



Journal of Synagogue Music

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NUMBER 1

A "VIMALEI" BOY CONFESSES

VALUING TOT SHABBAT SERVICES

THE CANTOR'S POWER OF EXCLUSION

HAZZANUT & THE INDIVIDUAL WORSHIPER

BRITISH REFORM JUDAISM'S CHANGING MUSIC

HAVINEINU: AN ABBREVIATED WEEKDAY AMIDAH

REHEARSING AND CONDUCTING ADULT JEWISH CHOIRS

THE LIVE STREAMING OF SERVICES ON SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS

EMOTIONAL EXCITEMENT: HAZZANIC RECITATIVES & CARLEBACH NUSACH



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Front cover: “Tree of Life” Ark, Congregation Micah, Nashville; Michael Landau Architectural Associates, 1997.

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An Envoi to Our Readers

By Joseph A. Levine

E editing an annual publication these past 16 years has shown me how futile it is to attempt putting a period in a rushing stream. Better to make a friend of nature's revolving seasons and today's hourly changing electronic headlines by placing editorship of the *Journal* into the capable hands of a younger colleague, beginning with *JSM* 2021. During the past six years of



Marsha Bryan Edelman

working with Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman as a proactive Editorial Board member and as my Co-editor, I have found that her skill set uniquely matches the *Journal's* requirements. She has published an acclaimed book, *Discovering Jewish Music* (JPS 2003), along with numerous articles in professional journals, including this one. She holds a Masters degree in Sacred Music from JTS, as well as an EdD in Music and Music Education from Columbia University, and she served as Professor of Music at Gratz College for nearly a quarter century. She has also been active as a musician and conductor, arranging and producing the music for recordings and concert performances by various ensembles.

Dr. Edelman is the Founding Conductor of HaZamir Philadelphia, a chapter of HaZamir's International Jewish Teen Choir, conductor of the LaShir Choir of Princeton, and of Shirah: the Jewish Community Choir of the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades. She also serves as Administrator of the Zamir Choral Foundation, and on the Steering Committee of its immensely successful North American Jewish Choral Festival. She is currently Adjunct Professor of Music in the H. L. Miller Cantorial School.

In the name of all who have been privileged to serve in the post before her, our Associate Editor David Sislen and I proudly welcome Marsha as the *Journal's* next Editor in Chief:

Charles Davidson (1967-1969)

Morton Shames (1970-1979)

Abraham Lubin (1980-1987)

Jack Chomsky (1988-1993)

Eric Snyder (1994-1998)

Scott Sokol (1999-2003)

Joseph Levine (2004-2020)

RECENT ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Participation in Tension with Performance: Choirs and Cantors and Congregational Singing

By Joshua R. Jacobson

The first article I ever had published, “Jewish Music *versus* Jewish Worship,” appeared in the February 1977 edition of the *Journal of Synagogue Music*. Bursting with chutzpah and naiveté, I opined that traditional davening in nusah was the only legitimate form of Jewish prayer. Cantors and choirs had no business performing for the congregation:

The role of the hazzan changed. ... The *Sh’liaḥ tsibbur*... [has] become a cantor who perform[s] for the congregation; the congregation rarely open their mouths. ... *T’fillah* [should be] a personal act, an individual voice reaching out with the rest of the Jewish community to God. Art music can inspire, but only through the medium of other individuals who recreate this music for us. Therefore, the *mitpalleil* must turn to spontaneous music... to traditional nusah.¹

Now, 42 years later, I’ve evolved. I still enjoy davening in heterophony with a knowledgeable congregation. But I’ve developed an appreciation for the cantorial art. I think there is a role for performance in the liturgy, when the bar is set high. The article that follows is based on my observations of American synagogue music over the past five decades.

A confession: I am out of touch, I admit. I’ve been ruined. I love listening to inspired *hazzanut*. I love the heterophonic sound of a congregation davening together. I cherish the centuries-old tradition of nusah. I expect whoever is *leyening* (chanting Torah or *haftarah* or *megilah*) to have prepared, to be fluent with the *t’amim*, to know how to pronounce the words, to know what the words mean, and to convey that understanding in his or her performance.

In my profession as a choral conductor, I am constantly listening closely and critically to singers, finding errors and correcting them, making the sound more polished, more beautiful. I can’t turn that off when I go to shul. My profession also involves seeking out, choosing, rehearsing and performing music that is interesting, that is emotionally compelling, that goes beyond the mundane. That is not what I generally hear in shul. When I listen to a congregation singing Moshe Rothblum’s *V’sham’ru*, I go nuts from the lack of variety and the incessant repetition in that tune. (Does every congregational song today have to have an artificial refrain?)

I enjoy hearing great choral music in the liturgy. And there are some awesome synagogue choirs. But I cringe when I hear a volunteer choir that has not been trained properly, or an under-rehearsed, blasé professional quartet. I don’t blame the singers; I blame the institutions. I expect a certain modicum of aesthetic values in a synagogue service. Why is it that I can attend a Boston Symphony Orchestra concert and have a spiritual experience listening to a Mahler symphony, and then go to my shul and feel zero holiness? No peak experience? No “flow?”

¹ Joshua Jacobson, “Jewish Music *versus* Jewish Worship,” *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Feb. 1977, pp. 47-49.

Leonard Bernstein wrote that the first time he remembered hearing beautiful classical music as a child was in shul, listening to the cantor and organ and choir performing great compositions at his Boston synagogue, Mishkan Tefila. That was in the 1920s. Now? Over the past five years Congregation Mishkan Tefila has dismissed their cantor, done away with the professional choir and organ, and dumped their precious collection of sheet music.

In 1983, political scientist Benedict Anderson coined the term "unisonality" in reference to music's ability to bring together a large group of people.² Through the act of singing the same words and the same melody (more or less) at the same time, individuals, who are in many ways quite different from one another, merge into one voice. It's a powerful force that makes us feel we are a community when we all sing together, whether it's the national anthem at the ballgame or *L'kha dodi* in shul.

In his book, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino asserts that there are two kinds of music, participatory and presentational.³ Not popular *versus* classical. Not tonal *versus* atonal. Participatory *versus* presentational. Here are some excerpts from his writing:

Participatory is a special type of artistic experience in which there are no artist-audience distinctions... and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role. In participatory music-making one's primary attention is on the activity, on the doing, and on the other participants, rather than on an end-product that results from the activity. People can join in at a level that offers the right balance of challenge and acquired skills. ... Participatory music is more about the social relations being realized through the performance, social synchrony. ... Presentational performance [on the other hand] refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing.

Turino reminds us that participatory music needs to be simple and highly repetitive to allow maximal involvement, while presentational music can be more complex, owing to the skill of the composer and virtuosity of the performers. And to sustain audience interest, presentational music needs to have more variety and contrasts. But Turino also asserts "There are many types of musical participation. Sitting in silent contemplation of sounds emanating from a concert stage is certainly a type of musical participation. ... Presentational music also has something to do with people, communication, and direct connection."

In 2002, Samuel Adler published an article in the *CCAR Journal*.⁴ Sam doesn't pull any punches. He tells it like he sees it (or hears it). Here are a few excerpts:

² Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. p. 132.

³ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

⁴ Samuel Adler, "A Composer's View of Temple Music," *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 2002, pp. 19-24.

After a lifetime of commitment to the synagogue and its music, I am alive to witness the dumbing down of the music for the synagogue and the complete triumph of the amateur as the composer of music for our liturgy. ... Our religious establishment has joyfully embraced the sound and the spirit of popular culture, and the musical sounds pouring forth from our pulpits are either Hassidic ditties, written for people who are musically illiterate, or pop-sounding songs written by musical amateurs to make our congregants feel “warm” rather than get the spiritual high that would result if they were ever confronted with great music. ... I am all in favor of congregational singing, but at the same time, I am in favor of a balance between that kind of participation and listening to a great piece of music set, for example, for the text of *Hashkiveinu* or *R'tseih*.

I agree with most of what Adler wrote, although I take issue with his dismissal of Hasidic *niggunim* as “ditties.” A real *niggun*, if sung with *kavvanah*, can be tremendously uplifting.

We hear similar words from Ben Steinberg in 1991.⁵

Whereas rhythmic freedom within a modal framework has served us well by allowing knowledgeable cantors to pour meaning and significance into the sacred words they sought to interpret, the restrictive, four-square guitar beat driving a ‘60s pop melody now obscures those same words—hence the damage done to an entire generation of young temple-goers who have been exposed to little else and who indeed consider camp songs as their sole “tradition.”

As for the opposition, Robert Cohen’s views were published in *Tikkun* Magazine in 2005.⁶

Jews today want closeness and spiritual connection—to God and to each other—not distance and reserve. And so today’s prayer music must invite, even demand, emotional and spiritual engagement, not respectful or awed (or bored) “appreciation”; enabling a journey inward, perhaps, as much as upward.

An informal society has required more informal music for prayer. And what sociologist Samuel Heilman dubs our “do-it-yourself culture” has demanded more inclusive, more participatory music even as it gave rise, in many circles, to smaller, more participatory settings for worship. “I, for one,” wrote one participant in a recent Jewish music e-mail discussion, “do not wish to have someone else do my praying for me.”

And just as the children of Beethoven and Schubert in the 19th century—most prominently, Salomon Sulzer of Vienna and Louis Lewandowski of Berlin—created a then-innovative style of liturgical art music in the Romantic Classical idiom of their day, so the children of the Weavers, Pete Seeger, and Peter, Paul & Mary in the late 20th century created a now distinctive style of liturgical folk music—an indigenous American product.

⁵ Ben Steinberg, “Response to Gershon Silins,” *CCAR Journal* 33, no. 18 (1991), p. 21.

⁶ Robert Cohen, Liner notes from CD *Open the Gates: New American-Jewish Music for Prayer*, Vol. 1, 2005. Reproduced in *Tikkun*, January, 2008. <http://boston.ccarnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/New-Wings-for-Our-Prayers-On-American-Jewish-Music-A-Jewish-Magazine-an-Interfaith-Movement.pdf>

The decline of art music in the synagogue, and the ascendancy of folk music, has been a source of near-apoplectic distress, it seems, for some elitist cantors, composers, and other guardians of the Jewish art music tradition.

Indeed, the naysayers sometimes seem clueless with respect to what *amcha* (the Jewish people) need in spiritually inspiring music today, inveighing instead against the lack of “stateliness” or “dignity” or “decorum” in our synagogue music.

I suspect many congregants and many rabbis would agree with Cohen’s statements. But at the risk of being labeled an out-of-touch elitist, I want to critique several points that Cohen raises.

First of all, how sad that he characterizes the appreciation of classical music as “boring.”

Secondly, is he not aware that traditional Jewish liturgy involves a dialogue, if you will, between the cantor and the congregation? Yes, there are texts in the service that are meant to be chanted by the cantor for the congregation. *Kol Nidre*, for example, is not a congregational tune. There are texts in the service that are meant to be chanted by the congregation silently or in heterophony. And there are texts in the service, such as *L’kha dodi* and *Adon olam*, that are meant to be sung together by everyone in the room.

Third, he draws a false comparison between the music of Sulzer and Lewandowski and that of Peter, Paul and Mary. Apples and oranges. One is the so-called “elevated” (or classical) style and the other is a simpler, down-to-earth, popular style. The congregants of 19th century Berlin and Vienna could have chosen to embrace popular songs into their liturgy. Indeed, many did, but not in the *Oranienburgerstrasse* or the *Seitenstettengasse* synagogues. Most congregants in America today prefer the style of Peter, Paul and Mary to the style of Aaron Copland or Phillip Glass. But there are still a few synagogues today where you can go and be inspired by a beautiful professional music performance by a cantor and/or choir.

Ben Steinberg wrote that “rhythmic freedom within a modal framework has served us well by allowing knowledgeable cantors to pour meaning and significance into the sacred words they sought to interpret, rather than a restrictive, four-square guitar beat driving a pop melody that obscures those same words.” Steinberg is singing the praises of the best kind of cantorial recitative, where the *ba’al t’fillah* is using music to interpret the sacred text.

But this tension between the styles is nothing new. Let’s go back 417 years. Rabbi Samuel Archivolti (1515-1611) lived in Padua and published his treatise on Hebrew Grammar, *Aruggat ha-Bosem*, in Venice in 1602.⁷ In it, Rabbi Archivolti wrote:

⁷ Samuel Archivolti (1515-1611), *Aruggat ha-bosem* (Amsterdam, 1730). Quoted in Israel Adler, ed. *Hebrew Writings Concerning Music*. RISM. Munich: G. Henle, 1975, p. 100. The original text was not marked with vowels or punctuation; these have been supplied by the author of this article.

הנגונים הם על שני מינים. הא' הוא הנגון המבנה על הדברים בהשקפת ענייניהם, כי בהתחלפות הקולות יבדיל בין ההפסק והפסוק, והחפזון והמתון, והשמחה והעצבון, והתמימה והאיום, וזולת. וזה הוא הנגון המושבח במוסיקה כי לא לבדו ישקוף לתענוג האזן, אכל גם לתת רוח ונשמה אל הדברים הנאמרים.

There are two categories of song. The first category is a melody which is created for the words from the point of view of their ideas. For by musical (vocal) changes we are able to distinguish between pause and continuation, fast and slow, joy and sadness, astonishment and fear, and so forth. And this is the most praiseworthy type of melody in music, for not only does it look out for the ear's pleasure, but it also strives to give spirit and soul to the words that are sung.

And by the way, Archivolti's analysis is remarkably similar to an essay by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi (the brother of the great composer), who was living in nearby Mantua, published just five years later, in 1607.⁸ Like Archivolti, Monteverdi posits that there are two types of song — a dialectic of two styles. Which is more important, he asks, the words or the music? He cites the old-fashioned style, *prima prattica*, as one that considers musical form the most important element. But in Claudio Monteverdi's modern music, the second style, *seconda prattica*, the form of the music can be treated freely. The purpose of the music is to illustrate the words.

Rabbi Archivolti's assertion that music should serve the text (rather than the other way around) may have been influenced by the concept that the text was holy, God-given. Therefore, the text must have priority over music, which is composed by mere humans. This is the case in the performance of cantillation, in which the rhythm is dictated not by meter but by syllabic stress patterns. And this is also the style of many of the great cantorial recitatives. I'm talking about great cantors who understand the text and the subtext and use their chant as a way of enhancing the text, bringing out the meaning of the words. Cantors have been reviled as being "opera singers," as if that were an insult. Great cantors use their voices to express the text, not just to show off, not for entertainment, and not for abstract musical value that is detached from the text of the liturgy.

Here is what Rabbi Joseph Caro's *Shulhan Arukh* had to say about that (Ts'fat, 1563).⁹

שליח צבור שמאריך בתפלה כדי שישמעו קולו ערב, אם הוא מתמת ששמים בלבו על שנותן הודאה לה' יתברך בנעימה, תבא עליו ברכה, והוא שיתפלל בכבוד ראש, ועומד באימה ויראה, אבל אם מכון להשמיע קולו, ושמים בקולו, הרי זה מגנה.

What about a cantor who stretches out the prayers so that everyone can hear how nice his voice is? If delight is in his heart and his motivation is to thank God using a beautiful melody, then God bless him, let him chant with dignity and with awe. But if his motivation is merely to show off his voice, if his delight is focused primarily on his voice, then this is deplorable.

Now back to Rabbi Archivolti. He continues:

⁸ Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (volume 3), New York: Norton & Co. Inc., 1966, pp. 45-52.

⁹ *Shulhan arukh, orah hayyim*. 53:11.

וְהָמִין הַב' הוּא הַנִּגּוֹן הַמּוֹנִי, שֶׁדָּבָרֵי הַשִּׁיר נִכְנָסִים עָלָיו, וְאֵין מִבְטּוּ כִּי אִם לְמִשְׁמַע אוֹזְן.

The second type [of music] is the popular sort of tune in which the words are fit onto [the music], and its only concern is for the ear's pleasure.

Let me show you what Archivolti was talking about, although my example will be more contemporary.

First, here is Exodus 31:16 as it would be chanted in cantillation:

וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם:

That would be Archivolti's first category. We call that logogenic music, music in which the text is the most important element.

Now consider the melody by Moshe Rothblum as we hear it sung in many synagogues in America.

V'sham'ru

Liturgy Moshe Rothblum

V' - sham' - ru v' - nei yis-ra - eil et ha - shab - bat,

la - a - sot et ha - shab - bat I' - do - ro - tam b' - rit o - lam.

We call this “melogenic music,” music in which the text must fit the demands of a metric melody. Because the tune is the most important element, we pay no attention to the words. And we don't notice, and we don't care, that v'-sham'-**ru** is being pronounced v'-**sham**-ru. Or that ha-shab-**bat** becomes ha-**shab**-bat, except in the next phrase where it is correctly rendered “ha-shab-**bat**.” Nor do we care that the phrasing of לעשות את השבת לדורותם — ברית עולם has become לעשות לדורותם ברית עולם. But that's just what happens when a fixed melody is superimposed onto a text that has an inherently flexible rhythm. Of course, there are some great tunes that fit the lyrics perfectly, like Max Wohlberg's מכלכל חיים בחסד—and it doesn't have a refrain!

Back to Rabbi Archivolti. He also touches on the subject of contrafaction—taking a melody from one song and using the same melody for a different set of lyrics. Like singing *Adon olam* to the tune of – you name it.

ובכן שירים רבים אשר הם רחוקים זה מזה בענייניהם כרחוק מזרח ממערב יתיחס לכולם נגון אחד מהמון פשהיו על משקל אחד וחרוז אחד.

So, a single popular melody may be applied to many songs whose subjects are as distant from one another as the West is from the East, so long as they are all written in the same meter and the same rhyme scheme.

ונחנו מה נדבר ומה נצטדק על קצת חזני דורנו שמנגנים התפלות הקדושות בנגוני שירי חול מהמון, ומתוך הדבור המקודש יפול בדעתם גבול פה ודבר ערוה.

What can we say? How can we justify the actions of a few *hazzanim* of our day, who chant the holy prayers to the tunes of popular secular songs? While reading sacred texts they are thinking of obscenities and lewd things.

Many rabbis point out the positive values of contrafaction: You don't have to teach a new tune; everyone can sing instantly. The value of a dismally repetitious melody like *V'sham'ru*, is that it's easy to learn. Everyone can sing. You create community.

Here are some observations (personal, not scientific). In most Orthodox synagogues there is no professional cantor; rather there are many *ba'alei ha-batim* that serve as *sh'lihei tsibbur*, lay prayer leaders. Thus, there is no one who really knows the centuries-old traditions of nusah, only a few people who think they know. And many sections of the liturgy that were traditionally chanted by the cantor are now sung by the whole congregation as a group, often to the tune of *Erev shel shoshanim* or some other tune that doesn't quite fit the meter, the phrasing, or the mood of the liturgical text. No one seems to care about aesthetic values, which are considered *goyish*. The greatest value is *davening* as fast as possible and ending the service as quickly as possible.

Many less traditional synagogues have recently decided that they no longer need a professionally trained, ordained cantor. The rabbi, a congregant or a self-proclaimed cantorial soloist can lead the congregation in song. There is little or no *davening* – which used to provide congregants the opportunity to “participate” in the service. And there is little or no inspirational performance by a competent hazzan. Most of the music of the service consists of the congregational singing of one song after the next, geared to the lowest common denominator to enable maximal participation by people who are largely Jewishly illiterate.

Obviously, there are exceptions to this dreary picture. Many contemporary composers and cantors have given us inspirational liturgical experiences.

If I ran the zoo, all prayer leaders would be thoroughly trained in the traditional nusah. They would have beautiful voices and beautiful souls. They would know the meaning of the texts they are singing, to many levels of understanding, and would convey that depth in their performance. They would be able to successfully teach the congregation to appreciate this spiritual artistry and would be able to train lay members to capably lead parts of the service. The congregation would be open to many different kinds of experiences within a service, whether traditional or non-traditional. To everything there would be a time under heaven: times for stirring communal singing, times for intentional listening to an inspiring performance, times for silent meditation.

How can a choir function in a synagogue today? If it is to perform with the cantor on the *bimah*, it had better be well trained, a pleasure to listen to, and presenting interesting music that can inspire. But the choir could also be seated among the congregants, introducing new congregational melodies and producing tasteful harmonizations to beautify the well-known tunes. Actually, some of my most inspiring musical synagogue experiences have been in situations where there was no tension between participation and performance; no tension between choir and congregation. Everyone who participated in the service was a performer. Every performer participated in the service.

