Hasidic World's Attitude towards Hazzanut." The internet site for these memoirs is www.jewishgen.org*

The Tchortkover Rebbe, David Moshe

Hasidism in Jazz

By John Katz

> *Hasidic... the sound of that word evokes an image of men in movement… a divine combination of holiness and passion... rapture refracted and reflecting humanity in God... God in humanity... just like jazz.*
>
> *Jazz... blacks bound by bondage... head and hand cuffed into humiliation…sell, sale, sold into slavery of body, mind, spirit…gods and God denied deification... sounds of protest… angry music of soul-torment... reflecting what humanity... what God… just like Israel.*

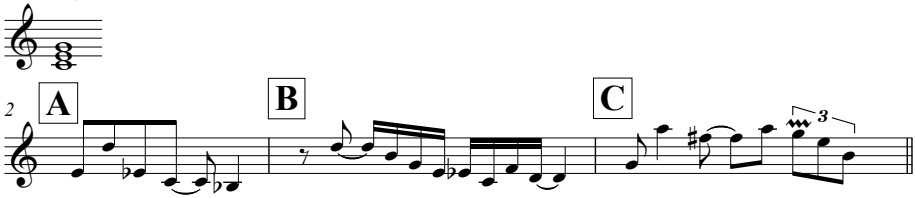
This common destiny of oppressive alienation gave birth to the historico-music development of the jazz-Hasidic experience.

The Jew of the Diaspora and the disoriented African while in exile maintained their musical roots by a kind of collective consciousness. Recognizing that evolution changes most things, nevertheless a people suppressed into insularity will cling to that which makes their existence uniquely theirs. The Fiddler on the Roof understands this, and sings and dances within "tradition."

This article cannot, nor should it, discuss all the complex historical points of contact or isolated non-parallel developments of Jazz-Hasidism; rather my main concern is to analyze what is musically "true" to both forms. I come therefore not as a religious Jew, but even more significantly as a musician, who recognizes that the search for the right note at the right time is in fact an out-of-this world experience. That search however, much less the finding, no matter how ethereal, must be based on an understanding of form and tonality. Only after one has mastered the outer structure can one then proceed to the heart, the very quintessence, of the Jazz-Hasidic experience: i.e. *improvisation*. Only the foolish will define improvisation; but if it is anything, it is an unfolding and mastery of your own "inner structure." The literate tradition of the past to the non-literate experience of the present (made manifest by the improvisor) is what binds the jazz-Hasidic musician.

Kabbalistic thought starts from the premise: "We proceed to the unknown from the known." Let us then begin with the "known" of Jazz. Traditional Jazz has within it the same elements of all music: melody, harmony, rhythm. What makes it unique has been the style of the performer: changing melody patterns, the extension of harmonic patterns, tonal variations within the limitations of the instrument, (flutter tongue, buzzing sounds, glissandos up to a note, glissandos down from the note, known to the trade as a fall-off, etc.) and of primary importance, the improvisational visions of the player. These impro-

visations are based on and related back to the mainly harmonic aspect. The chordal harmonies are called by the "jazz-man, "changes." Whatever infinite possibilities are available to the improviser are based upon his incredible knowledge of chord variations, and these can be expressed as melodic riffs. An improvisation based on a major triad could evolve into the following, among other alternative variants (**Example 1.**).



Example 1. Melodic improvisations based on a **major triad**.

There have been many developments within the jazz musical scene, not only in written terms but also in the tremendous growth of the performer as virtuoso and improviser. Only compare Jelly Roll Morton with Art Tatum, Pee Wee Russell with Benny Goodman, etc., and the obvious growth of the individual technique of the jazz man would be only too apparent. But the common denominator of all the jazz players, that one musical form that has touched all, and in turn been fondled, changed, molded, tenderized, brutalized by all players in different historical time sequences, is the... ***Blues!*** No matter what will happen to jazz as it evolves, no matter what kind of musical masters will appear, the one pervasive musical form of the Blues (like synagogue prayer modes) will remain to stimulate and challenge the ingenuity of the improvisers.

In the beginning, the Blues were primarily concerned with verse-improvisation. Lyrically, the Blues not only expressed despair, hope, and anger, but contrary to popular belief, abstract introspective poetry that comes from an oppressed people. Structurally it represents an A A B form, and as we shall see, the music corresponds to that form. An example of a Blues lyric will illustrate the point:

> I woke up this morning, rainwater in my bed,
> I woke up this morning. rainwater in my bed.
> You know my roof is leaking, Lord, leaking on my head.
> The cold wind howling, howling in my heart.
> The wind howling, howling in my heart
> For the best of friends. Lord, they have got to part.

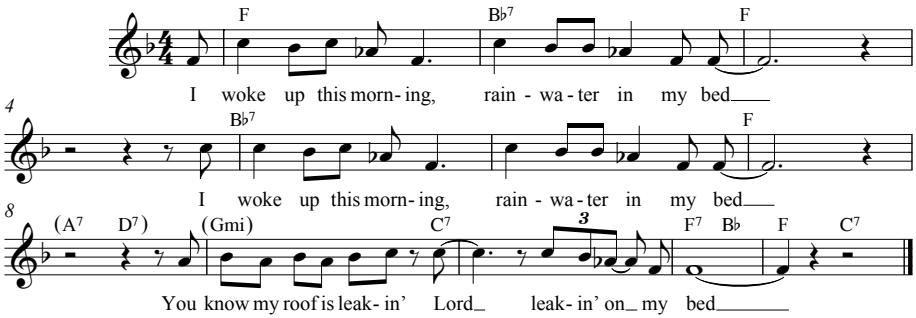
There is a similarity between the above poetic structure and the poetry of the Torah (Genesis 4: 23).

> Adah and Tsillah, hear my voice, ye wives of Lamekh, hearken unto my speech. For I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamekh seventy and seven fold.

What is common to both poetic structures is the repetition of a line in the Blues, and the extension of a thought put into different language in the biblical poem. In the Blues, the first idea is usually repeated exactly in the second line. In the biblical poem the idea is put differently in the second line, but in effect reiterates the original thought.

It is not within the purview of this paper to explore the connection between the parallel rhymes of the Bible and the parallel rhymes of the Blues; I only wish to point out how Blues music relates to its ABA pattern. There are uncountable Blues melodies—not to mention improvisational melodies—and to suggest that once you've heard one Blues tune you've heard them all, would be idiotic. Nevertheless, there is an archetypical Blues which will illustrate the poetic and musical structure.

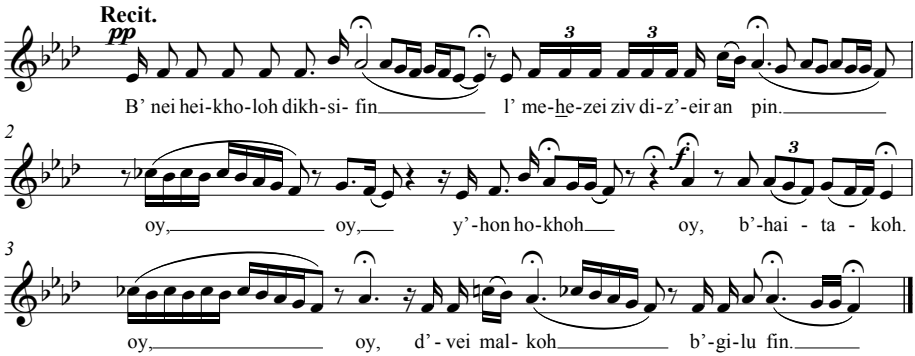
In the classic jazz tradition the performer now improvises, or to use the vulgar expression, "blows" on the changes. Fantastic as it may sound, all Blues improvisations are based on the I-IV-V-I chords (the church organist's catchphrase, "Amen begins"; **Example 2.**).



Example 2. Blues improvisation (chords auxiliary to the I-IV-V-I pattern) are indicated by parentheses.

Composer/educator Max Helfman (1901-1963), dean of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, was not only a musical tzaddik but a man unique in this age of musical technology. It was he who first suggested to me that jazz and Hasidic music have similar tonal characteristics not only in terms of intervallic structure, but more significantly, that the improvisational experience unites what appear to be dissimilar musical tonalities.

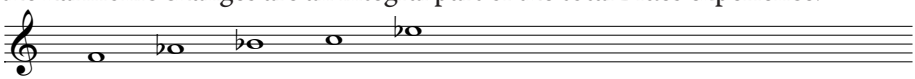
Through the revered Max, I met another great musical personality and seeker of musical truth, Cantor Allan Michelson of Adat Ari El Congregation in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California. When I asked Michelson to go deep into his vast repertoire of Hasidic melodies, with the intuitive qualities of a great artist he sang for me the perfect song from which a whole series of musical challenges could germinate. Not only was the melody exquisite, but even more miraculous, it had the same overall musical characteristics as the Blues—the flatted third, the flatted seventh—so much of the Blues mystique was there. But behold! The flatted *fifth*—that tonal note of oppression that both peoples too cruelly shared, was also there (**Example 3.**).[1]



Example 3. Cantor Allan Michelson's melody for ***B'nei Heikholoh***.

Both Cantor Michelson's melody and my Blues improvisation upon further analysis are based on the Dorian mode with the addition of the flatted fifth, which I consider an "improvised" note, or better still, a note that humanizes the divine fifth. That melody is aptly named *B'nei Heikholoh* ("Scholars of the Sanctuary who yearn to bask in the reflected glory of God, at this table and at this favored time when there is joy but no anger").

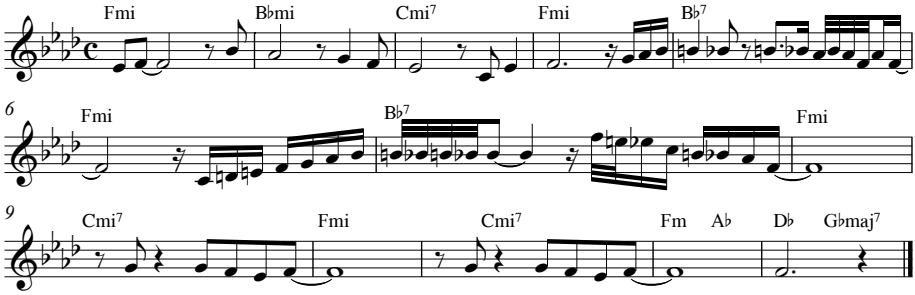
When the jazz-man plays the Blues, it is this scale (**Example 3.**) that provides the basis for all subsequent improvisation, with the understanding, of course, that the harmonic changes are an integral part of the total Blues experience.



Example 4. A **Blues** scale.

1 *B'nei Heikholoh* is a meditative *z'miroh* (quasi-liturgical table song) recited after the "Third Meal" (*Sholosh S'udos*) taken between Minhah and Ma'ariv late Sabbath afternoon. This melody appears in Abraham Zvi Idelsohn's *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies, vol. 10 – Songs of the Chassidim* – 1932: xii; 1, no. 2, and is ascribed to Rav Dovidl of Talno (Ukraine, 1808-1882).

In effect, it is possible to state that the melodic aspect of the Blues and *B'nei Heikholoh* is based on a pentatonic scale. What differences occur as each music evolves are the rhythmic, harmonic and improvisational devices unique to each culture. With this thought in mind I had the choice of either harmonizing *B'nei Heikholoh* and/or re-working it so that it would be musically acceptable to the jazz player and most importantly, to Cantor Allan Michelson. (Incidentally, *B'nei Heikholoh* can also be harmonized within the Blues tradition, that is, I-IV-V-I chordal progressions). The melody that follows (**Example 5.**) was one that I felt the jazz group and the cantor could relate to as a basis for improvisation.



Example 5. A melody **for improvisation**—based on a Blues scale and *B'nei Heikholoh.*

The above example presents a solution to a specific musical problem. It represents one way of solving the problem of revising a particular melody from the Hasidic tradition to relate to the jazz tradition. Other solutions are of course possible, according to the sensitivity and creativity of the cantor and the jazz musician with whom he wants to be involved if the congregation will allow it. This example, however, at least serves as an approach that could be helpful to cantorial jazz-men who wish to attain a unity of improvisational styles.

Is there then really a separate and distant gulf, a chasm, between jazz and Hasidic music? Is one profane, the other sacred? Martin Buber said, "Nothing is profane; everything is waiting to be made sacred." A jazz writer has said, "Jazz... it comes from the house of the Lord." All kinds of philosophical questions can be asked and all answers can be incomplete and meaningless. Let the theologians, philosophers, historians and religious traditionalists rack their brains to solve the problem of historical unity. The musician has, or should have, one concern: does it work?

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A Report on the Ernest Bloch Conference: *The Man and His Music 50 Years Later*

By Malcolm Miller

The conscious and unconscious use of traditional music in art music, the deliberate attempt to create national styles, whether Jewish, American or Swiss, the notion of universalism and particularism in music, the influence of racial, ethnic and deterministic ideologies on music: these were some of the topical themes raised and explored during this exciting three-day conference held on July 29-31, 2007 at Fitzwilliam College in Cambridge. The event, presented by the Jewish Music Institute at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, supported by the Nordev Trust and organized by Dr. Alex Knapp, marked an important stage in the preparations for a 2009 International Festival to mark 50 years since the composer's death. The very special assembly of leading scholars, performers and members of the Bloch family presented a series of academic papers, discussions, reminiscences and performances with many fresh insights and new perspectives on the significance of the Swiss-Jewish American composer that made this a riveting, ground-breaking event.

Several absorbing keynote papers explored the tensions within Bloch's musical personality. Philip Bohlman, Professor at Chicago University, in his poetic and penetrating paper "Journeys between Utopia and Dystopia: Chronotypes of Displacement in Bloch's Epic Landscapes," compared the three epic cycles, the *Israel Symphony*, *America*, and *Helvetia*. Drawing on ideas as distant as St. Augustine and Thomas More, Bohlman unravelled a contemporary search for utopian universalism tempered by an awareness of the dystopia of displacement and of being an outsider. As Bloch himself recognized, for the Swiss he was an émigré; for the Americans he was a Jewish composer; and for the Jewish public he was too assimilated. Bloch himself had ambivalent attitudes towards the fledgling Jewish population in Palestine, where his *Sacred Service* was premiered in 1940; like Mahler he sensed he belonged to a different time and place. Bohlman pinpointed the different uses of folk musics, for example those in *America* were more stereotypical,

whereas those used in *Helvetia* reflected a more esoteric selection based on his childhood experiences. The *Israel Symphony*, by contrast, was more concerned with developmental processes than the collage-like approach leading to a grand visionary choral gesture with which each piece concludes. One interesting fact to emerge from the conference was the relative unfamiliarity of these epic works, which still elude audiences, in favor of the more often played Bloch favorites.

A second keynote paper, given on the third day, was by Klara Moricz, Professor at Amherst College, MA, one of the leading Bloch scholars as well as an authority on Bartok, who has published several challenging and even controversial articles on Bloch in recent years. In " 'Suffering and Greatness' of Ernest Bloch: Concepts of the Composer as Genius," Moricz looked into 19th-century ideas about genius, including Wagner's formulation of the genius as "representative of his race," and the shift to a 20th-century world view of the artist as prophet, warning and describing mankind to itself, without necessarily improving mankind. Through detailed exploration of Bloch's correspondence, she showed how that aesthetic shift was reflected by the composer's own self-perception, modeled on the image of Beethoven and Wagner, yet filtered through 20th-century ideologies of determinism and racial theories.

Moricz discussed the influence on Bloch of the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon, who held that race has psychological characteristics as well as physical. Bloch's idea that "Man is not only himself," however, contradicted his own eschewing of belonging to any group or ideology. Moricz's paper interestingly converged with Bohlman in that Bloch's sense of history was colored by Le Bon's pessimism, that the belief in Nature precluded a belief in the "perfectibility of Man"; only the elite represented progress. Thus for Bloch the swing from utopia to dystopia was necessary, human fallibility ensuring that there would never be a "paradise on earth." Nevertheless, he remained passionately anti-racist, his own public Jewishness partly motivated by a quest for freedom from what he perceived as prejudice.

A fascinating question raised by Moricz's paper was how far Bloch was aware of the contradiction whereby he both supported and refuted Wagner's racial-aesthetic claims, namely 1) that the artist must draw on his racial sources, and 2) that the Jewish "race" was incapable of that (expressed in his notorious essay "Judaism in Music"). Bloch had absorbed the Wagnerian philosophy from the Swiss Protestant theologian Frederic Louis Godet, and to a certain extent vindicated it by his own example as a Jewish composer reaching deep into his race. Yet at the same time, as one Italian critic observed of the Ital-

ian premiere of *Sacred Service* in the 1930s, Bloch represents a refutation of Wagner's accusation that Jews were incapable of drawing upon their racial sources, by his very self-consciousness as a "Jewish composer." Interestingly, as Moricz has shown in earlier articles, Bloch rejected so-called Jewish composers such as Mendelssohn, Mahler and Schoenberg, as being imitators; he saw himself as the only true contemporary creative artist amongst them, in the Wagnerian definition.

As a Jewish composer of Jewish works, Bloch was interested in the "Jewish soul" and denied, in his *Jewish Cycle*, being a musical "archaeologist." In his erudite paper "From Geneva to New York: Radical changes in Ernest Bloch's view of himself as a 'Jewish Composer' during the period 1916-1919," Alex Knapp distinguished between those works which drew unconsciously on many traditional motifs and those which made self-conscious use of traditional materials following a period in which Bloch studied sources, in the years following the *Jewish Cycle* (1916-19). According to Knapp, the moment Bloch became an "archaeologist" (Bloch's own word), he ceased to become a "Jewish composer" working from the unconscious. There then ensued a tension within his style related to the use of assimilated material, a tension one could equate with the dystopia referred to by both Bohlman and Moricz.

One of the highlights of the conference was a chamber concert in the Chapel of Fitzwilliam College, which featured a selection of the Jewish works, and some piano music and songs. *Three Sketches From Jewish Life* and the famous "Nigun" from the *Baal Shem Suite* were played with passionate intensity by the Latvian-American cellist Yosif Feigelson, who also performed some rarities by the Polish-Soviet Mieczyslaw Weinberg and Solomon Senderey, all accompanied by the present author. The program began with the American pianist Miriam Brickman's stirring rendition of *Poems to the Sea* preceded by a reading of the Walt Whitman poem that inspired the work. The *Poèmes D'Automne* received a compelling account by the soprano Andrea Rivers-Baron partnered by the Israeli pianist Zecharia Plavin. The ravishing impressionistic songs of this cycle are settings of poems by Beatrix Rodes, with whom Bloch had an ardent affair during the early years of his long-lasting marriage to Marguerite.

The storms Ernest and Marguerite weathered, the inspiration of nature and the sea, especially the house on Agate Beach, Oregon to where the Blochs emigrated in 1941, and his enigmatic, magnetic personality were some of the themes that emerged in a fascinating oral history session on the second day. To begin with, several grandchildren including Ivan's children Ernest Bloch II and his sister, the professional singer Seta, daughter of Lucienne Bloch and

accompanied by another granddaughter, and Bloch's nephew Alain Hirsch and his family from Geneva all shared recollections of Bloch and Marguerite at their home in Oregon or on visits to Switzerland. These highlighted hitherto unexplored aspects of Bloch the man and artist, for instance his perfectionism, his love of agates, which he collected on the beach and polished, and his sense of humor. Secondly, a documentary oral history project conducted by Joella Werlin, complemented these live reminiscences with a series of filmed interviews, some of which are from a TV film she had made, and some of which are part of the new Bloch Legacy project underway in Portland, Oregon (www.ernestblochlegacy.org).

Amongst the more musically pertinent perceptions to emerge at the conference was that of an essential Bloch style which transcended the French, American or Jewish idioms in which he worked. This was borne out by several papers on Bloch reception around the world. Chaired by Philip Bohlman, the second-day session began with two papers about the dissemination of Bloch through websites and through recordings. Itoh Akinora, a Japanese IT professional and amateur violinist, explained the rationale behind his website in "A Young Persons Guide to Ernest Bloch: the History of My Website." (Akinora set up the site in 1999 after being won over by a concert of *Shelomo* in Japan, and prioritized it as informational, regularly updated and aimed at the general public.) Dalia Atlas, who in June conducted a rare London revival of Bloch's early *C-sharp Minor Symphony* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at London's Cadogan Hall, has released five CDs of lesser known Bloch works (ASV and Naxos), and here spoke about the meaning behind the notes, the unifying characteristic of Bloch's voice. In "New Approaches to Interpreting the Multiplicity of Styles in Bloch's Music," Dalia Atlas pinpointed one of the style characteristics of Bloch as his sense of the spontaneous, and extended it to the passion at the heart of Bloch's music, a "fundamental" depth that permeates all his idioms. This generated an interesting discussion about the subjectivity of perceptions of his various idioms, whether Jewish, Chinese, American or French/Swiss.

There followed two stimulating papers about Bloch's reception in Israel. In the first, "Bloch as a model for the first-generation composers of the Yishuv and early Israel (1920-60)," the notable musicologist Jehoash Hershberg, Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, outlined the specific influences of Bloch on recent Israeli composers. Hershberg's beautifully structured paper began and ended with comparisons of Bloch and Israel's foremost pioneer composer Paul Ben-Haim, who was born in Munich as Paul Frankenburger. Noting the similarities between Frankenburger's oratorio *Joram* of 1933,

the year he left for Palestine, and Bloch's *Helvetia* (1927), he described them as both sharing the quality of an end of an era. Similarly, both Bloch's 1924 *Quintet* and Ben-Haim's 1933 *Quartet* were the works of new immigrants, "synthesizing," as Hershberg put it, "their European heritage with their new environment."

The general point was that similar ideological situations gave rise to similar musical responses. Hershberg is an authority on these issues: his monumental tome, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948*, is based on rigorously researched social history. Here we were treated to similar treasures: a history tracing significant Bloch performances in Palestine/Israel. In 1927 Bloch was considered, like the composers of the St. Petersburg School of Jewish Folk Music, and Joel Engel in particular, as an advocate of "Hebraic music." The Palestine Broadcasting Service, initiated in 1936, initially featured Bloch on its programs, but paradoxically his "old world" music—such as the "Nigun," were popular—while other Eastern European styles were being rejected. Critics and composers considered Bloch modern and genuinely "Jewish," unlike an assimilated diaspora composer such as Gustav Mahler. This was shown by performances in 1937 of Bloch's *Poemes Juifs* alongside emblematic proto-Israeli works by Marc Lavry; a process also epitomized in the *Sacred Service*'s Palestine premiere in 1940. It was considered modern in style, a secular mass—yet spiritually Jewish. Since Ben Haim had analyzed this work extensively and wrote the premiere performance's program notes, Herschberg concluded that there was a direct line of influence from Bloch to Ben Haim's *Liturgical Cantata* commissioned for New York's Park Avenue Synagogue in 1948, stylistically as well as conceptually.

In his paper "Bloch's Reception and his Standing in Israel since 1955" Zecharia Plavin, Professor at the HED College of Music in Tel-Aviv, complemented Hershberg's study with a survey filled with quotations from the press and public. For critics in the first years of the State of Israel, Bloch was considered a "stranger" whose most modern idiom was that of polytonality, while his ecstatic Jewishness was a display of diasporic "non-belonging." In contrast to the rejection of Bloch's "Hebraism," there was also an awareness of Bloch as a relevant representative both of modernity and of "Jewishness." Plavin concluded that Bloch represented a beacon of high art within a culture in which classical music was still a minority interest.

In a wider context, while the voice of Bloch is one that commands and demands attention, it is remarkable that fifty years after his death, there are still few monographs on the composer (significantly, the only major biography, by Levinsky, is available only in French), while only a few works receive

performance, such as *Shelomo* and the *Sacred Service*. In a paper titled "*Sacred Service: the Mass Bloch never wrote and the two that Leonard Bernstein did write*," David Schiller (University of Georgia) argued brilliantly that the *Sacred Service*, while overtly the first Jewish liturgical cantata, was far more universalistic in intent than it appears. The author of *Bloch, Schoenberg and Bernstein, Assimilating Jewish Music* (Oxford University Press, 2003), Schiller posited a "universal Mass" that Bloch never wrote, a paradigm for a genre which, though it turned out to be an idea for the eventual *Sacred Service*, was nevertheless, present in its absence, as a genre in abstract.

One of the questions considered was Bloch's use of spoken as opposed to sung texts and English versus Hebrew. As reported by Suzanne Bloch, the composer's daughter and an eminent lutenist and early music specialist, Bloch wanted the texts sung and Bernstein's performance and recording of 1960 was considered as being against the composer's wishes. Schiller took as his starting point a comment Bernstein made when justifying his decision, that Bloch's version was "too theatrical." This seemed odd to Schiller, on account of both Bernstein's overt theatricality and the nature of the recitative-like vocal line which Marko Rothmuller (musicologist and baritone) famously recorded under the baton of the composer in 1949. Yet it transpired that Seta, daughter of Lucienne Bloch, reported that according to her mother, Bloch had wanted the texts to be spoken. Alex Knapp resolved the issue diplomatically by noting that "both were right," and that Bloch wanted a type of recitation in between speech and song, a notated *Sprechstimme* with some pitch indication and free speech-inflected rhythm.

We heard Bloch's own recording followed by Bernstein's recording in which the speaker was Rabbi Judah Cahn, a Reform rabbi. Schiller was making the point that Bernstein's claiming Bloch to be theatrical was valid in relation to Bernstein's intention at this point, of joining in with Cahn in the "Kaddish"—it was more than acting, it was "praying." From Bloch's use of an English text that kept a certain universal ecumenical approach, Schiller observed that Bernstein's use of the "Kaddish" made the work more "sectarian" and Jewish. The *Kaddish Symphony* (no. 3) also used the same text, and Schiller played a 2003 recording conducted by Leonard Slatkin in which the text is spoken by Bernstein's daughter Jamie; here the notion of Bernstein's prayer is even more reinforced as the words are changed to "my father prayed with all his might."

More universalistic was Bernstein's *Mass*, a music theatre piece infused with contemporary allusions, in a similar spirit of questioning, which was surprisingly chosen to be performed at the Vatican in 2000 even though it is

very challenging and confrontational and full of jazz and popular elements. The "Dona Nobis" is very clever party music which becomes exuberant and unruly rock music which is then held back by the sudden "Pacem" repeated three times (symbolic perhaps). The *Missa Brevis* of 1988, originally for a Joan of Arc play, is as Schiller observed, "less troubled than the Mass," and more conformist, and shows some stylistic similarities with *West Side Story*. An intriguing successor to this tradition was Shulamit Ran's *Credo Ani Maamin* in which lines in Latin and Hebrew and English are intermingled and in which she adds a movement to the conventional Mass, a memorial to the Holocaust. Schiller incisively analyzed the "Credo" movement in which Ran adds the text of Adon Olam, which has the same phrases as in Bloch's *Sacred Service*, both drawn from Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith. That formulation itself had responded to the Credo of the Medieval church and constituted a Jewish "credo," thus pointing to universalistic considerations.

The final paper of the conference was about Bloch's other great dramatic chef d'oeuvre, his only opera, *Macbeth*, premiered at the Opera Comique in Paris on November 10, 1910. To open his colorful account of the work's performance and recording history, Stanley Henig—director of the Historic Masters record company—recalled attending the only UK performance to date. This was a concert version mounted at the Royal Festival Hall in 1975, a production by Denny Dayviss, inspired to the task by Denby Richards, veteran music critic and editor of many journals such as *Musical Opinion*. Henig explained the circumstances for the curtailment of the original Paris production after some thirteen performances as relating to the soprano Lucien Breval's decision to go to Russia, though in fact she remained in Paris, much to Bloch's chagrin.

The libretto of *Macbeth*, by Bloch's friend Edmund Fleg (author of the book, *Why am I a Jew?*), is closer to Shakespeare than is Verdi's version, and musical influences are mainly Wagner and Debussy. There are almost no set pieces (apart from a drunkard's song) nor duets, and Macbeth, sung at the premiere by the great Dutch baritone, Albers, is on stage most of the time. Most of the eighteen characters are minor, and most of the vocal writing is a type of declamatory *Singspiel*. There is a great use of Wagnerian leitmotif (Alex Knapp's unpublished study analyzes over sixty of these).

The opera was revived in 1938 in Naples, for two of three projected performances. One of the reasons for the cancellation of the third performance was the scheduled arrival of Mussolini, who had just signed the pact with Hitler. The second scene of Act 2 (a musically lyrical one) was cut—the murder of Lady MacDuff and her children—evidence perhaps of political motivations.

Bloch conducted the rehearsals, but he was not permitted to conduct the performances. This production set into relief the darkening clouds over Europe which impelled the Blochs eventually to migrate again, to America.

Since 1938 there have been some revivals: Rome in 1953, followed by Milan and Brussels (where Queen Elizabeth was present–as a friend of Bloch), Geneva, some American colleges and a couple of student performances in Haifa—as mentioned earlier—conducted by Dalia Atlas. In 1997 Montpelier opera performed and recorded it with the Act 2 scene cut; and in 1999 Dortmund produced and recorded a version with the formerly cut scene. Vienna saw further productions in 2003 and in 2005, a total of 90 performances and 19 different casts since 1910. Henig concluded that a UK stage premiere would be an ideal aim for the 2009 Bloch Festival, and would also mark the centenary of the opera's premiere.

The final session, "Whither Bloch," brought out many ideas such as publications, performances and projects for the promotion of Bloch's music in advance of the 2009 festival as well as in a much longer-term view, towards 2030, the 150th anniversary of Bloch's birth. Leading artists and ensembles would be encouraged to perform ever wider selections of Bloch's music, and many scholarly projects would be pursued. A moving moment came when Rabbi Dr. Norman Solomon, who deserves special mention for his witty and erudite chairing, spoke about his support of the project through the Nordev Trust, in memory of his beloved wife, a music lover and keen violinist. Much credit is due to Alexander Knapp for masterminding the conference and supervising the smooth running through his Jewish Music Institute steering committee. The proceedings, to be published for the 2009 festival, will both fill a major gap in the literature and offer a fitting tribute to Ernest Bloch, one of the most compellingly individual and influential of 20th-century composers, a visionary whose significance is yet to be fully appreciated.

Malcolm Miller, a musicologist and pianist, received his PhD at Kings College. He is Associate Lecturer in Music at the Open University, editor of ***Arietta****, Journal of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe. Malcolm directs the Forum for Israeli Music of the Jewish Music Institute at SOAS, University of London, and has contributed to the* ***New Grove Dictionary of Music*** **II** *and music journals including* ***Jewish Renaissance, Tempo, Musical Opinion, International Piano*** *and* ***Musica Judaica****.*

Singing the Bible with a Modern Inflection: Scriptural Events, Places and Personalities in Israeli Popular Music

By Naomi Cohn Zentner

Biblical events have inspired the writing of countless musical pieces in every category and genre—from operas and oratorios to art songs and symphonic music, many of which were written by Jewish composers. Beginning in the fifth century, biblical narratives inspired the texts of *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) using mainly biblical images related to the redemptive covenant between God and the People of Israel. Over the centuries, biblical themes and figures have found their way into all kinds of Jewish musical expression, from the liturgy to paraliturgical poetry to art music.

With the beginnings of Zionism and its quest for a Jewish homeland, an innovative form of Bible usage hit the musical stage. It revisited central themes previously understood in a wholly religious light, and portrayed them in an historical and nationalistic manner. It also reflected an interest beyond the biblical stories, to the atmosphere of the ancient Land of Israel itself—its landscapes, its agriculture, its pastoral serenity and even its livestock. The biblical chronicles were seen as a way to herald the Jewish people's return to their homeland and to their naturally designated role. Recurring biblical imagery of a hardworking Jewish folk living out of doors and deeply rooted to the land was useful to a Zionist establishment intent on creating the image of a "New Jew." Every decade since the establishment of the State in 1948 has seen some variation on the theme of using the Bible. From the *Yishuv* era in pre-state Palestine to this day in modern Israel, the Bible remains a central theme of popular Israeli music.

The hundreds of songs written over the past century are a trove whose exploration has begun, yet awaits a full-volume study.[1] This article is a modest

1 The field of the biblical influence in Israeli music has been explored both as theme material and as musical inspiration. A list of major works researching biblical images in Israeli Popular music includes: Dan Almagor, "D'muto shel David BaPizmon UvaBamah HaKalah" ("The image of David in Song and in Light Entertainment"), *Al HaPerek–Alon L'-Morim L'-Tanakh* 12, pp. 51-94, 1996; Matti Goldschmidt, *The Bible in Israeli Folk Dances* (Viersen, Germany: Choros verlag, 2001); Sarah Hafri-Aflalu, "Shir HaZemer HaYisraeli M'sohei'ah im HaMikra," ("Israeli song converses with the Bible"), *Eit HaDat* 2 (1998) pp. 119-132; Talya Horovitz, "Masa B'-Ikvot Nomi Shemer V'haTanakh" ("A Journey following Naomi Shemer and the Bible"), *Sha'anan* 5765, pp. 161-196; Akiva Nof, "D'muyot Mikra'iyot BaPizmon Ha-Ivri" ("Biblical Figures in Hebrew Song"); Menashe Rubina "Moshe B'-Shir Am Uv'Shirei Y'ladim" ('Moses in Folk Songs

attempt to begin the work of sumarizing relevant research in Hebrew, and will discuss the music under three headings:

biblical verses set to music;

the musical style of popular songs inspired by the Bible;

biblical events and figures in the texts of Israeli songs.