In the summer of 1968, I was a participant in Cantor Ray Smolover's "Masters Fellows" institute in the Berkshires. It brought together college students who were aspiring musicians, writers, dancers, painters, with masters such as Isaac Bashevis Singer, Sam Adler, Yehudi Wyner, Lazar Weiner, Sophie Maslow, Paul Ben-Haim. One Friday night the service involved all of us, the students and the teachers, performing Ben-Haim's choral masterwork, *Kabbalat shabbat*. Every performer was a participant and every participant was a performer.

In December 2004, I had the most extraordinary experience on a Shabbat at Moshav Mevo Mod'im in Israel. This is a small cooperative village founded by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. I must admit I was skeptical. I was much too intellectual for a Carlebach service! But that Friday night service was sung by everyone in the room with such intensity, such beauty, and such complete involvement that we were all carried away, transported to a state of higher consciousness. It worked because everyone in the room had the *kavvanah*, the concentration, the intent to achieve that height of spirituality. And it worked because the man who led the prayers that evening was himself in the proper state of mind and was blessed with a beautiful voice and a deep soul.

In 2012, fed up with Friday night services at my Orthodox synagogue that were rushed and were severely lacking in aesthetic values, a fellow congregant and I decided to do something about it. We established a monthly alternate service, which we called *Todah v'zimrah*, in which everyone who attended was a member of the choir. I had written simple choral arrangements of the entire service, and we had a group of "ringers" who had practiced and could confidently sing the arrangements as members of the congregation. And everyone who attended was given a *siddur* that included sheet music. It was a beautiful experience. But after four years it had run its course, attendance had petered out, and we discontinued it.

In 2010 before going to Berlin, Germany for a conference, I did some on-line research to find a synagogue for Shabbat services, and found that the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue advertised an all-Lewandowski service with a professional choir, organ and cantor. I was in Heaven, inspired by a gorgeous performance of great liturgical music. I participated as a listener to beautiful music. I have also experienced beautiful services at *Shirah Hadashah* in Jerusalem and in other partnership davenings. One of the best was when I participated in a Friday night service that was led by the inspiring Joey Weisenberg. It never felt boring. Never felt artificial. It was beautiful and spiritual. There was no distinction between participation and performance.

For the past four years I have been presenting “Majesty” concerts of the greatest synagogue compositions of the 19th century with the Zamir Chorale of Boston.¹⁰ These are inspired musical interpretations of the liturgical texts. Frequently in rehearsal we sensed the *k’dushah* of what we were singing, and I would be thinking, “I want to go to *that* shul.” But where was the shul that had that quality of repertoire and of performance?

Let me end by returning to 17th century Italy. Rabbi Leon de Modena wrote an eloquent defense of a synagogue choir, first written in 1605 in Ferrara, then published in Venice in 1622 in the preface to the collection of synagogue motets by Salamone Rossi.¹¹

יש אֲתָנוּ יוֹדֵעַ עַד מָה בְּחֻמַּת הַשִּׁיר (רוֹצֶה לִּזְמֹר הַמוֹסִיקָה) שֶׁשָּׁה אוֹ שְׁמוֹנָה בְּנֵי דַעַת מִבְּנֵי קְהֵלֵנוּ (יִשְׁמְרֵם צוּרֵם וְיִחְיֵם) אֲשֶׁר בְּחֻגִים וּבְמוֹעֲדִים יִשְׁאוּ קוֹלָם וְיִרְוֲנוּ בְּבֵית הַכְּנֻסֶת שִׁיר וּשְׁבָחָה הַלֵּל וְזִמְרָה אֵין בְּאַלּוּהֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ לִשְׁבַח יִגְדֵל וְאֲדוֹן עוֹלָם וְכִיּוֹצֵא לְכַבֹּד ה' בְּסֶדֶר וְיִחָס עֲרֹךְ הַקּוֹלוֹת בְּחֻמַּת הַנְּזָכָרָה. . . . וְאֵינִי רוֹאֶה שְׁיִטִּיל סֶפֶק כָּל מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ מוֹחַ בְּקִדְקִדוֹ דִּלְהֵלֵל לַה' בְּזִמְרָה בְּבֵית הַכְּנֻסֶת בְּשִׁבְתוֹת רְשׁוּמִים יוֹם טוֹב . . . וּמִצָּנָה עַל הַשֹּׁצֵצִים קוֹלוֹ בְּתַפְלֹתוֹ בְּיוֹמָתוֹ. וְאִם יוֹכֵל לְהַשְׁמִיעַ קוֹלוֹ יְחִידִי בְּאֵלּוֹ עֲשֶׂה מְשׁוֹרְרִים יָחֵד, הֵאֵם לֹא יִהְיֶה טוֹב? . . . אִם יַעֲמִדוּ אֶצְלוֹ מְסִיעִים אֲשֶׁר חֲנֻמִּים ה' קוֹל עָרֵב . . . יִזְמְרוּ עִמּוֹ וְיִקְרָה שְׁיִתְיַחֲסוּ וְיִרְכּוּ לוֹ, הֵאֵם יִחְשַׁב לָהֶם לְחֻטָּא? . . . וְלֹא עָלָה עַל דַּעַת שׁוֹם בַּר דַּעַת אוֹ חֻקִּים לְאַסוֹר מִלִּשְׁבַח לַה' יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּקוֹל הַיּוֹמֵר נְעִים שְׁאֵפְשֵׁר וּבְחֻמַּת הַזֹּאת הַמְעוֹרְרָה הַנִּפְשׁוֹת לְכַבֹּדוֹ.

There are in our midst six or eight men learned in the science of music (in the Italian style), men of our community (may their Rock keep and save them), who raise their voices in songs of praise and glorification such as *Ein keiloheinu*, *Aleinu l'shabei'ah*, *Yigdal*, *Adon olam* and the like to the glory of the Lord in an orderly relationship of the voices [i.e. polyphony] in accordance with this science [i.e. Italian notated music]. . . . I do not see how anyone with a brain in his skull could doubt that it is proper to praise God in song in the synagogue on special Sabbaths and on festivals. The cantor is required to chant his prayers in a pleasant voice. If he were able to make his one voice sound like ten singers, would this not be desirable? . . . Or if assistants who have been graced by the Lord with sweet voices stand beside him... and if it happens that they harmonize well with him, should this be considered a sin? . . . No intelligent person, no scholar ever considered forbidding the use of the greatest possible beauty of voice in praising the blessed Lord, nor the use of this artistic music that awakens the soul to God's glory.

¹⁰ These lecture/concerts were livestreamed and are now posted on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/K-6gPDJ6qlk>, <https://youtu.be/CZULi6k5f-4>, <https://youtu.be/TVVSiHtBK-g>.

¹¹ Salamone Rossi, *Complete Works: Part III Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew*. Edited by Don Harran. Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae no. 100. Middleton, Wisconsin: American Institute of Musicology, 2003.

So, where does that leave us? There is nothing new about this tension between participation and performance, between art music and traditional davening. This is not just a contemporary American phenomenon. And it's not just a synagogue issue. Many churches are also struggling to deal with this tension. Judaism is a large tent. Certainly, there is room for many different styles of worship and many different styles of sacred music. But what do we mean by "sacred"? *K'dushah* is something that is set apart. Shabbat is *kadosh*, it's different from the other six days. Music for worship could also be *kadosh*: it doesn't have to be stylistically identical to the American vernacular. My hope is that the men and women who are in charge of our synagogues will let cantors reintroduce *k'dushah* into synagogue music. Let us have congregational singing, of course. Spirited and spiritual congregational singing. But let us also have that other kind of sonic beauty, where we participate by listening, whether it's great *hazzanut* or sublime choral or instrumental music, music that transports us to another place.

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Joseph Levine, "Joshua Jacobson lecturing," 1999.

Singing Their Heart Out: Emotional Excitement in Cantorial Recitatives and Carlebach Nusah

By Amit Klein

Introduction: *Avodah she-baleiv* (“Service of the Heart”)

Prayer is one of the most significant acts of worship in Jewish tradition.¹ It is a ritual, performed on a daily basis, that involves approaching divinity. Since it is an act of communicating with God, the prayer ritual often involves emotional arousal and excitement. The association between the act of prayer and the heart, which symbolizes the emotional aspect of our existence,² goes back to the *Midrash* itself: “What service is performed with the heart? It is prayer” (*Sifrei*, Deuteronomy, 41). One of the elements that makes the prayer ritual emotionally charged is the fact that the prayer text is loaded with emotionally expressive fragments. The prayer text covers a wide spectrum of emotional expressions: praise, glory, happiness, sorrow, lament, cry, yearning, and longing. The emotional character of the text to a large extent determines the emotional character of that part of the ritual, but it is by no means the only element that affects the emotional character of the ceremony. Other components—such as choreography, staging, accessories and, of course, music—enerate an emotional atmosphere, which can either intensify the emotions emanating from the text, undermine them, or add other layers and dimensions to them.

In this essay, I will delve into the musical mechanisms employed by two traditional communities in order to intensify the emotional impact of the prayer ritual, by amplifying emotions that these communities consider central to the prayer ritual. I will examine how those who emphasize the supplication element of prayer use musical devices that express a broken-hearted plea to God, while those who emphasize the thanksgiving element of the prayer use musical devices that generate joy and happiness.

The two traditions I am referring to are Cantorial Recitatives and Carlebach Nusah,³ respectively. Both these genres evolved in Ashkenazi synagogues over the last two centuries, and use music to achieve emotional excitement, employing different mechanisms, which share certain similarities: both genres employ mechanisms that create a certain *mood*; both genres also feature an intensification process that generates high emotional *arousal*.

¹ According to the Talmud, the prayer ceremony came from the three founding fathers of Israel (that is, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), who established the idea of the three daily prayers (Babylonian Talmud, *B’rakhot* 26b). Since ancient times, the prayer has evolved and developed, and is nowadays more or less fixed in its structure and textual content. At first, the prayer ritual was free in form and content; however, legend has it that the “Men of the Great Assembly”—many sages who lived between the time of Ezra (late-5th century BCE) to that of Simon II (late-3rd century BCE)—standardized the general text, content, and order of the ritual (BT *Megillah*, 17b, Maimonides, *Mishneih Torah*, “Laws of Prayer,” 1:4).

² Also, see Reuven Kiperwasser’s chapter in *Judaism and Emotion, Text, Performances*, eds., Sarah Ross, Gabriel Levy & Soham Al-Suadi (New York: Peter Lang, 2013) on the development of the concept of the heart in rabbinic literature.

³ For an explanation of what I mean by Carlebach Nusah, as opposed to *nusah ha’t’fillah*, see note 11, below.

In Cantorial Recitatives, the cantor conveys a mood of supplication by musically imitating the weeping and crying of a person pleading to God. The cantor also generates a musically sophisticated mechanism of intensification in which emotional excitement is systematically built up by gradually increasing various musical attributes in two main categories: pitch height and pitch density. Carlebach Nusach, by contrast, generates a radically different mood, one of happiness and joy. It also utilizes an intensification process—albeit of a different kind—based on music speed and volume.

The Emotional Significance of Music in Judaism

Already in the ancient world, the Jewish tradition acknowledged and cherished the power of music to generate emotional excitement. A well-known and venerated example is the singing of the Levites in the Temple. The Levites' singing accompanied the sacrificial rituals and was mandatory; the absence of the appropriate song could invalidate the entire ritual.⁴ The music is thus a constitutive component of the ritual that is required to validate the ritual.⁵ Another example of the importance of music in Jewish tradition is its role in many biblical stories in which a prophet sings or plays a musical instrument and is thus inspired to make his prophecy. In these biblical stories, music is evoked specifically for the purpose of achieving a certain emotional state. It is by means of music that the prophet ascends to the ecstatic meditative state required to communicate with God.⁶ A more common example for the Jewish use of music as an emotional vehicle is the blowing of the shofar as part of the prayers on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The sound of the shofar, reminding the congregation of the sounds of weeping and moaning,⁷ is intended to move the hearers to repentance (*t'shuvah*).⁸ Here, again, musical sound is used to evoke a religiously desirable emotional state in its hearers.⁹

Music continued to play a major role in Jewish religious life even after the Temple was destroyed and the magnificent musical rituals held in the Temple ceased to exist. In later generations, Jews continued to introduce musical elements into prayer rituals in order to generate various emotional states. Furthermore, as is typical of many ritualistic elements, prayer music has also undergone a process of canonization in Traditionalist circles, in which certain tunes and melodies have become sacrosanct. These tunes came to be associated with the ritual to such an

⁴ As is said in the Talmud (BT *Arakhin* 10b): "The song is required for the sacrifice, says Rabbi Meir."

⁵ Another example of the mandatory status of music in the Jewish tradition is the following harsh statement by Rabbi Yohanan: "Whoever recites without melody and learns without song, of him it is written (Ezekiel 20:25): 'So, too, I gave them decrees which are not good and ordinances whereby they should not live'" (BT *Megillah* 32a).

⁶ To give just one of numerous examples from the Bible: "And Elisha said ... But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him" (Kings II, 15:14).

⁷ BT *Rosh ha-shanah* 33b-34a.

⁸ The mechanism of imitating the sounds of weeping and crying will be discussed in detail later on in the context of the cantorial recitative.

⁹ Musical sound might on other occasions generate a religiously undesirable emotional state. For example, according to some interpretations of Jewish law, men are forbidden to listen to female singing since the female voice is considered *ervah* (nakedness). Shmuel said: "The voice of a woman is *ervah*, as it is said: 'For your voice is sweet and your face is comely' (Song of Songs 2:14)" (BT *B'rakhot* 24a). The sages fear that the female singing voice might generate an undesirable emotional state, namely, that of lust.

extent that they are now considered to be an inherent part of the liturgy.¹⁰ Nowadays various communities employ a wide range of musical liturgies that stem from various traditions. As we shall immediately see below, these liturgies generate different emotional states which these communities consider to be of religious significance.

The Production of Emotional Excitement in Synagogue Music

Different musical styles tend to generate different emotional states (think, for example, of Blues and Swing). Like other musical genres, Jewish Ashkenazi synagogue music, too, has evolved and developed over the generations. These changes have affected not only the musical characteristics of the genre but also the emotional state that this style tends to generate. In this essay I examine how the musical features of two historical genres of Jewish Ashkenazi synagogue music produce different kinds of emotions. The instances I refer to have both prevailed during the 20th century. The first few decades of the 20th century were the culmination of a long legacy of cantorial art. The Cantorial Recitative, or *Hazzanut*, is a highly elaborated form of traditional prayer-chanting, which reached its peak at that time. The last decades of the 20th century witnessed the rise of more modern-sounding music, the “Carlebach Nusah,” named after its originator, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994). The Carlebach Nusah has gradually permeated traditional synagogue chant, and the cantorial recitative.

There are many significant differences between these two musical styles. Carlebach's music is mainly based on modern popular music, sung communally, rather than the traditionally prescribed *nusah ha-t'fillah*,¹¹ a Middle Eastern-derived chant which is the basis of Cantorial Recitative. The latter is a solo, virtuosic, melismatic, and non-metrical quasi-improvisational composition, while Carlebach Nusah is characterized by simple, metrical, and symmetrical melodies intended to be sung by the whole congregation. The emotions that these genres evoke are also different; much Cantorial Recitative tends to be sad and sorrowful while Carlebach Nusah music is uniformly happy and joyful. Nonetheless, in order to achieve emotional arousal both styles employ a similar mechanism, which I refer to as the *intensification process*.

In the following two sections I will analyze both styles individually. In each section, I will begin by briefly describing the musical genre. I will then describe the mood that each genre generates. Finally, I will explain the intensification process employed by each of these genres. I will not attempt to provide a full musicological (or ethnomusicological) analysis of these two genres, nor will I delve into the reasons for the decline of Cantorial Recitatives, on the one hand,

¹⁰ A typical example is the cantillation of the Torah in which the *t'amim* (the small musical *neumes*) are considered so essential to the liturgical obligation that only a person who can recite the Bible verses in a musically correct way would be considered fit to fulfill the various Torah-reading obligations. Another famous example is the *Mis-sinai* (“[as of] From Mt. Sinai”) tune of Kol Nidre, which became so closely associated with the holiness of the Day of Repentance that one cannot imagine the prayer without humming this melody.

¹¹ My use of the term Nusah, both with respect to the traditional chants that were sung in synagogues since the Middle Ages and to Carlebach's tunes, might be confusing. The word *nusah* in Hebrew means “a version” and originally referred to different traditions of the prayer text. It later also came to refer to different versions of chanting the prayer texts. To minimize the confusion, I will use the term *nusah ha-t'fillah* to refer to the traditionally prescribed chants and will refer to Carlebach's tunes as Carlebach Nusah.

and the rise of the Carlebach Nusah on the other hand.¹² I will concentrate only on the different musical means used by these two genres in order to generate emotions. However, before I turn to the analysis of these two genres, a brief discussion of the relationship between music and emotions is in order.

Music and Emotions¹³

Many different questions can be asked regarding the relationship between music and emotions. For example: What does it mean to say that a certain musical piece is sad? Or what connection is there between a sad musical piece and the listeners' emotional state? Or we may ask *how* is it that the music is sad? What is it about it that makes it sad? The question I will be focusing on here is the latter one. I am mainly interested in the musical mechanisms employed by composers, performers, and other people who make music for creating happy music, sad music, and so forth.

That said, in order to have a better grasp of how the specific mechanisms I will discuss herein generate music which is emotional in certain ways, it would be useful to provide a general view on what makes music emotional.¹⁴ It would be an understatement to report that there is no consensus on the answer to this question. There are many theories on what it is in music that makes music emotional, and most of them are subject to serious criticisms. Since there are so many theories, it would naturally be difficult to provide an account that would satisfy all discussants. One of my aims in this paper is to show that my account comes close to being uncontroversial, by demonstrating that the main criticisms raised against most theories do not apply to the specific cases that I will be discussing.¹⁵

One possible way in which music conveys emotions is by representing them symbolically.¹⁶ There are various modes of representation, and music may represent emotions through any of them. For example, tears and weeping sounds may represent sadness, the facial expressions of a sad person may reveal his feelings and represent sadness; the word *sadness* refers to and represents the emotion sadness, and so on. Music may stand for the emotions it represents in the same manner. It could be that the sounds resemble certain vocal emotional expressions, as when a Blues guitar sounds sad;¹⁷ it could be that the music's rhythm, dynamics or contour are bent, in the same way that a depressed person is bent;¹⁸ and it could simply be that music represents a certain emotion in a manner which is contingent upon history, as when a

¹² Some of these reasons are discussed elsewhere. See Schleifer (1990) and Klein (2009).

¹³ The field of Music and Emotions is growing rapidly and is too broad to encompass in this paper, even in a nutshell. I will therefore focus solely on issues relevant to the musical analysis that follows.

¹⁴ Note that there are at least two ways in which music can, for example, be happy: it may express happiness, or it may make the listeners feel happy. Technically, these results are referred to as the distinction between *perceived* emotion and *felt* emotion. While some of my claims refer specifically to one or the other result, much of what I say refers equally to both. It is also worth noting that the emotions expressed by the music often coincide with those felt by the audience. It is precisely *because* of the music's sadness that the audience feels sad.

¹⁵ The account provided in the next few paragraphs (as well as many of the examples provided) draws heavily on Davies (2011).

¹⁶ Theories that adhere to this account are referred to as *semiotic theories*.

¹⁷ This is the *iconic* or *symbolic* version of the semiotic theory (Davies 2011, 26-27).

¹⁸ This is a combination (admittedly, mine) of the semiotic theory and the contour theory (Davies 2011, 31-35).

trumpet is associated with bellicosity, in the same way that names are arbitrary and contingent.¹⁹ Some criticisms of this theory (or, more precisely, family of theories) invoke the intuition that the connection between, say, happy music and happiness is natural (or is inherent *in* the music) and is not merely a matter of convention (namely, something that the music is reminiscent of).²⁰ Other criticisms point to the normal relation between an emotion and a sentient being who is expressing the emotion, which is absent in the case of music alone representing a certain emotion.²¹

Because of criticisms like these, other theorists argue that music is emotional because it conveys the emotions of a real individual²² (like the composer, the performer and so on) or an imagined one.²³ While these theories can accommodate the two questions mentioned above—regarding the direct connection between music and the emotions it generates and regarding the connection between the generated emotions and the emotions of some sentient being—they are plagued by another problem. It is not clear that the emotions generated by the music always correspond to the actual emotional states of the composer, the performer, or some other real individual.²⁴ I will try to demonstrate how the cases under discussion manage to avoid the problems of both theories.²⁵

So far, I have mentioned mainly discrete emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, fear and so on.²⁶ Many theorists believe that the phenomenology of emotional experience can be described in terms that are similar to these: all emotional episodes can be divided into one of

¹⁹ According to this theory (and others in the same vein), music represents emotions in a manner that is merely referential. The only connection between the organ and religiosity is that, as it happens, the organ was played in churches; an alternative connection could equally have been created with harps (if the tradition emanating from the Levites' song in the Temple had prevailed).

²⁰ Some versions of the semiotic theory (for instance, the iconic version or the contour theory) are less vulnerable to this objection than others because they explain the connection between music and the emotions it generates in less arbitrary terms.

²¹ In the normal case, sadness has to do with someone being sad, while the semiotic theory implies that there is sadness in the air without any sentient creature being (necessarily) sad.

²² Theories of this type are referred to as *expression theories* (Davies 2011, 28-29).

²³ Davies (2011, 30-31). A different version of the theory argues that the sentient being whose emotions are expressed is the listener himself. It submits that music has a certain emotional character if and only if it has the propensity to generate that emotion in an audience of qualified listeners under normal conditions. This theory is referred to as the *arousal theory* (Davies 2011, 29-30).

²⁴ The view that the music conveys the emotions of an imaginary persona suffers from other problems, namely, that we do not always imagine such a persona when we are emotionally moved by music, and that it is not clear that an imagined persona satisfies the requirement of a sentient being.

²⁵ There are other problems regarding the way in which music conveys emotions. First, it is not obvious why the emotions that the music expresses are normally the same emotions that the listeners feel. The expression of anger by another person does not necessarily make us angry; it may make us frightened. Another question is why the audience willingly attends concerts where sad music is played. We normally try to avoid sad emotions and our pursuit of sad music calls for an explanation. As with the other criticisms mentioned above, I will try to show that these problems also do not affect the cases that I discuss.

²⁶ The distinctions described in this paragraph and in the next one are common in the empirically oriented literature. My description draws mainly on Sloboda & Juslin (2011), Zentner & Eerola (2001), and Gabrielsson & Lindström (2011).

several categories that are universal and stem from evolutionary development.²⁷ Other theorists, however, argue that reducing all emotions to one of a limited set of categories fails to do justice to the richness of emotional experience.²⁸ For this reason (among others), theorists have suggested different approaches to the description of the phenomenology. According to these approaches, emotions can be described by placing them along affective dimensions.²⁹ Such models elegantly grasp two aspects of emotional experience, namely that emotions vary in degree, and that some emotions may be conceived of as bipolar (Sloboda & Juslin 2011, 78).

Dimensional theories differ in the types as well as number of emotional dimensions they stipulate.³⁰ The most influential of these is Russell's two-dimensional *circumplex model* (*ibid.*, 77).

According to Russell's model, emotions can be described by placing them on two bipolar axes, one referring to *valence* and ranking emotional experiences as being pleasant versus unpleasant, and another referring to *arousal* and ranking emotional experiences as being activating versus deactivating (Zentner & Eerola 2011, 198). While the dimensional approaches have problems of their own³¹ and have even been referred to as lacking theoretical depth (Sloboda & Juslin 2011, 78), they certainly fare better than categorical approaches in registering the variance in degree of emotional experiences. As many people describe both cantorial music and Carlebach music as moving, exciting, emotionally charged, and so on, a theoretical model that acknowledges these experiences is needed in order to provide a better understanding of how these experiences are generated. Since much of this paper will focus on the question of how the two liturgical traditions discussed manage to generate such *intense* emotional experiences, I will assume herein that there is at least one bipolar dimension along which emotional experiences vary, namely the *arousal* (or activation-deactivation) dimension.³²

There is one additional point about the literature regarding music and emotions that is worth highlighting. Much of the writing focuses on abstract instrumental music that is not accompanied by text or dramatic accompaniment, and does not convey a narrative.³³ Since the problem of how music generates emotions is most acute when it comes to absolute music, where words, drama, context, or even referential objects are absent and cannot explain the emotions generated, much of the theoretical writing on the connection between music and emotions has focused on absolute music of this sort.

²⁷ Theories explaining the phenomenology of emotional experience in these terms are referred to as *categorical approaches*.

²⁸ Theories of this kind often mention five basic emotions (happiness, anger, sadness, fear, and disgust) although some postulate as many as 14 or 16 discrete emotions (Sloboda & Juslin 2011, 77).

²⁹ These approaches are referred to as *dimensional approaches* (*Ibid.*).

³⁰ There are one-, two-, and three-dimensional models (*Ibid.*).

³¹ For example, according to Russell's model, two distinct and affectively distant emotions like anger and fear are both located next to one another, both being negatively valenced and highly active (Zentner & Eerola 2011, 199-200).

³² It is worth noting that single-dimension models emphasize something like the arousal dimension, rather than something similar to the valence dimension. (*Ibid.*).

³³ This rules out not only composed texts like operas, *Lieder*, pieces for ballet, or other dramatic performances but also program music (such as Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*).

The current article deals with music that is anything but abstract. It is accompanied by words (or rather, accompanies words), it serves as part of a contextually meaningful ritual, and it is supplemented by other components of the ritual such as choreography, dramaturgy, and so on. My arguments in this chapter will focus on how music, in and of itself, produces certain emotional effects, but since it is extremely difficult to divorce the emotional impact of the music from the emotional impact of other elements of the ritual, and from the context in which it is played, the claim that the emotions are generated by the music alone should be taken with a grain of salt. While I will point out features of the music that seem to have the tendency to produce certain emotional states, it seems to be the case that the actual emotional impact that the worshippers experience is also significantly affected by the other elements of the rite.

Hazzanut

The Cantorial Recitative is a form of art which has developed gradually since the mid-eighteenth century and reached a peak in the first half of the twentieth century. Hazzanut is characterized by a dialectical interplay between simple traditional patterns of synagogue chanting, dating back to medieval times, and sophisticated artistic creativity dictated by modern musical sensibilities. Broadly speaking, the cantorial art uses florid virtuosic ornamentation in order to extend and expand the traditional plain chant (*nusah ha-t'fillah*) and adds further melodic and melismatic layers to it.

The ornamentations have increased in number and complexity over the years and reached their peak in the first half of the twentieth century, due in part to the development of the recording industry. The introduction of recorded Cantorial Recitatives opened a new era in the annals of cantorial music, namely, its (partial) phasing out from the sacral environment of the synagogue and entry into the commercial world. Due to this transfer's unprecedented success, both in terms of popularity and wide distribution and in terms of its influence on the character of the cantorial recitative, the recording era was later named "The Golden Age of the Cantorial Art."³⁴ The popularization of Cantorial Recitative in the Golden Age era led to the increased use of virtuosic vocal passages. As noted by Werner (1976, 236), "every passage was chanted to impress the listeners (not the worshipers) by the brilliance of their voices and their vocal acrobatics." The close-to-impossible virtuosic vocal passages, reaching fantastic pitch heights and seemingly endless melismas, enabled the cantors to imbue the music with a melodramatic atmosphere. The melodramatic format of the cantorial recitative (which I term the *supplication recitative*) was designed to be an effective way to make good use of the cantor's vocal abilities and to generate the emotional states that should accompany the prayer. This format consisted of elements generating the appropriate *mood* and elements creating great emotional *arousal*.

³⁴ For an overview of the Golden Age era, see chapter six "The Golden Age of Cantorial Art," in Heskes (1994, 56), and "The Golden Age of Hazzanut," in Edelman (2003, 127).

Emotional Mood

One of the key goals of prayer is to plead before God, asking for physical and spiritual salvation. Although Jewish prayer comprises several types of texts expressing various emotional moods (such as supplication, praise, and thanksgiving), throughout the ages, the cantorial world mostly preferred texts of supplication, probably due to their prominence in the prayer, in terms of their textual length, emotional significance, and central placement.³⁵ The Sages of Israel have noted the supremacy of the supplication in various sayings such as: "Rabbi Shimon says: When you pray, don't do it in a fixed manner, but rather in a *supplicatory manner* before the Lord." (Mishnah *Avot* 2:13, italics mine). Another example is Rabbi Eliezer's statement stressing the power of tears: "From the day that the Temple was destroyed, although the [heavenly] gates of prayer have been locked ... *the gates of tears have not been locked*" (BT *B'rakhot* 32b, italics mine).³⁶

The importance of supplication in their prayer was noted by cantors over the generations, especially in Eastern Europe. The main focus of cantors in their musical compositions was directed to supplication texts. Over time, a special format was developed to fit the supplication of the text and to generate a mood appropriate to it. The music was designed to resemble the image of a crying person. The cantors of the Golden Age, in particular, conveyed the mood of supplication in their cantorial recitatives by means of two musical techniques. Firstly, they musically simulated and imitated the weeping and cries of a person pleading to God. Secondly, cantors repeated the prayer text and the music many times.³⁷

To demonstrate the supplication format, I will use a typical and famous composition by cantor-composer Jacob Rapaport, *Aneinu* from the *S'lihot* service.³⁸ The text is a clear

³⁵ For example, the daily *Amidah* prayer—the major part of the three daily prayers—is designed so that the central part, named *Bakkashah* (Request), asks for such things as good health and a good livelihood. It is situated between the first and last parts named *Shevah* (Praise) and *Hodayah* (Thanksgiving). It is also the longest section, more than double in length—thirteen benedictions vs. three each in the opening and closing sections: *Avot-G'vurot-K'dushah*; and *Avodah-Hodayah-Shalom*. Additionally, the text in the middle section is highly emotional (For example: "Heal us, Eternal One, and we shall be healed; save us and we shall be saved," and "Have pity on us and accept our prayer with compassion and favor").

³⁶ In some cases the emphasis on supplication and crying becomes a decree, not merely a recommendation. An example is the emotional prayer recited at the end of *Neilah* on Yom Kippur: "May it be Thy will, You Who hear the *sound of cries*, that You shall *put our tears* in Your flask to be, and that You shall save us from cruel decrees, for to You alone our eyes turn." The author of *Sefer Hasidim* (section 250) instructs the cantor to omit these words unless he is weeping, or the congregation are weeping, for otherwise he would be prevaricating when uttering "[You] who hears the sound of cries... put our tears...".

³⁷ The correlation between supplication and persistence and perseverance is well known, particularly in religious contexts. For example, *Midrash Rabba* on the verse "And I besought the Lord at that time" (Deuteronomy 3, 23), explains that Moses pleaded no less than 515 times to enter the promised land (based on the numerology of the Hebrew word *va-et'hannan* ["And I besought"]). In his letter (Ephesians 6:18) the apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of perseverance: "[praying] always with ... supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all *perseverance and supplication* for all saints" (italics mine). The perseverance is not only restricted to the text; the cantor also repeats the musical motives several times, although the repetitions are not identical, but involve small melodic variations.

³⁸ *S'lihot* are penitential poems said in the period leading up to the High Holidays, and on Fast Days. The central theme throughout these prayers is God's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

supplication in the form of a litany³⁹ in which every phrase repeats the plea *Aneinu* ("answer us"⁴⁰) with various epithets of God, associated with His merciful nature and with His benevolence towards the three Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Cantorial recitatives based on this particular text were composed by many cantors. Here, I analyze Rapaport's composition as performed by Mordechai Hershman. The central part of the supplication recitative is usually the part in which the cantor emphasizes the most characteristic supplicatory motives of the recitative and is usually the most complex part of the piece. For this reason, I skip directly to the central part of the recitative named, hereinafter, the Supplication section (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. The Supplication section in *Aneinu* by Y. Rapaport

The figure displays a musical score for the Supplication section of the prayer *Aneinu* by Y. Rapaport. It consists of seven staves, each with a number in a box at the beginning. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written in Hebrew below the notes. Rhythmic markings, including numbers and beams, are placed above the notes to indicate the tempo and rhythm. Arrows point from the lyrics to the corresponding notes on the staff.

1 A ne

2 A ne

3 Eo die lich os a neinu

4 A ne nu ha o ne be et so ro a ne nu ha o ne be et so ro a ne nu

5 A

6 A ne

7 Oy ho a ne be et so ro oy a ne nu

³⁹ A litany ("supplication", in Ancient Greek) is a textual form of prayer consisting of a number of petitions in which, in each repetition, part of the phrase changes. Originally the term referred to the Christian *Kyrie* (*Kyrie eleison*; *Christe eleison*; *Kyrie eleison*), but also many Jewish *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) are written in this structure (for example: *Avinu malkeinu*, *Hoshana*, *L'eil oreikh din*, and more).

⁴⁰ In this context the meaning of the term is something like "answer our pleas."

The musical attributes associated with the supplication (cries and repetition) mentioned above are clearly evident in this excerpt. Notice the cantor's cry and his seemingly endless repetitions of the word *Aneinu*. In the first three phrases, the cantor repeats the same musical motive, albeit with small variations. Each musical phrase begins with a high, long, and almost irritating note, which sounds like a cry of the plea *Aneinu*. The cry then develops into a very long melismatic motive in which the same notes are repeated over and over, especially the minor second interval that resembles the sigh of the crying and pleading person. The repetition of musical motives and text is very clear also in the following phrases: in phrase 4 the recitation motive (Eb-D-Bb) is repeated two times, in phrase 5 the up and down minor-sixth interval is repeated three times, and in phrase 6 the F-Eb-Db-C-Db-Eb motive is also repeated three times. Phrase 7 repeats, again, the sigh motive (F-Eb) five times (see the arrows in phrase 7 in Figure 1 above).

All these repetitions of the text and the music, and, especially, the continuous sound of the “sigh” motive, create the sorrowful mood of a persistent plea and bring about the image of a crying person. Some theorists argue that the way in which music can evoke emotions in listeners is through representation.⁴¹ I also noted that there are several ways by which music can represent the emotions it stands for. A few of them are arbitrary and contingent, but other ways of representation are natural, for example, a smile representing happiness.⁴² In this case, the relation between the music and the mood of supplication is straightforward. Sighs and repetitions are typical characteristics of supplication: the sighs are typical sounds that a suppliant would generate, and the repetitions are typical to his act of supplication.⁴³

The fact that the association here is natural rather than arbitrary rules out the criticism, raised against semiotic theories, that people normally sense the mood *inside* the music and not lying outside of it in a place that the music merely refers to.⁴⁴ Another criticism raised against semiotic theories is that in the normal case emotions can only be expressed by sentient beings.⁴⁵ Here, the role of the cantor as a sentient being whose emotions are expressed in the musical piece is clearly important. The supplicatory mood is not merely an emotion that the *music* expresses; it is first and foremost the emotional state of the cantor. Jewish tradition has emphasized the importance of a cantor who has good reason to supplicate.⁴⁶ The conveyance of a supplicatory mood from cantor to congregation may provide some of the explanation to this tradition.⁴⁷

This view also addresses the concern raised against the expression theory, according to which, music conveys the emotions of a real individual. In this case, the persona in question is

⁴¹ Those who adhere to the semiotic theory. See footnotes 16 to 21 above and the accompanying text.

⁴² This is the iconic theory. See footnote 16 above and the accompanying text.

⁴³ The representation here can be explained not only through the iconic theory but also through the contour theory (see footnote 17 above and the accompanying text).

⁴⁴ See footnote 20 above and the accompanying text.

⁴⁵ See footnote 21 above and the accompanying text.

⁴⁶ The cantor should be someone who is virtuous and in need. For example, he should be married and have dependents, he should be over the age of 30, humble and agreeable to the congregation, and so forth (BT *Ta'anit* 16a, *Shulhan arukh*, *orakh hayyim*, 581:1 and 53:4).

⁴⁷ Note also that the cantor's presence makes the association between the music and supplication even stronger. While the sighs and repetitions are features of the music, they are sung by a human cantor (rather than, for instance, by an oboe). This strengthens the association.

the cantor himself. The critics assert that there is sometimes no correspondence between the actual emotions of the relevant persona and the emotions that the music conveys. While this dissonance may occasionally occur in reality, Jewish tradition has sought to minimize the risk of its occurrence by insisting that the cantor should be the kind of person most likely to supplicate.⁴⁸ I am not trying to suggest which theory is correct,⁴⁹ but merely demonstrating that my account works for all theories in question.⁵⁰

Emotional Arousal

One of the major techniques used by cantors of the Golden Age to arouse intense emotions through their music is what I call the *intensification process*. Underlying this mechanism is the fact that simultaneous intensification of various musical attributes generates an effect of high emotional arousal. Throughout this essay I assume that emotions can be described by locating them along a bipolar axis that represents arousal (or activation-deactivation).⁵¹ I will now suggest that the intensification process generates high arousal or moves the listeners along the affective axis in the direction of more activation and will explain how it does so. I will do this by showing that the intensification process employs certain musical patterns, which according to empirical studies using different methodologies, tend to generate emotional excitement, intensity, dynamism and so forth.⁵² In other words, they influence the arousal axis and generate more activation.⁵³

⁴⁸ Moreover, this also explains why the cantor should be someone agreeable to the congregation (see footnote 45 above). It is easier to empathize with someone who is agreeable to the worshippers, and his emotions are more likely to generate the desirable effect. It goes without saying that the Jewish sages' efforts were not always successful. For a lively description of a cantor whose prayers make the whole congregation cry and tremble in supplication while he himself remains unmoved, see Agnon (1968, 262-272) especially page 267.

⁴⁹ Even those who argue that music often generates emotions by means which are non-associative (for example, Davies 2011, 31-33; Kivy 1999, 5), generally agree that music can, and sometimes does, elicit emotions by virtue of its associative features. Hence, while I often try to demonstrate that my argument works even according to those who believe that music does not *always* generate emotions through associative means, it will suffice to rely on the claim that music *also* generates emotions through associative means, which is not very controversial.

⁵⁰ Regarding the other problems noted (see footnote 25 above), it is not surprising that the emotions expressed by the music are the same emotions that members of the congregation feel, as this seems appropriate to the situation when one supplicating person is joined by another who is in the same position. This is another reason why the cantor should be agreeable to the congregation. It is also not surprising that people put themselves in a situation where they will be overwhelmed by somewhat unpleasant and sad supplicatory emotions. Their reasons for doing so emanate from and can be explained by their religious devotion.

⁵¹ See footnote 32 above and the accompanying text.

⁵² See, for example, Gabrielsson & Lindstrom (2011) cited above. Gabrielsson and Lindstrom's meta-research discovered that with respect to a variety of musical attributes, higher indexes tend to generate higher levels of emotional activation. In particular, this is the case with respect to the indexes mentioned hereinafter, namely, pitch height and pitch density.

⁵³ I do not wish to imply that the greater arousal affects the supplicatory mood of the cantorial recitative or vice versa (nor do I wish to imply the opposite). The question of the relation between the arousal dimension of the emotional phenomenon and discrete emotions like happiness, fear, and so on, is far from clear. It is widely acknowledged that the arousal dimension on its own fails to do justice to the rich phenomenology of emotional experience (see footnote 31 above and the accompanying text). It fails to distinguish between two very different experiences like intense fear and intense happiness, for example. Some theorists—most notably Russell—have added further dimensions to the model. But, first, even after adding another dimension (such as valence) to the model, it still fails to account for the variety of emotional experience (as was acknowledged by Russell himself as noted above), and, second, it is not quite clear what the relations between the various dimensions are. For all these

The intensification process in Cantorial Recitatives involves many musical elements (as detailed below), and encompasses the entire composition, from the beginning to the end.⁵⁴ Throughout the cantorial recitative, a musical crescendo is built up gradually. This is not the usual crescendo often found in many musical scores, which represents a local intensification of the volume of the sound. Here the range of the intensification is the entire work, and it involves many more musical attributes in two main melodic categories, namely, pitch height and pitch density. The emotional excitement is built up systematically by gradually increasing these musical attributes and this generates the emotionally charged atmosphere mentioned above.