Within this framework the article focuses on biblical figures and events in the repertory of Israeli popular song from the late 19th century till the present day.

Biblical verses set to music

Among musical settings of biblical verses by Zionist-minded composers, the love-passages from *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs)—such as the song *Ana Pana Dodeikh* ("Where Has Your Beloved Gone?")—were perhaps set to the most popular-sounding music as well as the best received.[2] These verses, portraying a love story between the *dod* (lover) and his *ra'ayah* (beloved), understood by rabbinic commentary as an allegory for the love between God and the Children of Israel, reverted in modern Hebrew songs to their *p'shat* (literal) meaning. Yosef Goldenberg explains:

> The love songs of *Shir HaShirim* fulfilled a double meaning within the new Hebrew folk song. First, they proved that the Israeli folk possessed traditional love songs just like any other nation. Secondly, they functioned as substitutes for the more direct love songs which were also more stylized and better written. Overt love songs were deemed inappropriate to the contemporary social asceticism, they couldn't serve in shaping the desired collective identity or in helping to build the land and its society.[3]

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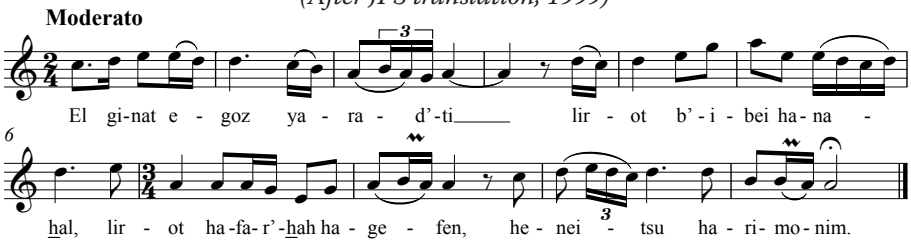
and in Children's Songs"), *Mahanayyim* 115, Iyar 5727, pp. 120-131; Nathan Shachar, "HaNashim BaMikra BaZemer Ha'-Ivri" ("Biblical Women in Hebrew Song"), *Beit Mikra* 172, 2004, pp. 97-115. On the topic of Biblical themes in Art music, see Moshe Gorali, *The Old Testament in Music* (Jerusalem: Maron publishers, 1993), and "The Bible in Music,: *Ariel*, Vol. 42, 1976.

2 *Ana Panah Dodeikh*. Lyrics: *Shir HaShirim* 6: 1-2, music: Gil Aldema, arrangement: Yechezkel Braun, performed by Ran Eliran and Nehama Hendel, 1958. As the duo Ran and Nama, they performed this song on the Ed Sullivan television show and gained a reputation as singers of Israeli "folk" songs. The five-CD set, *Songs of the Bible—Songs inspired by the Tanakh*, Ofra Helfman, ed., distributed by The 8th Note, 2008, includes an entire disc devoted to 30 settings of biblical verses; 17 of the verses were from *Shir HaShirim*.

3 Yosef Goldenberg, "*Hishtakfuta shel Sh'lilat HaGolah BaZemer Ha-Ivri* ("Reflection of Diaspora Negation in Israeli Folk Song"), *Katedra* 111, pp. 129-148, p. 135ff. Unless otherwise specified, all titles, lyrics and quotes in this article were translated from Hebrew by the present author.

The images of reawakening nature in *Shir HaShirim,* invoked by Bible commentators to signify the eventual *G'ulah* (Redemption), now gained an additional meaning. Part of the Zionist ethos they reflected was the land's revitalization in joyous springtime, blooming after a long "winter" of desertion; a flourishing that occurred in response to the love and devotion of those who had longed for the land and returned to cultivate it.

I went down to the nut grove
To observe the budding of the vale;
To see if the vines had blossomed,
And whether the pomegranates were in bloom.
(After JPS translation, 1999)



Example 1. ***El Ginat Egoz,*** a popular Israeli song based on *Shir Hashirim* 6: 11, 4: 16. Music by Sarah Levi-Tanai, performed by Chana Aharoni and the Emanuel Zamir band, 1957. To hear it on line, search in Hebrew for "El Ginat Egoz" on the Zemereshet website: www.zemer.co.il .

The voice of Yemenite singer Chana Aharoni exemplified the archetypal Israeli sound; it was seen as authentic to the land. The accompaniment of recorders and drums on this recording was perceived as recreating a biblical atmosphere.

In the 1950s, military entertainment troupes—*Lehakot Tsva'iyot*—were established in an effort to raise the morale of soldiers. For example, the Central Command Troupe performed a popular song, *VaYiven Uziyahu Migdalim BiY'rushalayim Vai-Hazkeim* ("[King] Uzziah Built Towers in Jerusalem and Fortified Them"), whose text was compiled from two verses in Second Chronicles: 26: 9-10. The song, developed from a motive of only three notes, was intended as a musical filler to ensure that soldiers in the audience would remain seated while the stage set was being changed. The unusual verse was randomly chosen by the Chief of the Education Corps, General Yitzhaki, after composer Yohanan Zarai bragged that he was able to compose a catchy melody to any text.[4]

4 Natan Shachar "Mi-'Y'fei Nof' Li-'Y'rushalayim Shel Barzel': Al Shirat Yerushalayim BaZemer Ha-Ivri MiReishit HaTsiyonut V'-Ad L'-Ahar Milhemet Sheishet HaYamim" ("From 'Y'fei Nof' to 'Yerushalayim Shel Barzel': On the Songs

Another biblical verse set to music and performed by an Army troupe, *Erets Zavat Halav U-D'vash* ("A Land of Milk and Honey"), was later choreographed and accepted as a genuine folk-dance.[5] These songs have since evolved into staples of the core Israeli repertoire, so much so that they are considered by many to be "folk" songs. An excellent example is the famous cantorial piece based on a verse from Jeremiah (31: 20), *HaVein Yakir Li Efrayim* (" 'Is Ephraim not my dear son?' [says God]"). It was composed by Hazzan Shmuel Malavsky who sang it originally with his family choir as a cantorial selection. In 1970 it was surprisingly performed by *Lahakat HaNahal* (*No'ar Halutsi Loheim*–Pioneering Military Youth—an Army entertainment troupe) following a successful tour of Israel by the Malavsky family.[6]

By the 1970s, quoting of complete biblical verses gradually disappeared from secular Israeli popular music. However, the lyrics of many Israeli songs unrelated to biblical issues were interspersed with biblical phrases which had become an integral part of Modern Hebrew vernacular.

Today, the setting of biblical phrases to new melodies occurs almost exclusively in the popular musical genre known as Neo-Hasidic, geared to Orthodox audiences. This type of song has its roots in the annual Israeli Chasidic Song Festivals that started in 1969, in which mostly secular Israeli singers performed new songs based on lyrics stemming from the liturgy and biblical texts. Based on biblical verses, songs such as *Sisu Et Yerushalayim* ("Rejoice in Jerusalem"; Isaiah 60: 10, 3rd-place winner in the 1970 festival (composed by Akiva Nof), were popularly adopted by the religious community as *Shirei Kodesh*—sacred songs. Settings by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach and by Mordechai Ben David of biblical and liturgical verses to dance-and-folk music figured heavily in the creation of Neo-Hasidic music, particularly *niggunim*—mainly dance-type melodies fitted with biblical or liturgical words.

One of the latest developments in the field of Israeli popular music is the sudden interest of secular singers and songwriters in traditional Jewish music as a source of inspiration. As result of this new trend, albums released since 2007 have been treating the old/new sources in several different ways.

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of Jerusalem in Hebrew Folksong from the Beginnings of Zionism till after the Six Day War"), *Etmol* 193, (2007) p. 24. *VaYiven Uziyahu Migdalim BiY'rushalayim Vai-Hazkeim*, music: Yochana Zarai, (1956).

5 *Erets Zavat Halav U-D'vash,* Music: Eliyahu Gamliel. Performed by Central Command Army Troupe (1956).

6 Hazzan Shmuel Malavsky (1894-1985) together with his four daughters and two sons comprised a family choir that performed mainly liturgical pieces in concerts all over the world.

1. The traditional melodies gain modern covers (David D'Or's *Shirat Rabim*—"Song of Many"; Ehud Banai's *Shir Hadash*—"A New Song"; Meir Banai's *Sh'ma Koli*—"Hear My Voice").
2. Biblical and liturgical texts are set to new music (Shlomo Gronich's *Masa El HaM'korot*—"Voyage to the Sources").
3. Sacred themes inspire the writing of new texts (Shuli Rand's *N'kudah Tovah*—"Good Point"; Erez Lev-Ari's *Simhat HaP'ratim HaK'tanim*—"The Joy of Small Details").

The increased interest of musicians not normally associated with religious music, as well as the warm reception that many of these songs have received by mainstream Israeli audiences, imply that liturgical and biblical influences are gaining popularity and acceptance in the ever-expanding field of what is perceived as "Israeli" music.

A "Biblical" Israeli music style

Biblical influence on Israeli popular music should be viewed as part of the Zionist movement's larger cultural endeavor, which saw the Bible as the cornerstone of an emerging Israeli culture. Referring to the Bible helped dissociate the new Zionist ethos from the religious Judaism of the Diaspora, and to reconnect it instead to agricultural and historical aspects of the Land of Israel.

Yosef Goldenberg elaborates on the emerging State's conscious effort to distance itself from the Jewish way of life in the Diaspora.[7] He claims that due to the negative image of the Diaspora, Zionist culture preferred Jewish Middle Eastern culture as well as Arabic culture as substitutes for the Eastern European culture from which most of the Jewish population in pre-state Palestine originated.[8] Biblical images and events were portrayed in Zionist literature and art through the use of Mediterranean and Arabic images and landscapes. However, in the case of Israeli folk music, the early Hebraist composers attempted to create a new musical style that would be perceived as ancient-sounding, authentic to the land, and thus distanced from the Eastern European musical style which was seen as more sentimental.[9]

7 Goldenberg, "Hishtakfuta...".

8 Ibid., p. 130

9 It is important to clarify that the musical style discussed in the following paragraphs only reflects a particular segment within Israeli music. Israeli music sprang from two opposing musical influences. The first was an attempt to create a brand new Israeli identity and culture, a collective style of songs with which all Israelis, regardless of background, could identify. *Shirei Erets Yisrael* (Songs of the Land of Israel), as they are called, reflect love for the country, its landscapes, and the pioneering spirit associated with modern day resettlement of the ancient homeland.

Biblically-based Israeli songs relate to a specific genre within the inclusive term *Shirei Erets Yisra'eil* (Songs of the Land of Israel); Shai Burstein refers to them as *Zimrei Shorashim* (rooted, i.e., authentic songs).

> There is a double meaning to the term *Shorashim*. These songs express the Zionist aspiration to set root in the land of Israel and to cultivate a new and healthy Hebrew culture in their textual and musical content as well as in their cultural and ideological role. However, apart from this glance toward the future, these songs include an aspiration which is of no lesser importance: to reconnect to the cultural-national roots of the Jewish people prior to their exile from the Land of Israel.[10]

Goldenberg outlines musical parameters that characterize this early Hebrew song in which composers attempted to create a new style of Israeli folk music. It was based on contemporary Middle Eastern musical elements plus the composers' perception of ancient biblical music, while overlooking the recent past.

- **Mode -** A preference for church modes—especially the Dorian mode—while avoiding the leading tone and the classical major and minor scales. Often only part of the scale was used, thus creating a pentatonic effect.
- **Vocal expression -** A preference for guttural diction in the manner used by Yemenite singers. Yemenite vocalists such as Bracha Zefira and Shoshana Damari were very popular, and the female Yemenite voice was seen as an ideal vehicle for performing Hebrew songs; it was thought to convey an Oriental/biblical sonority.
- **Instrumental arrangement** - The model for an instrumental ensemble was Emanuel Zamir's band, which included recorders, an accordion and a drum.

Songs crafted in the "new Israeli style" that is being explored here combined Middle Eastern musical influences that were perceived as being closer both to biblical music and to the local Arab music and thus authentic to the land; and Eastern European musical influences that reflected the origins of many of these songs' composers.

The second category of early Israeli songs, which are not reviewed in this article, emerged from the diverse musical traditions of new immigrants. Songs of the immigrants from Russia, Yemen, Yiddish-speaking countries, Sephardic-and-Ladino-speaking countries, Greek-speaking countries and Arabic-speaking countries were all translated into Hebrew, thereby becoming "Israeli songs."

Although early composers often proclaimed that they attempted to detach themselves from Eastern European music, many of the songs composed in the "new Israeli style" still included Eastern European characteristics.

10 Shai Burstein, "'Shirah Hadashah Atikah': Moreshet Avraham Zvi Idelsohn V'Zimrei 'Shorashim'" ("'New-Old Songs': The legacy of Avraham Zvi Idelsohn and the 'Shorashim' songs"), *Katedra* 128, July 2008, p.114.

Woodwinds were considered more appropriate—less sentimental—than stringed instruments. The drum's accented rhythm expressed a physical element which was not emphasized in Diaspora songs.

- **Texture** - There was an attempt to ignore any harmonic ramifications of the song's melody in favor of heterophonic texture, achieved by doubling the accompaniment.
- **Rhythm** - Prevalence of a syncopated rhythmic pattern that emphasized beats not normally accented. Melodic phrases commonly ended on a strong beat, commensurate with Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation (adopted by the Zionist establishment), which emphasizes the final syllable of most words.
- **Music-Text relations –** A preference for syllabic (one note per syllable) music as opposed to the melismatic (multiple notes per syllable) style typical of the embellished Eastern European cantorial style.

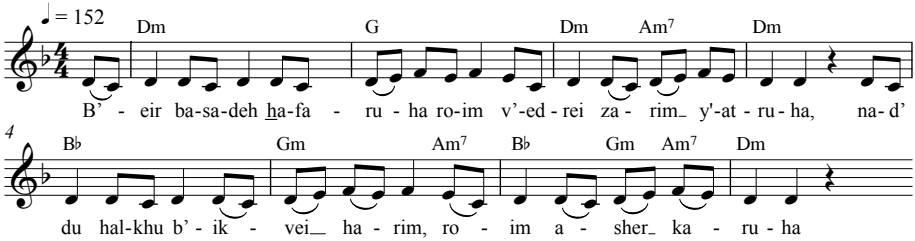
The song *B'eir BaSadeh* ("A Well in the Field"; words and music by Emanuel Zamir, 1950s) exemplifies successful inclusion of the above musical elements: it evokes "well" stories from the patriarch Isaac's life without quoting them directly.

Shepherds dug a well in barren fields
But were forced to abandon it
While strange flocks surrounded it.
The well refused to give forth water
Until those who had dug it returned.

The scene is pastoral, the search and finding of water is described in a passive third-person voice with little emotional involvement. Besides evoking biblical landscapes and imagery, Israeli folk music also endeavored to conform with the frugal language of the Hebrew Bible, which was very sparing in describing emotion.[11]

The melody is written in the Dorian mode but does not make use of every note in the scale. It limits its range to a sixth and stays mainly within the scale's lower tetrachord. Although there is little rhythmic syncopation, an accented rhythmical motive keeps repeating, and the song ends on a strong beat with the words *ronu ron* ("sing a song"). The original musical accompaniment of recorder, accordion and percussion was an attempt to recreate a timbre that could be construed as "biblical."

11 Goldenberg, "Hishtakfuta...", p. 135.



Example 2. ***B'eir BaSadeh***—an attempt to create a new Israeli sonority that would sound "biblical." Words and music by Emanuel Zamir, 1956.

Biblical figures and events in Israeli Popular song

Approximately six-hundred songs were written about biblical themes, events and figures in Israeli popular music. While a thorough analysis of this large body of music is beyond the scope of this article,[12] we will highlight some of the changes that occurred in the choice of such biblical themes and figures in Israeli popular songs from the 1910s till today. These changes reflect shifting interpretive preferences that have evolved over the years, influenced by both foreign and Israeli musical trends.

The first Zionist song to use a biblical event as commentary on contemporary events was *Shivat Tsiyon* ("The return to Zion") published in 1883 with music and Yiddish lyrics by Elyokum Zunser (1840-1913). By juxtaposing contemporary immigration of Russian Jews that went under the acronym ***BILU***[13] with the biblical return to Zion of Judean exiles from Babylonia in the late-sixth century BCE under Ezra and Nehemiah, Zunser announced emphatically: we are living through the *Shivat Tsiyon* of our time. This set a pattern for the utilization of biblical stories to interpret contemporary events.

State-endorsed early folk song

One of Israeli folk song's unique characteristics is that its origins and composers can easily be traced. This runs counter to the generally accepted notion of "folk" song, according to which anonymously developed indigenous music is handed down from generation to generation, adopted by the masses as an integral part of their folk tradition with neither the composer nor the date of

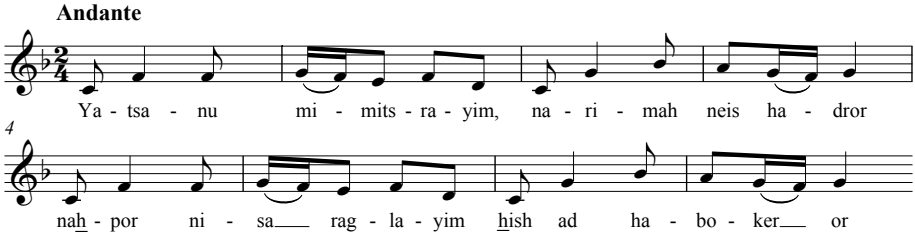
12 Eli Eshed includes a partial list of biblical songs on his website in an article called "*Pizmonim Tanakhiyim V'-Historiyim: S'kirah V'-Ma'agar Meida Bibliographi*" ("Biblical and Historical Songs; An Overview and Bibliographical Database").

13 ***Beit Ya'akov L'khu V'****-Neilkha* ("House of Jacob, let us arise and go"; Isaiah 2: 5). The first organized return to *Erets Yisra'eil* in modern times, it was a reaction of young Russian Jews to the pogroms of 1881.

composition known in most cases. Because of the conscious effort to create a new culture, Israeli composers were commissioned by state institutions such as the Department of Education to write folk-style songs, which were then distributed by the *Histadrut* (Federation of Labor) and broadcast by the Israel Broadcasting Association.[14]

Many of the earliest songs with biblical themes were written for children from kindergarten age to high school, stemming from a belief that one of the goals of the education system was to provide new textual infrastructures that reflected the Zionist movement's values.[15] The song *Y'tsi'at Mitsrayim*[16] is a good example of this process. Composed in 1918 by Levin Kipnis—a writer of children's songs—for use in kindergartens, it describes the Exodus from Egypt in Modern Hebrew. In this and other songs, Kipnis popularized the reinterpretation of biblical events (such as the Exodus) by the light of current occurrences in Jewish history:

> We've departed from Egypt/ ...
> Let's raise a flag/ let's sound a cheer/
> We're leaving with strength...
> Let's split the sea in two/ the water will cease its waves…
> There is still a long way to go but let's not be alarmed/
> With a song, it's easy to walk to the Land of Israel/



Example 3. ***Y'tsi'at Mitsrayim,*** a children's song about the Exodus from Egypt.

Written as a march, this song creates a mood of optimism and of moving forward with a unified stride. The refrain *Narimah neis/na-shirah na/*("Let's raise a flag/ let's sound a cheer") is sung to an ascending fanfare that conveys a joyful and festive departure from bondage.

14 Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (California: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 34, 118.

15 Sarah Hafri-Aflalu, "Shir HaZemer...", p. 120.

16 *Y'tsi'at Mitsrayim* ("The Exodus from Egypt"), words: Levin Kipnis, music: Yedidyah Admon, 1918.

Yet, a comparison of these lyrics to the actual narrative in the Book of Exodus yields surprising differences. Where the biblical account is characterized by fear, hesitation and doubt, Levin Kipnis depicts a unified, excited people who react bravely to every obstacle placed in their way.[17] The forty long years of wandering exhausted and dejected in the wilderness are treated as a huge parade: *B'-shir mah kal la-lekhet l'-Erets Yisra'eil* ("With a song it's easy to walk to the land of Israel"). Moses is not mentioned anywhere in this song; instead, a narrative voice declares: "Let's split the sea in two." And of course, God plays no part in the miracle—the *people* have the power. The song selects only those parts of the biblical story that can be used to impart nationalistic meaning to contemporary happenings: the biblical Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land parallels the modern exodus of persecuted Jews from Europe to pre-State Palestine 33 centuries later. It is a unifying and exhilarating event that takes place amid singing and the raising of banners. No matter what difficulties may arise on the way, the Israelites will not be dismayed.

This commingling of historical imagery with present reality conveyed a new understanding of the biblical story as well as of the situation in Erets Yisrael at that time.

Usage of biblical topics by the Army troupes

After the State's founding in 1948, the army (officially named the Israel Defense Forces or *Tsahal*) endorsed a specific type of song to boost morale and add meaning to the young soldiers' mission. The *Lehakot Tsva'iyot*, first established in the 1950s,[18] performed songs that later became classics and helped establish a unique "Israeli" musical style. Besides providing light entertainment, the songs also gave the governing establishment a means of furthering ideals through their pedagogic content. In fact, their underlying purpose was to make Zionistic material accessible and fun by packaging it in catchy popular music. This became apparent by the 1960s, when Army-sponsored songs often reflected international musical trends, resulting in the creation of hybrids such as *Twist Moledet (*"The Homeland Twist") and *Tango Toranut (*"The Guard-duty Tango").[19]

For *Lehakot Tsva'iyot*, the Bible provided a known framework of strong ideological connection to the land and its people. The humorous manner in

17 Hafri-Aflalu, "Shir HaZemer...", p.121.

18 For more on the *Lehakot Tsva'iyot* , see: Regev and Seroussi. *Popular Music,* pp. 90-112.

19 *Tango Toranut,* performed by the *Lehakat Pikud Merkaz* (Central Command Army Troupe), words: Yossi Gimzu, music: Aryeh Levanon, 1966. *Twist Moledet,* words and Music: Dvora Havkin, performed by *Lehakat Pikud Merkaz*, 1963.

which biblical figures were presented influenced the way biblical topics would be treated in later years. A few biblical stories were even relocated with good humor to the military via lighthearted songs.

Ya'eil, Ya'eil is based on Judges 4: 17-22: "And Sisra (the Canaanite Captain) fled to the tent of Ya' eil, the wife of Hever the Keinite." It portrays the meeting of a female soldier on duty in a canteen tent, with Sisra, a tightfisted officer who refuses to buy anything at her canteen. "All the soldiers in the Jezreel Valley knew the canteen tent and the server, a sergeant called Yael, a sweet laughing soldier." The song goes on to tell of her revenge for Sisra's stinginess. [20]

HaShir Shel Yonah HaNavi ("The Song of Jonah the Prophet")[21] tells of Jonah, a soldier who joins the Navy. When his boat, the Tarshish (city to which the biblical Prophet of the same name flees (Jonah 1: 3), is shipwrecked, Jonah decides to become a submariner. Unfortunately, submarines have not yet been invented, so he compromises and enters the innards of a whale. Navigating successfully to the port of Nineveh, he receives a *Tsalash* (medal of bravery). After his army (and navy) service he joins the Technion team and researches *kikayon* plants (a form of gourd; Jonah 4: 6).

In the song *Moshe, Moshe* one of the verses states, "Moses said: 'No stealing…' The people said: 'Great, he mentioned nothing about bribery!'" Also common were an array of serious songs that often empathized with biblical battles of the past and compared them with current wars of the Israel Defense Forces. One example: *Zemer l'-Gid'on* ("A Song to Gideon"), containing a refrain that eulogizes the great champion: "Blessed be Gideon, son of a poor nation, who fought the Midianites… chased and scared them." [22]

An earlier example of a song that juxtaposes biblical history with that of modern Israel is *Mul Har Sinai* ("In Front of Mount Sinai"), written for *Nahal* by Yehiel Mohar (words) and Moshe Vilensky (music) in 1956. The song alludes to both the redeemed Israelite slaves receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai and to the Israeli Army's Sinai Campaign of 1956 in which they captured the entire Sinai Peninsula. The image of the burning bush (Exodus chapter 3), in which God instructs Moses to return to Egypt and lead the enslaved Israelites to freedom, is evoked to symbolize the eternal Divine presence at Mount Sinai. When the soldiers of Israel return to Sinai for the

20 *Ya'eil, Ya'eil,* words: Dan Almagor, music: Amitai Ne'eman, performed by the *Lehakat Pikud Tsafon* (Northern Command Army Troupe),1961. Lyricist Dan Almagor wrote many popular songs on biblical topics, ten of them about Noah alone.

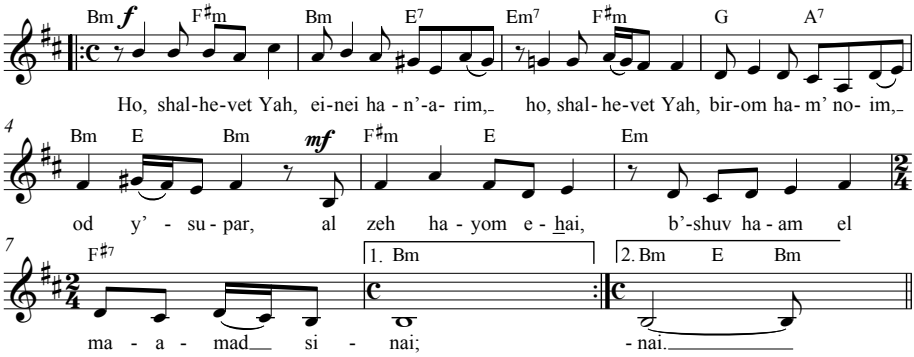
21 *Yonah HaNavi,* words: Dan Almagor, music: Albert Piamente, 1968.

22 *Zemer L'-Gid'on,* words and music: Naomi Shemer, performed by the *Lehakat Pikud Tsafon,* 1960.

first time since their ancestors received the Torah there, they find the bush still burning. This time, however, the flame is in their eyes—and in the fire of their engines. Awe-inspiring echoes of the *divine* redemption from Egypt are contrasted with modern Israel's brave soldiers delivering the threatened nation through *their own actions.*

It is no legend my friend/ and not a fleeting dream
Here in front of Mount Sinai/ the bush is burning still
And it burns in song/ in the mouths of our young soldiers
And the gates of the city/ are in the hands of the *Shimshonim*

Oh, flame of God/ in the soldiers' eyes
Oh, flame of God/ in the engines' roar
This day shall be recounted/ my brothers
When the nation returned/ to stand before Sinai



Example 4. ***Mul Har Sinai***—facing Mount Sinai again after 33 centuries.

In this music we discern a sonority connected with the early *Naḥal* troupes whose instruments consisted of a *darbuka* (hand-held Arab drum) and an accordion, both of which were easy to carry to faraway army bases where the troupes performed as part of their army service. The popularity of their songs made this preexisting *darbuka*/accordion sound—East European with an Arabic flavor—one of the prototypes of Israeli folk-music style.

The excitement mentioned in the lyrics is expressed musically by the accordion playing an exhilarating Hora dance-rhythm, with a fanfare as repeated motive. Subliminally, we ask ourselves: is this the fanfare of the military victory or of the biblical Revelation's Shofar blasts? The opening verses—referencing the biblical event—are sung by the troupe's female members.

The men sing verses that refer to the experience of young Israeli soldiers in the Sinai Campaign of 1956.

In the song's refrain, male and female voices join together. The ancient biblical quality of the Arab drum that joins them carries the historical feeling of the text to a place where historic and contemporary events meet.

The phrase *v'-sha'arei ha'ir b'-yad haShimshonim* ("and gates of the city are in the hands of the *Shimshonim*") hints at *Shu'alei Shimshon* ("Samson's Foxes"), the jeep unit founded during the Independence War, that fought on the Southern front and in July 1948 played a major part in forcing the Egyptian Army's retreat from the Negev. Since the 1956 Sinai Campaign was fought beyond Israel's southern borders, it was significant to remember those who had forged these same borders by their courageous stand just eight years before. The unit was named after the biblical incident in which Samson (*Shimshon* in Hebrew) ties fire torches to the tails of foxes and sets them free to burn the Philistine fields.

So here we have a song about a fighting episode in the Bible alluding to a modern Israeli wartime advance that was given a biblical name to add significance to the mission. Of course, putting God's Revelation and Samson's subterfuge together in one song is historically suspect, to say the least, since more than two centuries separated the Israelites' receiving the Torah and the Philistines' defeat by Samson. The only connection between them is the meaning provided by contemporary events—as interpreted by this great song.

It was written and actually performed in the midst of the Sinai Campaign. Singer/actor Chaim Topol, a young member of *Lahakat HaNaḥal* at the time, reminisced years later about singing *Mul Har Sinai* while standing at the foot of the mountain during that campaign. "You will be surprised," he said, "but all the generals stood and cried. It was a sublime moment—maybe the greatest moment that *Lahakat HaNaḥal* has ever had."[23]

Shuv Lo Neileikh

An unexpected dividend from biblically inspired Israeli songs was that they helped connect the public to places with national/historical significance. In 1967 following the Six Day War, many places formerly held by Jordan once again became part of Israel. Quoting the Bible's mention of these sites strengthened their significance in the eyes of Israeli youths who had made that unparalleled victory possible but who had never thought of visiting

23 The quote, which appeared in the military magazine *Ba-Maḥaneh* in December 1964, is mentioned in Regev and Seroussi. *Popular Music,* p.101.

the places they recaptured. The song *Shuv Lo Neileikh*[24] ("We Won't Leave Again"), states that the entrance of the Israeli army into Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho was an act of national homecoming.[25]

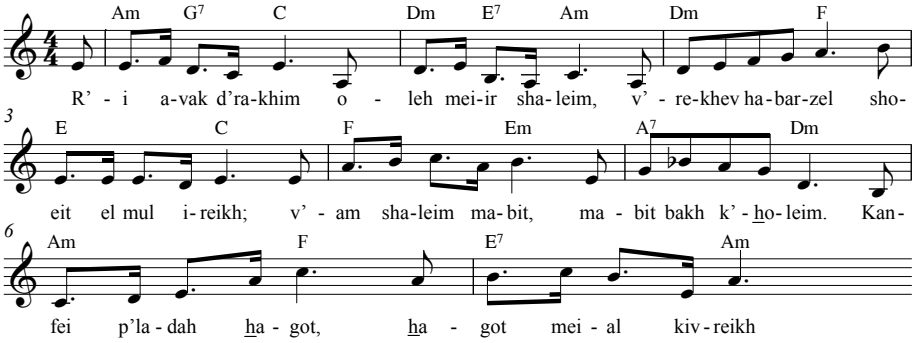
See the road dust coming from the city of Shaleim,
And the armored car roaring to your city;
An entire nation watches you as in a dream,
Airplanes circle above your tomb.
See, Rachel, see, / See the world's Sovereign;
See, Rachel, see, / Your children have returned to their borders.

See the winds of Iyyar carry the lines of steel,
Benjamin is here with us, and Joseph too;
The star of Bethlehem twinkles trembling,
The *Halutz* and the *M'aseif* are with us.

See Rachel, see…

Rachel, stop your voice from crying,
Rachel, we're all here with our packs on our back;
Rachel, we'll never leave and you'll never leave,
Rachel, we'll never again leave the fields of Bethlehem.

See Rachel, see…



Example 5. A song of homecoming, ***Shuv Lo Neileikh***, from the Six Day War.

The biblical reference to Jeremiah (31: 15-17) where Mother Rachel, lying buried at Bethlehem, is assured that she will see her sons returning from exile to the Land of Israel, was the perfect choice for a song about the entire nation's return to the Matriarch's legendary resting place. Mention of the

24 Words: Shmuel Rosen, music: Effi Netzer, 1967.
25 Hafri-Aflalu, "Shir Hazemer," p. 129.

Halutz (vanguard) and *M'asef* (rear guard), names of the biblical fighting units that conquered the Promised Land in Joshua's time, here implies that Israel's soldiers have brought the *original* mission to a successful conclusion. *Halutz* and *M'asef* are specifically mentioned in connection with the circling of biblical Jericho's walls; that operation took six days (Joshua chapter 6), while modern Jericho was conquered in an action that also took six days.

In the 1967 recording of *Shuv Lo Neileikh* there is a noticeable difference in performance practice between the refrain and the verses. The verses are sung in a free rhythm, with much pathos but minimal accompaniment, imparting a contemplative aura that is appropriate to a song of national import. Special emphasis is given the phrase *Shuv lo neileikh minei Shadmot Beit Lehem* ("We'll never again leave... the fields of Bethlehem"). As with other historic songs, current-day reality has proven otherwise. Even the verse added to *Yerushalayim shel Zahav* by its composer Naomi Shemer after the Six Day War—*Nashuv neireid el Yam HaMelah b'-derekh Yeriho* ("We shall again go down to the Dead sea via Jericho")—no longer holds true!

Nationalistic biblical topics versus personal ones

Where is the individual figure in the aforementioned songs? No names of individuals appear in the historic events of the Exodus in Levin Kipnis's *Y'tsi'at Mitsrayim.* The name of Moses does not appear in *Mul Har Sinai* even in connection with the burning bush. True, Rachel is mentioned in *Shuv Lo Neileikh*, but plays no active role in it. She is told to "see," but all the events take place without her involvement.

There *are* songs about central biblical figures from this early period, but the focus was limited to their association with historic events. This offhanded treatment reflects the relative place of the individual in Israeli society at that time. Up until the 1960s the general populace was thought of in collective terms, considered first and foremost as part of the Zionist enterprise in Israel. After the mid 1960s, with the crumbling of Israeli society's collectivism, it became more common to address the wishes, feelings and tastes of the individual, something that had been considered unpatriotic in earlier years.

Sarah Hafri-Aflalu[26] claims that themes and attitudes of Israeli songs based on biblical topics can be roughly divided into two periods: from the emergence of the Zionist movement to the late 1960s, which she calls the "dream" era; and from the late 1960s to the current day, which she calls the "awakening" era. In addition to the Exodus from Egypt as a theme, songs from the "dream" era tended to focus on other seminal events in Jewish history such as the original

26 Ibid., pp. 125-127.

patriarchal settlement of the Land in relation to the unfolding story of *Shivat Tsiyon*, as exemplified by the various contemporary waves of immigration. The earlier era's concern was with nationalistic themes rather than stories of individuals. Biblical personages were mentioned in "dream"-era songs only to flesh out historic events, with little interest in the internal world of biblical characters who formed part of the overall picture.

This changed after the 1960s, when biblical *figures*—rather than events—claimed attention along with their aspirations and fears, their sufferings and relationships. New characters stepped to the footlights, often ones who had been relegated to the wings in the Bible, but whose stories—though less known—frequently proved more intriguing than those of the better-known players. Non-Jewish archetypes such as Cain, Goliath, Noah, Jezebel and Hagar suddenly received more exposure than Abraham and Sarah. This change of subject matter in Israeli songs reflected a parallel transition in Israeli society, from a monolithic culture engrossed with the Zionist ethos to a society focusing on the diverse people who formed its backbone.

The beginnings of Israeli Rock

Rock music played an important part in this evolutionary movement toward personal exploration. During the late 1960s, American and English rock music's phenomenal success spurred Israeli musicians into creating a rock music of their own. Opinions differ as to when Israeli rock actually began, though most agree that the first attempts were made between 1967 and 1971. Some single out Arik Einstein and Shalom Chanoch's 1969 album, *Shablul* ("snail") as being the first Israeli rock release. Others reserve that honor for the only recording made by the trio *Ha-Halonot Ha-g'vohim* ("The High Windows"). As with many other musical trends, rock came to Israel about a decade after it first appeared in the US and the UK. As a result, Israeli rock was influenced primarily by the Beatles rather than by Elvis Presley.

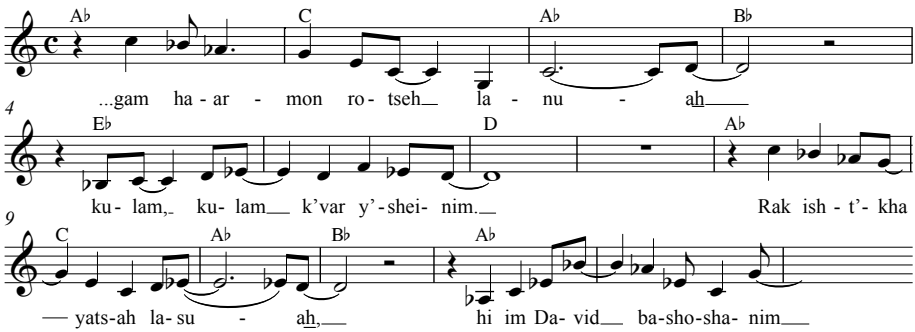
Biblically-inspired songs figured prominently in the early work of Einstein and Chanoch as well as The High Windows, often composed in the style of late-1960s ballads.[27] Other characters who formed part of the supporting cast in the Bible, but who now occupied center stage in Israeli songs were: Hagar, the Egyptian mother of Ishmael; Avshalom, the son and would-be usurper of David's throne; Avishag, the Shunamite concubine of David's old age; and Uriyah, the Hittite general in David's army, whose death the King engineered in order to possess the man's wife.

27 For example, in the song *Avshalom* written by the Lul group and composed by Shalom Chanoch in the album *Shablul*, the lyrics are very loosely based on the biblical story of King David's son Avshalom.

Urah, Urah, Uriyah

This song[28] sheds light on the despicable episode in David's life where he seduces Batsheva, the wife of a loyal soldier whom he has sent to fight a war. *Uriyah* is urged to wake up and stop being so naive: *Urah, Urah* ("Awake!"—also a word-play on the hero's name). *Uriyah* remains a forgotten victim, but his personal tragedy inspired lyrics that awakened a tremendous amount of sympathy for him. The melody slithers and winds, dipping and rising unexpectedly on chromatic notes, tone-painting the "dishonest" and seductive behavior of those involved. When the words *Urah, Urah, Uriyah* return, the melody and harmony become more "honest" and straightforward (i.e., diatonic) until Batsheva's name is mentioned, at which point the chromaticism resumes. The search for biblical occurrences that were obscure in the greater scheme of things—yet intriguing on the human level—was a way of using *Tanakh* not only as a repository of timeless wisdom but also as a source for folk-type songs built on a common past that everyone recognized.

Wake up, wake up Uriyah/ tonight Batsheva will not come
The castle would like to rest too/ Everyone is sleeping
Only your wife went out for a stroll
She's with David among the rosebushes



Example 6. Chromatic excerpt from ***Urah, Urah, Uriyah***, about a neglected biblical figure.

Yehezkeil

Aside from marginalized biblical figures now being chosen as the subjects of songs, Hafri-Aflalu claims that mainstream luminaries such as Moses, David, Jonah and Ezekiel were portrayed in a more human and nuanced manner during the "awakening" era.[29] Prophets were not only shown as spiritual guides of

28 *Urah , Urah, Uriyah*, words: Yonatan Geffen, music: Shalom Chanoch, performed by Shula Chen, 1969.

29 Yiddish writers also wrote about biblical figures from a more personal per-

the nation; their failures, weaknesses and particularly their unhappiness over having to carry the divine message were all divulged. Often these portrayals were closer to the biblical texts than had been the idealized visions in songs of the earlier "dream" era. In *Kum Leikh El Ninveh* ("Come, Get Yourself to the City of Nineveh"), Jonah the Prophet is quoted as saying: "Stop, I'm not a prophet, it's not for me, it's not for me." In *Moshe, Moshe*, Moses our Teacher tells the Israelites to "manage on your own!" In the song *Yehezkeil*,[30] the prophet Ezekiel is a *bomba* (slang for "cool") prophet!

In 1967 the decision to write popular songs about biblical prophets was not yet a given, since Israeli society remained deeply secular. Connections between the divine and the human in the realm of entertainment were uncommon, and it was even more unusual to talk about God and the Hebrew Prophets in a humorous rock song. Nonetheless, The High Windows chose the prophet Ezekiel as the subject of their most successful creation. The spirit of the fun-loving 60s, wrapped in cool light humor, is very much evident in both words and music. A Beatles-inspired rhythm plus Mamas and Papas-style vocal harmonies created the new sound that Israeli youth had been looking for. The result caused quite a stir among the religious community where it was deemed disrespectful.

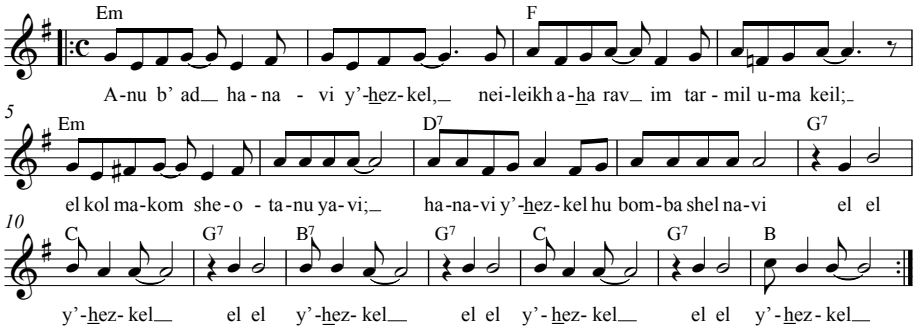
We're all for the prophet *Yehezkeil*/
We'll follow him with backpack and walking stick
To every place that he brings us/
Yehezkeil is one cool dude of a prophet
Here's to *Yehezkeil*…

One night with his eyes closed/
He came to a valley filled with bones
He collected and attached bone to bone/
A thousand pieces (*chicks*) followed him then
Here's to *Yehezkeil*…

---

spective. Itzik Manger's musical drama *Khumesh Lieder* ("Pentateuch Poems"; 1935) contains songs that portray figures from the Book of Genesis (including Eve, Cain and Abel; Abraham, Hagar and Sarah, etc.) as typical *shtetl* Jews, very commonplace and often flawed. The show was first staged in Israel in Yiddish in 1969; later, it was translated by Chaim Cheffer and produced in Hebrew in 1970 with popular singers Shlomo Artzi and Shoshana Damari playing the main roles.

30 Hafri-Aflalu, "Shir Hazemer...," p. 127. *Kum Leikh El Ninveh,* words: Yoram Teharlev, music: Alona Turel, performed by the *Lehakat Pikud Merkaz*, 1967; *Moshe, Moshe*, *word*s: Yoram Teharlev, music: Moshe Vilensky, *Lahakat HaNahal*, 1966. *Yehezkeil*, words: Yoram Teharlev, music: Shmulik Kraus, performed by The High Windows, 1967.



Example 7. Excerpt from a Rock song about the "cool" Prophet, ***Yehezkeil.***

The lyrics deal with the prophet's life, his followers and his prophecies. *Yehezkeil* is cool because his friends are angels; he is close to God. We hear, too, of his failures. His dire warnings cause people to ignore him and just go on having a good time. Despite his supposed chumminess with God, we never get a chance to hear what God actually tells him to say. The closest we come to *Yehezkeil*'s immortal vision concerning the Dry Bones (chapter 37) that will acquire flesh and breathe again is the slang expression *hatikhot* (literally "pieces"). Delivered as if accompanied by a knowing wink, the word is used to describe pieces of bones, but also to hint at the gorgeous chicks who constantly fawn over the prophet; definitely a bit cheeky!

Noah

In 1960 the Israel Broadcasting Authority established the Israel Song Festival in an attempt to encourage the writing of new compositions "in the Spirit of the Land," devoid of any attempt to imitate the Twist, Mambo or other foreign imports, which they saw as corrupting the country's youth.[31] The festival resulted in a demand for authentic Israeli songs. Many songwriters turned to the Bible for inspiration, and lyrics about scriptural themes proliferated.[32]

Young newcomer Matti Caspi—who went on to become one of Israel's most talented and admired composers—wrote two numbers for the 1974 Festival. One was about Noah's dove flying high and wide as it searched for land during the Flood. The other song, *Noah,*[33] completed this picture by describing Noah's earlier gathering-up of the animals and the journey they then jointly undertook in the ark. The lyrics plugged gaps that appear throughout the biblical story, spinning a modern-day midrash charmingly and amusingly.

31 Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music,* p. 113, 115.

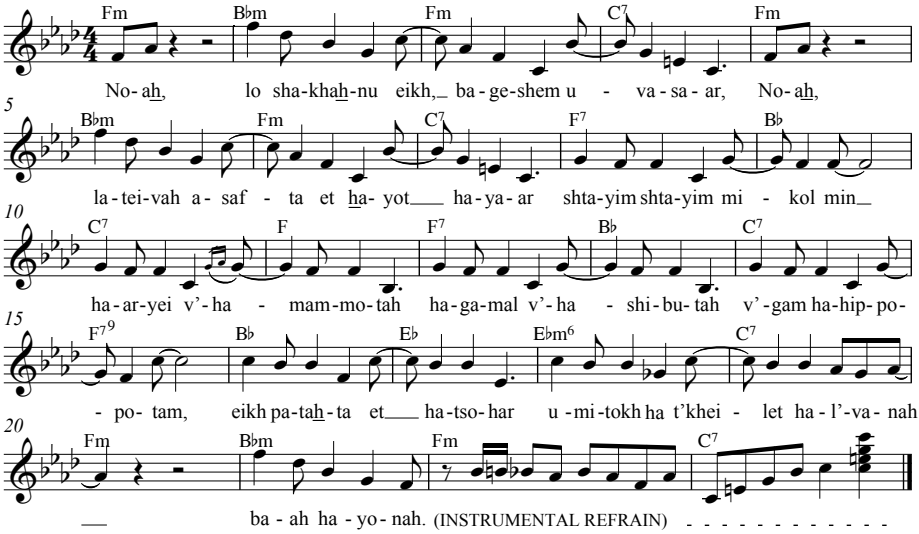
32 The *Mizrahi* (Oriental or Middle Eastern) Song Festival of 1970 also included songs with direct quotes or biblical references, mainly to *Shir HaShirim*.

33 *Noah,* words: Yoram Teharlev, music: Matti Caspi, 1974.

What might we hear on a boat filled with animals cooped up for long periods of time with no end in sight? Kvetching, arguments and more kvetching. The melody's bouncy Latin rhythms add to the song's humorous effect. Ironically, they also attest to the fact that the Israel Song Festival's attempt to create a distinctly native popular style devoid of international influences did not really succeed.

Noah, we haven't forgotten how in the storm and heavy rain/
Noah, to the ark you brought every animal species, two by two/
The lion and the mammoth, the camel, carp and hippopotamus/
How you opened the skylight and from out the blue-whiteness/
The dove appeared

Noah, the dove has returned with an olive leaf/
Noah, let us out, let us go/ we've had enough of each other/
The lion and the mammoth….



Example 8. ***Noah,*** a humorous take on the biblical tale, to Latin rhythms.

Again, the choice of the Dove and the Ark were not accidental. At a time when messages of peace and love were universally popular among the Hippie Flower-Power Generation, especially in music, the twin symbols of a dove with an olive-leaf in its mouth flying above a globally interconnected environment proved particularly relevant.

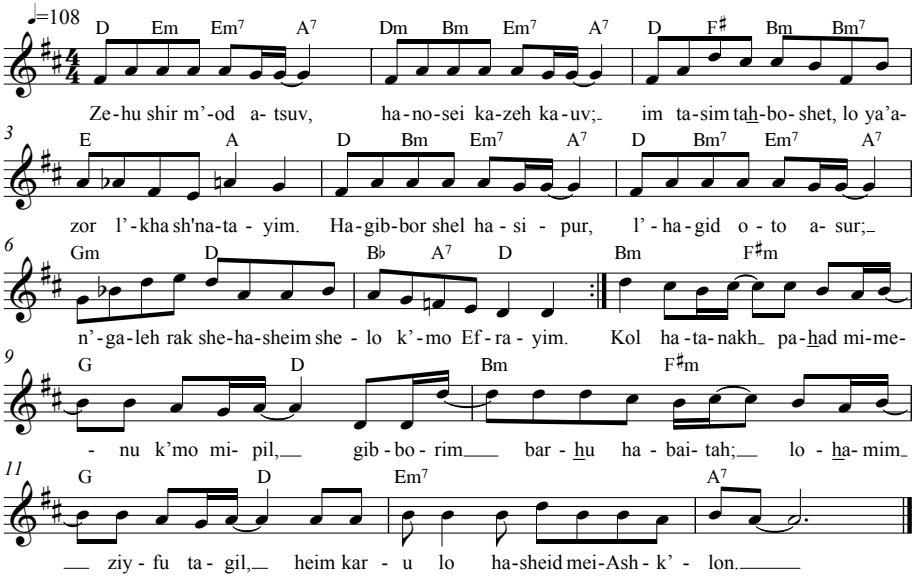
Golyat

In 1975 the popular band Kaveret (known in America as Poogy) released its third album, which included one of its most popular songs—the only one that is biblically themed—*Golyat* (Goliath). Based on the biblical story of David's clash with the Philistine giant, it might easily be dismissed as a light, rather silly attempt to garner as many laughs as possible. But that dismissal would overlook a multitude of insightful details that Kaveret had built into the song. For starters, its music was very much text-based—its *own* text, that is—aiming for nonsensical delight and leaning heavily on double meanings in Hebrew, internal Israeli slang and local humor. What seems musically simple, however, owes much to the group's skillful musicianship, especially that of Danny Sanderson on guitar and Yoni Rechter on keyboard.

Kaveret's popularity was partially attributable to its emergence right after the Yom Kippur War of 1973, a conflict that left a grieving and shocked populace facing the trauma of an unprepared army, an unusually high number of casualties and a near annihilation of the State. At the time, there was nothing that Israelis needed more than comic relief and Kaveret knew how to deliver the goods. The band's popularity was also largely due to the fact that most of its members had graduated from *Lehakot Tsva'iyot* with considerable experience in writing, playing, and singing hilarious skits using gibberish for lyrics, and were thus already well known and in demand during the Israeli music scene of the 1970s.

> This song is a very sad one
> the subject so painful that if you put on a bandage
> it won't help you for two years…
>
> All of the Bible feared him as they would an elephant
> Heroes fled homeward
> Warriors lied about their age
> They called him the demon from Ashkelon...
>
> In the kindergarten he said "Hi!" and children stood to attention,
> Five years old and he'd already brought home a boulder;
> Every day he practiced disturbing animals for hours,
> Some people say he had a voice lower than the Dead Sea…[34]

34 English translation by Abigail Wood.



Example 9. A deceptively comic song, ***Golyat***, written after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Words and music: Alon Olearchik and Danny Sanderson, performed by Kaveret, 1975.

The song offers a humorous version of the David and Goliath encounter as told in First Samuel, chapter 17. The accent is not on David the shepherd boy but rather on Goliath, who had the misfortune of being born ten feet tall, and thus inevitably turned into a bully feared and teased by everyone surrounding him. The song's deliberately misdirected scrutiny is consistent with Hafri-Aflalu's assertion that from the 1960s onward, not only were individual biblical characters given the limelight, but the ones chosen were *secondary* characters. This followed in the wake of a general interest in the obscure, an openness to the unusual and a search for the human story *behind* the biblical headline as opposed to the nationalistic-centered narrative of earlier times. In *Golyat,* for instance, we find ourselves empathizing with the misunderstood lummox, almost hoping that he finds true love in some "Shrek"-like manner and galumphs off into the sunset with his equally klutzy but immensely understanding Giantess.

In post-Yom Kippur War Israel, morale had shattered along with the public's nerves. Kaveret chose to show how a young and inexperienced shepherd-boy effortlessly gained victory over an outsized enemy champion depicted in the song as a terrifying golem. By presenting this alien monster as hilariously as they could, Kaveret was acting as *ex officio* national morale booster, a *Lahakah Tzva'it* in civilian clothes, whose purpose was to amuse—but also to subtly instill an optimistic and self-reliant ideology.

Ehud Banai

Another favorite musician, Banai first appeared on the Israeli Pop scene in the late 1980s. His signature style, mixing rock and Blues with *Mizraḥi* and Sephardic elements, earned an enthusiastic response from both critics and the general public. Born to a family famous in Israeli music and theatre and raised with a traditional Jewish background, he returned to his roots by openly readopting a religious lifestyle. Very much influenced by traditional Jewish texts, his repertoire naturally included songs on biblical themes. One of them, *Eigel HaZahav* ("The Golden Calf"), tells of a bewildered people lost in the desert, waiting for their once-revered leader to descend from the mountain. The song depicts a nation seemingly abandoned, seeking new direction and in desperation turning to the worship of a molten idol: arch symbol of materialism and falsehood.

Another of Banai's songs—*Shir Ga'agu'im* ("A Song of Longing") from *HaShlishi*, his third album—shows quite a different side of the biblical David's personality, as willing caregiver for the chronically depressed King Saul. As in other Israeli songs since the 1960s, the intimate incident is neither beautified nor given historical significance. Saul's feelings and mental illness are expressed through everyday Hebrew in a way that could be typical of any ordinary citizen far removed from the responsibilities of being a king in ancient Israel. The incident's milieu has been moved from ancient days to current ones, with Saul calling David on the phone, and David tuning his guitar rather than a lyre. Concerns such as relationships, human weakness and the healing power of music are all movingly treated in brutal honesty and in a unique musical language typical of Ehud Banai.

Late at night in the palace
Everyone long asleep
Only Saul is awake—gloomy as always
He picks up the phone to call David

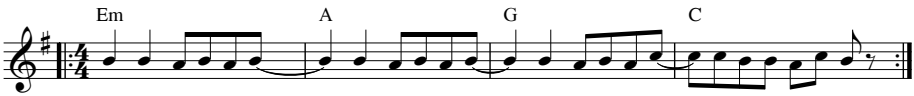
"Perhaps you'll come over, David,
My soul is a black lake;
And bring your guitar with you,
Because there's a flame in your fingers."

David comes right away—calmly
He sits and tunes the guitar
He knows the work well
Closes his eyes and plays.

David has ten fingers
At the end of each one—a ray of light
When he strums the string
Time moves backwards... [Instrumental interlude]

Saul is torn inside
His stomach the site of battles
He loves and hates and is jealous of—
yet addicted to his young friend.

A dark shadow falls
The demon has returned
A knife is thrown through the air
Again there's a wall between them... [Instrumental interlude]



Example 10. The instrumental interlude from Ehud Banai's ***Shir Ga'agu'im***, an insightful 1990s update of the Saul and David case. [35]

Whenever the lyrics speak of music being played, or of strong feelings between the ailing king and the caregiver he suspects will inherit his throne, Banai plays a recurring refrain on the *Tar*, a Persian stringed instrument with a hauntingly ancient sound to which tradition ascribes the ability to cure melancholy. The music here assumes a dual role: picking up the storyline at certain strategic moments, and also lifting King Saul's despondent spirits. Despite the fact that rock music rarely allows more than one such non-vocal interlude per song, these particular instrumental riffs function as wordless commentary on the action, expressing emotions that cannot be articulated in words. By means of vernacular conversational exchanges juxtaposed with ancient-sounding string playing, Banai succeeds in depicting the intense grateful/resentful relationship in which Saul finds himself bound to David. He's fashioned a poignant and powerful ballad that takes its cue from Scripture but plays out widely in current-day human relationships.

Idan Raichel

In 2008, to commemorate the State of Israel's 60th year of independence, several songs were written. One of the most popular was Idan Raichel's *Min'i Koleikh MiBekhi*, referring to Jeremiah 31: 16-17.

35 *Shir Ga'agu'im,* lyrics, music and performance by Ehud Banai, 1992.

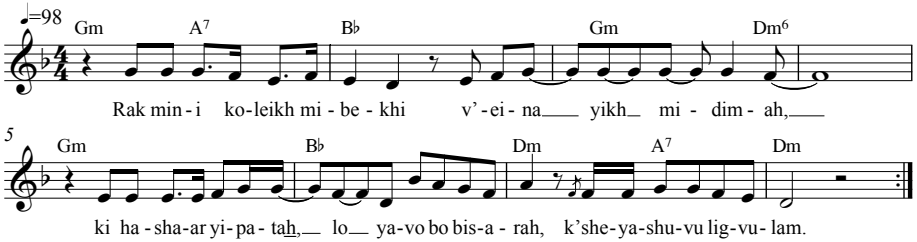
Since the 2002 release of his first album, dedicated to the Ethiopian heritage, Idan Raichel has attracted attention as one of the most promising young Israeli artists of his generation. At a very young age he started his musical career as an accompanist, and now his name graces every aspect of the production credits for what he calls his "Project." Besides writing the lyrics and composing the music, he also serves as producer, instrumentalist, recording-and-mixing technician and singer— although he mostly hosts guest vocalists to perform his songs. His forte lies in combining samplings of music from different traditions with electronic music. He was the first to bring Ethiopian sounds to Israeli homes via mainstream radio, and since then he has often represented Israel in music festivals and events abroad. He truly projects a multicultural image of Eretz Yisrael.

The song *Min'i Koleikh Mibechi* ("Stop Your Voice from Crying") was written after Raichel attended a *shi'ur* (lecture) in which Rabbi Benni Lau discoursed at length on our matriarch, Rachel. Idan felt strangely connected to the figure of Mother Rachel, and for Israel's 60th birthday he used the above-mentioned verses from Jeremiah to allude to the current issue of captive Israeli soldiers. Many who heard the song identified with these prophetic words that suddenly revealed a timely relevance to contemporary Israeli life; some even felt that *Min'i Koleikh...* should supersede *Hatikvah* as the country's national anthem.

For at night you cannot sleep
Then put your ear to the silence
All the merciful compassion
will come, here he comes

For you saved your soul for him
For the time is nearing
When he will fall into your arms
At the end of the road,
when they return to their borders

Only stop your voice from crying
and your eyes from tears
for the gate will be opened
and he'll storm through it
when they return to their borders…



Example 11. Idan Raichel's ***Min'i Koleikh Mibekhi—***a song whose lyrics bear timely relevance to contemporary Israeli issues.

At first glance, the lyrics seem to describe a universal theme of awaiting the return of a loved one. However, the use of biblical quotations evoking Jeremiah's scenario, Mother Rachel and the long-awaited return of her sons to their border—very familiar and relevant images to Israelis—transform it into a song about their current predicament. The line "only stop your voice from crying" can also be understood as relating to the State of Israel itself which also appears in the feminine gender in Hebrew. Idan Raichel might be anthropomorphizing the State in giving her maternal instincts toward her lost children, similar to the way Arik Einstein's song *Imah Adamah* ("Mother Earth") implies a terrestrial relationship to the Land of Israel.[36] But in addition, Raichel's biblically-inspired music is so representative of Israel's current mood that EL AL—the State's national airline—invited him in October 2008 to embark on a series of exclusive appearances during regularly scheduled flights, as its "Honorary Ambassador" to the world.[37]

Conclusion:

Jewish communities have always interpreted contemporary events in the light of a biblical context. Every generation had its Pharaoh and its Haman along with its Moses and its David. This traditional way of viewing Jewish history as an upward spiral repeating itself endlessly in different variations is no different in 20th-and-21st-century Israel. Wars, hardships and hopes are constantly being viewed through the filter of biblical images, current events evaluated by means of popular songs written about them. In that regard, biblically-inspired songs have given added meaning to the current-day events and also contributed to a better understanding of the biblical events. The search for a "biblical" sound and the constant quoting of biblical phrases in songs from the

36 *Imah Adamah,* words: Yankele Rothblith, music: Miki Gavrielov, performed by Arik Einstein, 1972.

37 Raz Shachnik, *Hofa'ah BaSh'hakim* ("An Appearance on High"), *Yediot Aharonot*, Oct. 31, 2008.

early years of statehood onward attest to the important place that Scripture has held—and continues to hold—in strengthening Zionist ideology.

The Bible's presence in Israeli popular music is not felt as strongly today as it was in the past. However, Idan Raichel's 2008 song and the current resurgent interest of Israeli musicians in liturgical and biblical verses demonstrate one inescapable truth about the Bible. It is still capable of generating themes that will inspire the writing of relevant and potent Israeli hits well into the foreseeable future.

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Hasidim and Mitnagdim in Vilna Between the Wars

By Chaim Grade

Arriving fashionably late on the morning of Simhat Torah, *baalei-batim* (householders) of the *Alt/Neu Kloiz*[1] proceeded slowly, as befitted worshipers at an established Vilna house of study and prayer. They wore the silken top hats known as *tsilenders* (cylinders) and strolled leisurely with hands folded behind their backs even in the densely packed *Shulhoif*, a vast gated courtyard onto which every synagogue in the historic Jewish Quarter opened. The *baalei-batim* led in tow their sons and sons-in-law—tall, thin young men who wore fixed expressions of boredom on their faces. Instead of taking their young wives to the theater, out of filial duty and fear of father-in-law the younger gentlemen now had to sit and suffer in silence as the hazzan and *meshor'rim* (men and boy choristers) held forth during the Torah scroll circuits known as *Hakafot*.

By midday, services in all the other little shuls had ended: the Painters' Shul whose walls were covered with colorful depictions of biblical scenes; the Workers' Shul whose worn-out membership was dying; the Gravediggers' Shul whose attendees were amazingly robust; and the Old Shul whose constituents' milky white beards well suited its great age.

Finally, the services ended for the *Perushim* (recluses) at the Gaon's *Kloiz*[2] as well. Even in midweek these self-proclaimed elitists would wear tallit and tefillin until noon, after the Vilna Gaon's personal custom. On this holy day in the damp, darkly lit study hall they circled the bimah around and around so many times that they collapsed from exhaustion afterwards. Contrarian Mitnagdim, who did not indulge in prolonged hasidic-style singing and dancing, could at least sit and study between *Hakafot*, especially in their golden years when the legs were prone to give out. But the moment that *Musaf* (the Additional Festival service) ended, these *Perushim* would immerse their

1 Old/New Shul.

2 Built in 1800 on the site where once stood the home of the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman (1720-1797).

moustaches in wine, shake off any remaining crumbs of honey cake from their beards, and very carefully climb the stairs leading to the *Shulhoif*.[3]

Truth to tell, the *Perushim* deeply resented Vilna's general malaise: an abiding love of hazzanut. What bothered them most was the younger generation's behavior. Instead of davening with wholehearted intensity and focus, the latter considered themselves to have fulfilled their prayer obligations by merely listening to a cantor's music making. "And do the cantors of our day even approach their predecessors in piety sufficiently to have earned the right to stand at the *amud*[4] and lead others in prayer?" they ask themselves. "And although *gabba'im* (lay officials) of the Great Synagogue have decreed that all *m'shor'rim* (choristers) from the oldest down to the youngest must wear special yarmulkes and blue-striped tallitot, the more observant among us are far from satisfied. Why? Because it smacks of the way they do things over at the *Khorshul*—whose choir-centered service is attended only by pharmacists and modernists."

On Simhat Torah, however, even an elitist recluse from the Gaon's *Kloiz* will allow himself the liberty of casually tapping the shoulder of a young fellow who happens to be passing by and asking him, "Tell me, have you by any chance heard anything new in the hazzan's coloratura?" The young man, who has felt the soft brush of silk and velvet on his cheek, turns around and sees before him a gray-haired old timer. He answers with great respect, "Good *Yomtov*[5], Grandpa." And the recluse replies, "A good *Yomtov* and a good year," while noticing that the young man is carrying a tallit bag under his arm and is clean shaven. He thinks: "I was right; this is one who instead of davening in a *kloiz*, prefers cruising the *Shulhoif* and gobbling tidbits of what the cantors are singing in every shul he passes."

It was amazing how quickly painters, workers, gravediggers and passing young men like this one could grasp complicated hazzanic phrases after hearing them only once. The following morning, those same liturgical roulades could be heard accurately sung from every shop in Vilna's Jewish Quarter.

One by one the little shuls emptied onto the *Shulhoif*, except for the Koidanov *Shtibl*[6] "**Bim-bam, bim-bam!**" resounds from within. The Koidanov Hasidim put no stock in a hazzan and *m'shor'rim*; they're singing and danc-

3 Synagogues in Vilna were built largely below street level so that no matter how tall, they complied with a municipal ruling that forbade them to exceed the height of nearby churches.

4 Prayer leader's stand.

5 Holy day or Festival.

6 A small hasidic prayer hall.

ing unaccompanied—with great fervor. In fact, the impression given is that this *shtibl* is about to uproot itself from the mostly mitnagdic *Shulhoif* and rise up to heaven in a whirlwind of wildly flying beards, flapping *kapotes*[7] and fanning *gartels*[8].

It's a warm day with rays of sunlight permeating the air and penetrating the *kloiz*'s windows. On its rooftop the Koidanov Hasidim dance in a giddy stupor induced by the joyous overindulgence that is tolerated—even encouraged—on Simhat Torah. And although it's already well past noon, a crowd has gathered around the Great Synagogue, the Courtyard made more congested than usual by a canopy of softly expansive ladies' hats whose feathers climb over the men's more solid headgear. Above these, thrusting upwards like chimneys, are the shiny black *tsilenders* of the Synagogue trustees.