In light of their strong focus on the supplication motive in the prayer, as demonstrated above, it is not surprising that the peak of the intensification process occurs in the supplication section. A vivid example of the intensification process can be seen in the supplication section of the *Aneinu* analyzed above. For example, the melodic motive in bar 2 is repeated in bar 3 in an intensified manner (see the arrows between bar 2 and 3 in Figure 1 above). In bar 2, the culminating note (Ab) is sung twice, while in bar 3, it is sung three times in the melisma. In bar 2, the musical phrase ends with the short motive F-Eb-Eb-Db, while in bar 3, the cantor prolongs the concluding phrase with additional seven ornamental notes in between the original motive notes: F-Eb-**Eb**-**F**-**G**-**F**-**Eb**-**F**-Eb-Eb-Db (added notes in bold). The motive in bar 3 is clearly more melismatic than its parallel in bar 2.

Occasionally, the intensification process might start *before* the beginning of a Cantorial Recitative's supplication section; however, the peak of the process is typically found in the supplication section itself. **Figure 2** demonstrates the gradual ascent in four musical attributes:

Pitch duration (Note speed);
Length of melodic motives (Melisma length);
Maximum pitch height;
Average pitch height.

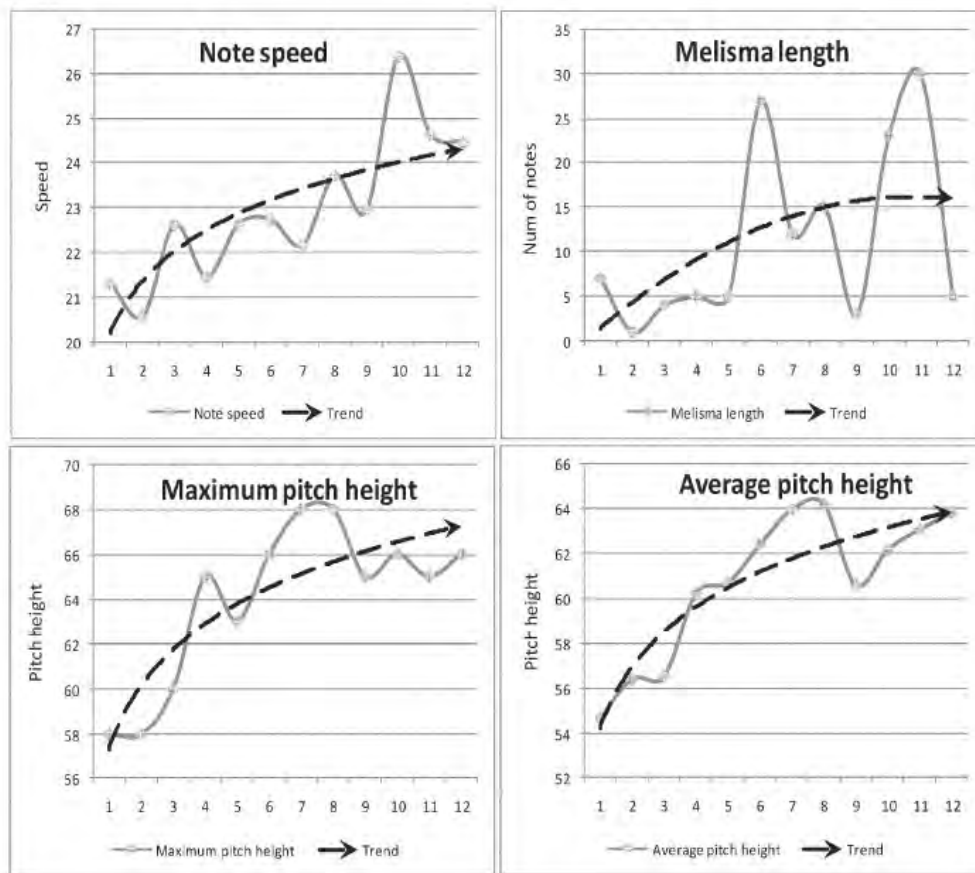
The graphs in Figure 2 refer to a section beginning a few phrases before the supplication section and ending at the end of that section. As can be clearly seen in the charts referring to each of the aforementioned musical attributes, there is a constant and steep trend upwards⁵⁵ that begins in the opening section (points 1-5 in the chart) and continues to soar until it reaches its peak in the supplication section (points 6-12 in the chart). The simultaneous intensification of these attributes generates the emotional arousal in the supplication recitative.

reasons, in discussing the intensification process in this chapter, I will not draw any relation between this process and the generation of the discrete mood of supplication described previously.

⁵⁴ For a more detailed account of the intensification process, which refers to the historical development of the intensification of various indexes and provides more details about the statistical methods, see Klein (2011).

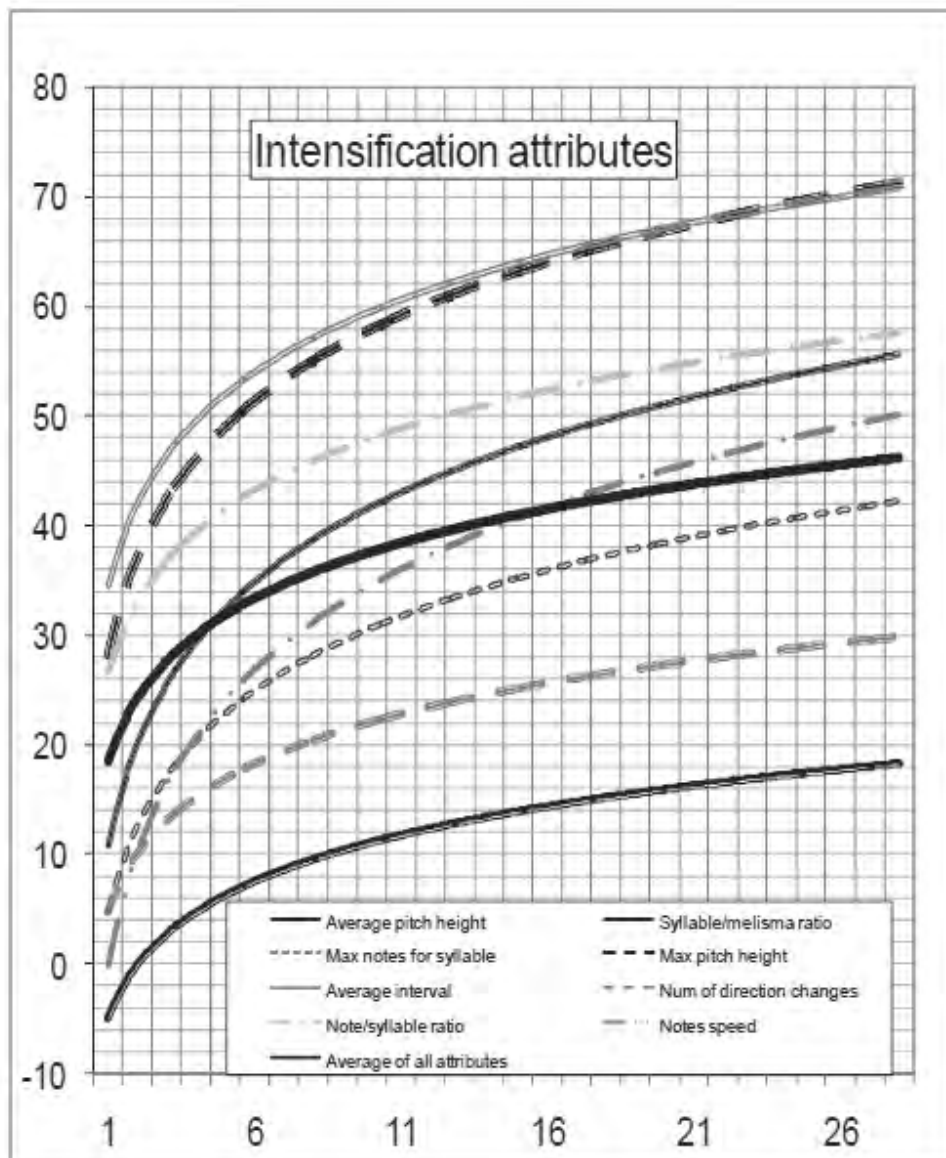
⁵⁵ The ascent of the curve is demonstrated not only by the measured values of each attribute but also by the *trend line* that the curve generates. The *trend line* is a statistical mathematical calculation of the data used to determine whether certain measurements exhibit an increasing or decreasing tendency that is statistically distinguishable from random behavior. Here I used the Excel polynomial trend function (order 2).

Figure 2. Intensification process in four musical attributes



The aforesaid about the intensification generated by the ascent of certain musical attributes can be generalized to other attributes as well. As demonstrated in Figure 3, the line in the graph depicting the trend of many musical attributes (not only the ones discussed earlier) ascends throughout the chart. These musical attributes relate to pitch height (such as average pitch height, maximum pitch height, and tessitura range) and to pitch density (such as average melodic interval, note-to-syllable ratio, syllable-to-melisma ratio, number of direction changes, and note speed). The ascent of these attributes represents the intensification which gradually arouses emotional excitement throughout the Cantorial Recitative.

Figure 3. Summary of intensification attributes in *Aneinu*



Other elements contribute as well to the creation of emotional arousal throughout the Cantorial Recitative. One of them is the ascent in the height of the tonic. The tonic is not (necessarily) the same height as the average pitch height, and the tonic's rise adds to further average pitch height, and the ascent itself generates further emotional arousal. Another even more significant element is a change of the music's underlying prayer mode. That is because the specific intervals in the musical scale have the greatest effect on a Cantorial Recitative's emotional impact. Studies show that dissonant intervals (to cite a fundamental difference between them and prayer modes) create emotional excitement.⁵⁶ As we shall see, cantors tend to favor modes that contain dissonant intervals.

⁵⁶ See Gabrielsson and Lindstrom (2011, 389-390) and in Table 14.2, 384.

Figure 4 exemplifies the use of these elements in the *Aneinu* composition. Firstly, the pitch level of the tonic or fundamental tone rises as the cantor moves from F minor to Bb minor. This modulation typically takes place in proximity to the supplication section and accelerates the intensification process leading to the peak of the composition. But there is an additional modulation that occurs later on in the supplication section in bar 4 of Figure 1, above. While the tonic pitch in bar 4 remains Bb, the prayer mode changes into *Ahavah rabbah*.⁵⁷ This mode features the unique interval of the augmented second—a very dissonant interval—and therefore automatically generates an emotionally charged atmosphere. It is no wonder that this particular mode (along with the similarly dissonant Ukrainian-Dorian mode) was used extensively by cantors of the Golden Age in their supplicatory recitatives.

Figure 4. Modal Map of Changing Fundamental Tones in *Aneinu* by Rapaport



Let me briefly summarize this section. The Cantorial Recitative emphasizes the supplication elements of the prayer. It emphasizes these elements by using musical means that create an emotional atmosphere conducive to supplication. It generates the appropriate mood by imitating crying and weeping and by employing persistent repetitions. In addition, it generates an emotionally charged atmosphere generated by using what I termed the intensification process.⁵⁸ The aroused atmosphere, together with the supplicatory mood of the music gives the recitative its unique character and generates the appropriate emotional state in the listeners.

Carlebach

While the Cantorial Recitative style emphasizes supplication, this is by no means the only aspect of prayer that Jews throughout the generations have sought to emphasize. While our people have unfortunately had good reason to indulge in prayers of supplication, they have also rejoiced and expressed other emotions in prayer. We now examine how Jews employed sacred music for the purpose of creating and enhancing joyous emotions in their prayer.

A musical genre that achieves this alternative goal became tremendously popular in Ashkenazic synagogues from the mid-twentieth century on; I call it: “Carlebach Nusah.” How it

⁵⁷ *Ahavah rabbah* is a Phrygian mode with the third degree raised a half-step.

⁵⁸ As noted earlier (footnote 53 above), an investigation of the relations (if any) between the intensification process and the supplicatory mood of the music is not within the scope of this paper. All I can say here is that, in itself, the intensification process does not evoke supplicatory emotions in the listeners and that it is conceivable that the application of the same process against the background of a different mood might generate an altogether different range of emotions.

developed and was rapidly integrated into the musical repertoire of Ashkenazic synagogues is a fascinating phenomenon. Owing much to Shlomo Carlebach's charismatic personality, his highly singable music became part of the mainstream of synagogue chant in no more than a few decades. As Weidenfeld (2008, 1)⁵⁹ summarizes:

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994) was a prolific composer of Jewish music, a nonconformist religious figure, and a cultural hero. Carlebach composed hundreds of songs which have influenced the development of liturgical and popular Jewish music of the 20th century. His many performances were a combination of song, music, dance, storytelling, ethical teachings and inspirational speeches. Carlebach's music and teachings, live performances, records, audio and video tapes, compact discs, and literature have been disseminated in America, Israel, and all over the world. His musical style as well as its cultural and social implications significantly influenced the beliefs and lifestyles of many Jews around the world.

With regard to Carlebach's synagogue music, Weidenfeld continues:

Carlebach's early years in Europe, influenced by his father's function as a Chief Rabbi, exposed him to the world of synagogue prayer. Carlebach attended synagogues with different prayer traditions, and eventually composed his own version of *nusah hat'fillah*: Carlebach Nusah. Parts of it, especially those which accompany the Friday night liturgy, have been adopted by countless congregations all over the world. ... The inclusion of the Carlebach Nusah into the Jewish prayer service of nearly all denominations greatly influenced the communal prayer experience ... His music has attained a status of a genre and is often listed among other genres, such as cantorial, klezmer, etc.

There are many noteworthy musical differences between the Cantorial Recitative and Carlebach Nusah. First, in terms of its musical origins, while the cantorial style ultimately derives from the Middle East, Carlebach's music boasts stylistic features of Western music (tonal vs. modal, harmonic vs. monophonic). Another difference lies in these varying styles' respective relation to the traditional prescribed chants that had dominated Ashkenazic synagogue prayer in earlier centuries. The relation between occasional Cantorial Recitative and the ongoing prayer chant heard throughout the rest of the service—that is, the *nusah ha-t'fillah* (prescribed prayer modes for all liturgical occasions)—is complex. Yet, it is clear that the virtuosic cantorial style was meant to *grow out of* the *nusah ha-t'fillah* and to complement it.

Cantorial Recitatives sometimes use the ongoing prayer mode as a basis—and *embellish* the chant by *expanding* it into a solo virtuosic *fantasia*. Carlebach's synagogue music, by contrast, *replaces* the prescribed prayer chant with simple metric melodies that are intended for the whole congregation to sing together. It is worth noting that Shlomo Carlebach himself, when he led prayer, used to intersperse his own melodies with the traditional *nusah ha-t'fillah*; he happened to be a skilled prayer leader (*ba'al t'fillah*). His followers, generally not trained prayer leaders, focused mainly on his original compositions, and what is widely practiced nowadays in so-called “Carlebach services” is really a replacement of the traditional *nusah ha-t'fillah* with Carlebach's famous metric and highly melodic compositions.

⁵⁹ Sarah Weidenfeld's research on Carlebach (which, to my knowledge, is the most recent and comprehensive study on this topic) deals with many aspects of Carlebach's life and music, including his biography, theological philosophy, and music, that is, what I call Carlebach Nusah.

Carlebach services are famous for being charged with an electrifying atmosphere and for generating emotional excitement. The question is: How does Carlebach Nusah move the congregation emotionally with its fairly simple, and at times even banal, music? The answer I would like to suggest is that Carlebach Nusah generates a joyful mood and a highly emotional arousal—by using simple musical means.

Emotional Mood

We have demonstrated that the Cantorial Recitative tends to generate a mood of supplication. Carlebach Nusah, by contrast, is disposed to generate a lively and happy atmosphere. Carlebach melodies are usually sung in fast tempos which tend to generate, and are associated with, joy and vitality. Furthermore, many times the rhythm the melodies are written in is also a rhythm associated with similar emotions. An upbeat rhythm, an accentuated rhythm, or a dotted rhythm all tend to generate happiness, and many Carlebach melodies have rhythmic patterns which are likewise associated with this and similar emotions. Moreover, Carlebach's songs are melodically simple and employ catchy and symmetrical phrases. Usually, the melodic phrase consists of two periods and employs basic tonic-dominant harmonies. Simple melodic structure is another characteristic of music associated with joy and happiness.⁶⁰

I am using the term “associated with” because, as I noted earlier, often music generates emotions by representation. The connection between simplicity, fast tempos, and certain rhythmic patterns and happiness is less transparent than the obvious connection between cry-like sighs and supplication, but it can still be explicated in natural (rather than historically contingent and arbitrary) terms.⁶¹ A fast tempo is the manner of speech of a happy person, and simple life is often equated with happiness and tranquility.⁶² As in the case of Cantorial Recitatives, here, too, the connection between the music and the generated emotions can be explained not only by means of theories that emphasize associative connections (like the semiotic theory or the contour theory) but also by theories that emphasize the expression of emotions by a sentient being; again, the sentient being whose emotions are conveyed is the person leading the ceremony (the performer).⁶³

Shlomo Carlebach's overt elation in the prayers led by him corresponded to the joyful emotions that these ceremonies expressed (and, conversely, that the lack of such correspondence

⁶⁰ The association between all of the musical features mentioned in this paragraph and happiness-related emotions is well documented. See, in general, Gabrielsson and Lindstrom's meta-research already mentioned (footnote 52 above). Specifically, on fast tempo see *Ibid.* p. 376; on upbeat tempos and dotted rhythms see Huron & Margulis (2011, 589); on melodic simplicity (and fast tempo) see Gabrielsson & Lindstrom (2011, 381).

⁶¹ As I noted earlier (cf. footnote 44 above and the accompanying text), this is important because it helps us explain the intuition that the emotions are *inside* the music and not merely suggested by it.

⁶² As can be seen in, for example, the radiating optimism and joyful mood of the paintings of so-called Primitive Art painters like Henri Rousseau or Anna Mary Robertson ("Grandma") Moses.

⁶³ The presence of a *ba'al t'fillah* (prayer leader) also makes the association between the musical features and the emotions they represent stronger. If fast tempo is associated with happiness because it is the manner of speech of a happy person, then the fast singing of a person seems to be more closely connected to happiness than, say, piano music played in a fast tempo (cf. footnote 47 above).

would have been detrimental to that atmosphere).⁶⁴ Moreover, it is very obvious why people should put themselves in a situation where they experience happy emotions as a result of the music they are willingly exposed to.⁶⁵ People actively seek happy emotional episodes and enjoy them. Happy emotional episodes are even described as “contagious” in that being in a happy environment, in itself, makes us somewhat happy.⁶⁶ The joyful emotional states that they generate are probably one further explanation of the huge popularity of Carlebach services.⁶⁷

There is another feature that contributes to the happy mood that the Carlebach services create, and it, too, is a result of their joyous musical settings. The simple structures and harmonies of Carlebach Nusah make it easy for the whole congregation to join in and sing along with the *ba'al tfillah*. Contrary to the Cantorial Recitative, which is a solo performance led by a virtuosic cantor, Carlebach services are events that call for the participation of all. On occasion, the singing is also enriched by instrumental accompaniment. This is a further dimension that widens the circle of active participants in the ceremony. The result is an ecstatic celebration in which all participants take part in contributing to the success of the event and, in turn, are inspired by it.

The process of the audience joining in is, of course, a gradual one. A listener with a musical ear and an extroverted personality starts singing along with the leader and, slowly, other listeners join in, humming at first, then singing, and then dancing, drumming and so on. Larger parts of the audience are gradually included in the ceremony and, as a result, the scene gradually becomes more and more similar to other merry gatherings. Eventually, the occurrence becomes reminiscent of other joyous occasions in the Jewish life cycle: a wedding ceremony in which all participants partake in the *mitzvah* (commandment) to regale the newlywed couple; or a Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration in which the congregation welcomes a young person to adulthood.

The aforesaid sounds very similar to the semiotic theory of musical expression discussed above.⁶⁸ Yet, it is clearly distinct from it. According to the iconic theory, it is the *music* that reminds us of an emotional episode, as when the sound of the organ reminds us of religious songs or of being in church. The music, therefore, represents, or stands for, the emotional episode. Here, by contrast, it is the scene itself (enthusiastic congregational involvement) that represents or stands for the emotional episode (wedding or other religious celebration). Indeed, it is thanks to a purely musical feature, namely, melodic simplicity, that this representation is generated (and this justifies discussing it in our context). But the connection is between the scene (rather than the music) and the emotional episode, and it is therefore more natural.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ As can be seen, for example, in the recording cited below (footnote 73).