In front of the Great Synagogue's main entrance and also by its various lower exit doors stand Jews with necks extended and heads bent—like thirsty lambs before a trough. With one ear they are trying to catch a bit of singing from inside, to no avail. They try the other ear—a wasted effort. Normally, if one stood in the *Shulhoif*, one should have been able to hear the hazzan without difficulty. His voice was like that of the first human, Adam; it could be heard from one end of the world to the other—at least according to the legend. But this day—nothing was heard but the sound of silence.

Given no choice, everyone turned away and began to engage in conjecture. They knew that at that point in the service the hazzan should be chanting *Ana Adonai* (We beseech You, O God), the *m'shor'rim* should be responding *hoshiah na* (deliver us!)—and the Shammash (Sexton) should be counting out loud: "Now completing the first *Hakafah*; the first *Hakafah* is now completed!"

Inside the Great Synagogue, the area that the *Hakafot* circled—between the Holy Ark up front along the Eastern wall and the central raised Bimah from which the Torah was read—had become uncharacteristically quiet. From there, the stillness radiated outward in ever-widening circles, finally reaching the cross-latticed windows of the walled-off women's section. Filled with the ladies' bright eyes, these apertures resembled nets overflowing with goldfish. The silence seemed to flash-freeze all ongoing chatter, rolling back over the many rows of benches until it passed through the synagogue's heavy iron doors and hovered over the *Shulhoif*, like a river on whose surface ice had instantly formed.

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7 Long gabardine coats.

8 Cloth belts worn during prayer.

Something unprecedented had occurred in the Great Synagogue of Vilna…

Editor's note: In translating this episode from ***The Agunah*** *(1961), Chaim Grade's panorama of the philosophical and ethical issues that divided pre-Holocaust Lithuanian Jewry, your editor was torn between the need to observe the journalistic limits imposed by* ***A Literary Glimpse****, and the desire to tell all. Suffice to say that Grade's next chapter—"A Slap in the Great Synagogue"—has more to do with the tale of a widowed woman whose husband has never returned from enforced service in the Tsar's army than it does with this issue's theme of* ***Niggunim in Worship****. For that reason we have—literally—stopped the story at its point of greatest impact, but hopefully not before capturing the aura of Yiddishkeit that enveloped Jews of all stripes in Vilna between the two World Wars. We are grateful to Rabbi Edward Goldfarb of Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple, who gave us the idea. [JAL]*

Polish Hasidim, around 1925 – photograph by Roman Vishniak.

Subject: Under a Cloud in Central Europe—*The Trials of Leopold Hilsner*

March 25, 2008

I recently returned from a trip to Central Europe, which was of some musical significance. In Prague I attended a concert featuring the world premiere of my new piece, "The Trials of Leopold Hilsner," a song cycle for soprano and piano based on the Hilsner Affair of 1899. This notorious case has been compared to the Dreyfus Affair in significance: an innocent Jew, Leopold Hilsner, was tried and found guilty of "Jewish Ritual Murder" of 19-year-old Agnes Hruza, despite being defended by T.G. Masaryk. His death sentence was changed to life imprisonment after international protest and Hilsner was released in an amnesty in 1918. My song cycle explores dramatic archetypes—mysterious death, the innocence of the accused and the eternal faith of the Jews in their vindication and redemption.

The premiere, performed admirably by Marta Vavrova (soprano) and Peter Vasicek (piano), was sponsored by the Foerster Society of Prague which promotes new music. Organized by the indefatigable Mila Smetackova who is also a prominent member of the international Dvorak Society, it took place in the recital hall of the historic church of St. Vojtech, where Dvorak once was organist. The Austrian government is once again looking into the case, which prompted ORF (Austrian State Broadcasting) to record the cycle as part of a documentary on the notorious Affair. The recording was done in Vienna's Stadt Tempel on Seitensttetengasse, the synagogue where Salomon Sulzer had officiated from its inception in 1826 until his retirement in 1882.

So long as the old guilty verdict against Hilsner remains on the court records, anyone can use this as "proof" that Jews do indeed commit Ritual Murder, as we find in the current Arab and anti-Semitic press. For years, activists have been petitioning the Austrian Government to give Hilsner a posthumous rehabilitation and overturn the guilty verdict, since the crime was committed in Bohemia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Czech government recently did indeed overturn the guilty verdict but this is inadequate; the Austrian Government, as heirs to the Hapsburg Empire as recognized by a 1918 Treaty, must complete the act. This they refuse

to do, claiming that they do not have the power to interfere in Hapsburg legislation—if they did, every Hapsburg aristocrat could claim his land back. This battle has been going on for years, and it is hoped that the current round will see some conclusion—hence the interest from ORF, which also filmed an interview with me at the Zentral Friedhof (cemetery) in Vienna, where Hilsner is buried. Fortunately, the weather was sunny, even if the political outlook is not.

Charles Heller
Toronto

Dramatic woodcarving of Leopold Hilsner in the Hilsner Hotel and Restaurant in Polna—a Bohemian city of 5,000 where the murder took place. A screaming willow and shrine where the body was found are seen in upper left and mid-right background, and the victim's grave appears at lower left.

Subject: About The Judaica Sound Archives at Florida Atlantic University Libraries

August 20, 2008

In 2002 the JSA began to collect and preserve Judaic audio recordings from the early 20th century to the present. It has quickly grown into a major archive of Judaic music, largely due to donations from many individuals and organizations no longer able to keep their collections and looking for the "right place" for them. Although the JSA encourages donations of all kinds of Judaic music (Sephardic, Yiddish, liturgical, theater, etc.) and music by Jewish performers, composers and conductors, it has been especially successful with its collection of hazzanut.

In addition to storing and filing the original phonograph recordings, tapes and CDs that are donated to them, the JSA preserves the music and voices on these recordings digitally. Many of these digital mp3 files have been added to the JSA website (www.fau.edu/jsa), which allows visitors to audit collections that are either in the public domain or for which the JSA has obtained copyright waivers. The website contains 153 cantorial albums that can be heard in their entirety.

To meet the needs of students, scholars and researchers who require better access to works still under copyright, JSA Research Stations are being installed at **Gratz College** near Philadelphia, the **University of Ottawa** in Ontario, the **Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies** in Chicago, the **National Yiddish Book Center** in Amherst, Mass., **Hebrew Union College** in New York City, and the **University of Pennsylvania** in Philadelphia. In addition to all the cantorial voices that are accessible on the website, JSA Research Stations provide access to 180 additional albums of cantorial music.

I invite JSM readers to contact the JSA if: (1) you are interested in donating your collection of phonograph recordings, (2) you are volunteering some of your valuable time to help with translation, categorization and verification, (3) you are a copyright owner considering adding your music to our prestigious and growing online collection, or (4) you would like to learn more about the JSA Research Stations.

Nathan Tinanoff, JSA director
Boca Raton, FL
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Subject: The Power of a Well-Placed Niggun

September 3, 2008

In the early 1990s, I participated in an interfaith service for MLK day in Albany. I was asked to sing Psalm 23 in Hebrew. (This was before Gerald Cohen had composed his incomparable setting). I sang the old traditional melody from Shabbat afternoon. It concludes with a pretty la-la-la niggun. After a few moments, the congregation started to hum along. Then 100 members of a combined-churches Black Gospel choir joined in. It was a very moving experience.

Five minutes later, the Archbishop stood to deliver the keynote. He explained that he had in fact written down his comments but chose not to deliver them. Instead, he began to sing the la-la-la refrain of *Mizmor L'-David.*
I cried. Smiled and cried.

Alan Sokoloff
Mamaroneck, NY

Subject: A Masorti Cantor in Sweden–33 Years Later

November 25, 2008

On September 19, 1975, shortly after I graduated from The Cantors Institute at JTS, my wife Debbie and I arrived in Stockholm to begin a 3-year contract as <u>h</u>azzan at the Great Synagogue. Half-a-year later I wrote an article for the *Journal of Synagogue Music* (vol. 6, no. 3, March 1976), conveying my impressions about this unique position. We actually stayed in Stockholm for five years, before returning to the States. After two years in Salt Lake City, Utah, we returned to Stockholm, for several reasons. First, I missed my position here and the possibilities that I foresaw it could give me. Secondly, I felt it would benefit our children to grow up in a European country where they could enjoy greater exposure to the rest of the world's culture.

After 33 years, as my career here is slowly coming to its conclusion, it's quite natural to reflect over the choice I made. As with everything in life, there have been advantages and disadvantages. Among many advantages were the following:

Being a big fish in a little pond has given me opportunities to appear on radio and television, to participate in various government events, to write articles on Jewish music for Sweden's National Encyclopedia, to compile the first Hebrew/Swedish *<u>h</u>umash* and a new *siddur* for our synagogue, to travel

and perform abroad (the Great Synagogue of Moscow in 1985, the Great Synagogue of Leningrad in 1987 and the Concert Hall of Tallin in 1989), to meet Jewish Nobel Prize laureates (such as Isaac Bashevis Singer in the late 1970s), and to sing in the Great Church of Stockholm last year as part of the seasonal opening of Parliament. The community also gave me and my family a complete sabbatical in 1988-89, at which time I studied *milah* in Jerusalem. My career as a *mohel* has taken me to all of the Nordic countries plus Dublin, Amsterdam, Tokyo and Madrid. It has also taken me into the homes of countless Muslims here, including many Palestinians from the Gaza Strip!

One of the disadvantages has been a sense of losing my roots. In Sweden, I feel like an American. When I visit America, I feel Swedish. In my mind I'm neither here nor there. Sometimes I think like an American. Sometimes I think like a Swede, or at least a European. A few years ago my three children, all of whom were born and raised in Stockholm, told me about a site on the Internet called "Third Culture Kids" (TCKID), for youngsters who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside their parents' culture. They felt that it was enriching to be considered a TCKID. The oldest and youngest (ages 30 and 26) still live in Sweden, and one of them works for the Jewish community in Gothenburg, where Abraham Baer lived and wrote his *Baal T'fillah* (self-published, 1877). The third child (age 28) left Sweden nine years ago, and will be receiving his *s'mikhah* from JTS. He has no immediate plans to return to Stockholm as its rabbi, although the community here would love to have him do so and assume the pulpit.

My official employer is The Jewish Community of Stockholm. In American terms, one might say that I am employed by The Jewish Federation of Greater Stockholm. This organization runs most of Jewish life in the city and its surrounding areas, including the rest of Sweden to the north. It employs all of the *klei kodesh*, including the Orthodox rabbi. Stockholm has 3 synagogues. The Great Synagogue defines itself as Masorti, although it is unaffiliated. The other two synagogues, both Orthodox, are heavily subsidized by the Jewish Community, whereas the Great Synagogue is totally financed by the Jewish Community. Even though I officiate only in the Great Synagogue, I perform weddings, funerals and circumcisions regardless of the synagogue which the people involved attend or do not attend. As you can see, Jewish life in Sweden is organized in a very different way than it is in the United States.

When I began my career here, many survivors of the Second World War still came to services. They knew how to daven. Now they've passed on and have left no successors. Since our services are based on active davening—and there are no more daveners around—I believe we may have to re-evaluate how

the services are run. One major problem: worship is now egalitarian. This has chased away a significant number of the older generation who, although they cannot daven, prefer the traditional way of doing things. Worse, egalitarianism has definitely not attracted young people.

The Great Synagogue, Stockholm

As I see it, the Great Synagogue needs to decide whether it is Masorti or not. And if we're not Masorti, what are we? Two representatives from the World Masorti movement recently came to talk to us. From what they said it became increasingly clear to me—and to others here as well—that belonging to a world organization would give our synagogue the strength, direction and resources that we so desperately need. We lack a Masorti/Conservative rabbi, not having had one for two years. During that time my colleague Paul Heller and I have been trying to keep the ship afloat. We also need a youth leader who would initiate a program for young people in our synagogue. Both Orthodox synagogues affiliate with B'nei Akiva, and many of their kids gravitate toward Chabad.

Nonetheless, the rewards of serving as a cantor here have far exceeded the challenges. My work in Europe has enriched my life and deepened my understanding of what it means to live as a Jew—as opposed to simply being "Jewish." For that alone I am glad to have taken advantage of the opportunity to serve the Stockholm community almost my entire career.

Maynard Gerber
Stockholm

Continuity, Change and Retrieval: The New Reform *Siddur*

A Review Essay by Ruth Langer

משכן תפלה *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*, ed. Elyse D. Frishman (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2007), 694+xviii pp.

Jewish liturgy has evolved over the centuries. For the most part, these changes have been gradual: the shift of a word here and there through misremembering, mishearing, scribal error, or conversely, deliberate corrections or improvements to received traditions. But at certain periods, more radical innovations appeared. The Talmud relates that the most formative of these emerged from the academy of Rabban Gamliel at Yavneh in the late first century, a response to and compensation for the disruption of sacrificial worship in the Jerusalem Temple. Another great shift occurred in the sixteenth century when the successful implementation of printing coincided with the aftermath of the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal, resulting in the emergence of increasingly standardized regional rites (as opposed to local ones).

The entrance of Jews into modernity also belongs to this list. Reform Judaism, from its very beginnings, expressed its identity liturgically, critiquing and experimenting with almost every aspect of synagogue ritual. This wave of liturgical reforms challenged and in some ways continues to challenge the rest of the Ashkenazi world, especially in terms of the aesthetics of worship, but also in terms of its content. Ashkenazi Jews almost universally jettisoned festival *piyyut*;[1] many synagogues introduced expectations of some degree of decorum during prayer;[2] synagogue architecture turned to pews and frontal presentation; musical aspects were more commonly and deliberately elaborated–including in Orthodox settings. Conservative Jews developed their

1 On this process, see my *To Worship God Properly: Tensions between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1998), 182ff.

2 On these issues in European Reform synagogues, see Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: The World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968), especially Ch. 6 "Order and Decorum."

own, more cautious, standards for changes to received texts; Reconstructionist Jews developed theological guidelines for their liturgies.[3]

Mishkan T'filah is best understood within this larger historical context. On the one hand, its striking statement of vision for the Reform movement itself needs to be understood within the trajectory of the liturgies previously produced by the CCAR. However, it also dialogues with its larger Jewish environment. Obvious elements of that environment include: the attention to aesthetic detail of both the Orthodox *ArtScroll* publications and the Reconstructionist Movement's *Kol Haneshamah* liturgies; the desire for accurate translations best characterized by the Conservative movement's *Sim Shalom*; and the enhancement of prayer through commentaries, found in different ways in all three. The editors of *Mishkan T'filah* integrated the best aspects of other contemporary prayer books into their volume while innovating in ways that should inspire and challenge Jewish liturgists from outside the North American Reform world.

The Structure of this *Siddur*

Mishkan T'filah comes in various bindings. Unlike previous CCAR liturgies, though, all are Hebrew-opening. The weight and volume of the full text lie about midway between its predecessor, the *Gates of Prayer*[4] and the Plaut Torah commentary (or the original, full edition of *Sim Shalom* and *Etz Hayim*). Thus, it is substantially larger than any other prayer book (other than large-print editions) in circulation. Each version is available both with transliterated Hebrew (the normal text, navy binding) and without it (royal blue).[5] The volume is also available sliced into two: one volume for weekdays and festivals and one containing Shabbat liturgies only. These retain the page numbers of the full edition as well as internal numbering. Both reproduce the full "back of the book,"[6] about thirty percent of each volume, containing primarily *Hallel*, concluding prayers, home liturgies, the generous selection of songs and hymns, and relevant parts of the acknowledgments. The pages of

3 See Eric Caplan, *From Ideology to Liturgy: Reconstructionist Worship and American Liberal Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2002).

4 *שערי תפילה Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975), xi.

5 The copy I received for review was without transliteration, with a few slips. The exception is in the commentary where the Hebrew headings are routinely transliterated even in this edition.

6 Appropriate adjustments are made so as to exclude extraneous material. To keep the layout consistent, prayers are occasionally expanded to fill an entire opening or brought entirely onto a single page.

all these versions are of the same dimensions, with the opened book exceeding the width of many laps. These dimensions are also not proportional to standard paper sizes, making photocopies inelegant. Electronic versions are also not readily available, limiting possibilities for local customizations.

Hebrew is central to these services, as is indicated by the presence of Hebrew texts and their transliteration throughout, even for many alternative readings. Symbolically significant is the fact that the volume's title is transliterated but not translated on the title page, and its subtitle labels it a "*siddur*." The binding's spine gives only the Hebrew name in Hebrew characters. Thus, it is unlikely that this name will have the fate of its predecessor, *שערי תפילה*, known universally as the *Gates of Prayer*.[7] If one chooses, one can also easily *daven* the entire service in Hebrew using this *siddur*, something that was possible only in places in the *Gates of Prayer* and not at all possible in the *Union Prayer Book*.[8]

But Hebrew prayer is only a choice. Contemporary Reform Judaism continues to value autonomy and welcome diversity.[9] The CCAR's first official prayer book series, *The Union Prayer Book*, in its various editions, continued in the traditional model and presented only a single service for each occasion (with a month's worth of alternative insertions to Sabbath services). As its name indicates, it sought liturgical "union." In contrast, the 1975 *Gates of Prayer* celebrated diversity by offering ten different "Sabbath Evening" services, six

7 Its introduction refers to it as *Shaarei Tefillah*, so the intent was that the Hebrew title be used. However, that title was not presented with vowels or transliterated on the title page or binding. The binding's spine, in fact, reads *The New Union Prayer Book: Weekdays, Sabbaths, and Festivals*, not mentioning the volume's new title at all. This all changed in the 1994 revision, whose title page reads *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays, שערי תפילה לשבת ויום טוב: A Gender Sensitive Prayerbook*, and whose spine reads *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays*. This volume, because of its grey binding, is fondly known as the *Gates of Grey*. It, and its various iterations, are the first to drop "Union Prayer Book" from the title.

8 Adopted by the CCAR in 1895. Its newly revised version is copyright 1940. It is less than half the size of *Mishkan T'filah*.

9 As voiced in the *Gates of Prayer*'s introduction, xi-xii, and in the 1976 "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective" especially in the section, "Diversity Within Unity, the Hallmark of Reform" (http//ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=41&pge_prg_id-4687&pge_id=1656, accessed July 27, 2008). See also the discussion in the introductory section of the "Commentary on the Principles for Reform Judaism," discussing the 1995 platform by this name, (http//ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=45&pge_prg_id-4687&pge_id=1656, accessed July 27, 2008).

for "Sabbath Morning," and four for weekdays. Each service served a different demographic or voiced a different theology. While they prayed from the same volume, different communities were literally on different pages. [10]

Mishkan T'filah merges these two ideologies. It contains two versions of the service for "Shabbat Evening" and "Shabbat Morning"[11] and single services for every other occasion (though no service at all for weekday afternoons!). But the primary services for Shabbat (I) and the single services for all other occasions contain much of the diversity of the *Gates of Prayer*. Almost every page opening for these services contains the Hebrew prayer in the place of honor on the top right, accompanied on the rest of that page by a reasonably literal translation (and transliteration). On the left side, one finds interpretative versions of that prayer, each concluding where appropriate with the standard *chatimah* (eulogy[12]) in Hebrew. Thus, no matter which version of the prayer one recites, all receive a standard cue to turn the page; this single two-page spread expresses and simultaneously contains the diversity, bringing everyone literally onto the same page.

The editors, Rabbis Elyse D. Frishman and Peter S. Knobel, state these ideals eloquently in their Introduction, writing:

> In any worship setting, people have diverse beliefs. The challenge of a single liturgy is to be not only multi-vocal, but poly-vocal–to invite full participation at once, without conflicting with the *keva*[13] text… Theologically the liturgy needs to include many perceptions of God… In any given module of prayer… we should sense all these ways. The distinction of an integrated theology is… that… over the course of praying, many voices are heard and ultimately come together as one… An integrated theology communicates that the community is greater than the sum of its parts.[14]

There are other structural features of this volume worthy of note. The Hebrew font employed throughout is modern and very readable. Graphi-

10 The 1994 interim version for "Shabbat and Weekdays" (*Gates of Grey*) reduced the variety to single services for all but "Shabbat Evening," where there remain three services. Size was likely an issue; the result was a slender, lightweight volume.

11 The change of terminology from "Sabbath" to "Shabbat" is already present in *Gates of Grey*.

12 From the Greek for "praise, blessing," used in English discussions of Jewish liturgy for the concluding blessing formula.

13 This term for the "primary, traditional" liturgy, coined by Jakob J. Petuchowski z"l who taught many of today's Reform liturgists, receives no translation here, but is explained in "A Note on Style and Usage," Introduction, p. xvii.

14 p. ix.

cally, the typography is a huge improvement, especially over the *Gates of Grey*. Most pages, on the model of *Kol Haneshamah*, also offer ample white space, a device that encourages a meditative, reflective approach to prayer. This is particularly evident on the two-page spread dedicated only to the calligraphed first line of *Sh'ma* and its response–marking the prominence historically granted to this prayer in Reform liturgies. Simpler but similarly spacious is the spread dedicated to Psalm 51: 17 before the *T'fillah*. The use of blue ink for headings, borders, and the marginalia is subtle but effective, though in dim light or for the color-blind, it may be difficult to differentiate from the black.

The second set of Shabbat services (II) are "linear services," printed with a thin blue border surrounding the individual page (i.e., not the two-page opening), with only a single, often interpretative translation, and with more extensive historical commentary at the bottom of the page. Were the translations here literal, one would suggest that these services were meant more for study than for prayer. But these services are a concession to those who prefer the received prayer book model, that pioneered in the *Gates of Prayer*, where Hebrew and English intersperse section by section down the page (as opposed to the more common model for translated prayer books, with Hebrew on the right and the vernacular on the left side of the opening).[15] The traditional selections of Psalms for *P'sukei D'zimrah* and *Kabbalat Shabbat* also appear in this format, though with literal translations and limited commentary.

To the uninitiated, Jewish liturgy is a welter of words whose organization is far from obvious. *Gates of Prayer* added titles, section by section and paragraph by paragraph.[16] *Mishkan T'filah* has moved these headings to the margins of each page, both appropriately removing them from actual process of worship, and making them much more educational. The outer margin of each page lists in blue all the prayers of that section of the service, with the prayer(s) of that page in bold black type. This allows the worshiper to place each prayer within its larger context, enhancing understanding of the whole.

However, there are places where this is still misleading. This mechanism does not allow for levels of headings, so there are separate headings for the

15 See "The Prayer Book of the People: A conversation with Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman on the making of *Mishkan T'filah*—A Reform Siddur, the Movement's innovative new prayer book," *Reform Judaism* (Summer 2006), http: //reformjudaismmag.org/Articles?index.cfm?id=1149, accessed July 27, 2008. This article is also available on the website dedicated to the prayer book itself, http: //urj.org/mishkan/, under "Educational Resources."

16 Though the graphic distinction between section and paragraph titles largely disappeared in the *Gates of Grey*.

various parts of *Sh'ma*, without clear recognition that these biblical passages form a discrete unit. And for some reason, the *G'ulah* benediction has lost its identity, appearing as "*Emet v'-Yatziv*" or "*Emet Ve-Emunah*" followed by "*Mi Chamochah*," as two separate units. This division was not generated by the prayer's length's requiring two page openings, as a similar renaming did not happen for the parts of the Shabbat or Yom Tov "*K'dushat HaYom*." Perhaps its roots lie in the fact that *Mi Chamochah*, widely sung congregationally in Hebrew, serves as a functional liturgical marker in Reform liturgies.

Curiously, too, these headings are titled "rubric headings" in the book's introductory materials (xvii). "Rubrics" refers originally to the performance instructions written conventionally in red ink (hence the name) in Christian liturgical volumes. English-speaking Jewish liturgists adopted this term to refer instead to the structure of the liturgy. Now, the red ink has turned blue!

This *siddur* also enhances its educational task with the addition of notes at the bottom of each page and more extensive notes with its "linear" services. Some enhance understanding by pointing to biblical sources or historical background, others suggest choreography, or offer additional inspirational readings. However, it is difficult to understand how some of these inspirational readings differ from those offered as left-page prayers. Space considerations seem to have driven the extent of the commentary offered, making it uneven at times. Some comments recur from service to service; in other cases, each comment on a single prayer is different. This seems driven by the negotiation between the space and material available.

The choreographical notes present a window into the tensions faced in this *siddur* in its dance with diversity. In direct contrast with earlier Reform prayer books where verbal instructions or typefaces indicated who should read what, when to stand and when to sit, this prayer book provides no directions at all within the main text, except some in the Torah service. At most, indented lines occasionally suggest congregational responses, though even this is omitted for the call and response of *Bar'chu* and is inconsistent for *Kaddish*.[17] There are no mandatory responsive readings or prayers reserved for the *sh'liach tzibbur*; everyone may recite every word.

17 This is inconsistent. The response is indented for *Mourner's Kaddish* (532, 598), but for *Kaddish D'Rabanan* sometimes yes (46, 208) and sometimes no (299, 434), and for *Chatzi Kaddish* once yes, in a linear service (263) and mostly no (20, 144, 224, 312, 342, 392, 451). There is no *Kaddish* after the *T'fillah* or after Torah reading. As in the *Gates of Prayer,* with the exception of weekdays, *Chatzi Kaddish* precedes *Bar'chu* in the evening instead of separating the obligatory *Sh'ma* unit from the optional evening *T'fillah*, as is traditional.

With the exception of some directions in the Torah service, every single choreographical instruction appears in the notes at the bottom of the page, prefaced by, "For those who choose: …" These notes are inconsistent. There is no instruction to stand for *Bar'chu* or to sit again afterwards, but a note indicates how to bow during the call and response (themselves otherwise not indicated) if one wishes. For the *T'fillah*, one finds the option of taking three steps forward before beginning, bowing at the beginning and end of the *Avot v'Imahot* (without clear indication that this instruction applies only to this blessing), to bow before and then to rise on one's toes during the *K'dushah,* and then to bow at *Modim*. However, again, there is no instruction to stand at all, none to bow at the end of the *Hodaah*, nor any indication that one should take three steps backwards at the end of this prayer. Perhaps instructions to stand are insensitive to those who cannot? Differing customs of when to sit again (after *Bar'chu* or after *Sh'ma*; after the *K'dushah* or after completion of the *T'filah*) may prevent the concise composition of such instructions. Instructions were apparently included for traditional practices that Reform Jews are reaccessing, not for those which are established custom in Reform practice.

These partial instructions serve the cause of diversity and acceptance of tradition, not of clarity for the uninitiated. They also presume that this volume functions for congregational prayer led by a liturgical expert who will give the congregation explicit directions, and not for private prayer[18] or prayer led by a less-than-fully trained layperson. But it is not clear what model would be more appropriate for a movement-wide prayer book today. *ArtScroll*'s decision to include every possible instruction is overly deterministic, even in the Orthodox world, not allowing for diversity of legitimate *minhag* and encoding many that are not necessary. However, it does aid significantly those learning the dance of prayer. Previous Reform models, including ubiquitous explicit verbal instructions (*Union Prayerbook* and *Gates of Prayer*) and/or changing typefaces (*Gates of Prayer*, italics for congregational reading, sans-serif for sung texts), also failed to allow for diversity and the directions were, in practice, frequently ignored (particularly where the *Gates* series directed singing for unfamiliar passages![19]).

The Prayers Themselves

The Hebrew texts (and their literal translations) are mostly what one would expect to find in a Reform prayer book today. Many of the liturgical decisions made for the *Union Prayerbook* still stand: the radically shortened *Yotzeir*

18 There is no discussion of *minyan* in the volume or directions for prayer without one.

19 A problem that was anticipated. See the *Gates of Prayer*'s "A Note on Usage," xiv.

and *Emet v'Yatziv* texts; the abbreviated introductory prayers and *Hallel*; the elimination of the second paragraph of *Sh'ma, Birkat Kohanim*, formal *Tachanun*, and *Musaf*. Many favorite English versions of *Union Prayerbook* prayers still appear, albeit with updated English as was already the case in *Gates of Prayer*,[20] as do some *Union Prayerbook* Hebrew versions,[21] both on the left-hand page. In addition, many changes introduced in the *Gates of Prayer* remain, like the four alternative beginnings to *Aleinu*. Innovations introduced in the 1994 version of the *Gates of Prayer* also persist. All English references to humans[22] or God are ungendered and any mention of "patriarchs" now is accompanied by "matriarchs," whether as categories or as lists of individuals,[23] in Hebrew and English, even where the Hebrew might be construed to be gender neutral. On the other hand, where the 1994 text named God in English "Eternal One," a fully ungendered term, following Buber's translation of the Tetragrammaton as "der Ewiger,"[24] *Mishkan T'filah* uses "Adonai," which remains gendered and hierarchical to Hebrew-speaking ears.

There are also occasional attempts to construct ungendered Hebrew prayers. The *Gates* series reintroduced the traditional list of blessings of the *Birchot ha-Shachar*, labeling them "נסים בכל יום For Our Blessings."[25] Here,

20 For example, "Grant us peace" on pp. 179, 259, 282 and 491 (Shabbat Evening I, Shabbat Morning I and II, Festival *T'filah*), "Let us adore," p. 587.

21 For example, p. 175 includes the *Union Prayerbook*'s text for the *Avodah* prayer which had eliminated not only references to sacrifices, but to Zion. See the note on p. 279 explaining the history of Reform revisions to this prayer and the *Gates of Prayer*'s reintroduction of "the hope that God's presence may again be found in Zion" in response to the rebirth of the modern state of Israel.

22 Ungendered references to humans already appeared in the *Gates of Prayer*, a last minute change before the text went to print. See the Preface to *Gates of Grey*, iv.

23 Now in their traditional order, though, with Rachel preceding Leah. For a discussion of this, see "Ordering the Matriarchs in the *Avot V'Imahot*: The Leah and Rachel (or Rachel and Leah) Debate," http: //urj.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=10473, accessed August 5, 2008.

24 *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung*, trans. Martin Buber with Franz Rosenzweig (Berlin: L. Schneider, 1930). If the root of the Tetragrammaton is the verb "to be," as is reflected in God's name at the burning bush, "אהיה אשר אהיה," (literally, I will be what I will be), then "Eternal" should be a powerfully meaningful name for God. Apparently, it did not resonate in Reform synagogues. The earlier preferred English name, "Lord," derives directly from "*Adonai*" via the Septuagint, which clearly already knew this standard substitution for the Tetragrammaton in actual speech.

25 However, they appear only in Service I for Shabbat morning in *Gates of Prayer*, the most traditional service, 286-7. In the *Gates of Grey* they appear as standard for both weekdays and Shabbat.

they included two of the morning blessings of identity, in the positive formulations introduced by the Conservative movement (שעשני ישראל–who has made me a Jew; and שעשני בן חורין–who has made me to be free), but omitted the third. Traditionally this reads "שלא עשני אשה–who has not made me a woman" for a man, and "שעשני כרצונו–who made me according to His will" for a woman, but the Conservative movement had introduced the positive "שעשני בצלמו–who made me in His image" for all. *Mishkan T'filah* introduces this third blessing of identity, adapting the Conservative model. The text now reads "שעשני בצלם אלהים–who made me in the image of God," an emendation that removes all issues of gender. As in the more recent Conservative liturgies, the text here also includes grammatically appropriate options for women, reading "בן/בת חורין."[26] Similarly, we find Hebrew references to God as *melech* have disappeared from the body of *Hashkiveinu*, though the word still appears in *b'rachot*.[27] In general, the transition to ungendered references to human and God in the Hebrew prayers remains a challenging and unfinished task.

The 1994 *Gates of Grey* (29) had also introduced, for the first time in American Reform liturgies, a text for the *Birkat ha-Minim*, the twelfth benediction of the traditional weekday *T'filah*, which functioned originally as a curse text, petitioning God, in its medieval versions, to destroy apostates, heretics (at times including Christians explicitly), enemies of Israel, and the empire of arrogance. Thanks to Christian objections to the prayer and censorship of it, the modern traditional text became much less overtly offensive, substituting for the categories above in the most common version: informers, evil (in the abstract), God's enemies, and arrogance. But liberal liturgists were still uncomfortable with it and often chose to omit it entirely.

The *Gates of Grey* retrieved it with significant alteration, calling it "על הרשעה—On Evil." *Mishkan T'filah* (88) preserves this Hebrew title. It reproduces the *Gates of Grey*'s opening line–"ולרשעה אל תהי תקוה"–but now with a literal translation, "And for wickedness, let there be no hope." Here, the Reform liturgists take the historical trajectory of this prayer a step further, moving the abstract category of "evil" front and center, where it replaces categories of human traitors to the Jewish community as the line's object. The second line in both Reform versions, "והתועים אליך ישובו–and may all the errant return to You," is probably an indirect retrieval from one of the versions of the Rite of the Land of Israel, found in the Cairo Genizah,

26 As it does with the verb of *Modeh/Modah Ani*, 24, 186, 288, 414. It presents *Birkat haGomel* in the plural, so the issue does not arise there.