⁶⁵ See footnote 50 above

⁶⁶ See Davies (2011, 37).

⁶⁷ And, again, as noted earlier (see footnote 25 above), it seems appropriate that the joyful emotions expressed by the music will be mirrored in the felt emotions of the congregation, as the happiness of a member of the congregation gives a reason to other members of the congregation to feel happiness (cf. footnote 50 above).

⁶⁸ Footnote 16 above and accompanying text.

⁶⁹ Cf. footnotes 42 to 44 above and the accompanying text.

There is another way in which the resemblance between the scene of Carlebach services and other religious festivities enhances the generation of a happy atmosphere. As some critics note, some dynamic musical patterns (like a fast tempo or a dotted rhythm) may resemble the manifestation of several very different expressions.⁷⁰ Someone talking at a fast pace may be doing so either out of elation or out of growing irritation. A fast tempo, hence, does not discriminate between being happy and being irritated. The context (among other things) is what enables us to differentiate between such emotions, and the nature of the scene provides us with a contextual background that allows us to interpret the fast tempo, the dotted rhythm, and so forth, as expressions of happiness.⁷¹

A typical example of Carlebach's happy-joyful praying style and his simplistic compositional style can be found in a rare video-recording of his *Hoshana rabba* morning service.⁷² Carlebach is standing at the *amud* (the prayer leader's stand) in the middle of the synagogue, holding his guitar, and surrounded by his group of players.⁷³ As is typical to his prayer style, instead of chanting the prayer in the traditionally prescribed *nusah ha't'fillah*, Carlebach uses one of his melodies to sing the text. It is a simple A-B symmetrical melody (see **Figure 5**), which is repeated over and over again until the text runs out, and then switches to "filler" syllables (*ai-dai-dai* and so forth).⁷⁴ The singing goes on for a few minutes and gradually the typical Jewish swaying of the body in prayer becomes an organized rhythmic motion, which eventually turns into an ecstatic dance. As noted earlier, the participation of the whole congregation, the dancing, plus the occasional use of instruments makes the event resemble a celebration of a big crowd and contributes to the happy atmosphere.

⁷⁰ Davies (2011, 27-28).

⁷¹ Needless to say, further associative impact is generated by the words, movement, and other features of the ceremony. As noted above (text in paragraph accompanying footnote 33 above), much of the writing about music and emotions focuses on absolute music, precisely because the accompanying text or narrative may serve to explain the emotional impact of the music by providing contextual reference, as it does here.

⁷² The recording is a non-professional tape of the prayer, currently in the author's personal files.

⁷³ It may be worth noting that the use of musical instruments is not typical of Orthodox Jewish prayer services that take place during the Sabbath or during other holy days when the use of musical instruments is prohibited; this occasion is exceptional.

⁷⁴ Carlebach usually does not have fixed tunes for a prayer. On the spur of the moment, he chooses a tune from his repertoire and uses it for a specific prayer. On this occasion, his famous *David melekh* composition is set to the words of the *Hoshana rabba* Hallel prayer, "*Hodu ladonai*." This structured flexibility in the assignment of tune to text bears some resemblance to the degrees of freedom embedded in the traditional *nusah ha-t'fillah*. The relation between Carlebach Nusah's flexibility on one hand and rigidity on the other, and the traditional *nusah ha-t'fillah*, is a broad and complex topic that should be addressed elsewhere.

Figure 5—Carlebach's *David melekh* melody (in its original key)



Emotional Arousal

Like the Cantorial Recitative, Carlebach Nusah also aims to produce an emotionally charged atmosphere. As I have pointed out, the mood that the Carlebach music generates is a different one—happy, rather than supplicatory—but the insistence on intense emotional arousal is the same with both genres.⁷⁵ While both genres aim to produce emotional arousal, the intensification mechanism that these two genres employ in order to generate this arousal is entirely different.

Cantorial music is usually sung by a highly skilled musician. The cantor who performs the cantorial recitative—either in the synagogue or in the concert hall—is a trained professional. He is, therefore, capable of generating an intensification process by heightening elements that relate to the melody itself, like pitch height or pitch density. The cantor's vocal abilities allow him to produce emotional impact by employing sophisticated embellishments and high-pitched melismas. Carlebach's music, on the other hand, is sung by the whole congregation, a mass of people that usually includes many participants who have no musical training. Their ability to produce a wide vocal spectrum that contains high notes and to accurately control and maneuver their voices in order to generate complex melismas is limited. Moreover, even skilled cantors with a good command of their voice will find it difficult to “lead” a choir through such complex melismas. For those reasons, the intensification process must be generated by manipulating musical elements other than pitch height and pitch density.

The high emotional arousal that the Carlebach music generates is achieved by means of an increase in both speed and volume. Carlebach's music is usually sung quickly, which often

⁷⁵ For some general comments on the distinction between the mood that the music generates (or the discrete emotions it expresses) and the music's arousal or level of activation, see text accompanying footnotes 51 to 53 above.

typically sparks a happy mood to begin with. Along the way, however, the tempo tends to get significantly faster. The tempo acceleration does not *merely* make the music happy in the same manner that the originally fast tempo produced; it also generates a greater activation of emotional arousal, in the sense explained above.⁷⁶ The fact that the music grows steadily louder is another feature that produces the emotionally loaded atmosphere characteristic of Carlebach Nusah.

It is important to note that increased tempo and volume tend to produce not only greater intensity; they also have a tendency to produce certain discrete, or categorical, emotions.⁷⁷ Fast tempo and loud music volume often tend to produce joyful emotions (and, indeed, Carlebach music employs a fast tempo to generate the happy mood that it aims to produce). But, in addition, fast tempo and loud music volume often generate an excitement that is not necessarily related to the specific mood that the music produces.⁷⁸ Moreover, as Gabrielsson and Lindstrom point out (2011, 392-392), the impact that tempo and loudness have on emotional intensity is more salient than their impact in terms of valence (joyful vs. sad music).⁷⁹ The fast tempo in which Carlebach music is sung therefore not only engenders a happy mood, it also causes emotional arousal (and the same is true for the increase in the music's volume).

A typical example of this arousal is found in the following transcribed performance of a typical Carlebach song: *Od yishama*.⁸⁰ This song is usually sung in marriage celebrations but the tune is frequently set to texts of other prayers in Carlebach prayer ceremonies.⁸¹ As shown in **Figure 6**, this simple Carlebach song is 32 bars long (symmetric, having two 16 bar sections, each divided into 8-and-4-bar phrases). The intensification process in this performance is clearly felt both in speed and in the singing volume. The graph charted in **Figure 7** demonstrates that, over time, the speed keeps accelerating. At first, there is a gradual increase throughout the first five phrases, and then, a geometric leap to almost twice the original speed. A simultaneous increase of volume raises the level of intensification (**Figure 8**), which results in an atmosphere that is both happy and emotionally charged.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷⁷ See more about models referring to emotion categories and models referring to dimensions of emotional affect in the text accompanying footnotes 26 to 32 above.

⁷⁸ For example, in Orwell's famous dystopia *1984*, the slowly increasing volume and pace of the sound coming from the telescreen generate and facilitate the rage experienced by the masses during the Two Minutes Hate (Orwell 1950, 13-18). As I noted earlier (see footnote 53 above), I cannot, herein, examine the relations (if any) between the arousal generated by the intensification process and the evoking of basic emotions. Note, however, that contrary to what I noted in the context of cantorial music (see footnote 58 above), the same mechanism that Carlebach's music employs in order to generate intense emotions also has the tendency to generate happiness-related emotions. Nevertheless, as the example in the beginning of this footnote demonstrates, the intense emotions generated by increase in volume and in tempo and the happy emotions generated by these features may come apart.

⁷⁹ Gabrielsson & Lindstrom (2011), pp. 392-392.

⁸⁰ The performance cited is from Weidenfeld (2008), accompanying sound disc (CD-2510).

⁸¹ See footnote 75 above regarding the various uses of Carlebach's tunes. While this transcription is made from a live performance, the phenomenon discussed is characteristic of prayers sung in Carlebach services and the intensification process described herein applies equally in the context of actual synagogue prayer. Another point worth noting is that using the melody of a wedding song in prayer is another means by which Carlebach services may resemble wedding ceremonies and produce a happy atmosphere.

Figure 6. Carlebach's *Od Yishama* melody



Figure 7. Speed intensification in *Od Yishama*

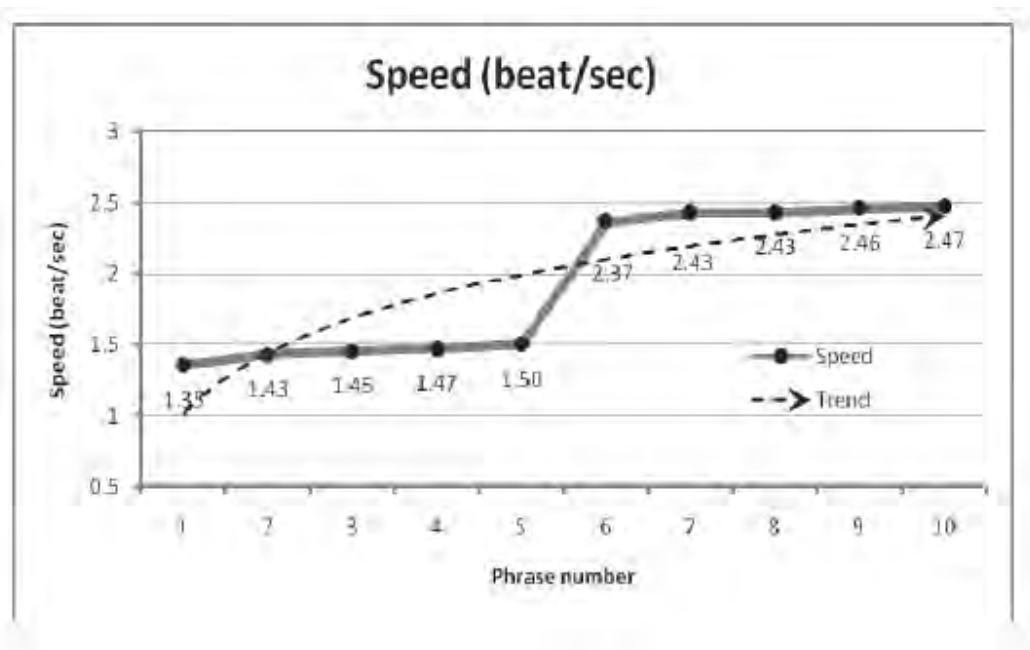
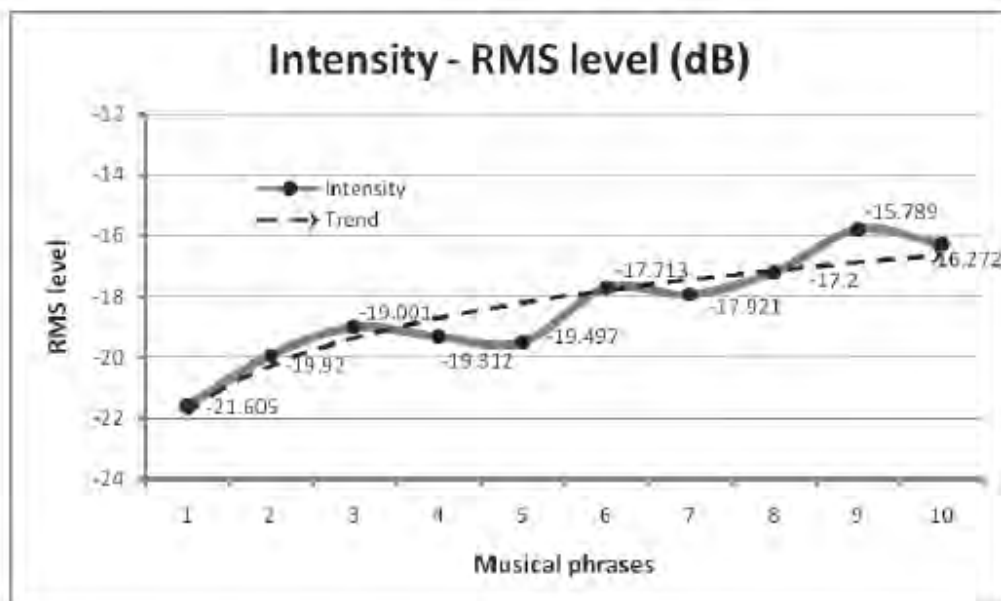


Figure 8. Volume intensification in *Od Yishama*



Concluding Words

By its very nature, music tries to move people emotionally. To say that a musical piece is not moving is almost tantamount to calling it "bad music."⁸² Functional music, that is, music that has a certain role within an independently meaningful ritual, such as prayer, faces a further challenge. It needs to be not only emotionally moving; it should also move people in a certain specific way, arousing the appropriate emotional states that are conducive to furthering the values that the ritual both embeds and engenders. In this essay, I have attempted to show how two musical styles that prevailed in the Ashkenazi synagogues over the past 150 years have tried to meet these challenges. I have demonstrated how both genres employed intensification mechanisms in order to generate emotional arousal and how they both utilized musical devices in order to generate the emotional states that they considered significant to the prayer: a supplicatory emotional state in the case of the Cantorial Recitative and an elated emotional state in the case of Carlebach Nusah.

But there is one further criterion that music ought to meet if it is to be emotionally moving. Authors often stress that music's emotional expressions can only be properly perceived by suitably qualified listeners. Suitably qualified listeners are those who not only hear the sounds and know how to distinguish between them and background noises; they are also familiar with—and usually form part of—the social, cultural, and artistic background in which the music is composed and played. Chinese opera is less likely to generate the same emotional impact in a Western listener as in a Chinese listener. Note, however, that being emotionally moved by music

⁸² Cf. Kivy (1999, 9).

is different than merely appreciating it, and while it may suffice to know the syntax and dramaturgy of Chinese opera in order to appreciate it, something further is required for someone to be moved by it. This additional element enables us to empathize with the social sensitivities that this form of art carries with it, and to experience the music as if it were truly communicating with the history and culture that shaped oneself.

Bearing the above point in mind may help understand both the huge success of the Cantorial Recitative in Europe and in America during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as its decline, and the rise of the Carlebach Nusah in Israel and in the United States over the last few decades. The supplication of the Cantorial Recitative struck a chord in the soul of all Diaspora Jews. The agonizing passion of the pleading cantor expressed the existential state of the needy, persecuted Jewish minority, in a manner far stronger than words. But the sorrowful mourning of the Diaspora ceased to be as central to the experience of Jews after the establishment of the State of Israel. While Jews around the world understand, and are fully aware of, their people's long history of persecutions, those who themselves had not experienced such persecution first hand are less likely to be moved by a composition communicating this story.

In retrospect, we can see that Shlomo Carlebach appeared at precisely the right moment in time. Jews living comfortably and relatively securely in Israel and in the established Jewish communities of the United States were looking for a new source for emotional reflection of their personal experience. They were seeking a fresh interpretation of the ritual and a new kind of music with which they could fully empathize. Carlebach's musical style met this need. In a remarkably perceptive manner, he managed to decipher the cultural code of the modern Jewish community and to create a musical style reflecting its *Zeitgeist*. Carlebach's Nusah is egalitarian and inclusive. It allows all members of the community to take part, actively participating in the ritual as equals. It strengthens communal bonds by encouraging collective action, and it celebrates the fact that the link between man and God can be defined not only by man's dependency, but also by God's desire for us to worship exuberantly.

The above conclusions are, of course, speculative. It would require further ethnomusicological research to establish that my findings have indeed explained the decline of Cantorial Recitative and the rise of Carlebach Nusah. What is obvious, however, is the ability of both these genres—given the right audience for each—to sway large crowds by generating intense emotional arousal.

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The Changing Music of British Reform Judaism

By Barbara Borts

This article attempts to uncover the earliest musical history and sources of both the first Reform synagogue, and the subsequent affiliates, of the Reform synagogues in the UK. In so doing, I intend to trace the trajectory of the music, attest to its ubiquity, and lay the foundations for the heritage of music now being superseded by attempts to create a new musical convention.

Music in the Reform synagogues tends to be mentioned as a footnote to other discussions or merits a few sentences along the way, and historical documents pertaining to music have either been lost, been thrown away, or are languishing somewhere in unknown cupboards and vaults. I collected some of these documents as I passed through the various synagogues and deposited them with the movement's other official papers in the University of Southampton Special Collections archive.

The neglectful treatment of the physical documents themselves exists in an ironic contradictory relationship to the hallowed deference given to the myth of the musical heritage of the movement. "My own generation has been a careless, at times even destructive, guardian of its heritage of music."¹ The music files and books stem from an earlier era, and are often rudimentary by our standards, collected in softback format, or in old loose-leaf folders, hand-written, copied on spirit duplicators. The sheets on which this music was printed is, in many of the synagogues I consulted, locked away in a closet or in a back room, very often uncatalogued and unorganized. But the power that the earlier music wields in the movement is palpable, being the lodestar against which all "new" musical endeavors are judged. There are many within the constituent synagogues of the movement, and not just the elders, who still venerate their "old" music, revered as "traditional,"² and are reticent to incorporate "new" music into their repertoire. Despite the negligence concerning the sources of the music, both the tangible resources and the provenance of the melodies, the melodies themselves have become "traditional" and it has proved extremely difficult to place them in a back room or lock them away in a closet.

The other reason that music came to occupy a greater role stems from the fact that the people who sang the music, and whose memories of how and why it came into the movement, are aging. Their reminiscences have also been neglected, forgotten, and once they are all gone, an important aspect of our Jewish history and heritage will disappear as well. Already I have been told that I am twenty years too late; in some places, one is reliant on the memories of people in their eighties and nineties, and in others, there is no one around who remembers. But for some, helping me with my research has brought back wonderful memories and, I hope, some joy in knowing that there will be a record of this aspect of their lives, which gave them so much pleasure. Music is of utmost importance to those who come to synagogue, and again, it is curious

¹ Eisenstein, Judith Kaplan, *Heritage of Music: The Music of the Jewish People* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1973), 3.

² Various meanings characteristically attach to the idea of "traditional."

that so little has been chronicled about this. I cannot explain this neglect; everyone with whom I have spoken thought it a wonderful project.

Reform Judaism In Great Britain--the West London Synagogue as Paradigm

The history of Reform Judaism in the UK has its own arc of development. While it was true that "...the toleration it [England] extended to Jews was more generous than in most countries..." nonetheless, it is clear from documents of both the Western Synagogue and Spanish-Portuguese Bevis Marks Synagogue that there were similar pressures as on the European Continent toward assimilation, intermarriage, and conversion, and shame at how services appeared to the outside, Christian, world, as British society "... was... hostile or indifferent to cultural diversity. It did not respect or value the customs and beliefs of the Jewish religion..."³

West London Synagogue [hereafter WLS] was the first of the Reform synagogues in the UK, established by nineteen Sephardi and five Ashkenazi men in 1840 as a break-away from the Spanish-Portuguese Bevis Marks Synagogue. The founders wrote a Declaration which was presented at a meeting held on April 15, 1840, in which they outlined their concerns: "We, the Undersigned, regarding Public Worship as highly conducive to the interests of religion, consider it a matter of deep regret that it is not more frequently attended...we ascribe it to the distance of the existing Synagogues from the places of our residence..."

Although UK Reform histories usually begin with the demographic argument--the need for a synagogue in the West End of London for those who had moved from the East End and City--and the desire to unify Sephardi and Ashkenazi under the rubric "British," the April 1840 declaration continues: "... the length and 'unimpressive manner' of performance, and dearth of religious instruction" were other crucial factors that led them to found a synagogue in the West End with different times for services, conducted "... in a manner more calculated to inspire feelings of devotion."⁴ The new synagogue held its first services in April 1840, and in January 1842 the congregation was officially incorporated.

There were, therefore, many factors which led ultimately to the establishment of Reform Judaism in England. Although the Anglo-Reform movement likes to maintain the myth of autochthonous Reform with its distinctive ontology, as in this excerpt from the Movement for Reform Judaism [henceforth MRJ] website: "...Reform Judaism in Britain started for entirely different reasons,"⁵ we know that there was contact between reform-minded individuals in England and on the Continent. Although more conservative than in Germany, its progress was followed, and comments in German and French Jewish journals indicated that this new synagogue was not simply a matter of convenient location and that musical alteration figured prominently: "We hope this would educate Jews sufficiently to explain themselves to Christians", or this from a French journal, noting the reforms that were similar to those being

³Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (University of California Press), 2002: 5-6.

⁴Anne J. Kershen and Jonathan A. Romain, *Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain 1840-1995* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1995), 26.

⁵ Movement for Reform Judaism, Web site, <http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/about-us/what-is-the-history-of-reform-judaism.html>.

made in Germany: "They want to shorten the service by omitting certain prayers, by replacing ancient chants with other melodies..."

West London Synagogue Forms of Prayer

The newly formed synagogue engaged its first minister, Reverend Professor David Woolf Marks, a noted Hebrew scholar. In 1841 he published a prayer book, *Forms of Prayer*, subsequently to become the *siddur* for the burgeoning Reform movement. The introduction betrays a strong predilection for the hegemony of words in prayer but does make mention of musical manners of presenting the prayers: "Here [in the holy books] they found...hymns for the utterance of every feeling of gratitude and reverence with which the heart of man can elevate itself towards the Great Creator" and "...the praise of the Deity has been chanted...."⁶

The introduction reveals much about the congregation for whom it was intended. For one thing, it contains a concise but erudite examination of theories about the historical origins and compositions of the prayers and mentions the names of various prayers in un-pointed [without vowels] Hebrew. It then makes mention of the blending of so-called German and Portuguese traditions under the rubric of British Jewry, and it serves as an apologia for liturgical reform.

One point is worth mentioning, a leitmotif of the reasons for the various liturgical and musical experiments of non-Orthodox Judaism, and that is, that the prayer books are reformed because of a perception that altering the liturgy will re-awaken spiritual feeling and devotion. To wit, "...we have arrived at the conviction that the house of prayer does not exercise that salutary influence over the minds and hearts of the congregants which it is intended and capable to exert...and it must be universally admitted that the present mode of worship fails to call forth the devotion, so essential to the religious improvement of the people."⁷

This is paralleled in the introduction to a volume of *Sephardi Melodies* that would appear 90 years later:⁸ "...the earnest wish to prevent, in the present age of religious indifference, the total decay and oblivion of those sacred hymns and melodies..."⁹ Here, although the one motivation for the book was to preserve melodies under threat of being lost due to neglect, the other was, as quoted earlier..."to assist...public and private devotion."¹⁰ We note that, early on, synagogues and rabbis struggled with lack of attendance, and believed that music was one way of revivifying the community's prayer. Today it is believed that new music will do this; Verrinder¹¹ and de Sola believed that the answer lay in the ancient melodies.

⁶ The Ministers of the Congregation, eds. *Forms of Prayer Used in the West London Synagogue of British Jews: Volume 1—Daily and Sabbath Prayers* (London: Wertheimer, Lea and Co., 1898), x.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁸ *Tall'lei Zimrah, Being the Traditional Liturgical Chants of Spanish & Portuguese Jews*, ed. Emanuel Aguilar & David Aaron de Sola, 1857 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931).

⁹ Emanuel Aguilar and Reverend David Aaron de Sola, *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*. (London: Wessel and Co; Schott and Co, 1857), 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Charles Garland Verrinder (1839–1904), a renowned Christian organist.

The 1841 *siddur* is, in essence, an abbreviated traditional Sephardic *siddur*. There were six editions, the last being in 1930, at which point a preface was added that noted that some things were expunged, and some things added back or newly created. I did find on one page a direction to add a hymn at that place,¹² otherwise, there is little to indicate what was sung and what was not. By way of contrast, the American Reform prayer book, the *Union Prayer Book*,¹³ is laid out with instructions indicating when the Reader is to lead, when the congregation is to read, and what the choir is to sing. This greater emphasis on music in the service indicates that in the American Reform movement, music played a central role in the service. For the British Reform movement, this was not made manifest.

Choir, Organ and Songbooks

Although there has been research into the musical heritage of WLS, little is known about the very first music it used. Early on WLS established the choral tradition for which it is still known, at first, an all-male choir, and later a mixed-voice choir.¹⁴ The organ was installed in 1859.¹⁵ That music was important in the culture of WLS is evident by the appointment of Verrinder as the accompanist.¹⁶

Although the synagogue had advertised for a suitable Jewish performer in the *Jewish Chronicle*,¹⁷ the organ was not an instrument Jews often played.¹⁸ Verrinder was later retained permanently, and joined Edward Hart, who was the choir director. In 1863, it was determined that Hart was “utterly inefficient,”¹⁹ his services were terminated, and Verrinder took on the whole of the musical direction of the synagogue: choir, music, and organ. Charles Kensington Salaman (1814–1901), an eminent Anglo-Jewish composer and musician²⁰ and an active member

¹² *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*, Sixth Edition, 1931, 24. (Hymn) is written in the middle of the page.

¹³ Isaac Mayer Wise (ed.), *T'fillot Yisrael--Union Prayer Book--as adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis*. Published by the Ritual Committee, Chicago, IL, 1892; Kaufmann Kohler (ed.), revised 1895; further revised 1918 and 1940.

¹⁴ Verrinder mentions his reasons for including female voices in a note to the WLS leadership in 1863. He wrote that some boys' voices “...have become totally useless... therefore, we need to look for other means in order to guard against the entire breakdown of the choir within a very short period.” He and the choirmaster went to the Westminster Jews' Day School, found girls “nearly all with very fair voices and possessing a slight knowledge of music.” They were to be remunerated and to receive instruction. This will “add to the solemnity of our Divine Services.” Women were already singing in some church choirs, but the issue in Jewish tradition revolves around *Kol ishah*--that is, the proscription against women's voices being raised in song in the presence of men, as the female voice can “titillate” and therefore distract men from prayer [BT *B'rakhot* 24a]. Other notes regarding women in the choir were concerned with preserving their modesty, leading to a “be heard but not seen” choral placement. For more on women and singing, see the issue devoted to this topic: *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Volume 32, Fall 2007.

¹⁵ The archival material contains many documents pertaining to the organ, including, in 1867, correspondence between Verrinder and the leadership concerning the amount of space that should be devoted to the organ.

¹⁶ Verrinder worked for WLS from 1859 – 1904. For more on Verrinder, see Susan Wollenberg, “Charles Garland Verrinder and Music at the West London Synagogue, 1859–1904,” in *Music and Performance Culture in Nineteenth-century Britain: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Temperley*, ed. Bennett Zon (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 59.

¹⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 Feb 1867.

¹⁸ For an exploration of the place of the organ in Jewish worship, see Tina Frühauf, *The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ *Anglo-Jewish Archives*, University of Southampton, 59/1/3 MS 140.

²⁰ For background on Salaman's musical reputation, see his obituary in *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, August 1, 1901, vol. 42, no. 702, 530-533.

of the Music Committee at WLS, collaborated with Verrinder between 1861 and 1892 on six volumes of music, to which he also contributed compositions.

As this study is primarily of the music for the Sabbath services, we will concentrate on the first two volumes of the series entitled *The Music Used in the Services of the West London Synagogue of British Jews, principally composed and collected, and adapted by Charles Salaman. The Ancient Melodies harmonised and the whole Arranged with obbligate Organ Accompaniment and edited by C. G. Verrinder*. These two volumes also contain music for pieces which would be sung on *Shabbat* during the intermediary days of the *Shalosh Regalim* [the Pilgrimage Festivals]. Aside from the self-explanatory title page above, no other clues are given as to motivation or purpose in creating these volumes, or for liturgical music in general. All one can reasonably deduce is that the older music they intended to use needed to be adapted for the WLS style.

Why did Verrinder, and West London Synagogue, wish to deploy organ music? For one, Verrinder was himself a church organist whose Doctorate in Music was granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1873. For another, WLS was founded by wealthy members of the Jewish community. The congregation may have conceived of themselves in cathedral-like terms, the synagogue into which they moved in 1870, a majestic neo-Byzantium edifice, with a lofty dome which seems to be hallowing the space beneath it, and a raised front-facing *bimah/almemar* [raised platform or dais for the clergy] soaring above the congregation. It did not replicate the traditional layout of Bevis Marks, nor of the Great Western Synagogue, also resplendent buildings, with the prayer leaders embedded within the praying congregation, however, WLS did arrange seats such that some faced each other, thus retaining a Jewish flavor in the design. Replete with a splendid pipe organ and a concealed choir, one could deduce that the design for the whole resembled the cathedrals and grand churches of Anglicanism²¹ and that this cultural norm would have appealed to the Victorian Jewish gentlemen of the day. Organs were, as well, employed in German, and later in North American, synagogues, and there were those who railed against them on the basis of *Hukkat hag-goyim* (imitation of non-Jewish practices).

The Music of Bevis Marks at WLS

What relationship did the music of WLS bear to the music of its parent synagogue, Bevis Marks?²² Hazzan Eliot Alderman, the current Musical Director of Bevis Marks Synagogue, and himself researching the early music of his synagogue, wrote that,

²¹ See Temperley, Nicholas, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Vol. 1, for a comprehensive account of the place of music in English church life.

²² In an interesting twist, Bevis Marks has “borrowed” back music from WLS. Eliot Alderman wrote that: “They [melodies from Bevis Marks] were definitely not sung in harmony by the Spanish & Portuguese choir of the time, because our...arrangements... are... adaptations of Verrinder’s using the original form of the melody.” They sing Verrinder melodies for *Hashiveinu* and *Ein keiloheinu*, and *Adon olam* melodies by Salaman and Waley, a member of WLS. WLS melodies were included (with permission) in the musical scores of congregational melodies in *Book of Prayer of the Spanish Portuguese Jews’ Congregation, London*, 3 vols., revised edition by Solomon Gaon, London 1965.

“Unfortunately, my congregation has kept poor records of its own history, never mind that of other synagogues, and in fact, I have tried to contact people at WLS a couple of times to see if they can shed any light on the Spanish-Portuguese musical history itself!”²³

Alderman and I went through Verrinder’s music books together to search for its Spanish and Portuguese origins. One possible indicator of the Sephardi origin of the music lies in the transliteration – the *Ayin* is transcribed as ‘ng’, which is generally only used in transliteration in Spanish-Portuguese settings; however, Dr. Alexander Knapp²⁴ has found this transliteration in a volume of the music of Julius Lazarus Mombach (1813-1880).²⁵ This music was for use by the choir members who, perhaps due to poor Hebrew skills or stemming from an Ashkenazi background, would have needed a transliteration, and were being instructed in the Spanish-Portuguese manner of pronouncing *Ayin*.

There is, surprisingly, not as much Spanish-Portuguese music as one might have expected to find. From where and in what form the music came to Verrinder is also rather a mystery. One of the earliest volumes of music published was the 1857 volume *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, by Emanuel Aguilar and Reverend David Aaron de Sola, hazzan of Bevis Marks Synagogue from 1815–1860.²⁶ Alderman is himself not certain whether Verrinder learned his melodies from the Aguilar/De Sola book, or from aural transmission. A third complicating factor is the Sephardi music published in the standard compilation of music used in the United Synagogues,²⁷ the *Voice of Prayer and Praise* [‘The Blue Book’], a collection of music used in Orthodox synagogues;²⁸ it is uncertain whether Verrinder used The Blue Book as his source, or whether they took their music from him.²⁹ Alderman notes that there are three important melodies which serve various purposes in the Sephardic tradition, and that Verrinder failed to use even one of these.³⁰

²³ Private correspondence with Eliot Alderman.

²⁴ Alexander Knapp, “The Influence of German Music on United Kingdom Synagogue Practice.” *Jewish Historical Studies*, Volume 35 (1996 – 98), 181.

²⁵ Mombach came to the UK from Germany as a *m’shoreir* (boy soprano), then worked as the *hazzan* for the Great Synagogue. He composed, “influenced by the ‘new wave’ of synagogue composition coming from Sulzer in Vienna, Lewandowski in Berlin and Naumbourg in Paris...” Victor Tunkel, “The Anglo-Jewish Cantorate,” (European Cantors Association, December 2004) <http://www.cantors.eu/Articles.html#Anglo>. He went on to teach *hazzanut* at the Orthodox Jews’ College. “Nearly all the music in use in the German synagogues of England and the English colonies was composed by him.” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10938-mombach-julius-lazarus>.

²⁶ De Sola writes, “...the present work...as far as we are cognizant, is the first ever published on the subject of the Sephardic liturgy.” De Sola, *The Ancient Melodies*, 1.

²⁷ Centrist Orthodox movement in the UK, whose head is known as the Chief Rabbi. US synagogues have the largest number of affiliated people. In 1870, it consisted of 16 synagogues. See Kershen and Romain, *Tradition and Change*: 52.

²⁸ Francis L. Cohen & David M. Davis, *The Voice of Prayer and Praise: A Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing*. (London: Office of the United Synagogue). The “Blue Book” has been published in different editions over a number of years and is still a standard British liturgical resource. For more, see Charles Heller, “Masters of the London Blue Book,” *Journal of Synagogue Music*, Fall 2006, Volume 31 No.1, 67.

²⁹ His setting of Psalm 121 is included in the 1933 edition, 331.

³⁰ *Shirat hay-yam and Yigdal*; the one not used, is *Hallel d’italia*.

Westernizing Jewish Liturgical Music

The Sephardic music that does remain was altered in a number of different ways. According to Professor Mark Kligman, by the mid-19th century, Western Sephardi music was already undergoing a process of alteration³¹ and this can be noted in the aforementioned Aguilar/De Sola book, where the melodies are set in the established Western style, with time and key signatures, and four-part harmonies, instrumental accompaniment being proscribed as noted above.

This process parallels that of the Ashkenazi world and was in keeping with contemporary trends in synagogue music in Europe. In this era, in general, there was a desire to retain a link to the tradition of *nusah ha-t'fillah*, or modal chant, but to re-shape and tame it through meter and rhythm and harmony. One hears in the compositions of Lewandowski³² that he has adapted the liturgical modes and re-cast them in metrical and harmonic frameworks familiar and comfortable for a Western, modernizing, congregation. On the other hand, there were still passages chanted by the hazzan, in both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi worlds, which were retained untrammelled and unwesternized, as they were not intended for communal singing, a chain of grouped “melodicles” that were presented in their original, recitative-style, format. This became a contested issue, as various reformers attempted to delete *hazzanut* [cantorial chant] altogether.³³ They were not entirely able to do so in Europe or later, in America; perhaps their greatest success was in the UK!

Within the “eastern” worlds of Ashkenaz, and the Eastern Sephardi lands, the taste in music remained quite “traditional”, in that it retained its melismatic, improvisatory, expressive quality, and its unfamiliar “clashing” harmonies in semi-tones and open chords. This music had no place at WLS. Reforming/assimilating/aculturating Jews, entering the universities, workplaces, public arenas, and private spaces of the wider society, mingling with non-Jews and attending cultural entertainments such as opera and concerts, reformed/assimilated/aculturated their liturgical music to conform to both internal and external subjectivities about decorum and solemnity, and what constituted a proper, English, “act of divine worship.” Later generations may have evinced an appreciation for the “exotic;” within this Victorian philosophical *Weltanschauung*, there was a definite hierarchy of the “primitive” and “advanced,” and the founders of WLS knew they wanted to be regarded as exemplars of civilization.

³¹Mark Kligman, “Introduction to Sephardi and Mizrahi Liturgical Music” <http://huc.edu/sephardic/media/Intro.pdf>, 24.

³² Louis Lewandowski was a *m'shoreir* (boy soprano), who accompanied a hazzan. He studied Western music and composition at the Berlin Academy. For more on Lewandowski, see: Joseph A. Levine, *Synagogue Song in America* (Crown Point, Indiana: White Cliffs Media Company, 1989); Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*; Zoe Jacobs, “Salomon Sulzer and Louis Lewandowski,” in *Great Reform Lives*, ed. Jonathan Romain (London: The Movement for Reform Judaism, 2010). 33 – 40;

³³ For more on this, see Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, chapter XII.

Verrinder's Contribution

Verrinder inherited an already altered “Oriental” music upon which he applied arrangements and the addition of lush organ accompaniments, developments permissible in a non-Orthodox setting. Sometimes his endeavors led to unfamiliar syllabic stresses, to melodies used for different purposes than they were intended,³⁴ and to musical passages simplified for the choir in ways that deviated from accepted Spanish-Portuguese practice. In *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, the compilers normally included the first and last verses only, so Verrinder would have needed to fill in the middle portions in order to give his predominantly non-Jewish choristers a full copy and himself a written accompaniment, all of which was unnecessary in a traditionally observant congregation with a hazzan and Jewish choir singing *a cappella*.

In addition to the Sephardi heritage, there was also some influence from the Ashkenazi tradition, as the books included music by Naumbourg and Sulzer,³⁵ from France and Austria. We also know that on occasion, Verrinder included music from Mombach. But we also know that music was imported from the non-Jewish world and that this was both contentious and appreciated. In one letter to the wardens, Verrinder wrote “I am proud to say several Cathedral organists as well as other professional and amateur musicians do not fail to express to me their admiration of the musical arrangements.”³⁶ More interesting is an 1867 correspondence between Salaman and the wardens, concerning some of his own musical output being used in Christian services, perhaps even adapted by him. It is curious, given the fact that, as Salaman points out, Verrinder used and adapted Christian and secular music:

I presume the wardens have the right of withdrawing the compositions from being used in the service of the synagogue; whether it would be wise to do so is another question. To be consistent they must abolish nearly all the Christian Chants so admirably adapted to the Hebrew Psalms by our talented organist. They must also withdraw from performance some of my adaptations of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*...likewise... the performance of one of our more beautiful *Yigdals*, the theme of which has been taken by Costa as a leading subject in his *Eli*³⁷ and which he has treated as a fugue in his Overture. They must also prohibit the organ voluntaries, so judiciously and admirably introduced and performed by Verrinder, in consequence of their association with Exeter and St James's balls [!] and occasionally with secular music. Wardens and the junior members are not aware that some of our more ancient and beautiful Hebrew melodies have been adapted to the poetry of Lord Byron, or rather, that he has written poetry expressly for them...³⁸these melodies are sung on more solemn occasions in the older synagogues and ...are not the less prized by Jews in consequence...³⁹

³⁴ For example, festival melodies or *nusah* used on *Shabbat*.

³⁵ Samuel Naumbourg, *Zemirot Yisrael*, two volumes (Paris 1847 and 1864); Salomon Sulzer, *Schir Zion*, two volumes (Vienna, 1839 and 1865).

³⁶ Dec. 8, 1870.

³⁷ Michael Costa, who composed *Eli*, an oratorio, in 1855.

³⁸ A Jewish composer named Isaac Nathan requested that Lord Byron write words to melodies Nathan had composed, melodies purportedly based on music from the Sephardi world. They have long been out of print, but two scholars at San Jose State University, Paul Douglass and Frederick Burwick, have revived them and they have been recorded online. One can listen here: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/douglass/music/album-hebrew.html>

³⁹ Feb. 1867, AJ 59/1/320.

What is striking about the second passage is the incongruous manner in which the absorption of melodies is permitted. Using *contrafacta* from the Christian world drawn into the Jewish orbit, even if unadulteratedly Christian in background and function, makes the music “kosher,” but music from the Jewish sphere which then passes into the Christian world negates its Jewishness. Salaman was right to highlight the inconsistency of the argument, and deftly hints at the way music, whether liturgical or otherwise, drifts between religions and the concert stage, quite freely. It is a pity he did not consider the topic in more detail, but it is amusing to think that music was in the vanguard of interfaith dialogue.

The Place of Music at WLS

It is important to note that the books are not prefaced in any manner, in stark contrast to the lengthy and scholarly introduction to the earlier work *Ancient Melodies of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*. In this work, De Sola states that even the reflection upon and study of music is important, as it... “may contribute to the furtherance of devotion...and tend to improve the public or private worship of *all* our brethren Israelites...”⁴⁰ De Sola offers a reflection upon the function of music in a religious service: “[these melodies] have proven efficient aids in elevating and sustaining the public and individual worship of Him who is ‘enthroned amidst the praises of Israel’...those sacred hymns and melodies which delighted and edified our ancestors through many generations, and which...assist...public and private devotion...”⁴¹ With this, he concludes that compiling such a book will aid the prayer life of Jews and the Jewish community. I have found no such statements from Verrinder. De Sola furthers supplies us with an archaeology of the poets, melodies, and histories behind the music in the collection. Verrinder, by contrast, only infers that the manuals he has edited serve to preserve the “ancient melodies.”