27 18, 160, 271, 408.

that continues the opening line, "אם לא ישובו לתורתיך–if they do not return to Your Torah," a text that applies there to apostates, but is too particular to modify a curse of wickedness without revision.

The Reform version then skips to the final line of the received Ashkenazi text, abbreviating it severely to read, "ומלכות זדון מהרה תשבר–and may the realm of wickedness be shattered," preserving only one of the received long list of verbs. That one, "shattered," is the one that best applies to the "realm of wickedness." Unlike a kingdom of arrogance (or an evil empire), it cannot be physically uprooted, defeated, or brought low, the petitions of the traditional text. *Mishkan T'filah* then omits a line introduced in the *Gates of Grey*, that asks for God "to raise up a better world where virtue will ennoble the life of Your children," and proceeds directly to the eulogy. This maintains the sense of the unique eulogy introduced in the *Gates of Grey*, but revises it to create a more appropriate literary tie with the language of the preceding line. Where *Gates of Grey* read, "המשבית רֶשַׁע מן הארץ–whose will it is that evil may vanish from the earth," *Mishkan T'filah* now reads "שובר רֶשַׁע מן הארץ–whose will it is that the wicked vanish from the earth." Here they draw on "שובר רשעים–who breaks evildoers," a well-documented variant of the first clause of the Babylonian version of this eulogy.[28] However, translating "רֶשַׁע" as "the wicked" instead of the abstract "evil" or "wickedness" is not only incorrect,[29] but it reflects an insensitivity to the modern trajectory of this prayer away from identifying specific human beings as its object.

New Retrievals of Tradition

This volume not only builds on its Reform predecessors but also makes additional selective retrievals of tradition. Most startling, because it was a change grounded in theology and very much a symbolic marker of Reform liturgy, is the reintroduction of the references to resurrection in the *G'vurot* benediction. This appeared previously only in the afternoon service for Yom Kippur in the *Gates of Repentance*, where it was accompanied by a very interpretative English version, not a translation,[30] and in the *Gates of Prayer*'s

28 See my article with Uri Ehrlich, "The Earliest Texts of the Birkat Haminim," HUCA 76 (2005): 63-112 for the medieval versions of this prayer. A fuller discussion of modern versions will be forthcoming in a book.

29 "The wicked" should be "רשעים" in Hebrew, as in the Babylonian variant, or the singular "רָשָׁע."

30 *Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978, revised 1996), 399-400. The closest translation of the phrase there is, "who quickens those who have forgotten how to live," a phrase that I have heard ridiculed pretty mercilessly.

Yom Ha-Atsma'ut service in a poetic version of the blessing.[31] At every locus where the traditional text reads "(*ha*)*meitim*," Reform liturgies had substituted "*hakol*" because of the irrational nature of belief in literal resurrection. *Mishkan T'filah* adds "(*ha*)*meitim*" in parentheses after every "*hakol*" and translates it as "revives the dead." As the more didactic commentary to the linear services states:

> Classical Reform prayerbooks replaced this benediction's image of physical resurrection of the dead (*m'chayeih meitim*) with more generalized imagery expressing the hope for a spiritual immortality. *Mishkan T'filah* provides the original language as an option, acknowledging its metaphorical power.[32]

Commentary elsewhere in the volume clarifies what is meant by "metaphorical power." The note to the weekday service teaches:

> Historically, the *G'vurot* confronts the mystery of death in the face of God's power. God can reverse death. So it concludes … מחיה המתים…*m'chayeih ha-meitim,…who revives the dead*. Our Reform tradition emphasizes life and God's power to direct it in any way. … מחיה הכל…*m'chayei hakol,…* who gives life to all.[33]

The Shabbat I services comment:

> The metaphor "reviving the dead" is widely used rabbinically. The Talmud recommends saying [the blessing formula] מחיה המתים…*m'chayeih hameitim* for greeting a friend after a lapse of seeing the person for twelve months, and for awakening from sleep.[34]

Finally, the Festival *T'filah* includes a comment by Judith Z. Abrams:

> The גבורות *G'vurot* emphasizes God's ability to renew us in the future. The resurrection of the dead, which may be taken literally, is best understood as a powerful metaphor for understanding the miracle of hope. Winter gives way to spring.[35]

While there is substantial apology embedded in this diversity of comments, we also perceive a real desire to own and integrate the traditional text. It is especially poignant that the only attributed comment here is by one who herself lives with debilitating illness and who obviously found the traditional words personally powerful. Only time will tell whether this optional retrieval will become popular. It aroused substantial controversy when it appeared in the preliminary versions of the *siddur*.

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31 599, in a text from the Rite of the Land of Israel found in the Cairo genizah.
32 276, 325.
33 78.
34 169, 247, 349, citing *B'rakhot* 58b, Y. *B'rakhot* 4: 2.
35 p. 472.

Other retrievals of tradition deserve comment too. The inserts into the *G'vurot* for dew and rain are now present with appropriate seasonal designations, and there is liturgy from the announcement for their switch (though not the announcement itself) with the Festival *T'filah*.[36] Where the Gates series restored elements of the traditional preliminary prayers, especially in its most traditional services, *Mishkan T'filah* makes their proper structure normative. *P'sukei D'zimrah* appears as a heading and section of the liturgy only in the first service for Shabbat morning in the 1975 *Gates of Prayer* and it disappears entirely in the 1994 abridged revision. Even in the 1975 edition, *Baruch She-amar* concludes the introductory prayers on weekday mornings (54); these contain no Psalms at all. *Mishkan T'filah* rearranges but expands only minimally[37] the *Birchot HaShachar* found in the Gates series, but follows the study passages, now moved to the end, with *Kaddish D'-Rabanan*, totally absent in the Gates series. It follows this with a discrete linear section (i.e., without alternative readings, but here as part of the non-linear services) titled "פסוקי דזמרה P'sukei D'zimrah–Verses of Praise" that begins with *Baruch She-amar* in its slightly abbreviated *Gates of Prayer* version and ends with *Yishtabach* on weekdays, this preceded by *Nishmat Kol Chai* on Shabbat. What lies between these is highly abbreviated and apparently follows the well-cited ruling of Rav Natronai Gaon that one who comes to synagogue after the service has already begun should minimally recite *Baruch She-amar,* Psalms 145 and 150, and *Yishtabach*.[38] However, here we find also Psalm 100 on weekdays, replaced by an abbreviated Psalm 92 on Shabbat. Similarly, *Kabbalat Shabbat* in *Mishkan T'filah* expands only slightly on the model presented in the first service in the *Gates of Prayer* versions, presenting excerpts from the traditional Psalms, in linear style only, but printed with the non-linear service.

Additional Retrievals

Mishkan T'filah retrieves the tradition of a simpler Torah service for weekdays, at least in the ceremony for removing the Torah from the ark (there is

36 p. 473, a left-hand page, with no indication of why one might recite these prayers on the days indicated.

37 The Torah blessings now include "*V'haarev Na*" but still omit "*asher bachar banu*." The study passages are still a conjoining of the traditional Mishnah and Talmud texts, omitting any Torah text. The alternative study texts continue onto the left-hand pages facing the *Kaddish D'Rabanan* and include contemporary readings, some of them more texts about study than for study.

38 *Teshuvot Rav Natronai Gaon*, ed. Brody, OH 12, citing Rav Moshe Gaon, who received this from his teachers. Cited in the Tur OH 52. The *Shulḥan Arukh OḤ* 52: 1 adds Ps. 148 to the required minimum.

no variation here in the ceremony for putting the Torah away). The appearance of a separate service may be, in part, motivated by the need to construct the volume so that it could be easily sliced into its component sections. If so, this explains why the Shabbat Afternoon service does not use the simpler weekday liturgy, as it traditionally would. Alternatively, the reality that the Shabbat afternoon service frequently functions as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service may generate the demand for the richer liturgy. Aside from its opening, the Torah service is the same in each of its three appearances in the *siddur*. This results in some anomalies, like the (abbreviated) announcement of the New Month appearing in the Festival liturgy, when it will never be recited, or the *T'filat haDerekh*, the prayer traditionally recited once one has left one's city on a journey, being included there and on Shabbat, when one traditionally does not leave one's city! In addition, while this prayer is often included in the miscellaneous section of traditional *siddurim*, it was never recited in the synagogue. Its place is more correctly with the home rituals, also included here, than with the Torah service.

Mishkan T'filah does reinsert the previously rejected conclusion of the *Yotzeir*, the petition that God shine a new light on Zion–another response to the growing role of Israel in Reform Judaism. The linear service for Shabbat morning retrieves the ancient *piyyut*, *El Adon*, but places it after the *Yotzeir* instead of embedded in it. However, *Mishkan T'filah* does not retrieve any other aspect of the *K'dushah* of the *Yotzeir*, so the *piyyut* would lack context there too. In contrast to this, while the Gates series included the inserts in the *Avodah* and *Hodaah* benedictions after the conclusions of these prayers, *Mishkan T'filah* inserts them into their correct places. *Mishkan T'filah* also offers the alternative of reciting the complete third paragraph of the *Sh'ma*, though only in the morning when one wears a *tallit*. It continues to reject the theology of the second paragraph and omit it entirely, but suggests that in a time when Reform Jews have returned to praying with a *tallit*, the complete third paragraph now makes sense.[39]

Mishkan T'filah's innovations in content do not end with retrievals of traditional Askhenazi practice. It includes a few wonderful retrievals from ancient Jewish practice on the left-hand page, including the *b'rachah* for reciting *Sh'ma* from the Rite of the Land of Israel[40] and an expansion on the priestly benediction from Qumran.[41] Most significantly, it includes a huge range of modern and ancient not-specifically-liturgical materials on this left-hand page,

39 See the comment on p. 320.

40 5, 59, 227, 453 (i.e., not in the Shabbat and Festival evening services).

41 99, for weekday mornings only, with the biblical text printed above. This is the only context in which the biblical Priestly Blessing appears in this *siddur*.

along with more conventional Reform interpretative translations of prayers. In most cases, the English and the Hebrew are literarily well composed. A glaring exception is the new Hebrew *b'rachah* added to the prayer "For a Bar and Bat Mitzvah." Questions of the legitimacy of constructing new blessings aside–an issue of little historical concern to the Reform movement, but also a norm much more respected in this *siddur* than in its predecessor–the Hebrew here reads like a translation back from the English into simple modern Hebrew prose, not the deeply biblically inspired poetry that is characteristic of liturgical Hebrew.

New Liturgies

Finally, there are sections that are entirely newly composed for celebrations that have emerged recently in Jewish communal life. Most intriguing and thought-provoking of these is the liturgy for Yom HaAtsma-ut, which takes as its text Israel's Declaration of Independence, interspersing seven substantial and inspiring excerpts from it with biblical and Zionist readings, each segment marked by the lighting of a candle.[42] This is prefaced by a short liturgy for Yom HaZikaron, a day never before acknowledged in official Reform prayer books. Tisha B'av, merged with Yom HaShoah in the Gates of Prayer, has fully disappeared again, and the Yom HaShoah liturgy here consists of the lighting of six candles, followed by a number of readings, all in English, and then memorial prayers.

However, one can infer that the Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtsama-ut liturgies are meant to be recited in conjunction with weekday services, as there are "Hoda'ah Inserts" for these days in the back of the book, referenced from their location in the weekday *T'filah*. The Yom HaAtsma-ut insert is modeled on the traditional *Al HaNissim* texts for this location and fits well, though it lacks their standard initial sentence.[43]

Additionally, the editors faced a challenge in discerning where to insert liturgical reference to Yom HaShoah. Precedent established that *me-ein haMe'orah* inserts (additions for holidays and fast days) that recall the past belong in the *Hodaah* benediction. However, by the medieval period, it was customary to place the insert for the Ninth of Av instead into the blessing

42 The declaration appears as a liturgical text in the prayer book of the Israeli Progressive Movement, *HaAvodah ShebaLev* (Jerusalem: Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism, 1982), 222-3.

43 p. 555. This is apparently an abbreviation of the text found in *HaAvodah Sh'balev*, 16, 46, where the *"Al HaNissim"* invocation is printed once, before the texts for specific days. The editors here seem to have missed that, a result of the undifferentiated typography and layout in the Israeli text.

praying for the rebuilding of Jerusalem because of its relevance there (and its incongruence in *Hodaah*).[44] As a result, all of the inserts into the *Hoda'ah* benediction refer to past events for which we express gratitude, an emotion that is hardly appropriate for remembering the Holocaust!

It would have been more appropriate to add this insert into *Shomei-a T'fillah*, like the traditional fast-day insert. Alternatively, memorial prayers came to be said in the presence of the Torah scroll, before it was returned to the ark after its reading. Indeed, the text here is an adaptation of the traditional prayer recited as a martyrology for the victims of the Crusades at that point. It might have been more powerful to introduce a Torah reading for Yom HaShoah to create an appropriate context for this memorial. However, as the immediately obvious Torah readings all carry deep theological challenges if associated with the Shoah, it would be more realistic simply to structure this service more deliberately as a kind of *Yizkor* service and allow it to accompany a regular weekday liturgy, without any insertion into *Hodaah*. Even though I disagree with the editors' choice here, I do applaud wholeheartedly their effort to integrate Yom HaShoah effectively into the Jewish liturgical calendar. As a community, we have not yet discovered the model that will serve our people appropriately through the generations.

Concluding Observations

We conclude with an examination of the Torah Blessings[45] in *Mishkan T'filah*, for this page opening epitomizes many characteristics of this *siddur*. The primary blessings are the traditional Hebrew text, as in previous CCAR liturgies, and their translation is literal, except for avoiding gendered pronouns for God (God "gives us the Torah," not "His Torah"). However, the calling and responding embedded in the traditional blessing before the reading is not indicated in any way. *Mishkan T'filah*, however, prefaces these traditional blessings with a retrieval of their customary prelude in the Sefardi rite. This receives the instructive header, "One who makes an *aliyah* might offer" as well as specific directions for its performance. The *oleh/olah* who chooses to do so greets the community with "ה' עמכם–May God be with you!" and the *siddur* instructs the congregation to respond, "יברכך ה'–May God bless you!" In other words, choreographical instructions accompany only that which is newly introduced into Reform practice, not the familiar.

On the left-hand page, we find an alternative set of blessings, texts composed by the *siddur*'s editor. These are only in English, and their third-person references to God's giving "Torah to the Jewish people" instead of the "to us"

44 For a discussion of this, see my *To Worship God Properly…*, 34, which cites Tosefta *B'rakhot* 3: 10; TJ *B'rakhot* 4: 3, 8a; TJ *Ta'anit* 2: 2, 65c; Rif, *Ta'anit* 10a; *OH* 557.

45 pp. 106-7, 368-9, 498-9.

of the traditional text suggest that these texts serve as blessings that could be recited comfortably by non-Jews. While no heading indicates this, there are Reform synagogues who give *aliyot* to non-Jews, particularly to family of those celebrating lifecycle events. In general, this *siddur* is sensitive to the presence of non-Jews in its community, balancing nicely a desire to avoid language that might offend with a strong desire to reinforce a positive Jewish identity. Thus, language of chosenness remains, even in these alternative blessings, as do readings that speak about the meaning of being a Jew.[46] The "we" of the praying community throughout is distinctively Jewish–to the point that of all the prayers for peace, only *Oseh Shalom* at the end of the *T'fillah* calls for peace for "Israel and all who inhabit the earth."[47]

Even though its title page declares that it is a "Reform *siddur*," the first such declaration of particularity in a CCAR prayer book, *Mishkan T'filah* presents a Reform liturgy that is more integrated with the liturgical customs of *k'lal Yisrael* than its predecessors. It voices an appreciation for tradition, both Reform tradition, Ashkenazi tradition, and more broadly Jewish tradition. It learns about modern liturgical publishing from its fellows and then sets a new and higher standard, especially aesthetically. At the same time, it consistently upholds the pillars of contemporary Reform, including commitments to egalitarianism, especially on all issues related to gender, Zionism, personal autonomy, and celebration of diversity. Though containing some relatively minor flaws, *Mishkan T'filah* represents a significant step forward in the evolution of American liturgies, one for which all involved in its production are to be congratulated.

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[Editor's note: Throughout this revew, Dr. Langer uses the transliteration norms and terminology of ***Mishkan T'filah*** *to avoid incosistencies. Hence, there is no differentiation between chet ahd khof, and "****T'filah****" is used for the Amidah or Sh'moneh Esreh.]*

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46 For example, the reading found opposite the Haftarah benedictions, "I, the Eternal…", p. 373.

47 But not in Mourner's *Kaddish*. This is in distinct contrast to the Conservative and Reconstructionist liturgies which revise the Hebrew texts of the concluding *T'fillah* benedictions.

The Worlds of S. An-Sky, including a CD: *The Musical World of S. An-Sky*

By Gabriella Safran and Stephen J. Zipperstein, Stanford University Press, 2006, 542 pp.

Reviewed by Joseph A. Levine

Hasidim claim that God created humans only because He loves a good story. The authors of this definitive study of the life and times of Shloime-Zanvil Rappaport (1863-1920), who founded Jewish ethnography, An-Sky being his self-chosen—deliberately enigmatic—*nom de plume*, begin their story thus:

> A brilliant, much sought-after storyteller, An-Sky was capable of relating tall tales, even when speaking about the most basic details of his own life.

Stanford University professors Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein portray An-Sky as a man of many guises who

> took great joy in reconciling apparent contradictions. A committed secularist, he managed in the last decades of his life to persuade pious fundamentalist Jews, including leading Hasidic figures, that he was, in effect, one of their own while they too knew that, of course, he was not.

Yet he wrote the quintessential Yiddish play of the 20th century—*The Dybbuk*—which authentically recreates the Hasidic world of wonder-working tzaddikim who could conjure departed souls from the Other Side (*sitra ahra*). Along with magical incantations and rapturous chants, niggunim played a major role, and the CD enclosed within this book includes several of them. The book also catalogues exemplary selections from among the hundreds of folk songs that An-Sky recorded on full-scale ethnographic expeditions from his native Vitebsk region (same as that of Marc Chagall) to Hasidic communities in France, Switzerland, the Ukraine, Volhynia and Podolia in 1909 and again in 1912-1914.

The authors have produced their own translation of *The Dybbuk*'s original Russian text as An-Sky emended it to conform with the government censor's demands in 1917, prior to the Yiddish version used by the Vilna Troupe in the world premiere Warsaw production of 1920. There are differences, notably a Prologue and Epilogue reminiscent of the Offenbach opera *Tales of Hoffmann*, which frame the action in a legendary time and which were later deleted. Here are some of the songs:

Yavo Addir Bimheiroh ("Let the Mighty One come speedily"), a Shabbat afternoon *z'mirah*.

Hot HaShem Yisborakh ("The Blessed One sent a tree"), a *Had-Gadya*-type Yiddish protest against violence, it echoes Belorussian/Polish song.

Dybbuk Niggun, from Henekh Kohn's score for the 1937 Polish/Yiddish film, it was known in the Vitebsk region and transmitted by the actor who played the Miropoler Rebbe in the Warsaw production.

Dem Berdichever Rov's Kaddish ("The Kaddish of Rav Levi Yitzkhok of Berdichev") has the late 18th-century Hasidic leader summoning God to trial over the way His people are treated in relation to all other nations.

Ne Zhurits'sia Khloptsy ("Don't worry, guys, over what will become of us") has become an anthem of the Lubavitcher world; it exemplifies Hasidic adaptation of songs from other cultures and using them for purposes of spiritual inspiration.

Mipnei Mah ("Why, oh why did the soul descend from the highest height to the deepest abyss? The greatest fall contains the upward flight") is the niggun-with-words that opens and closes *The Dybbuk*. It is sung to various liturgical texts in the Ashkenazic tradition; Journal Editorial Board member Sam Weiss uses it for a Friday night introit to the *Kiddush* that is recited at home: *Eishet Hayil* ("A Woman of Valor;" proverbs 31).

A Dudele ("Thou, Thou"), another song attributed to the Berdichever Rebbe, appears in the final scene of Act One: "Master of the Universe, where can I find Thee and where art Thou not to be found? Wherever I look there is only Thee—East, West, North or South—Everything is Thee, the only One—Thou, Thou, Thou!

S. An-Sky personified many of the cultural changes that occurred in his day. But Professors Safran and Zipperstein wonder whether he was primarily "a communal organizer, a politician, a writer of fiction or memoirs or plays or reportage, a folklorist, or, for that matter, a secular prophet of Jewish renewal?" He had started as a "rebellious *maskil*" with "universalist preoccupations," and had ended as a "cosmopolitan radical" who "worked tirelessly as a prominent anti-Bolshevik leader."

For that reason the CD intersperses Hasidic *D'veikut* and *Rikud* niggunim, Russian coal miners' songs, Yiddish hymns of the Russian-Lithuanian-Polish Workers Bund, Klezmer instrumental pieces, Russian-Jewish soldiers' songs and children's rhymes. Not every reader of these lines will find all of the above relevant to the needs of modern synagogue goers. Still, all of the songs performed by Michael Alpert (vocals-guitar-violin-accordion-drums), Stuart Brotman (cimbalon-baraban-electric bass), Adrian Coburn (vocals), Julian Kytasty (bandura), the Children's Choir of St. Petersburg, the Stanford Slavic Chorus, the

Bay Area Russian Folk Music Ensemble and the original artists featured on the Yiddish and Russian holdings of Stanford's libraries—recreate a once vibrant folk tradition that is just now being revived. It deserves emulation by cantors, choral members and directors, educators and instrumentalists. As the authors write,

> An-Sky loved music and was fascinated by its effect. Like his hero Lev Tolstoy, he believed that good art communicates feelings and brings people together. Like Tolstoy, he preferred folk songs to highbrow literature. In his own writing he tried to communicate with and unite his audience, never to publish just for scholars. But like a later generation of folksong collectors and performers who also wrote protest songs (Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Jean Ritchie), he wanted to influence politics and people's lives.

He did so by serving as a *tehillimveker*, the community functionary in Eastern Europe who awakened the village to prayer each morning by singing a passage from the Book of Psalms. An-Sky sounded a similar wake-up call to any Jew who was ready to join in building "the new house of Jewish culture."

Dr. Joseph A. Levine is editor of the Journal of Synagogue Music.

An-Sky's expedition in Kremenets, Ukraine, 1913

Jerry Glantz's *The Man Who Spoke to God*—including 2 CDs of Leib Glantz's recordings

Reviewed by Daniel S. Katz

In the early 1990s when I was a student at JTS, a hollow wooden cube, maybe two feet across, stood in a corner in one of the cantorial classrooms. It functioned as a frame for a stained glass panel. It was open in the back. Inside was a light bulb. When it was turned on, the glass lit up and could be viewed. Woven into the artistic design was the name of Leib Glantz (1898-1964).

I have no idea what has become of this unusual homage to an extraordinary cantor. I hope it has remained intact and that the Seminary will move it to a safer place, perhaps put it on display.

The Man Who Spoke to God by Jerry Glantz, the cantor's younger son, likewise puts Leib Glantz on display, but in the more accessible form of a published book. This 541-page work, accompanied by two CDs of Leib Glantz singing his own compositions and illustrated by ample photographs, mostly of high quality, is a compendium of 73 essays by approximately 50 different authors, including Leib, Jerry, and Kalman Glantz (Kalman is Leib's older son).

Jerry Glantz reports that even more people had wanted to contribute texts for the book. He acknowledges that the chosen "essays are more meaningful and more powerful than anything I could have written" (p. 6). Nevertheless, perhaps the most touching contribution of all is Jerry's own, a letter of appreciation that he had uncannily felt moved to write to his father just three months before the latter's unexpected death from a stroke.

The Man Who Spoke to God is a loving tribute not just from a son to a father, but from colleagues and cantorial specialists to a famous, yet enigmatic figure whose name is often spoken, although his work is not always well understood. The main contribution of this book is to familiarize us with the thoughts, spirit, and (both metaphorically and literally) the voice of the multifaceted Leib Glantz. It introduces us not only to a powerful and idiosyncratic *sh'liaḥ tsibbur*, but to a committed Zionist, cantorial composer and theorist and—from the various perspectives of the contributors—a father, friend, teacher, and colleague.

The book is divided into three sections containing personal reminiscences, assessments of Glantz's work, and a selection of essays by Glantz himself. Eight appendices provide an exchange of views between Glantz and Max Wohlberg, a biographical sketch of one of Glantz's teachers, a report on Glantz's work with different record companies, a discography, worklists, and

translations and transliterations of the thirty compositions on the CDs. The two-page "General Index," supplementing a four-page "Index of Names," is inadequate for a book of this scope and detracts from the book's potential value as a research tool.

The reader who expects, as I did, a progression from one section to the next, a sort of *gradus ad Parnassum* or *aliyah bikdushah* leading up to Glantz's own writings, will be disappointed. This is partially because the essays in Part 1 are more unified in scope and purpose than those in Parts 2 and 3, but also because the sampling of Glantz's theoretical works presented in Part 3 suggests that this was the weakest aspect of his creativity.

For me, the most successful part of the book is the first section. It opens with a biographical outline (attributed to Jerry Glantz only in the table of contents). The authors of the remaining 36 essays range from a lifelong friend who first met Leib Glantz in 1908 to a 23-year-old collector of *ḥazzanut* recordings, who only recently had heard Glantz's voice for the first time.

The most pervasive general themes seem to be Glantz's "rare synthesis of the startlingly new with the truly traditional" (Baruch Ben-Yehuda, p. 63) and his skill in textual interpretation, through which "he uncovered hidden meanings that existed in familiar words..." (Elli Jaffe, p. 81). It is impressive that many of the authors use similar images to describe him, or invoke a similar sense of revelation as they recall the transformative experience of having heard him sing when they were children.

For example, Naftali Herstik remembers hearing, at the age of eight, how Glantz *davened* the verse *Lo amut*: "It was as though he was engaged in a 'dialogue' with the Almighty. It was so daring that one felt that Glantz was ready to sacrifice his life on behalf of his congregation" (p. 226). This sort of description makes one think of Moshe Rabbeinu on Mount Sinai. It also invokes the book's title, inspired by the reaction of a Finnish opera singer, who had never before heard *ḥazzanut*, to one of Glantz's recordings (p. 2; cf. pp. 131, 134).

The 16 "Analyses of Leib Glantz's Historical Significance as Cantor, Composer, Researcher, Pedagogue and Zionist Leader" that constitute Part 2 are varied in their approach, the level of their writing and their intended audience. Despite the numerous musical examples, in many cases a lay reader who cannot read music should still be able to follow the authors' main arguments.

Part 2 includes Eli Jaffe's listener's guide to Glantz's best-known composition, "The Masterwork: *She'ma Yis'ra'el.*"[1] Sholom Kalib's essay on "The

1 The opening melisma of this piece can also be understood through Chaim

Uniqueness of the Chazanic Art of Leib Glantz" is essential for anyone not already familiar with Glantz or the role of a traditional cantor fifty to 100 years ago. It offers a basic appreciation of the skill and imagination with which he interpreted the liturgy, exploring some of the details of his "startling digressions from basic" *nusah*, while stressing his "absolute reliability to return to the *Nu'sach*[2] at hand" (p. 199).

This paradox is also examined by a team of three Israeli musicologists, Amit Klein, Eliyahu Schleifer and Edwin Seroussi, in their collaboration on "Harmonizing Theory with Creativity: Cantor Leib Glantz's Musical Agenda." Identifying "three major themes [that] stand out among his collected works...: *Nu'sach*, innovation and hermeneutics" (p. 147), they dissect Glantz's cantorial style and liturgical interpretations with three detailed analyses.

Boaz Tarsi compares Glantz's musical philosophy to Idelsohn's and shows how much of his nusah theory is "ideology-derived,... indeed at times bordering on an agenda" (p. 187). Joseph A. Levine offers an extended comparison of Glantz and Pierre Pinchik, including an anecdote about their refusing to speak to each other at a meeting of the CA Executive Council (p. 285). I hope that readers will not be deterred by the length of these three engaging essays.

Like Part 1, Part 2 also has a familial contribution. Kalman Glantz adds a worthwhile perspective by focusing on his father's political life and discussing the effects of his involvement with the Labor Zionists on his career. He admits that Glantz's "research... often [stood] on shaky, if thought-provoking, grounds" (p. 205) but balances his ideological zeal with a story ("the only time I ever influenced him") about his keeping a particularly effective pentatonic setting of *B'-Tseit Yisrael* even after "his research indicated to him that the Pentatonic wasn't appropriate for *Ha'llel*" (p. 213).

Part 3 reproduces twenty of Glantz's prose publications, most of which are intended for a lay, popular audience. They include lectures, newspaper articles, and a series of six radio broadcasts for *Kol Yisrael.*

None of these pieces is an example of scholarly research. Most are based on populist, nationalistic arguments and vague undocumented references to the ancient past. For example, it is certainly true that "some of the greatest performing artists in the world are Jewish: great pianists, violinists, conductors and opera singers" (p. 373). However, this has nothing to do with the

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Feifel's comment, in his account of his lessons with Leib Glantz: "often... *coloratura* is sung on a single-syllable word in order to emphasize the following word" (p. 67).

2 In direct quotes such as this or the next two, I cite the book's idiosyncratic transliteration, without comment, on the system employed (see note 9, below).

subject of the article, "The Origins of Traditional Jewish Music." The word "Jewish" could easily be replaced by "Italian" or "Korean."

Glantz declares that the opening of *Kol Nidre* is in the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode even though it has neither the characteristic half-step between the first and second scale degrees nor the augmented second (p. 411).[3] He attributes the non-metrical *Akdamut* chant to the *payy'tan* of *Akdamut*, but offers no supporting evidence (p. 415). He does not gain credibility by adding—and unfortunately he seems to be serious—that "this melody sounds as though it contains the smell of vegetation..." (p. 416).

The idea that minor inevitably conveys sadnesss is simplistic.[4] Comments about ancient music and cantillation ignore the inconvenient facts that scholars know of no surviving notation of Jewish music whatsoever before the 12th century, that no melodic notation of Ashkenazi cantillation is extant before the 16th century, and that no significant number of Jewish musical sources appears until the 18th century.[5]

Glantz's obsession with the pentatonic scale leads him to lop off the leading tone from *Addir Hu* (p. 398) and the lowered seventh from *Bar'khu* (p. 193). He is satisfied that this operation produces "a pure ancient Oriental... melody" (p. 398). Ironically, by converting major melodies to pentatonic, he unwittingly illustrates what Eric Werner meant when he speculated that major may be older than pentatonic and that the latter may have developed from the former by just such a process of abbreviation![6]

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3 Regarding his claim that "Beethoven... fell in love with this sacred melody and immortalized [!] it" (p. 436), see Daniel S. Katz, "When *Kol nidrei* is not *Kol nidrei*: Synagogue Reform in Aarhus, Denmark (1825)," *Liber Amicorum Isabelle Cazeaux: Symbols, Parallels and Discoveries in Her Honor*, ed. Paul-André Bempéchat (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2005), Festschrift Series No. 19, pp. 395-442, here pp. 438-439.

4 Minor is lively and completely un-melancholy in Bach's *Harpsichord Concerto in d-minor*, BWV 1052 and Mozart's *Symphony No. 40 in g-minor*. On the other hand, the solemnity and sadness in the *Mi-Sinai* tune for *Ashamnu* are eloquently expressed in major.

5 For a catalogue of the earliest manuscripts, see Israel Adler, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources up to circa 1840*, 2 vols. (Munich: G. Henle, 1989), Répertoire International des Sources Musicales, B IX[1]. For an overview, see Daniel S. Katz, "Biblische Kantillation und Musik der Synagoge: ein Rückblick auf die ältesten Quellen," *Musiktheorie* 15 (2000), pp. 57-78.

6 "The result sounds pentatonic to us today, but it is merely an elision, which occurs in all languages—even that of music"; Eric Werner, *A Voice Still Heard... The Sacred Song of the Ashkenazi Jews* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania

His system of tetrachordal and modal analysis seems based more on collecting the set of notes that appear in a piece than considering their relationships and functions. Max Wohlberg was skeptical: "...the melodic line ought to exhibit some tetrachordal characteristics, limitations, or breaks.... If the Tetrachordal theory were correct, then the fourth should have served as the dominant note of the scale..." (p. 476). In an example from *Tal-Geshem*, notated in d-minor, Glantz similarly ignores the function of the note B-natural as an unaccented neighbor tone, which he sometimes uses as an alternative to B-flat. He then relies on this tone to analyze *Tal-Geshem* as having two modes: Dorian (with B-natural) and Aeolian (with B-flat; p. 401). Wohlberg responds that such chromatic alterations "on the weak beat of the measure" are neither structurally nor modally significant (p. 477).[7] In this case Boaz Tarsi presents historical evidence that Glantz thought otherwise—and convincingly places the B-natural in its proper historical contest—not the Temple, but "the emerging new Israeli style of music in the beginning and middle of the 20th century, which strives in a similar manner to Glantz's, towards an 'Oriental,' 'nationally authentic' repertoire" (p. 190).