The first minister of WLS, Reverend D.W. Marks, does comment, albeit briefly, on the role of music in prayer. In a sermon given on the day the organ was first used, September 20, 1859, he wrote, “...no one can attentively read the biblical records of that age without noting the idea taking root, that music tends to kindle the imagination, to warm the heart, and to awaken the liveliest sentiments of piety.”⁴² Nonetheless, more attention was to be paid to the organ and historical arguments for its revivification than to the purpose of music in a service, and the nature of the music itself.

Reception by the Congregation

Verrinder’s music was, generally, well received. When he wrote to the Council for permission and funding to publish the second volume of his music, Simon Waley,⁴³ asked to proffer an opinion about the manuscript, wrote:

⁴⁰ De Sola, *The Ancient Melodies*, ii.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴² Marks, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*: 169.

⁴³ A warden at WLS and himself a composer of Jewish and other music.

Most of it consists of music that is now frequently sung in Synagogue. There is very little that I do not know, and very little that does not seem quite appropriate. The whole of it seems prepared in a spirit thoroughly appreciating the services for which it is intended. The character of the music is elevated, and devotional...and composed in a thoroughly... musician-like style... Nearly all the music seems adapted to our service, although there might naturally be differences of opinion as to many of the individual pieces...⁴⁴

Even the *Jewish Chronicle* of Verrinder's time waxed enthusiastic. Concerning the WLS Jubilee Service, the reporter stated that "...we can unreservedly compliment Dr. Verrinder... upon his special compositions, [and] his choice of older melodies..." It was noted that they could "trace everywhere a...musician experienced in the traditions of English church music."⁴⁵ Despite the fact that many of Verrinder's letters revolve around money and would seem to diminish the idea that music was important to the synagogue, he remained at WLS for the whole of his career and is reported to have said that those years were the happiest of his life⁴⁶

The archive contains many interesting titbits concerning the choir. Is a choir an *accoutrement* or functionally a corpus of *sh'lihei tsibbur*? The question is posed because the choir was composed of both paid and unpaid, volunteer members, some of whom at least may not have regarded themselves as engaged in the *mitzvah* of leading the congregation in prayer. In one representative letter, a chorister asked for leave to be absent to perform at another concert [sic] whilst another described herself as an "artiste."⁴⁷ The impression is given that at least some of the choir saw their work as a job, a "gig" if you will, rather than as undertaking a serious spiritual role in the worship. It was, however, a difficult choir to join, with auditions judged by Verrinder and others from the synagogue.

Music is a Thing of Beauty

There is a lack of thoughtful reflection upon music and religious and spiritual matters which echoes a statement by Endelman concerning 18th-century Anglo-Jewish life when he wrote, "...it is important to remember that London was on the cultural periphery of the Jewish world at that time. It was a raw, rowdy, untamed place without well-established traditions of scholarship and piety."⁴⁸ WLS emerged out of this "raw rowdiness" into the Victorian period with "...levels of observance and piety which were markedly lower..."⁴⁹ than in Central Europe;⁵⁰ thus they introduced reforms that were "moderate measures that responded to social rather than political needs."⁵¹ With such narrow desires, the Jews of WLS engaged a

⁴⁴ Aug 8, 1870 – from SW Waley, To Jacob Elkin, Secretary of WLS.

⁴⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, "Jubilee of the Reform Congregation," January 29, 1892, supplement: 22.

⁴⁶ Philippa Bernard, *A Beacon of Light: The History of the West London Synagogue*. (London: West London Synagogue, 2013), 80 – 81.

⁴⁷ November 28, 1864.

⁴⁸ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 62.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵⁰ Perhaps reflecting the fact that "...Jews who lived in England were comparatively fortunate...their disabilities were not as extensive as those which afflicted Jews elsewhere in Europe..." Jewish learning and observance being less valued than being "Englishmen." David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2.

⁵¹ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 112.

prominent non-Jewish organist to create services that would "...conform more closely to middle-class notions of decorum and gentility."⁵² Further reflection upon music and worship was not forthcoming, their preoccupations revolved around "beauty," which will become a recurrent theme in the musical language of WLS.

WLS maintained a level of interactive tension, with non-Jewish organists and Jewish musical directors, some of whom had a background in Orthodoxy, where they would have acquired other musical leanings. But the power of the corpus established in greatest measure by Verrinder, and the centrality of the organ, impressed itself fervently on the congregation and upon the Directors of Music who would otherwise have known differently, as we shall see. Thus, the music that was disseminated throughout the movement was a music designed to accompany rational worship services led frontally by rabbi and choir, non-participatory, and unembodied; how much the more so could a choir set aloft illustrate this value? In a correspondence engaged in 1857, there is an allusion to demands by Verrinder for a huge space for a grand organ, leaving the impression that the choir was more important than the ministers.⁵³

WLS engaged professional musicians, often well-regarded in the wider society, to ensure an excellent performance; certainly, they were in a financial position to be able to do this. Nonetheless, the impression remains that the quality of the music was paramount and other considerations, such as a connection to the traditions of music in the synagogue, were correspondingly unimportant.

Percy Rideout and Maurice Jacobson

Verrinder was succeeded by Percy Rideout (1882-1932), who served WLS from 1920 to 1931. He was again not Jewish, arriving with an illustrious career as Professor at the London Organ School, and a church organist. "His knowledge of religious music was comprehensive, and he had written many organ pieces for use in churches and cathedrals."⁵⁴

It seems that, at least initially, WLS did not concern themselves overly much to conduct a search for a Jewish organist and choir leader, who would have had to join them from the Continent, and thus, the second musical era in the life of WLS resided in the hands of a non-Jewish church musician. As well as adding compositions to the stable of WLS melodies, Rideout campaigned for repairs to the organ and to shifting the location of the choir, for better acoustic affect. One reads in his correspondence with the synagogue the pride of a first-class organist in a splendid instrument, without mentioning anything of its spiritual properties.

As the situation in Germany turned perilous for Jews, German Jewish refugees began to arrive, assisted by the efforts of the then rabbi, Harold Reinhart, and it may be that it was during this juncture that the music of Lewandowski came into the WLS world. There is a memo, asking Rideout if he had "the Lewandowski book that belonged to Mr. Tyler."⁵⁵ It is clear from the

⁵² *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵³ September 26, 1867. AJ 59/1/2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁵⁵ June 2, 1931. AJ 175 31/1

contemporary music of WLS that Lewandowski is integral to the repertoire and thus it seems likely that this might be the year in which WLS encountered him.⁵⁶ If so, it would mark the introduction of classically-composed music which is often, nonetheless, based solidly on *nusah*.

There might have been some kind of cultural shift during these years, for in 1932, upon the recommendation of the Music Committee, and with the assent of Rideout, a Jewish musician, Maurice Jacobson (1896-1976), was hired in a part-time capacity as Choir Director, and allocated some of Rideout's responsibilities: "Your duties are to be training the choir at all rehearsals, attending regular and special services, drawing up of the musical services and... the arrangement of the music under the supervision of the Musical Committee, and acting as deputy organist. You will be solely responsible to the Musical Committee for the training and conduct of the choir and will be required to hold such rehearsals as will bring the choir to and maintain it in a satisfactory state of efficiency...Dr. Percy Rideout will remain with the Congregation as the organist, but his duties will be confined to accompanying the choir and playing organ solos."⁵⁷

According to his sons, "Although from a Jewish family, Jacobson never regarded himself as a Jewish composer, per se. Even so, the influence was occasionally apparent."⁵⁸ The second sentence refers to the fact that he did compose liturgical music for the synagogue, although, imply his sons, this was not the source of his greatest pride. As there is a paucity of information, it is difficult to deduce whether or not the presenting issue was the disarray in the choir and its need for firmer direction, or the need for Jewish input into the music. If the latter, and in conjunction with the putative introduction of Lewandowski to the synagogue, then we might witness here the beginning of what will become a rather convoluted return to some sort of Jewish content in the music. But that remains a tiny suspicion. His family took great trouble to distance him from parochial musical concerns.

It was during Jacobson's tenure that a choir committee was mooted, which "...would have no real power but psychologically its existence might do them some good."⁵⁹ Real power still resided in the Music Committee and with the Wardens, who had the authority to deem certain pieces acceptable or unacceptable. Jacobson was amenable to the establishment of a choir committee "for the implication it will convey to the choir that they are regarded, not merely as cogs in the choir room, but are looked upon as members of the Synagogue in the wider sense."⁶⁰ The choir was, at this point, a Jewish choir; advertisements for members were listed in the *Jewish Chronicle* and certainly some of the applicants mentioned their deep background in Jewish liturgy and its music. Despite this, it seems that they sometimes rehearsed on a Shabbat afternoon, with lunch at the Portman Restaurant. Even more surprising was a memo asking if the choir wished lunch brought in for them on Yom Kippur or for arrangements to be made for them at a local restaurant. There is an anomaly here: perhaps non-Jews had already entered the choir?

⁵⁶ Indeed, Daphne Richardson, widow of Arnold Richardson, attributes the introduction of Lewandowski to Raphael.

⁵⁷ Feb. 26, 1932. AJ175 40/4

⁵⁸ Michael and Julian Jacobson, "Maurice Jacobson,"

<http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2005/Dec05/jacobson.htm>.

⁵⁹ December 11, 1932, letter to Mr. B.M. Woolf from Maurice Jacobson. AJ/175 40/4.

⁶⁰ December 11, 1932. Response to above. *Ibid*.

Rideout, meanwhile, continued as organist. Many of the memos are amusing, as when he mentions that he has retained Chopin's funeral march but cut out the *Gotterdammerung* March. This is before the war, but it is still startling that the non-Jewish organist would play the anti-Semitic composer Wagner⁶¹ at a synagogue service.

The decision-making procedure continued to exhibit elements of struggles between professionals and laity and, although responsibility for engaging and dismissing choristers in Verrinder's day lay primarily with him, we know that by 1932 the Music Committee had arrogated to itself many of these responsibilities, including asking that all music be presented first to them for approval.⁶² Jacobson proved to be a contentious choir leader, and, due to other professional commitments, he left his position after 1937, though he remained involved through the Music Committee.

Marc Raphael

In 1932, Marc Raphael, a well-regarded *Lieder* interpreter and singer who had received instruction in liturgical music with Samuel Alman, a Jewish musician and composer,⁶³ came to audition for a role in the choir. He was turned down, on the curiously unexplained basis that it was "not feasible" but he was engaged to work with assistant organist Ben Elkin conducting the choir at the overflow service at Wigmore Hall.⁶⁴ It seems to have gone well; the Honorary Secretary of the synagogue wrote to Elkin that, "it is undoubted that the devotional appeal of the Overflow Services was very high and it is equally certain that to this result the choir contributed a chief share..."⁶⁵

There began another slight cultural shift, towards positively encouraging the congregation to participate, to this day, a subject of great debate. Jacobson tried to encourage this by having the choir sing in unison, but this was not acceptable to the leadership. WLS struggled, and continues to struggle, with the tension between the production of exquisite four-part harmonies sung by trained voices, the whole accompanied by a master organist, and the sacrifices that need to be made to enable a congregation to join in, never mind "own" the music. The Music Committee...

...agreed as to the desirability of fostering Congregational singing but felt that the quality of choral singing should not be degraded in the attempt. They were therefore not in favor of unison singing but felt that the aim in view would--as it were--be attained by choosing simple harmonic melodies for the items selected for Congregational singing. We agreed as to the necessity of propaganda and suggested a letter being sent to members, inviting the participation of the Congregation, detailing the items selected for Congregational singing, and asking for volunteers to take a leading part in such singing. They further agreed that the Ministers be asked to announce each item selected for Congregational singing.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Chicago: Aristeus Books, 2012).

⁶² December 2, 1932. AJ 175 40/4.

⁶³ Samuel Alman, *Shirei Beit ha-Knesset* two volumes (London, 1925 and 1938).

⁶⁴ On the High Holy days, the *Yamim nora'im*, there may be too many in attendance to be accommodated in the synagogue. Many synagogues hold an "overflow" service at some other location.

⁶⁵ Sept. 26, 1934. AJ175 65/2.

⁶⁶ *Minutes*, Thursday July 12, 1934. AJ 175 64/4

It is an amusing twist that the leadership believed that this “congregational” singing needed to be led.

Raphael was formally engaged as Choir Master in January 1937 and remained until 1967. According to his biographer, his earlier work at the Great Synagogue under Alman had given him a solid Jewish liturgical and Hebraic background, and his musicianship led him to compose for the choir.⁶⁷ However, he, like Jacobson, straddled two worlds, and is perhaps more known as an interpreter of art song than as a synagogue musician. The music he wrote betrays no trace of *nusah hat'fillah*.

The Hymnal

In 1938, with the desire now firmly embedded to encourage congregational participation in at least some of the music, West London Synagogue published a hymnal.⁶⁸ The idea of a hymnal was borrowed directly from the various churches of the surrounding cultures;⁶⁹ it represents quite a dramatic shift in the way music and liturgy were conceived. Although one can state that there are “hymns” of a sort within the *siddur*, such as *Adon olam* and *Yigdal*, these are integrated aspects of the edifice of a service. Most music is music that accompanies the prayer; Jews sang their liturgy, words and music an interactive whole. The introduction of a hymnal is an interjection of something alien into the flow of a service, an artificial way of stimulating congregational singing.⁷⁰

The American Reform movement had published its own hymnal in 1897, revised in the 1930s⁷¹ to reintroduce Jewish musical sensibility, “adding devotion to aesthetics.”⁷² “... visionaries such as Abraham Wolf Binder⁷³ sought to restore a measure of historical grounding and a sense of synagogue music tradition... a composer such as Lazare Saminsky⁷⁴ began to draw upon... authentic Jewish chants and his research into established melodies from disparate Jewish communities and ancient biblical cantillations.”⁷⁵

⁶⁷ It was difficult to uncover much about Raphael’s tenure at WLS. He was born Harris Furstenfeld but changed his name to Marc Raphael. A recent popular biography, compiled by a former choir member, is the first. Gillian Thornhill, *The Life, Times and Music of Mark Raphael*. (Bloomington: Author House, 2012). Bernard’s recent history makes no mention of him.

⁶⁸ *Hymnal*. West London Synagogue, 34 Upper Berkeley Street, W. 1 (1938).

⁶⁹ The Orthodox world also considered compiling a hymnal, influenced both by the Churches and the “success” of the WLS hymnal. See Israel Finestein, *Anglo-Jewry in Changing Times* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1999), 231 ff.

⁷⁰ For more on the use of hymnals see Eric L. Friedland, *Were Our Mouths Filled with Song: Studies in Liberal Jewish Liturgy*, Monographs of the Hebrew Union College (Book 20), 1997.

⁷¹ *The Union Hymnal, Songs and Prayers for Jewish Worship*. Compiled and Published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1936.

⁷² Benjie-Ellen Schiller, “The Hymnal as an Index of Musical Change in Reform Synagogues,” in *Sacred Sound and Social Change*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 193.

⁷³ Abraham Wolf Binder (1895-1966), music director at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue and professor of Jewish liturgical music at the Hebrew Union College, both in New York City.

⁷⁴ Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959), helped found the Society for Jewish Folk Music in St. Petersburg, Russia, 1908. In 1923 he became music director at Temple Emanu-El in New York City, until his death.

⁷⁵ <http://www.milkenarchive.org/people/view/all/480/Schlesinger,+Sigmund>.

It is important to understand the chasm that existed between one community, which valued musical expertise, and another which did not. The much larger American Reform *Union Hymnal* was published for a movement, not one synagogue, and was issued under the auspices of the American Reform professional body of rabbis known as the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis (established 1889) with the music provided by the American Society of Cantors (established 1895). The first *Union Hymnal* (1897) included music by classical music composers; a small number of pieces composed by non-Jews, including a couple of hymns; and a vast number of pieces composed by Jewish composers, *hazzanim* or otherwise identified as consciously Jewish.

One might have imagined that a “songbook” intended for a congregation would seek to convey the spiritual meaning of the music to be sung and its place in the worship service, however, the WLS hymnal lacks both this type of reflective or educative prologue; there is no editorial attribution, apart from an ascription that four of the pieces were used with the permission of the 1897 CCAR *Union Hymnal*.

By contrast, in the *Union Hymnal*, the Committee on Synagog [sic] Music set out their mission in an opening statement. In this 1930s revision, the editors wrote that it should “ring true to the Jewish spirit” and “be as Jewish as possible.”⁷⁶ As the liturgical musical trends and compositions of the American Reform movement were to play a central role in the later musical history of the movement, I include their statement of purpose:

The Committee on Revision was actuated by a desire to produce a hymn book which would stimulate congregational singing, inspire Jewish devotion, revive the value of Jewish melody...lean heavily where possible on Jewish motifs...and finally contribute to the field of hymnology a publication which would be essentially Jewish in color, spirit and purpose...Even a superficial glance...indicates how many of the hymns are based upon traditional melodies...But...the needs and tastes of our congregations are... many. A number of old and new hymns have been included which are in the general tone, but which are not specifically Jewish.⁷⁷

It is significant but not surprising that the American Reform movement was more reflective about the place of music in its services because of the prominence of cantors. Without a comparable dedicated body of Jewish liturgical musicians versed and immersed in synagogue music WLS, without even one Jewishly knowledgeable musical expert, could not engage with the historical Jewish musical heritage. And in neglecting to include a preface, WLS declined to share the process which led WLS to present the music that it did.

The “how” and “what” of the music at WLS has been examined, but the “why” of this music needs further research. We have clearly shown that the WLS tradition in music was one of beauty⁷⁸ decorum and order,⁷⁹ its choral tradition possibly influenced both by the strong choral tradition in the UK⁸⁰ and “...the general ‘movement for better music’ manifest in...churches

⁷⁶ It is interesting that this criterion should exist in a Jewish world whose early musical heritage in Europe has often been described as Protestant in sound and in execution.

⁷⁷ *Union Hymnal* 1936, 142.

⁷⁸ Ideas based on readings and conversations with Sidney Fixman, and Charles Broadbent-Bowers, see below.

⁷⁹ Kershner and Romain, *Tradition and Change*, 34.

⁸⁰ Ideas substantiated in private conversations with Professor Jeremy Dibble.

throughout mid-Victorian Britain.”⁸¹ Although one notes that, in the late-18th century in some UK churches “...the main goal was...to make the music more beautiful...”⁸² by the 20th century, many churches had reclaimed traditional chant, and engaged in vociferous debates about how and with what reverence to engage in singing.⁸³

Raphael and Richardson

Raphael continued to work with Rideout until Rideout’s retirement in 1955, at which point his assistant, Arnold Richardson, became the synagogue organist. It is also during this time that Raphael, and/or others, proposed some mutually contradictory changes. One of these was to engage an actual hazzan, which was discussed but rejected by the Music Committee and by Reinhart. In combination with this discussion, there were [further] problems in the choir, in particular, the inability to engage Jewish choristers. It is unclear when it was approved, but, according to Thornhill, who sang in the choir in those days, “Mark Raphael tried very hard over an extended period of time to advertise for and audition Jewish singers, without much luck. Whereas he had enough sopranos and basses, he became desperately short of tenors and contraltos. Since he was a professor at the Royal College of Music, he was able to audition non-Jewish singers from there... my brother being one of them. That was in 1964. The result was a happy mixture; sopranos and basses were Jewish, tenors and altos were non-Jewish, and we all enjoyed singing together.”⁸⁴

The use of non-Jewish singers is often debated in the non-Orthodox Jewish world, and their presence is not unproblematic. If the choir is in the role of *sh’liah tsibbur*, then one might ask if non-Jews may perform this function on behalf of Jews. Allied to this would be a presumption about a lack of conversance with Hebrew. The manner in which non-Jews entered the choir is a further sad commentary on the inability of the Anglo-Jewish world to encourage and support Jewish professionals in the field of Jewish music. Finally, it seems far from the ideal of music and the creation of Jewish sacred space to purport that choir was an appropriate venue for interfaith mingling whose primary purpose was the enjoyment of the choristers.