Leib Glantz was clearly not an historian. This does not mean that the changes or innovations that he introduced into *hazzanut* are inappropriate or ineffective. It does mean that these changes are not compelled by historical reasons. Glantz's *hazzanut* is his own modern *hazzanut*, not a restoration of ancient *hazzanut*. His writings are important because of the information they provide about how he thought and composed. After all, the music is the main reason for his fame. As Tarsi points out, "It is extremely rare to find a source [of cantorial music, i.e. Glantz's compositions] in which so much additional information is available beyond the musical evidence alone" (p.194).

Although not being a scholar is hardly a character flaw, especially when the subject excels in so many other areas (e.g. politics, composition, vocal ability, *davening*). The fact has infelicitous consequences when it leads to Moshe Kraus's claim that Glantz "succeeded in defining the *Nu'sach* melodies that we currently use... as originating from the 'songs that the Levite priests sang' in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem thousands of years ago" (p. 91). This is fantasy.[8]

State University Press, 1976), p. 74.

7 This is not to suggest that including the B-natural makes bad *nusah*. Wohlberg "can justify its appearance on artistic grounds" (p. 477) and Glantz was delighted to learn that Pinchas Minkowsky also juxtaposed B-natural with B-flat in *Tal* (p. 401).

8 "Of all ancient Near Eastern cultures, none has a musical history as burdened by one-sided and subjective perspective and prejudices as that of Ancient Israel. Apart

Perhaps the most compelling passages in Part 3 are Glantz's discussions of the qualifications of a good cantor. He stresses *ḥokhmah* (wisdom) in a variety of meanings. On the one hand, he gives a list of Hebraic and religious subjects, including both medieval and modern literature, that he expects a cantor to master (p. 357). On the other hand, he notes "that art penetrates directly into the heart and often speaks more deeply than words and scholarly definitions" (p. 368).

A book with 50 authors will naturally show stylistic discrepancies, especially when some essays were written recently and others years ago, when some were written for the general public and others for specialists, and when some articles were translated from other languages or written by writers whose native language is not English. It is inevitable that some essays are better written than others. Several passages, as well as photo captions, might have been edited also for clarity, consistency, and accuracy.

For example, a 10-to-15-minute work for a single voice and half a dozen instruments is called an "opera" (Alan Hovaness' *Shepherd of Israel*, p. 22); Glantz is said to have served as chief cantor at Sinai Temple in Los Angeles until both 1945 (p. 251) and 1946 (p. 75); the date given for the Maccabees is half-a-century too early (p. 526); the puzzling term "mother Minor scale" denotes the relative minor (p. 241); and "great symphonies" are ascribed to Bach (p. 364). In one particularly confusing instance, a photograph shows Leib Glantz conducting a funeral for a man who died in 1875 (p. 53). When I saw this date at the beginning of the accompanying footnote, I paused for several minutes, trying to figure out the incongruity. Only when I hesitantly resumed reading did I discover at the end of the note that I indeed had not misread anything: it was a re-interment. This information should have been given up front. The most consistent stylistic peculiarity is the use of the word "cantorial" as a noun, e.g., "Cantorial was the Blues of the Jews of Eastern Europe" (p. 206). Even after 500 pages this felt awkward.

Several measures have been taken to make the book more accessible for lay readers. On many pages a shaded brown box highlights an excerpt from the article, as often happens in magazines. A glossary is provided and various words, concepts, and people are explained or identified in footnotes. Basic

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from sparse written records, the only information we have is that provided by stone, bone, or metal unearthed by archeologists"; Joachim Braun, "Music in the Ancient Land of Israel: Archeological and Written Sources" in the exhibition catalogue *Sounds of Ancient Music*, ed. Joan Goodnick Westenholz (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 2007), p. 11.

musical terminology is included as well, but the clarity of the definitions is inconsistent.

The transliteration system, explained anew at the beginning of each of the three parts of the book, capitalizes and italicizes every word and separates syllables with apostrophes. This can result in clusters of consonants, as in *Ni'ggunim* and *Ka'bbalat Sha'bbat,* or of capital letters, as in *U'Ve'Yom Ha'Sha'bbat*. Although this looks awkward to me, I hope that readers who do not know Hebrew will find it useful. Despite the virtue of consistency, I would have preferred exceptions to be made for Hebrew words in quotations or in the titles of cited works.[9] Otherwise, someone who further quotes or cites these materials may be misled.

Finally, when authors cite essays by Glantz or others that are included in this book, even if abridged or translated (e.g., p. 147, n. 7; p. 148, n. 8; p. 178, n. 11-12), it would have been helpful if this fact were mentioned, perhaps with appropriate cross-references (as on p. 176, n. 5); in one case a cited essay is acknowledged only in passing as part of a comment about the transliteration (p. 182, n. 16). It would also have been useful, for the sake of both scholarship and curiosity, if the original recordings from which the 30 CD tracks were taken had been identified.

At JTS, Leib Glantz was a mysterious name written on a background of dark glass, a fragile, inscrutable thing that could be deciphered only when a light bulb was turned on. This book, despite its anomalies and minor flaws, and ultimately in large part *because* of its anomalies, illuminates the life and spirit of Leib Glantz much more directly. It shows how many people, and what a large range of people, were moved by the man whom Max Wohlberg called "the most daring and original cantor that ever lived" (p. 85).

The book is most valuable for its accompanying recordings, which are Glantz's main legacy and bring us into immediate contact with him; for the explanations and analyses of the compositions on the recordings, which increase their value by increasing our understanding and appreciation of them; and for all the personal reminiscences about Glantz, which create an atmosphere of warmth and intimacy that gave this reader the illusion of being able to meet Leib Glantz.[10]

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9 The transliteration (see note 2, above) is not always consistent: on p. 147, n. 7, the Hebrew has been respelled in the titles of Glantz's article (actually 1952, not 1954) and of mine; in Idelsohn's German title, it has not.

10 For a complete understanding of Glantz's music, we still need the items listed in Raymond Goldstein's article (pp. 321-323): different types of editions, a thematic

If Glantz could conduct a funeral for someone who died in 1875, then students of *hazzanut,* music lovers and everyone who participates in Jewish life today can get to know an outstanding cantorial personality nearly half a century after his death. In Nov. 2008 I played Glantz's *Sh'ma Yisrael* during the first class that I taught at the new cantorial school in Berlin. My students had not yet heard of Leib Glantz. Yet they sensed at once the strong *kavvanah* and extraordinary personal engagement in the prayers of this *Man Who Spoke to God.*

Daniel S. Katz is rabbi of the Jewish Community in Weiden, Germany, and teaches at the Institute of Cantorial Arts at the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin.

Aaron Blumenfeld's *Mea Shearim: 100 Hebrew Songs in Chasidic Style;* and *101 Nigunim: Hebrew Songs in Chasidic Style*

Reviewed by Erik Contzius

As already stated in *The Journal of Synagogue Music* vol. 33 (Fall 2008, p. 173), Aaron Blumenfeld is an accomplished composer across many genres, including classical and jazz. But as the son of Rabbi Meyer Blumenfeld (z"l) and as a devout Orthodox Jew, Mr. Blumenfeld has a soul which he brings to the writing of liturgical music that shines through these two collections, self-published in 1999.

Blumenfeld does not pander to the popular trends heard all too often in the modern synagogue. Rather, he inhabits an Ashkenazi musical tradition that embraces *nusah ha-t'fillah*, cantorial ornamentation, and the Hasidic *niggun*, to paint the traditional liturgy of the *siddur* and *mahzor* in a refreshing, yet familiar way.

What is most apparent from examining these hundreds of songs, a far cry from his complex and through-composed works and opera, is that the melodic settings of familiar (and some not so familiar) liturgical and biblical texts are

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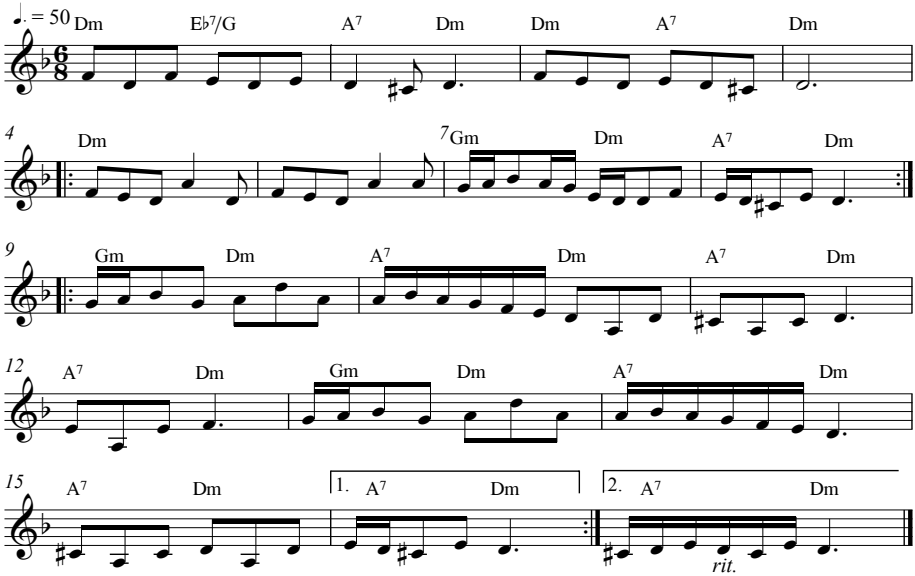
catalogue and a study of "compositions and melodies that have remained in manuscript and were also never recorded."

crafted by a master composer. Blumenfeld has a great sense of melodic line, and what at first appear to be simple *niggunim* are actually deceptively so.

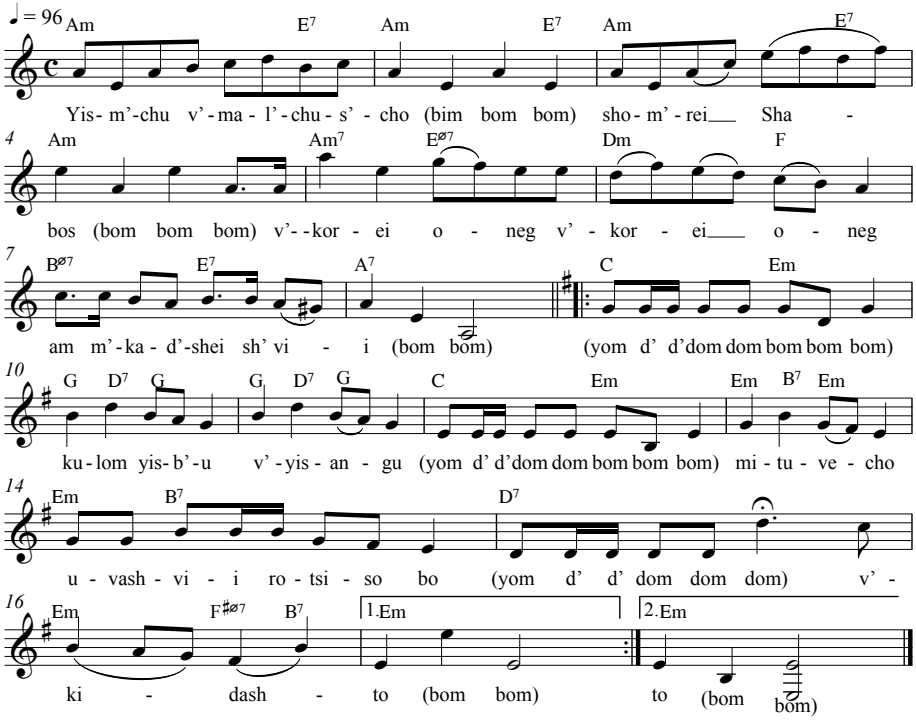
Take, for example, his "Nigun Waltz #1." It is a balanced composition without words—idiomatically—as a traditional *niggun*, starting in a grounded mood around the tonic, rising to an excited state in its middle section with the leap of a 4th to its tonic at the octave, and returning flowingly to the original grounded mood around its tonic at the conclusion. The structural underpinning of the piece is solid, the spirit moving, and although the work can be sight-read, it still requires great artistry and *kavvanah* to realize it fully.



Example 1: Aaron Blumenthal's Nigun Waltz #1

When approaching a text, Blumenthal does so with great understanding and a sensitivity to the words. Having grown up in a traditional household, his proclivity is to use the Ashkenazi pronunciation of the text, but this is not a detriment to its rendition, nor an obstacle to modernizing the words to conform to modern Hebrew. I spoke with Mr. Blumenthal directly on this point, and unlike his art song cycles, he envisions these musical collections to be useful to the modern cantor in today's synagogue.

The inflections and flavor of his compositions are very true to Hasidic expression. His "Yism'chu v'malchus'cho" is another fine representation of his craftsmanship in creating musical structure and balance. It is also a good example of how practical and useful Blumenthal's songs in Hasidic style can be during a service.



Example 2: Aaron Blumenthal's *Yism'chu V'Malchs'cho*

The above two illustrations represent only a small sampling of the gift which Aaron Blumenthal has given to the synagogue. In them, he has channeled a great musical tradition, and the anthologies should take their place in the synagogal canon of today's worship. His clear love of the authentic Jewish sounds of the Ashkenazi world ring so truly that to not take notice is to turn our backs on the great heritage of our Jewish musical past. We have a treasure in Mr. Blumenthal and should turn to him as a shining link from our musical past into our vibrant future.

Eric Contzius, who serves as cantor at Temple Israel of New Rochelle, holds a Master of Sacred Music degree from Hebrew Union College in New York. Recently, Cantor Contzius released a recording of his own compositions entitled, "Teach My Lips a Blessing," and in the fall of 2008 was a soloist in the "Songs of Life Festival" that premiered the Bloch ***Avodat HaKodesh*** *in Sofia and Plovdiv, Bulgaria.*

Michael Isaacson's book: *Jewish Music as Midrash: What Makes Music Jewish?*

Reviewed by Jack Kessler

Michael Isaacson is a remarkably prolific musician and pedagogue who has enjoyed an extensive career in film music while composing a considerable body of Jewish music. In *Jewish Music as Midrash: What Makes Music Jewish?* he has authored a book on the experience of music, accompanied by a CD of examples written by him, cued to specific teaching points in the book.

In actuality, however, Dr. Isaacson has gone far beyond the subtitle of the book. He has essentially written a Hasidic *sefer* on the nature of music, delving deeply into the physics behind it and its relation to the rest of the universe. His basic thesis is that music is not only an expression and a mirror of our personal/emotional/psychic/spiritual reality, but also an expression and a mirror of the evolving conscious cosmos. In this construct, music is a form of midrash, a layer of commentary on our lives and their relation to the universe. This approach implies that all art is midrash, thereby expanding the application of the term from its specific place in Jewish tradition to a much wider place in general human experience. From that assumption, Isaacson has taken on the challenge to teach us how music can reflect and deepen the Jewish experience of life.

This thesis is expounded over the course of a number of chapters whose headings alone are mind-expanding: The Midrash of Time, The Midrash of Space, etc. While reading, my excitement grew as I discovered resonances with my own work as a hazzan, composer and teacher. The section on overtones relates perfectly to one of the teaching devices I use with my hazzanut and vocal students: by virtue of the physics of overtone series, every pitch we sing contains every other pitch, and therefore we should sing every note as if it contains all music. This way of conceptualizing even a simple note can help the singer open him/herself to the deep sources of the flow of music. As an approach to music it may also be of value to the listener.

The book also explores the adventure of experiencing music. Isaacson comments extensively on the diminished ability of many contemporary listeners to really *hear* music, and the loss of attention span that he sees as a common problem. Active listening needs to be understood as something of an art form in itself, with appropriate personal preparation beforehand—and contemplation afterwards. Today's listeners, says Isaacson, have lost the art of listening, and need to re-educate themselves to appreciate music as an occasion for personal/spiritual growth. Accordingly, there is a thorough discussion of the process entailed and a list of steps the listener needs to go through as preparation. Here though, the process described by Dr. Isaacson

becomes highly intellectualized. He suggests that the sung word is made up of three elements: the text, the melody, and then the gestalt of the two, and that the listener can and must listen to all three. This dissection of the experience of listening may suit a Music Analysis class, but even an educated music aficionado will engage with a piece of music or sung text as a gestalt. Anything else will sacrifice the real event and prevent a true immersion in the lived moment. Analytical thinking has its limitations!

This is a serious book about a serious subject: spirituality and music. Granted that it is difficult if not impossible to write about music, yet readers may find that attempting to apply Isaacson's complex analysis of the layers of musical experience and his directions on how to listen can actually create a disconnect from the immediacy of the music itself. Moreover, from time to time, he mixes truly sublime teachings with outright silly sections such as a pseudo-history of music passing from man to woman down through the ages, acquiring more dissonance with the passing of time, until landing ultimately in our times when "anything goes" (does this mean that music has nowhere to develop?). In another chapter Dr. Isaacson describes Israelis dancing in Tel Aviv clubs to Arabic music as a courageous statement of dancing to the music of the "enemy." Since Israel is a Middle Eastern country with much of its Jewish population stemming from Arab lands, is it not possible that many Israelis naturally resonate with Middle Eastern rhythms, and dance to this music because they simply like to do so? So, while I find myself agreeing with many of the book's powerful points I also find myself demurring from some of what Dr. Isaacson has written to support them.

He has chosen to focus on Jewish music performed in the synagogue as the prime example of Jewish music that is experienced intensely by the listener. But Jewish worship is more than pure listening: it is partly a tribal event, and the music we use has a tribal function analogous to typical pre-Western cultures in which a group's music, legends, dances, etc. are a central part of its identity. Isaacson makes a blanket statement condemning as shallow and gimmicky all contemporary experiments in stretching the music done in synagogues. Much may be gimmicky and weakly derivative of American genres, but some of it is wonderful. Modern Judaism is a culture in transition, and we need to grow by experimenting. His disparaging view of Klezmer is so dismissive of the musical crossover work being done by great artists that he seems not to understand how Klezmer works as an evolving musical language. Moreover the contemporary "crossover" trends include other important Jewish influences, especially Sephardi and Mizrahi music. Middle-Eastern percussion, for instance, is becoming increasingly common in synagogue services. Dr. Isaacson also ignores the entire world of Hasidic music, and says nothing about the classic genre of extended niggunim that serve as powerful spiritual vehicles. This would not be a problem, except that the book is titled "What Makes Music Jewish?" By focusing on one narrow

aspect of a wide field, Isaacson doesn't really answer the (famously tough) question.

The CD that accompanies the book—with examples cued to teaching points—is all music by Michael Isaacson. Most of the selections use simple Western harmony, with a few nods to 20th-century harmonic expansion. Some selections are for youth choir. The recordings are all well engineered, with vocal performances of a high caliber across the board. The male hazzanim are all solid professionals, particularly Nathan Lam with his warm sound and clean diction. Roslyn Barak, Aviva Rosenbloom and Faith Steinsnyder are captivating. Barak is a stupendous bel canto singer; I would love to hear her do Donizetti. Rosenbloom displays a clean lyric soprano, and anyone who is foolish enough to say there are no good women hazzanim should have the privilege of hearing Faith Steinsnyder daven. My favorite track is the "Sheva Brachot," set in a quasi-Elizabethan style, sung by Chayim Frenkel. It is the most practically useful setting in the collection: the vocal parts are strong and the piece can be used in a wedding to provide joy and fun to the ceremony, with or without the instrumental fills.

Isaacson's approach, emphasizing the process of active listening to performed music, may reflect his situation within a Classical Reform environment, but this represents only one arena for Jewish music and not the totality of the synagogue experience. While active listening should ideally be the way a concert audience listens, the need in synagogues–at least in our era–is for neither passive nor even active listening, but for dynamic engagement through active participation.

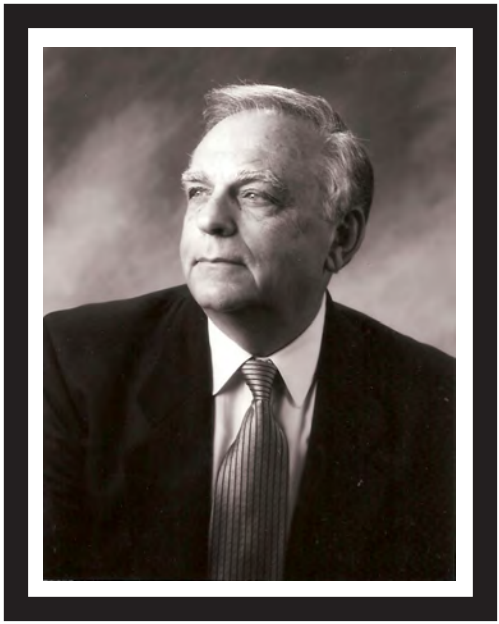
Shortly before the conclusion of the book, Isaacson expresses his yearning for a return of choral music to the synagogue. He says:

> It is well worth the personnel investment when one considers the beautiful, midrashic musical literature already available by the 19th and 20th century choral composers. Ultimately when it comes to synagogue music, I yearn for alertness, an awakening rather than a mindless, robotic ecstasy or, conversely, a fallen lethargy at services.

I humbly suggest that mindful ecstasy might not be so bad... .

Michael Isaacson has written a thought-provoking book. The essence of his approach is undeniably valuable: music as a spiritual process can elevate the soul and open our hearts.

Hazzan Jack Kessler directs the cantorial program of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal; teaches Nusah and Voice at the Davening Leaders Training Institute of Elat Chayyim, and directs the touring ensembles ATZILUT: CONCERTS FOR PEACE (Arab and Jewish musicians in concert together) and KLINGON KLEZ (Jewish music from the future).



Saul Hammerman (1926-2008)

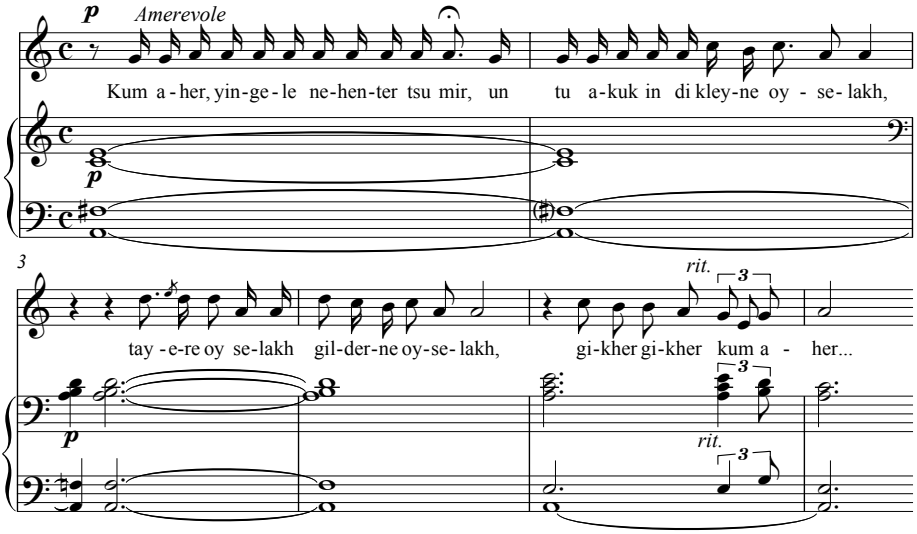
Few young cantors are given the chance to define the musical style and repertoire of their congregation for half a century. Saul Hammerman enjoyed that privilege as the founding hazzan of Beth El in Baltimore, a fledgling synagogue whose staff he joined in 1952. He brought with him a profound sense of what hazzanut should be, based upon what he'd heard as a boy growing up in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn, NY during the tenures of Cantors Mordechai Hershman and his successor Berele Chagy at Temple Beth El.

The younger brother of Cantors Herman and Michal Hammerman, he concertized widely with them. Over the years he would present that same repertoire of classical hazzanut to his own congregation, while remaining open to emerging musical styles. Beth El was a progressive Conservative com-

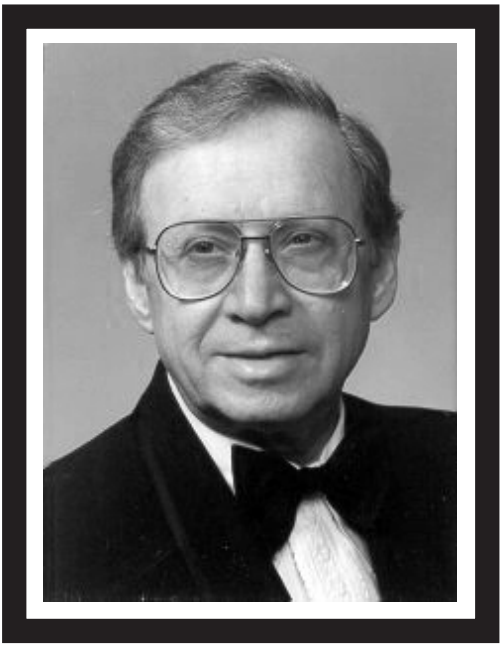
munity, and he produced musical evenings for it that brought to Baltimore such artists as Itzhak Perlman, Jan Peerce, Theodore Bikel, Roberta Peters, Giora Feidman and Renee Fleming, among others. Backing them were the United States Naval Academy Glee Club, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Chorus or the Handel Choir.

Saul served as president of the Cantors Assembly and as founding president of the Cantors Association of Baltimore, and his wry sense of humor lit up many a session at CA conventions, especially during the years that he co-chaired them. The sound of his bright lyric tenor still rings in the ears of colleagues who heard him in convention programs or on recordings. Typical of his social awareness, in his later years he helped organize the CA Retired Cantors Association.

Compassionate by nature, he treated everyone—even strangers—as if they were his kinsmen, and he loved children, whom he treated as equals. Moses Milner's *In Kheyder* was his favorite concert number.



Saul always saw the funny side of life; the Assembly will miss his ever-present smile and radiant personality. Our deepest sympathies go to his loving wife Aileen, an excellent musician in her own right, and the entire family. May the memory of Saul's notable career be an eternal blessing for them—and for everyone who knew and admired him. *[JAL]*



Pinchas Spiro (1922-2008)

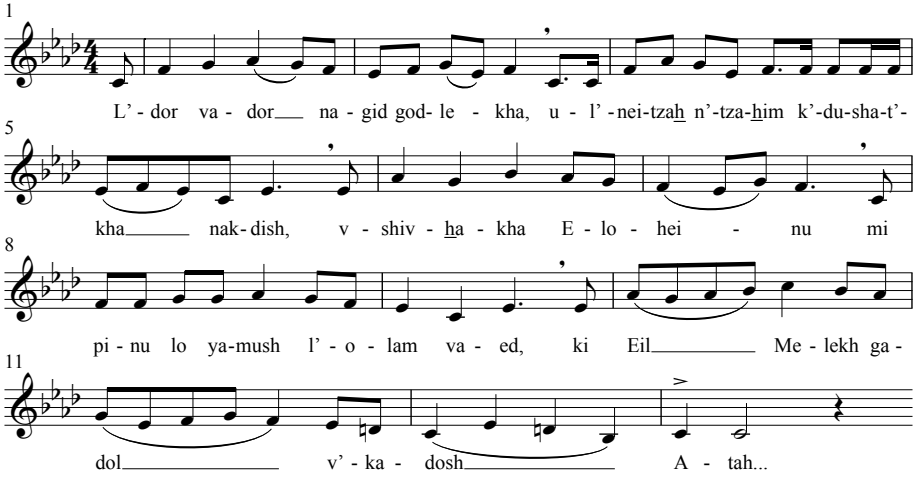
Pinchas Spiro's life ended during the week of Parashat *Va-Yeira*, when *Avraham Avinu* exemplifies the real meaning of spirituality by rushing to feed three strangers. It's as if Abraham is saying, "Their physical needs are my spiritual needs."

Pinchas felt the same way towards toward his colleagues and the American Jewish community. Early on he saw the need for a common musical language that would serve professionals and lay people alike in sharing the burden of prayer. He began with Weekday worship—the lowest common denominator—and ended with a complete arrangement of services for the entire liturgical year that can be led by and responded to by all segments of any congregation.

To this monumental achievement he imparted his own personal Israeli touch: rhythmic communal melodies crafted from the ongoing chant, that

continue to delight every time they are sung. This is truly a gift at large that keeps on giving—like the proverbial "teaching somebody how to fish" that feeds the individual for a lifetime. In Pinchas's case, the teaching is how to pluck spiritual moments from the sea of *t'fillot* that have accumulated over centuries.

In that sense Hazzan Pinchas Spiro, like Father Abraham, fathered a host of disciples who followed his spiritual path—becoming an *av hamon shirim*, as it were. As the director of a West Coast cantorial school said recently, "If your *Yamim Nora'im* services include a full Shaharit and you don't remember all the *piyyutim*, thank God there's Pinchas Spiro; he has them!"[1]



Excerpt from "L'Dor VaDor" for Minhah L'Hol,
Pinchas Spiro, *Complete Weekday Service,*
(NY: Cantors Assembly, Inc., 1980), pages 151-152. *[JAL]*

1 Nathan Lam, "How Should We Train the Cantors of the Future?"—Panel discussion at CA Convention (Kerhonkson, N Y), June 16, 2008.

Larry Vieder (1922-2008)

The story[1] is told of an elderly British Jew during the Second World War who telephoned the Prime Minister's office with an idea that he thought would aid his coreligionists in Nazi Europe. The operator connected him with a staff member who told him to present his plan on a written page. He did, and the staff member referred him to an Undersecretary, with the caveat: "The Undersecretary is a busy man; so you must condense your proposal into one paragraph."

The old man did so and the Undersecretary, impressed, told him: "I'm going to introduce you to the Secretary, but you must condense this paragraph into a concise sentence."

He did that, and the Secretary was so moved that he sent the old Jew to Churchill's Personal Aide. The Aide explained: "The Prime Minister is a very busy man. You can see him, but you have time for only one word."

---

1 After Bernard S. Raskas, "Help Wanted," *Heart of Wisdom*, III (New York: United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education), 1986: 22.

The old man walked wearily into Churchill's office and stood there. The busy leader asked: "What do you want?" The Jew replied: "Help!"

* * * *

Hazzan Larry Vieder died on the doorstep of Sukkot, when Jews everywhere ask God: *Hoshana*—"Help us!" Whenever Jews can help others, we are taught that it is incumbent upon us to do so without hesitation: *Azov ta'azov immo* (Exodus 23: 5).

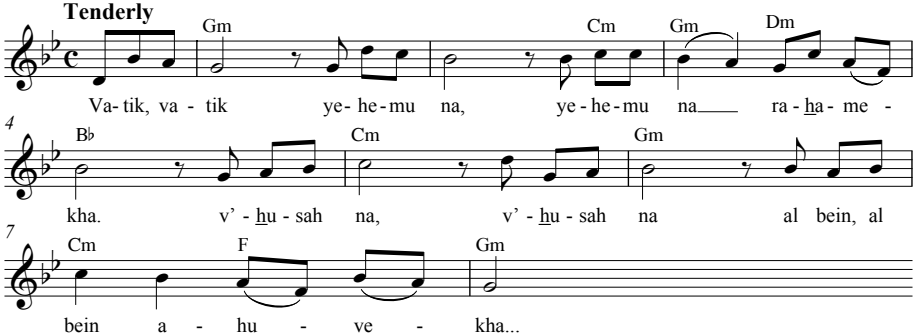
Larry Vieder lived by that creed, in his personal as well as professional life. He was the one to whom countless Jews—whether members of his congregation, Adat Shalom, or strangers who simply stopped by to recite a Kaddish at the Minyan that he led faithfully for almost 50 years—came for help. And he gave it willingly, and always with a smile.

He taught others to do the same, by example, garnering more contributions in support of the Cantors Assembly and its many educational and charitable programs than anyone in the organization's history.

He came by his openness of spirit naturally, from his family background. The Hasidim of Vishnitz in the Ukraine were known for their gentleness, and their niggunim radiated compassion. One niggun in particular[2] sums up what Larry Vieder stood for, and what his colleagues felt for him the moment we learned of his passing:

Vatik, yehemu na rahamekha, v'-husah na al bein ahuvekha

O Ancient of Days, be merciful, and take pity on Your beloved son!



[JAL]

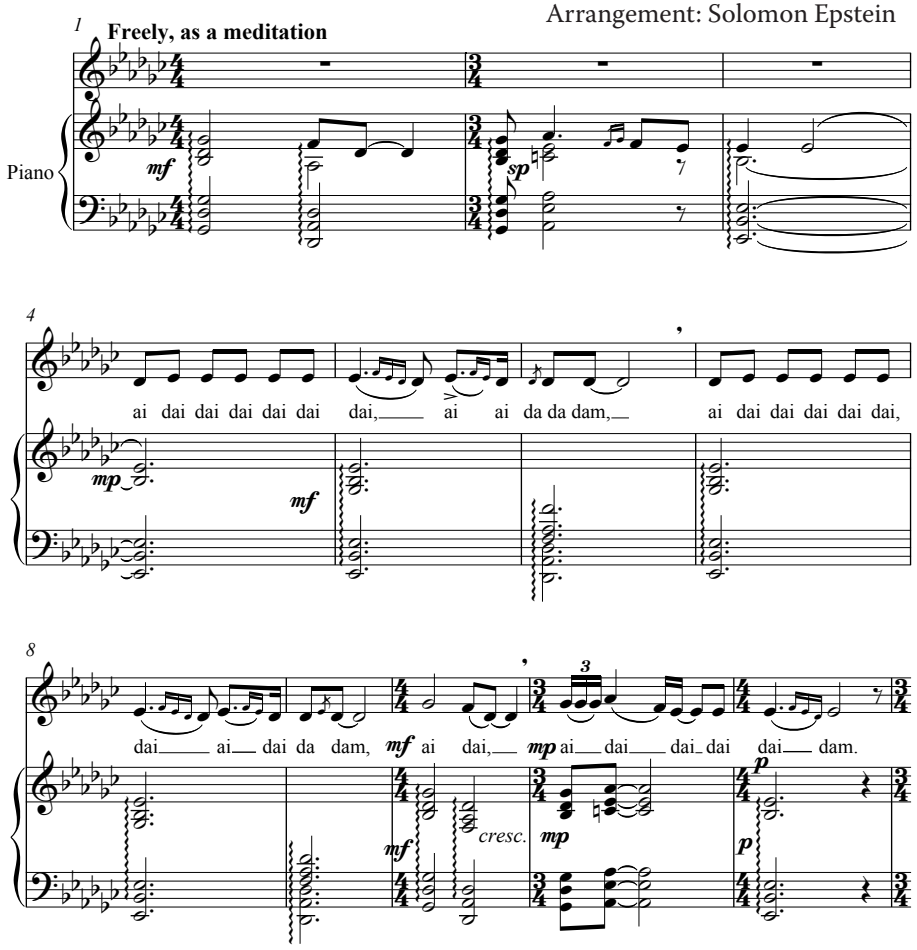
2 After "Vosik," Vishnitz-Haifa tradition as transmitted by Chaim Banet; *Songs of the Chassidim*, Velvel Pasternak, ed. (New York: Tara Publications), 1968, no. 58.

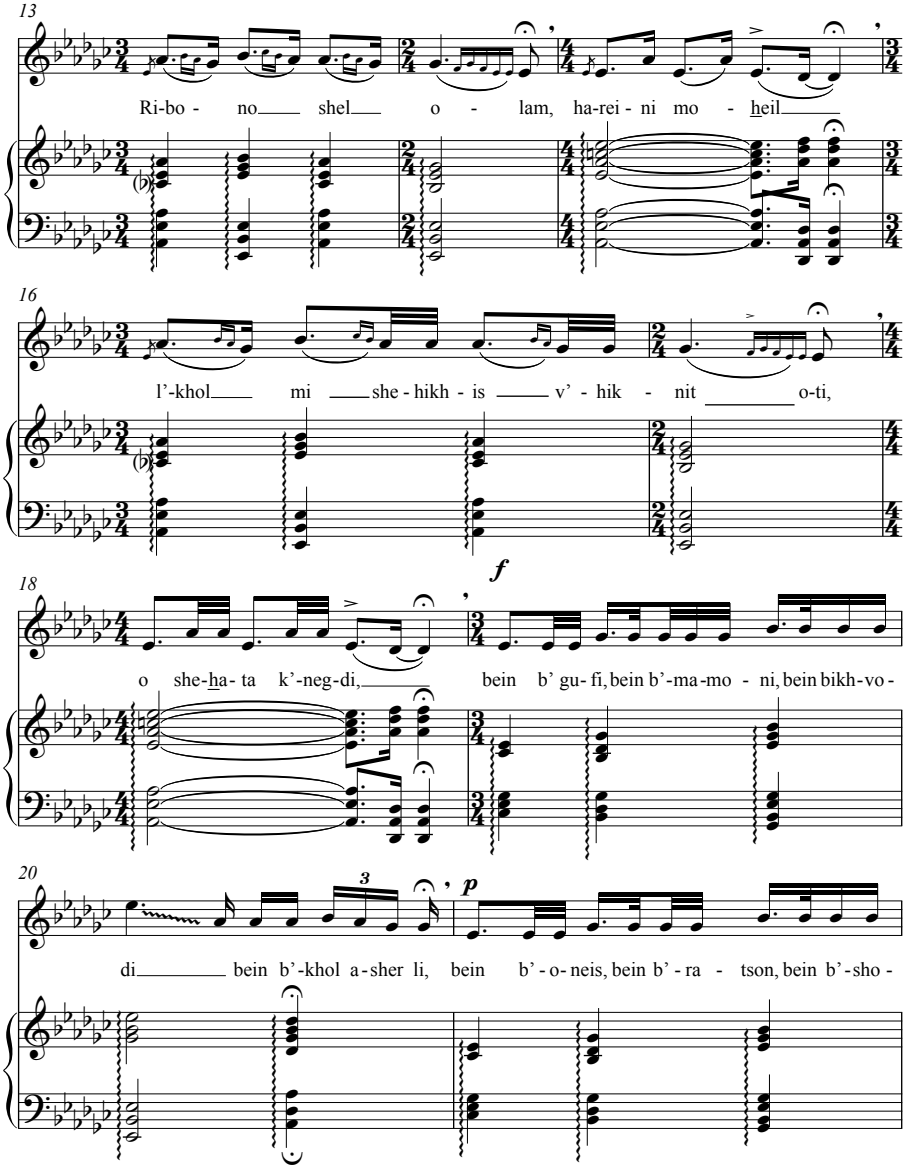
A Minyan of Niggunim for Our Time

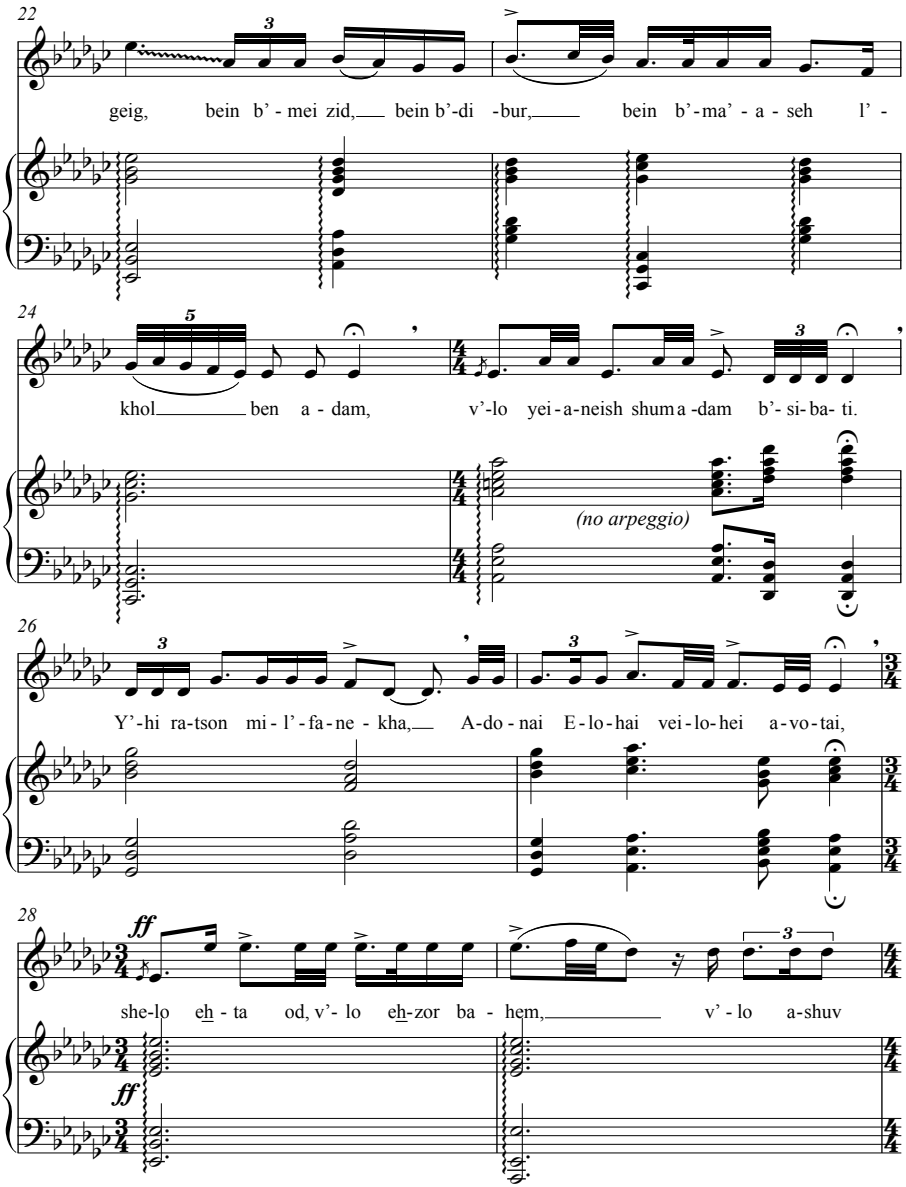
I. T'fillah Zakkah (Prayer forgiving others' slights, and repenting one's own misdeeds)

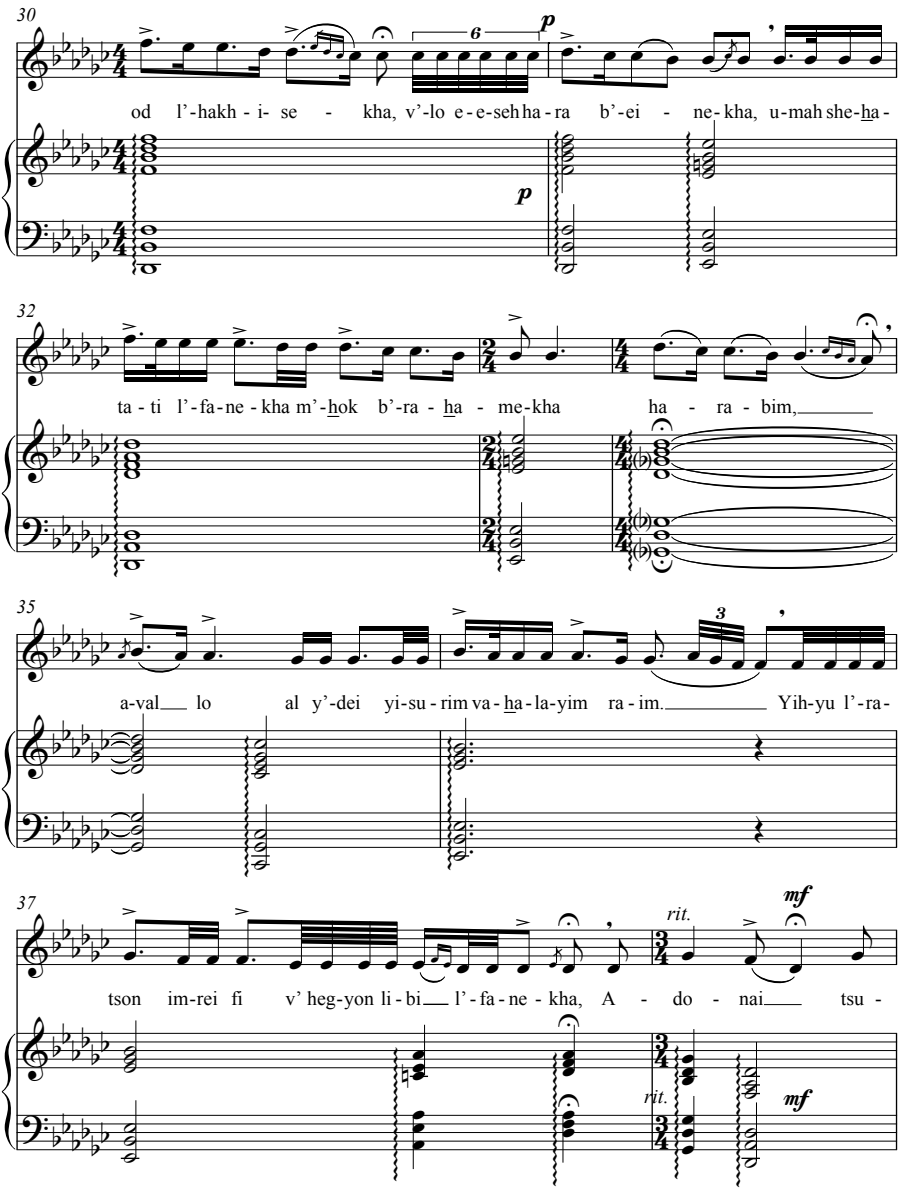
Text: *Rabbinical Assembly Maḥzor,* 1972: 350

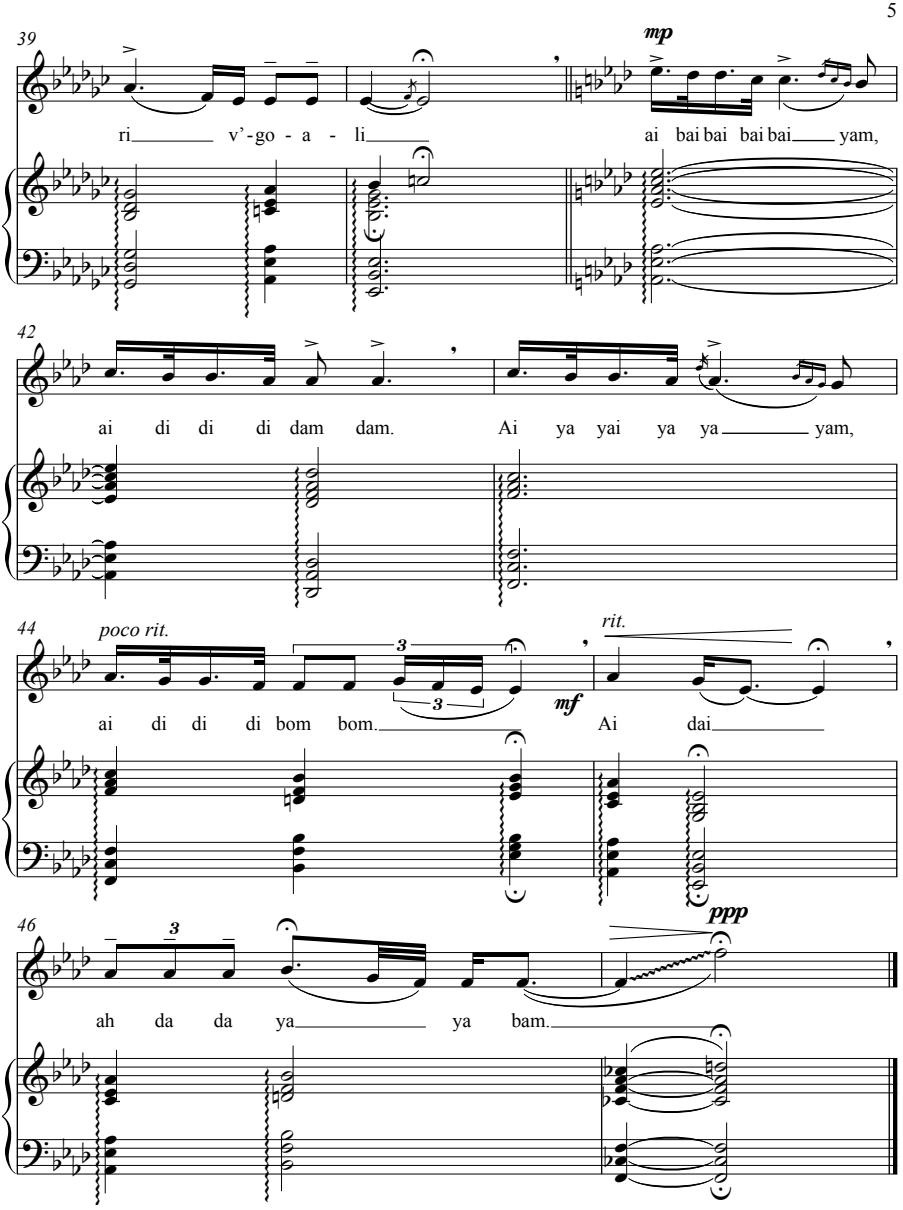
Music: D'veikut Niggun by the Rebbe of Poltava
Arrangement: Solomon Epstein

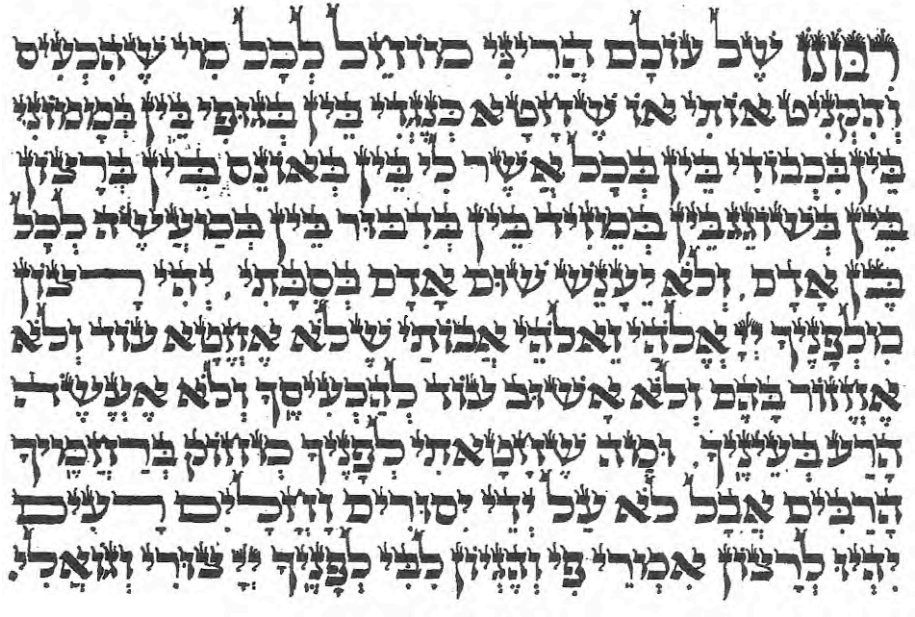



13
Ri-bo - no shel o - lam, ha-rei - ni mo - heil
16
l'-khol mi she - hikh - is v' - hik - nit o-ti,
18
f
o she-ha- ta k'-neg-di, bein b' gu- fi, bein b'-ma-mo - ni, bein bikh-vo -
20
3
p
di bein b'-khol a-sher li, bein b' - o- neis, bein b' - ra - tson, bein b'-sho -


22
geig, bein b'-mei zid, bein b'-di -bur, bein b'-ma'-a-seh l'-
24
khol ben a-dam, v'-lo yei-a-neish shuma-dam b'-si-ba-ti.
(no arpeggio)
26
Y'-hi ra-tson mi-l'-fa-ne-kha, A-do-nai E-lo-hai vei-lo-hei a-vo-tai,
28
ff
she-lo eh-ta od, v'-lo eh-zor ba-hem, v'-lo a-shuv
ff


30
od l'-hakh - i- se - kha, v'-lo e-e-seh ha-ra b'-ei - ne-kha, u-mah she-ha-
32
ta-ti l'-fa-ne-kha m'-hok b'-ra-ha - me-kha ha - ra - bim,
35
a-val lo al y'-dei yi-su-rim va-ha-la-yim ra-im. Yih-yu l'-ra-
37
tson im-rei fi v' heg-yon li-bi l'-fa-ne-kha, A - do - nai tsu -
rit.
mf


39
mp
ri v'-go - a - li
ai bai bai bai bai yam,
42
ai di di di dam dam. Ai ya yai ya ya yam,
44
poco rit.
rit.
mf
ai di di di bom bom.
Ai dai
46
ppp
ah da da ya ya bam.



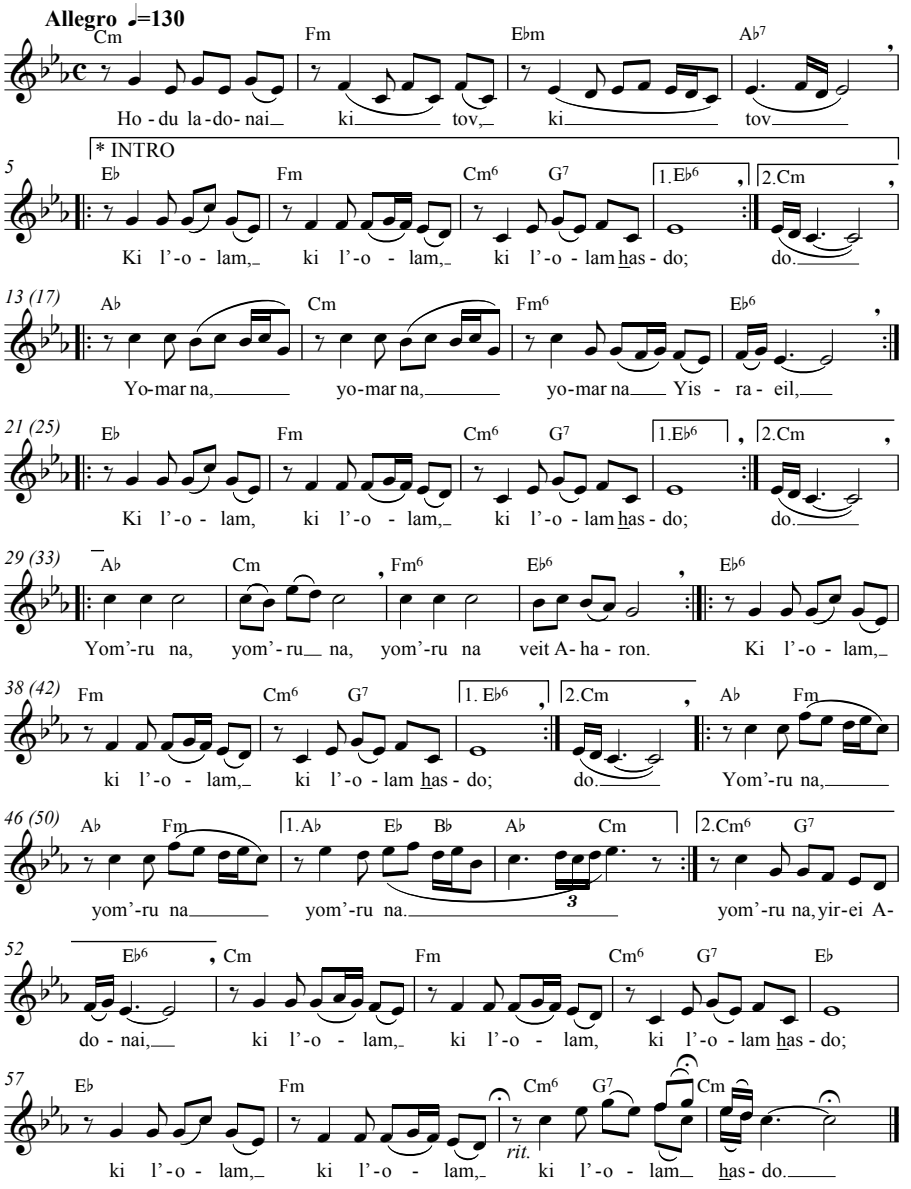
Master of the Universe! I herewith forgive anyone who may have irritated, angered or injured me, whether acting against my person, my possessions, or my reputation. Let no man be punished on my account, whether the wrong done me was accidental or malicious, unwitting or purposeful, by word or by deed. May it be your will, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, that I not repeat the wrongs I have committed, and that I sin no more. May I never again anger You by doing that which is evil in Your sight. I pray that You will wipe away my sins, not through sickness and suffering but with great mercy. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

II. Hodu

Text: Psalm 118: 1-4

Music: Attributed to Moshe Kraus

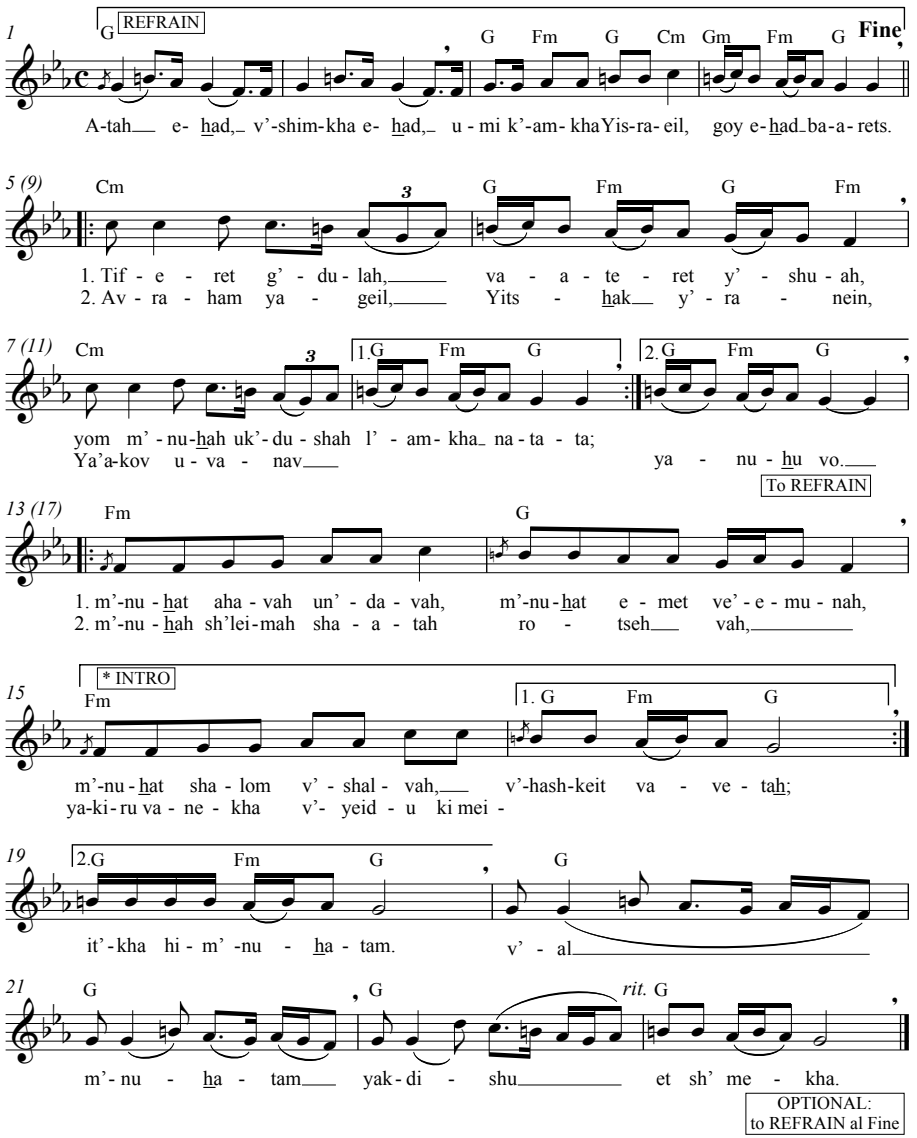
* INTRO



III. Atah Ehad

Velvel Pasternak, *Beyond Hava Nagila*
Tara Publications, 1999: 43
* INTRO

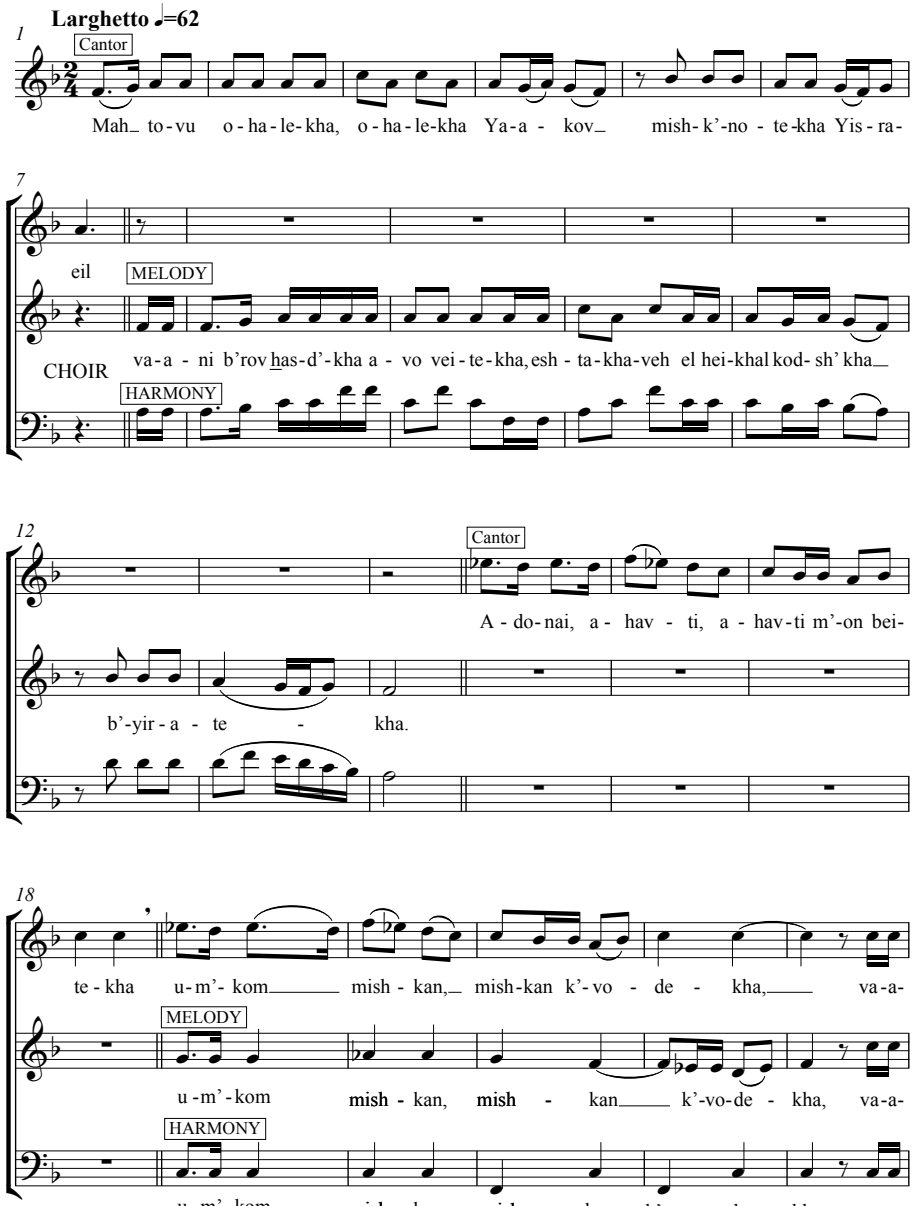
Music: after a Ukranian folk song:
Nye Zuritse Khlopsi
("Worry not over us")

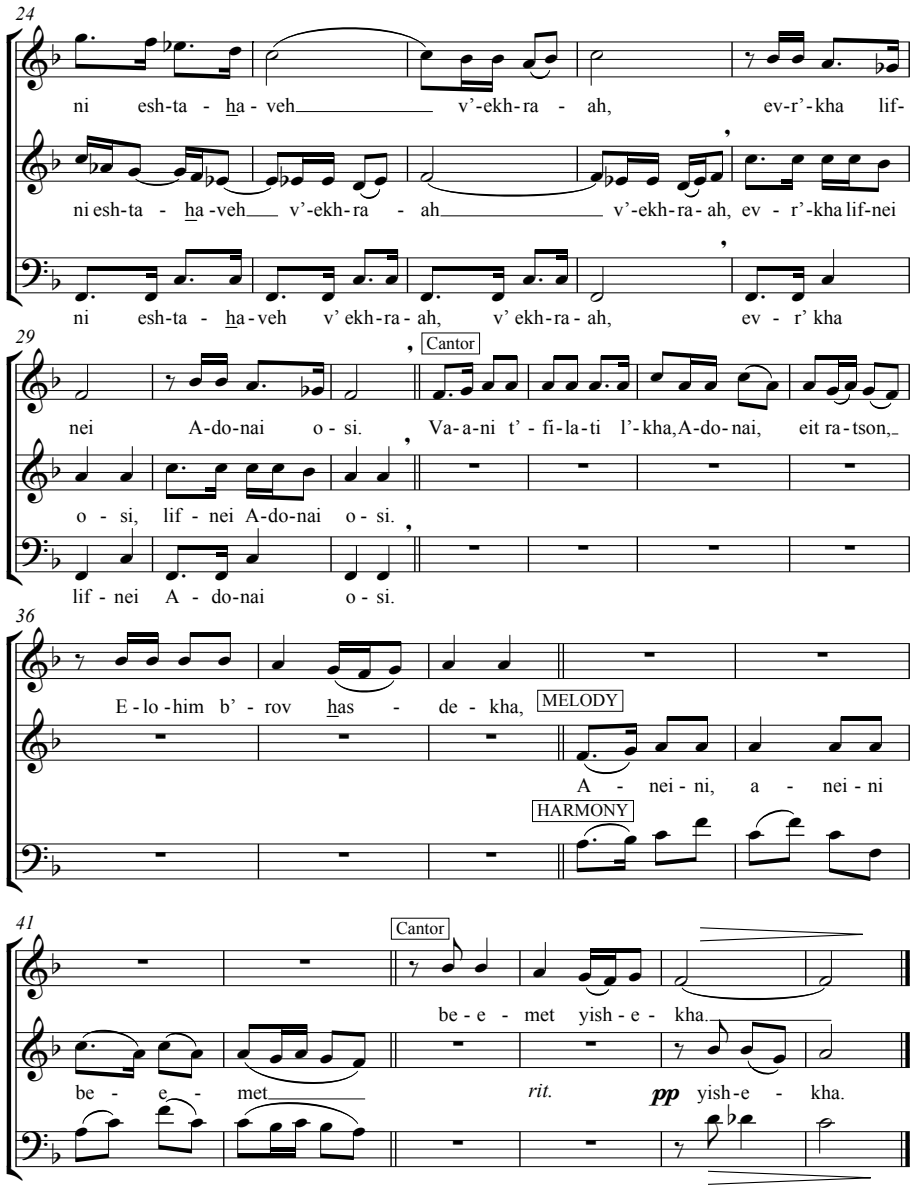


IV. Mah Tovu

After Charles Davidson

Music: *Chassidic Sabbath*
1961: "Hinei Ma Tov"



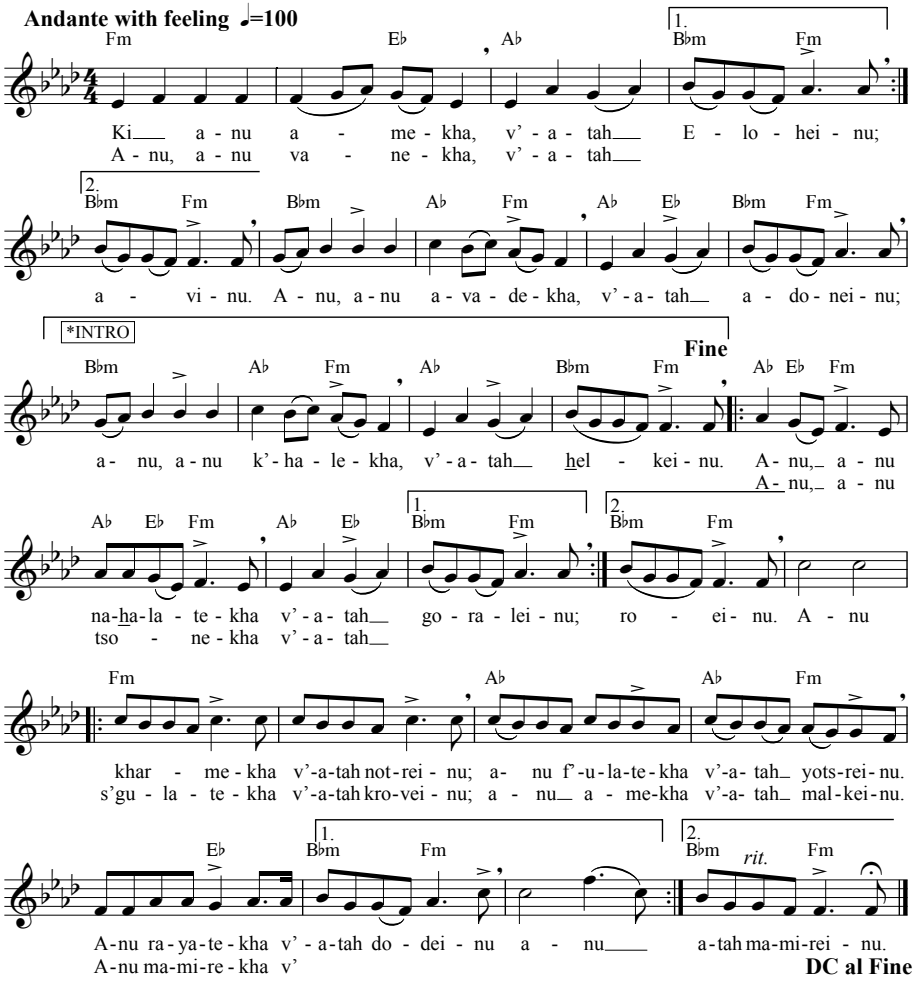

24
ni esh-ta - ha - veh v'-ekh-ra - ah, ev-r'-kha lif-
ni esh-ta - ha-veh v'-ekh-ra - ah v'-ekh-ra-ah, ev - r'-kha lif-nei
ni esh-ta - ha-veh v' ekh-ra-ah, v' ekh-ra-ah, ev - r' kha
29
Cantor
nei A-do-nai o - si. Va-a-ni t' - fi-la-ti l'-kha, A-do-nai, eit ra-tson,
o - si, lif - nei A-do-nai o - si.
lif - nei A - do-nai o - si.
36
E-lo-him b' - rov has - de - kha,
MELODY
A - nei - ni, a - nei - ni
HARMONY
41
Cantor
be-e - met yish-e - kha.
be - e - met
rit.
pp
yish-e - kha.

V. Ki Anu Amekha

Velvel Pasternak
Beyond Hava Nagila, 1999: 96

Text: Yom Kippur Liturgy
Music: (Munkacz, 1934);
Lubavitch, 1964.

*INTRO

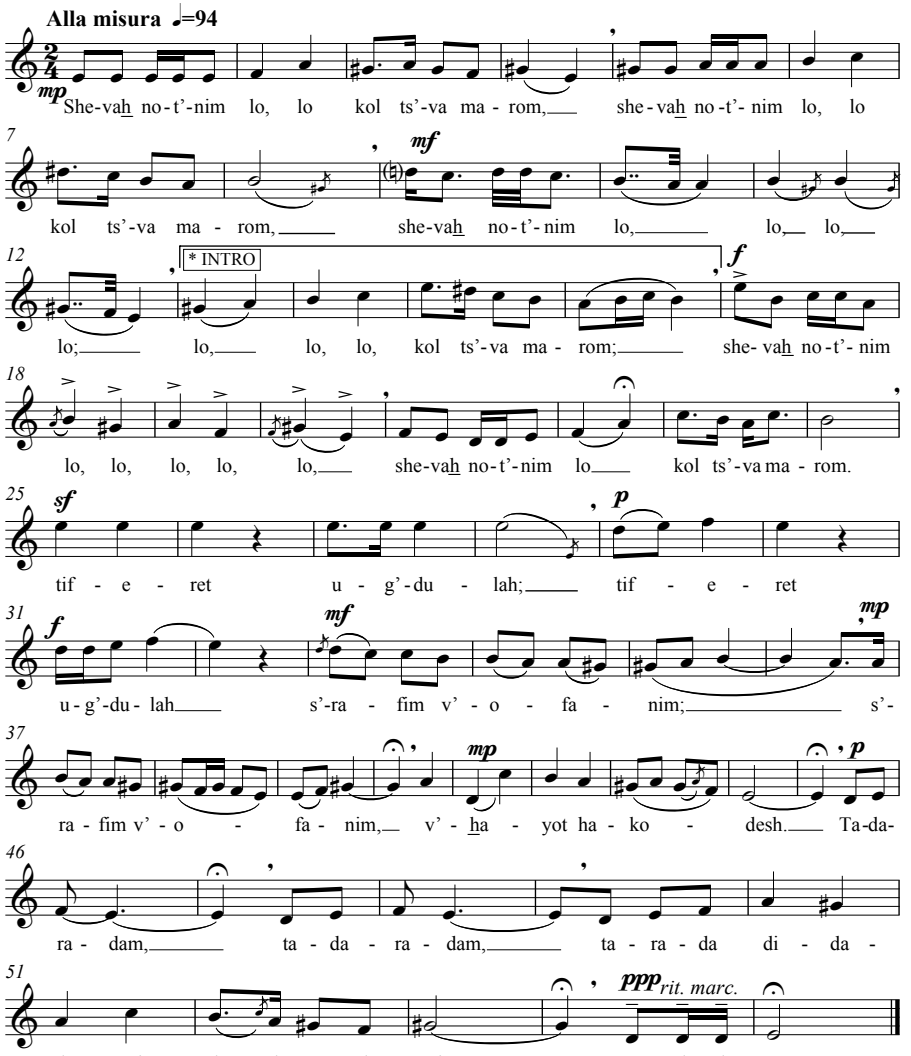


VI. Shevah Not'nim Lo

Text: Shabbat and Holy Day Shaharit

Music: Abba Yosef Weisgal
(Levine: *Emunat Abba*, 2006: 210)

* INTRO

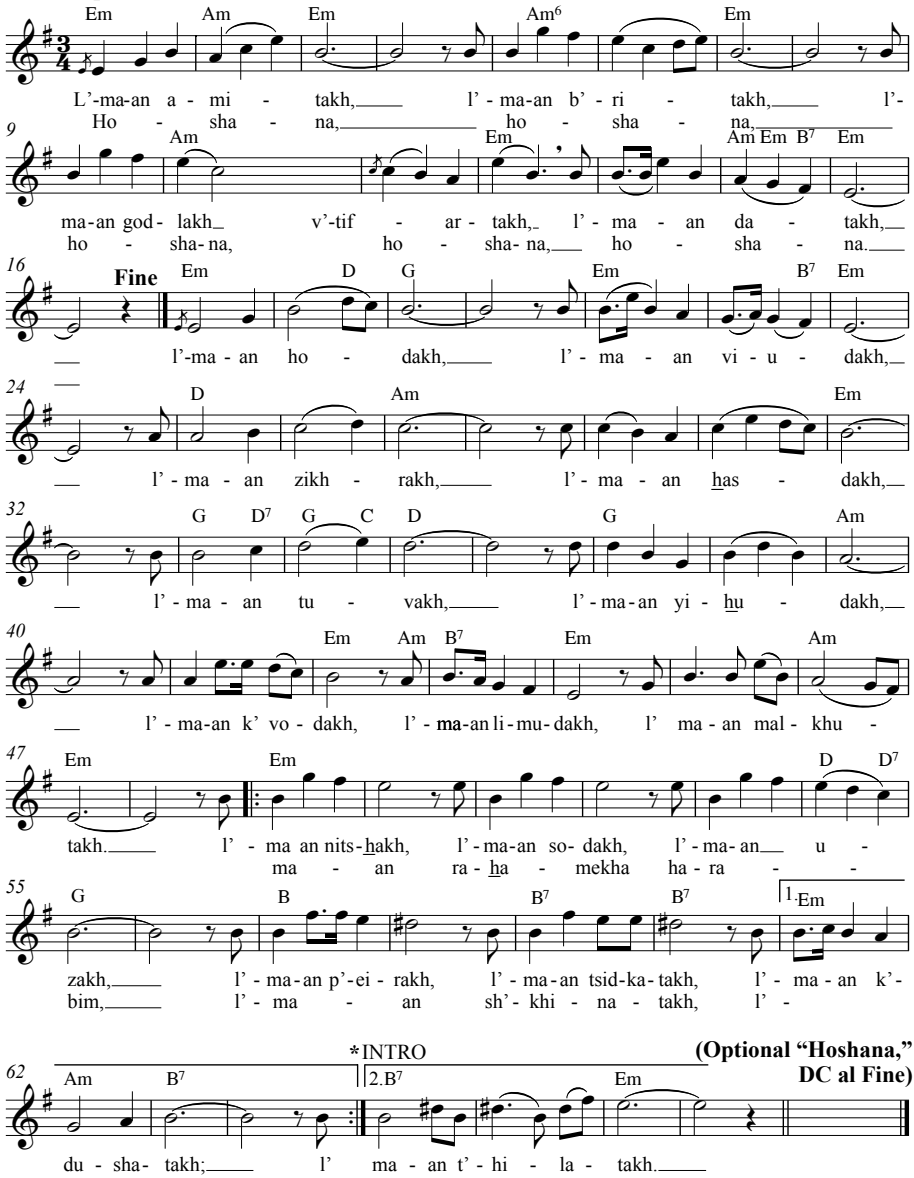


VII. Hoshana L'ma'an Amitakh

Velvel Pasternak
Songs of the Chasidim, 1968: 64

Music: Ben Zion Shenker
"Mizmor L'-David"

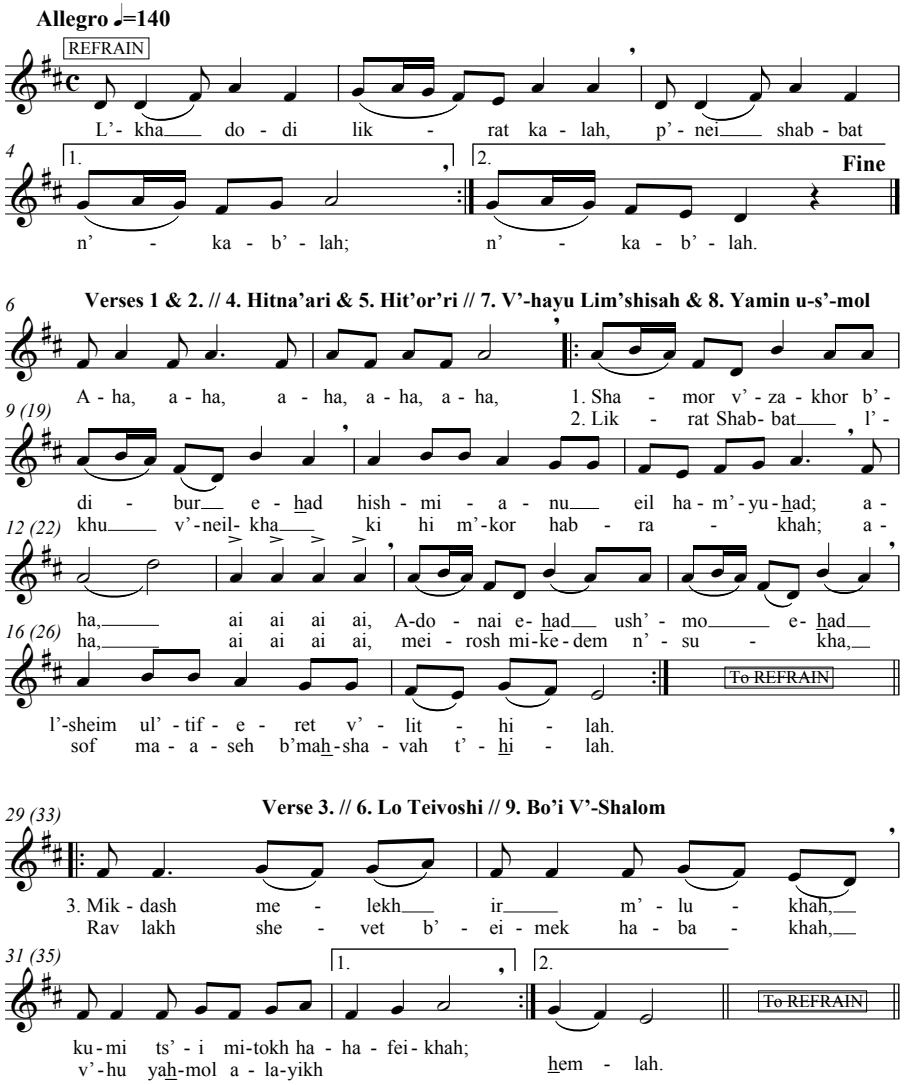
*** INTRO**



VIII. L'Kha Dodi

After Velvel Pasternak, "Ashreinu no. 2"
Songs of the Chasidim II, 1971: 25

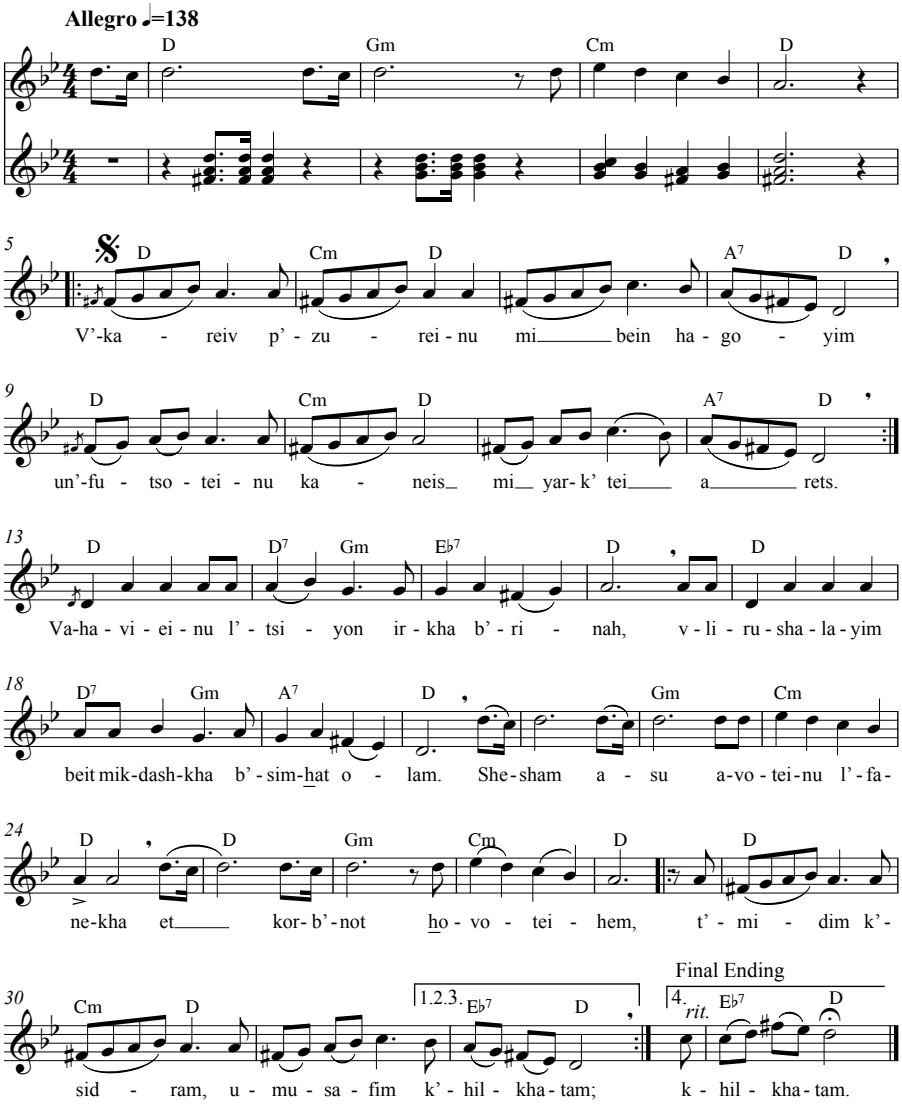
Music: Reb Yankel Talmud
Gerer Nigunim



IX. V'Kareiv P'zureinu

Text: High Holy Day Musaf Amidah
Songs of the Chasidim, 1968: 64

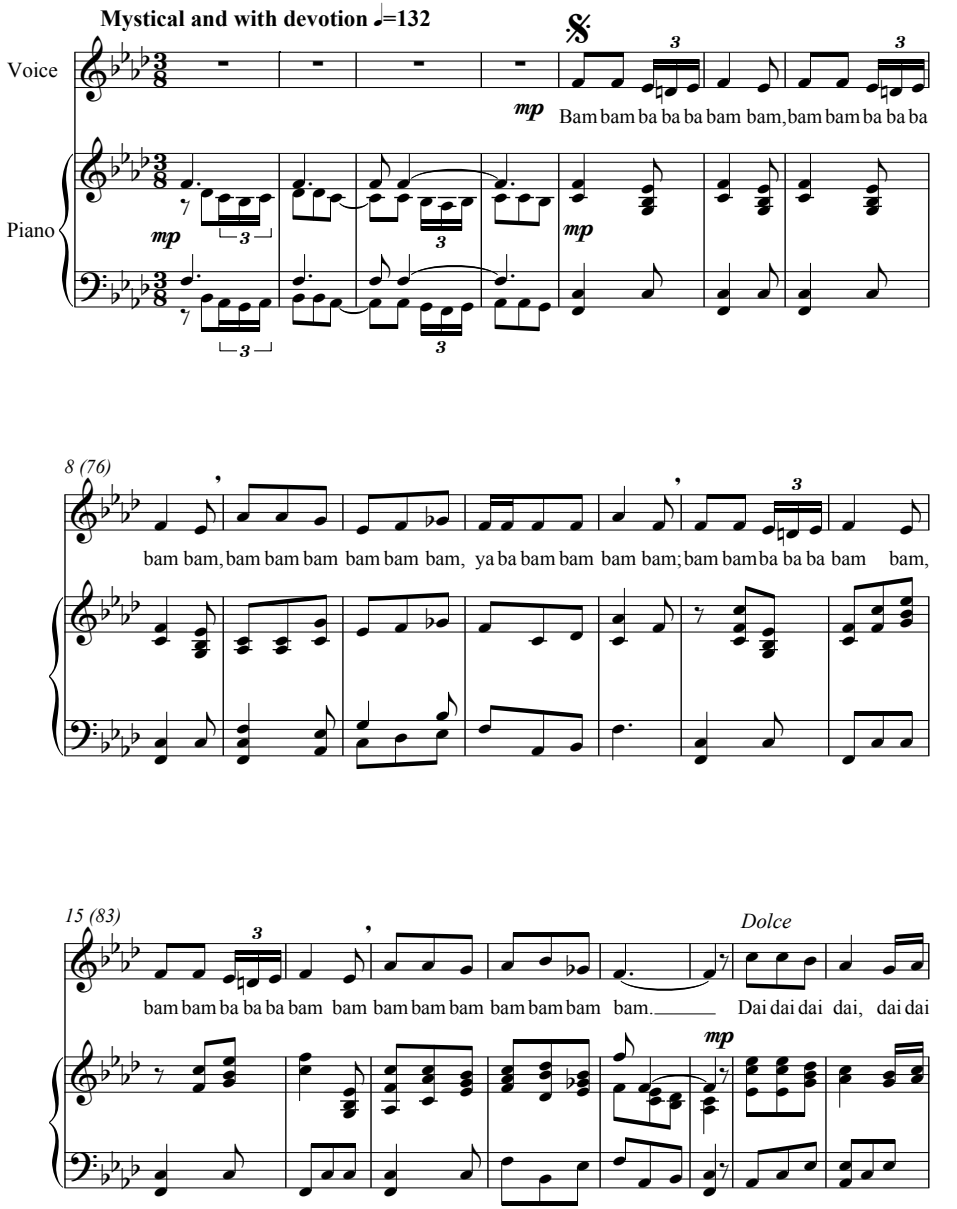
Music: After Shlomo Carlebach
(*Addir Hu*)

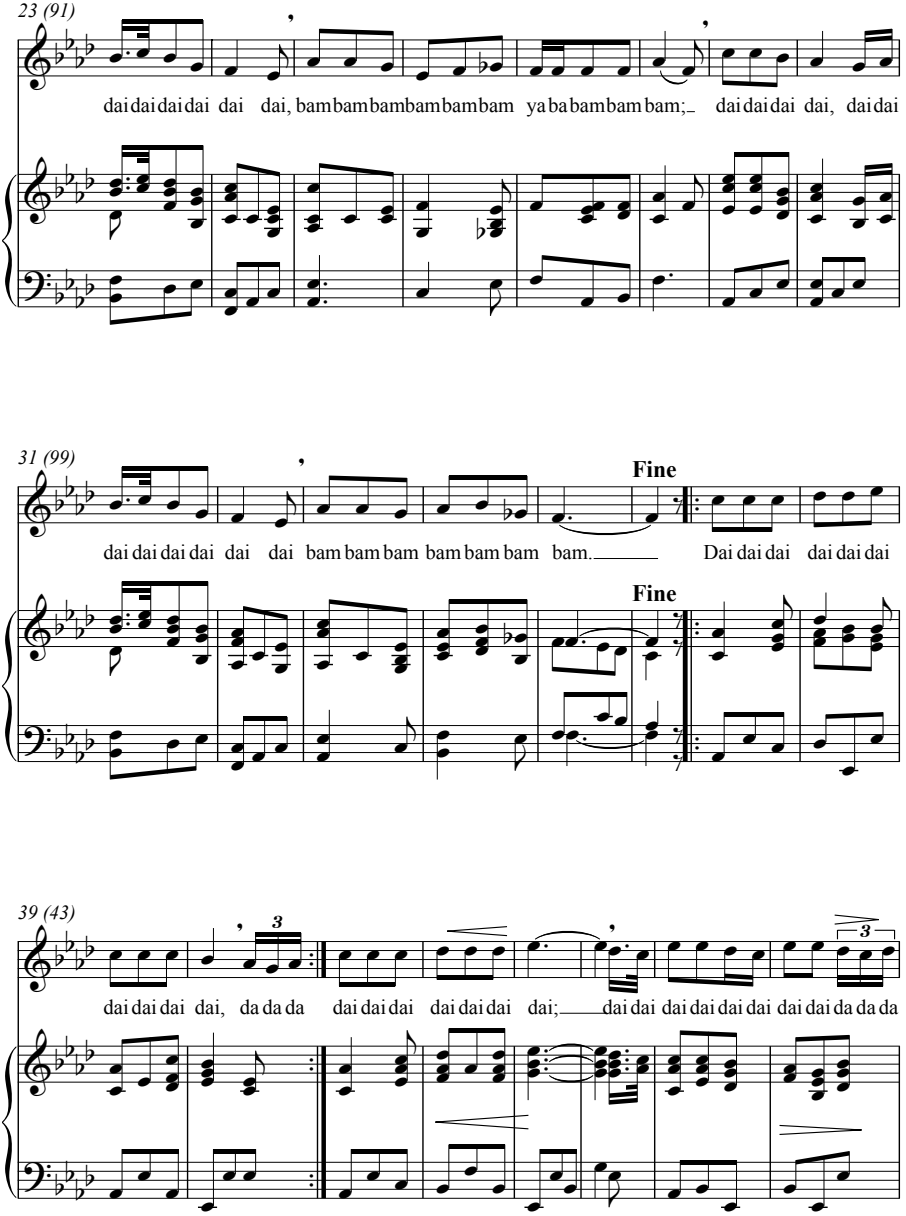


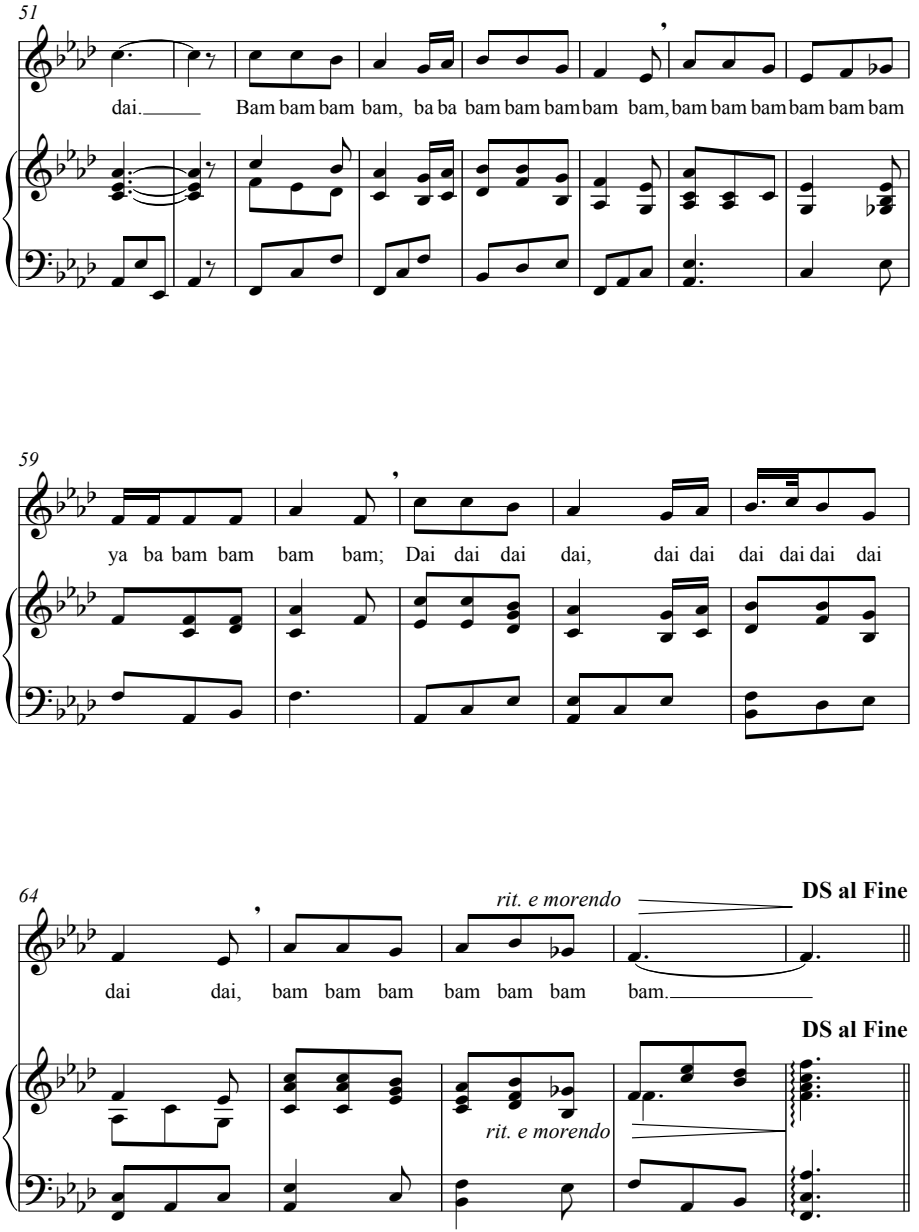
X. Simhah Niggun

Rejoice and Sing
TARA: 1976

Music: Traditional,
arr. Sholom Kalib




23 (91)
dai dai dai dai dai dai, bam bam bam bam bam bam ya ba bam bam bam; dai dai dai dai, dai dai
31 (99)
Fine
dai dai dai dai dai dai bam bam bam bam bam bam bam. Dai dai dai dai dai dai
Fine
39 (43)
3
3
dai dai dai dai, da da da dai dai dai dai dai dai; dai dai dai dai dai dai dai dai da da da


51
dai. Bam bam bam bam, ba ba bam bam bam bam bam, bam bam bam bam bam bam
59
ya ba bam bam bam bam; Dai dai dai dai, dai dai dai dai dai dai
64
rit. e morendo
DS al Fine
dai dai, bam bam bam bam bam bam bam.
DS al Fine
rit. e morendo

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Dr. Morton Gold, Music Critic of the National Jewish Post and Opinion

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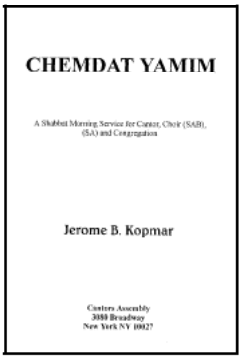

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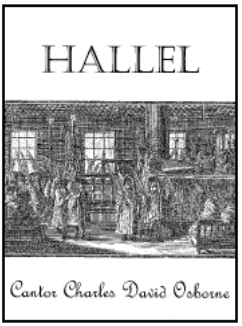

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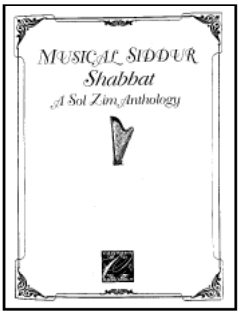

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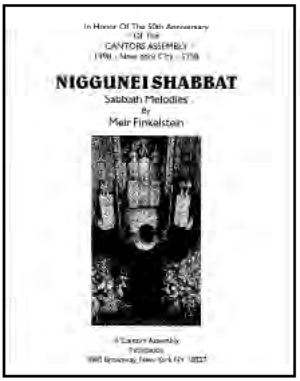

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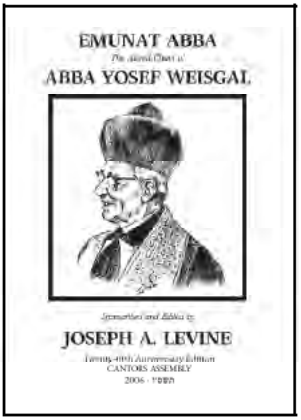

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Yiddish Song

with articles exploring this folk idiom that refuses to fade away:

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- **America in East European Yiddish Folksong**
- **Folk Songs and Common Ashkenazic Culture**
- **Sidor Belarsky's Popularity among American Jews**
- **The Lost World of Yiddish Religious Song**
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