Sydney Fixman, Arnold Richardson and Christopher Bowers-Broadbent

Upon the retirement of Raphael in 1968, Sydney Fixman became Director of Music and remained until his retirement in 2010; he worked with organist Arnold Richardson from 1948 until the latter’s death in 1973, after which time a student of Richardson’s, Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, became the organist. He continues there to this day.

Daphne Richardson, the widow of Arnold Richardson, was herself an employee and member of West London Synagogue during some of her late husband’s tenure. She indicated there was a general conviction that Arnold Richardson’s musical offerings were a “calling.” Daphne said her husband felt that accompanying the choir was “praying to God.” West London

⁸¹ Kershen and Romain, *Tradition and Change*, 47-48.

⁸² Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, 243.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 10.

⁸⁴ Private email correspondence with Gillian Thornhill.

Synagogue and its services became his spiritual home, and he considered himself an “adopted Jew,” although he never converted.⁸⁵

Of interest is the fact that one of their rabbis, Dr. Van der Zyl, who officiated there from 1958–1968, had undergone some training as a hazzan before entering the rabbinate.⁸⁶ Sydney Fixman’s early tenure at WLS coincided for a short while with Van der Zyl, whom he found “most encouraging” in terms of the music, although Fixman did not know about his hazzanic background.⁸⁷ This is a most curious circumstance, as Van der Zyl could have brought a depth of musical understanding to the burgeoning Reform world, but choose to suppress his expertise in this field. It is not clear whether the pressure for this came from without or within.

I asked Daphne Richardson about the hymnal. A hymnal, as opposed to choir music, invites congregational participation, and I wondered how widely it was used. She understood that, while they used the hymnal for some English hymns, they also sang a number of Psalms and anthems in Hebrew, but by the time Fixman began his work at WLS, it was only rarely used, and then, for the couple of Hebrew melodies it contained, not for the English hymns.⁸⁸ Current Senior Rabbi Julia Neuberger, who grew up at WLS, remembers they regularly dipped into it when she was a child.

The Association of British Synagogues/Reform Synagogues of Great Britain

In 1942, six other Reform synagogues banded together and formed the Association of British Synagogues. They were Manchester Reform Synagogue, known as Jacksons Row,⁸⁹ the Settlement Synagogue, Glasgow Reform Synagogue, Bradford Congregation, and Northwestern Reform Synagogue. The music used by these synagogues was varied and drawn from many different sources, both Christian and Jewish, English and German, with some Sephardi and perhaps a negligible amount from Eastern Europe, and some classical secular music. The two strongest influences continued to be the musical tradition of WLS, and that of Lewandowski, Sulzer, and others brought to England by German refugee rabbis. Still notably absent was any public analysis of the nature and function of music in liturgy.

The next marker for the organization came in 1946, when they changed their name to the Association of Synagogues in Great Britain. At that point, Sinai Synagogue in Leeds had joined. As many synagogues engaged German refugee rabbis, it is probable that they brought the music of their German Reform heritage to the synagogues they were serving. We know that Bradford, under the rabbinical leadership of Rabbi Graf, established a strong Lewandowski tradition. Sinai founding member Ruth Sterne recalls that they borrowed two volumes of Louis Lewandowski from Rabbi Graf for use in their services, and that she then ordered these volumes from the USA.

⁸⁵ Private conversations with Daphne Richardson.

⁸⁶ His daughter, Nikki Van der Zyl, attests to this, but has no further information.

⁸⁷ Private conversation with Nikki van der Zyl.

⁸⁸ Private conversations with Sydney Fixman and Rabbi Dr. Bobby Silverman, who grew up in WLS, and believes that in the 1950s, the hymnal was only used in Religion School.

⁸⁹ For more information, see P. Selvin Goldberg, *The Manchester Congregation of British Jews 1857-1957: A Short History to Mark the Occasion of the Congregation Centenary* (Manchester: Manchester Congregation of British Jews, 1957).

As Graf subsequently went to work in Cardiff, he surely took this Lewandowski tradition with him, and it is not beyond imagination that this music was also shared with the other new provincial synagogue of this era, Southport. Leeds had a “cantor” for some time.

In 1958, the organization changed its name again, to the RSGB (Reform Synagogues of Great Britain). Although not (yet) a movement per se, it began to operate as more of a centralized organization; the individual congregations were constituents, compliant in some issues, but retaining a great deal of independence in others.

The Music Committee—First Iteration—The Music Index

During the 1960s, Louisa (Lulu) Librowicz of Bradford Synagogue, and a vice-chairwoman of the movement, proposed the formation of a music sub-committee. The Music Committee, under Librowicz’s leadership, set about collecting the music sung in the various synagogues, and created an index. According to her son, Rudi Leavor, “We wanted an index of all of the music available throughout the constituent synagogues. We gathered all of the music and then had the first lines of all the songs copied out, in alphabetical order, with an index at the front. My mother then made use of the new technology of photocopying, to make copies of the various songs. It took some five to seven years. Later, Dennis Sheridan produced the printed versions from the hand copied ones.”⁹⁰

When I asked whether his mother was reflecting or creating a Reform tradition, he replied that she did not want to influence any synagogue in their choices, but rather, to present the index and leave it to people to use it as they wished. When the choir directors, or other responsible party, made their choices, they would order the parts from the Music Committee and these would then be sent to them. In contrast to the vibrant and dynamic musical scene in the USA and the English churches, this was a strongly conservative approach, which ensured that the narrow range of music used in the movement was continually redistributed to the various synagogues, without any kind of judgment or reflection.

The approach taken by the committee served to impress upon the synagogues the belief that this music was *Mis-sinai*, hallowed by ancient tradition, music perhaps not to be tampered with. This approach greatly impoverished the musical momentum of the individual synagogues. It limited the repertoire in great part to Verrinder, Mombach, Sulzer, and above all, Lewandowski. And it created a second-rate musical performance: all of these composers wrote four-part choral music; they had had at their disposal expert vocalists and organists, and the smaller voluntary choirs of RSGB synagogues could not approximate the quality of performance for which these works had been intended. They were also extremely difficult to sing, leaping about the octaves, with the need for lush high soprano soloists. And yet, the music lingered.

How accurately this music was disseminated is a matter of debate. Viv Bellos and Raymond Goldman, the former to become the Director of Music for the RSGB, the other the General Secretary of the RSGB from 1966-1994, believe that the music was often copied out incorrectly, that melodies went around the congregations in odd ways, not necessarily as written.

⁹⁰ Private conversation with Rudi Leavor.

As one of the tasks of the committee was also to help synagogues make the transition from Ashkenazi to Sephardi modes of articulation, the words and the music had to be modified in order to accommodate the differences in pronunciation and syllabic emphasis. Bellos and Goldman believe that this was awkwardly and not always successfully accomplished.

But the music of what was now the RSGB had also taken on the patina of folk song, in that it was often transmitted aurally to choristers who may or may not have read music, and who, in turn, transmitted the music to newer synagogues. As melodies were not always practised from the original, or even a written, score, they were sometimes recalled inaccurately.

One ubiquitous example of this is the Israel Goldfarb melody to *Shalom aleikhem*, sung after the lighting of the candles on Friday night, or as a Shabbat song altogether. It is composed of four strophes, in the form ABBA, and yet, in almost every synagogue, it is sung in the form ABAB. Every attempt to correct this from a composer's printed score bumps against the stubborn intractability of deeply ingrained melodic habitude.

Whether or not one has an obligation to honor the original intent of a composer, or whether the music should rightfully take on a life of its own and pass into folk memory, is an interesting question. When the late Debbie Friedman⁹¹ was in the UK at the end of 2010, she led people in a rendition of her melody for *Havdalah*, the ceremony for the conclusion of the Sabbath. She was amused to discover everyone present doing it "incorrectly," ascending where she had written the melody descending. She conceded that music takes on a life of its own, and went along with the sung version, the *k'ri-k'tiv*⁹² dilemma, if you will.

In like manner, Librowicz and her committee attempted not an ethnomusicological study, nor an attempt to establish a correct version of compositions, but rather, to capture the music of the times, and ensure that it could be shared among the synagogues. Bellos, however, is not sure how much was disseminated, as it was difficult both to see the rather cumbersome files, and to print and distribute the notes.

The index, as valuable as it may have been for collating the music of the movement and now proves to be for historical research, lacks musicological and scholarly scrutiny, and is therefore suspect in its ascriptions. Yet again, there is no statement of the purpose or nature of music in a service, simply a list of music that was being sung or which might be sung, presumably for the purposes of enabling the congregations to find music to sing.

Librowicz was succeeded as chair of the Music Committee by Bernard Pearlstone of Southwest Essex Reform Synagogue. The Music Committee's members at the time included, among others, Viv Bellos, who recalled that the committee had as their task the on-going project of examining the musical selections of the various congregations and deciding whether they should go into the index. The Committee viewed their role as one of trying to supplement the index, to support each other and the choir leaders, organists, etc. of the constituent synagogues.

⁹¹ Debbie Friedman (1951-2011), a phenomenally influential American singer-songwriter.

⁹² This refers to a universally observed Torah reading tradition. All scribes are to copy exactly the text of the Torah, even where there are known to be mistakes. In a printed version, known as a *humash*, an asterisk notes the "incorrect" written version of a word, the קָרִי--directing one's attention to the footnotes--to the correct version, קָרִי.

Prayerbook Revision 1977

In the 1970s, it was decided that the movement needed a prayer book of its own, to supplant the one created by the Ministers of West London synagogue and a committee was formed under the leadership of Rabbi Van der Zyl. Initially it consisted entirely of German refugee rabbis, but Van der Zyl approached Rabbi Lionel Blue⁹³ to become involved, and he in turn brought in Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Magonet.⁹⁴ These two became the main editors of the new Forms of Prayer, published in 1977. What is fascinating is that neither rabbi worked in a congregation at that time nor attended synagogue services on a regular basis, and neither of them had had a particularly religiously thick Jewish upbringing. This was apparent in the way in which the inclusion of music was conceived.

Each editor emphasized different precipitating factors in the publication of a new *siddur*. Magonet listed the practicalities—the need to update the prayer book to modern English (“you” instead of “thou”), a chance to rectify omissions and foreshortenings in the prayers themselves, and the chance to create not only a liturgical book, but one that was educational and could be used in home-based rituals.⁹⁵ Blue stressed the theological aspects: prayer in the shadow of the Holocaust and the destruction of the Yiddish world; contending with the rise of Israel and Jewish nationalism; the trends towards secularization; and the renewal of Judaism in Western Europe. When asked if he felt that the *siddur* had accomplished this, he responded that “We retained the same prayers, with a more interesting translation, a more interesting layout, but didn’t really tackle the questions people were asking...”⁹⁶

Music was to find some place in this new prayer book. “We noted the virtual absence of music in the old *siddur*; this new *siddur* added musical pieces, songs, both throughout the book and in a dedicated song anthology.”⁹⁷

Magonet explained the musical side of the prayer book: “We then added songs that they could use at home, the *z’mirot*,⁹⁸ to give people the possibility of learning things in that context, to use at home if they wanted. That was the musical idea. The *z’mirot* rotted the old Lewandowski and WLS choral formal apparatus. So, we added songs to break that down and added hasidic songs and the like.”

Here then, is an attempt to resituate some Jewish *Shabbat* practice back to the home, by using the *siddur* as a manual for home use, as is the case in many traditional *siddurim*. The question arose as to how the songs were chosen. Magonet replied that it began with his own learning process: “Whatever I knew and what I could get from someone else. I spent time with

⁹³ Rabbi Lionel Blue (1930-2016), a journalist, broadcaster, and recipient of the coveted Order of the British Empire (OBE) award.

⁹⁴ Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Magonet (1942 -), a theologian, Vice President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and long-time academic director of the Leo Baeck College, London.

⁹⁵ Private conversation with Jonathan Magonet.

⁹⁶ Private conversation with Lionel Blue.

⁹⁷ *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship. Volume 1 Daily, Sabbath, and Occasional Prayers*. Edited by the Assembly of Rabbis of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain. Seventh Edition. 1977. 571ff

⁹⁸ *Zemer*, a Hebrew word for “song,” usually refers to a “table song”, one sung on Shabbat at home around the meal table. *Z’mirot* is the plural.

Rav Sperber⁹⁹ and learned things at his *Shabbat* table that I didn't know from home." As the work of the committee continued, others requested the addition of their favorites, which were added. It was a learning process for the editors, as this use of music had been absent from their own lives.

The structural concept was that "There were the choices, four or five different songs, over a four-week cycle that would cover most of the traditional stuff. And one *zemer* a week, so that you would learn and sing one a week." This then would theoretically be taken back to the home and incorporated into one's Friday night celebration. However, in the established manner with which music was handled in the Reform movement, the purpose and function of music was not elaborated. Magonet acknowledged that "We didn't particularly talk about music. Those with a traditional yen wanted it available, to be part of their lives. Nowadays it is about different things, but then it was about access to the tradition. We were not conscious of how to provide the music – there was more about traditional songs that one ought to know."

This marks a shift. Whereas previously the music of the movement was either neo-Anglican, or circumscribed and reformatted German classical music based on Jewish modes, this generation began to discuss Jewishness in music, and believed that there was a corpus of synagogue song that was "traditional" and which they began to long to have in their repertoire. It is perhaps the beginning of the desire for "authenticity," a wish to incorporate the music most closely identified with Jewishness, that of the Yiddish worlds. This also coincides with the klezmer revival, another Jewish musical movement that attempted to recapture authentic Jewish musical traditions. The first new klezmer album was produced in 1975 by The Klezmerim.¹⁰⁰

The concept of "traditional music" is set to become a recurrent motif, and here Magonet, one of the first to espouse this, defines it as: "The Ashkenazi songfest, Eastern European Jewish songs, what I would have heard around the table of Rav Sperber. You have to remember that the UK tradition was rather thin—the previous book didn't have anything like that. People who knew anything were thin on the ground. If someone knew a tune at some *shuls*, we would join in, but there was no apparatus for that. We were not conscious about providing more than a *heykish*¹⁰¹ atmosphere."

And so, Magonet and others brought to the RSGB the music of the *Shabbat* home, which they themselves learned as adults, sometimes in Israel, at the home of an inviting traditional rabbi. "If you look at the Song Anthology, we added the songs that were around at the time, singable, with music available, and nice, to open up the music.... we just bunged them in, almost an afterthought, what was popular and available and somehow spoke in a religious context even if secular. We gave them a voice that they didn't have before, an entrée into stuff that just wasn't there. It was very sterile. Reform services starting with Lewandowski's *Mah tovu*—this wasn't *heykish*." This then became a bipartite endeavour. "We put the songs in, then the music committee had to find the melodies. So, we gave them the task afterwards."

⁹⁹ An Israeli Talmud Professor and rabbi.

¹⁰⁰ The Klezmerim, founded in Berkeley, California in 1975, was one of the world's first klezmer revival bands.

¹⁰¹ A Yiddish word that translates roughly as "homey", signifying a kind of warm, comfortable, familiar, quality.

Magonet continued with his theme, that the musical additions would bring about a change in the Reform world, but it is a vision laced with nostalgia, sentimental for a world which was no longer there, and which may not have proven attractive to the types of Jews who were members of RSGB synagogues, those, mentioned above, who desired cooler services and music in a classical Western style:

Lionel Blue grew up with *yiddishkeit* [Jewishness], but not *z'mirot* around the table. There were no home services in Reform, just terribly cold, synagogue-based ones. It was the WLS model writ small. And the *z'mirot* in the *siddur* were to try to get people to do things at home. We began the process of introducing a home liturgy, the other point of being Jews. We wanted a *kol bo*,¹⁰² and a home life, around the table, and we added whatever could help... We added other songs to introduce those in a rhymed version so that they could be sung in English. I don't think anyone ever did that before. We did nothing more with the musical education. It was not our responsibility and we had no time.¹⁰³

It is ironic that the attempt to introduce table songs for home Sabbath celebrations was done by incorporating them into regular *Shabbat* services. The synagogization of Jewish life was already a noteworthy aspect of Reform Jewish life and it was an interesting, but not clearly thought out, concept that the inclusion of a song anthology would, in itself, change things. The music of the *siddur* became part of synagogues' musical repertoire, although there were many synagogues that never learned all of the additional songs. This prayer book was printed before the online world allowed for people to find music and listen to songwriters. Without full-time music professionals, it was difficult to find printed music or recordings, transcribe them, learn them and teach them. The musical repertoire of the movement did expand, but not exponentially.

Lionel Blue had some other interesting perspectives to add: "What was the place of the music? The inclusion of that which was singable and still had a place in Jewish history. *Yom zeh m'khubbad*, *Yah ribbon*, the Sabbath songs. We also added Ladino songs. Ideas of what to sing now came from the *havurot*¹⁰⁴ like the one I was involved with, which added Ladino songs."¹⁰⁵

Tellingly, Magonet mentions Blue's *heymish* albeit non-observant background, and yet Blue himself not only ignores this, but is attracted to the music of a different Jewish culture, the Sephardi world. This was always felt to be part of the inheritance of the RSGB anyway, and, having retained certain Sephardi liturgical practices,¹⁰⁶ the music of this world begins to appear in song, and not, as in Verrinder's day, reworked into conventional choral pieces.

But Blue also drew spiritual inspiration from the Christian world and, in contrast to Magonet's desire to retrieve and encourage the use of what he perceived as the authentic,

¹⁰² An "everything in it." A *Siddur kol bo* refers to a prayer book that is replete with all prayers and readings.

¹⁰³ Private conversation with Jonathan Magonet.

¹⁰⁴ *Havurot*—the plural of *Havurah*—derives from the root *haveir*, friend, and is ascribed to small, more egalitarian groups, formed of groups of friends, or established in larger synagogues as small intimate groups of like-minded people. For more information see Barbara Borts, "Group Fellowship Comes of Age," *Jewish Chronicle*, June 8, 1990, 27.

¹⁰⁵ Private conversation with Lionel Blue.

¹⁰⁶ The retention of a pre-Torah reading *hagbahah* (lift and display of Torah scroll), for example.

unadulterated music of Eastern Europe, Blue finds instances of church music more spiritually arresting, and more encouraging of participation:

In the Christian world, there are lots of hymns, Sydney Carter,¹⁰⁷ and other songs like *God Likes a Cheerful Giver*, simple, easy to learn music. You could catch the music off of someone next to you. These spoke of the things your soul wanted, real and honest. For my morning prayers, I sang *One More Step* by Carter, but I couldn't get these songs in, because people thought they were *goyish* [non-Jewish]. A nationalist one like *Yerushalayim shel zahav*¹⁰⁸ could get in, but nationalism kept Judaism together and anything that felt like assimilation was a dirty word, especially religious assimilation... We used to do assimilation, but the Nazis put a divide between Jew and non-Jew. I mentioned once or twice the music of the Settlement and the WLS hymnal, but you knew that you could not get these things in.¹⁰⁹

Blue hints at a post-assimilatory age, in which one could return to the pre-Holocaust musical syncretism that occurred at WLS and the Settlement, when boundaries, at least for the Jews, were blurred and one found inspirational music in any setting. He believes that this was rather a "Golden Age," broken by the Nazi era, and that Jews feel now the need to "regroup" and demarcate Jewishness from Otherness. He didn't see music's potential for tethering the experience of the Holocaust, for, as Bohlman noted, "...music was present at a moment of ending, even as death was knowingly confronted...that transcendence was realized through the music."¹¹⁰ Blue was in the vanguard of a syncretic musical impetus, reflecting as well, his strong support for interfaith dialogue and disregard for traditional injunctions against interfaith relationships. He lauds the assimilatory musical project of earlier days. But it was not what others were seeking.

When asked whether music has a spiritual place in the *siddur*, Blue responded, "Yes, the Yiddish ones had a spiritual connection to people's reality, to the deepest experiences of their lives but there was some opposition to including them." Despite the yearning for "*yiddishkeyt*," that did not extend to including actual Yiddish songs. Sephardi music was claimed as part of the Reform's heritage. Yiddish remained the music of a world rejected, of an expression of religiosity that discomfited Anglo-Reformers.

Blue was aware of the paucity of the repertoire: "The music of the synagogue was fairly fixed: Lewandowski and Israeli folksongs. The other music that could be sung in the synagogue, like the Holocaust march, *Zog nit keynmol*¹¹¹ could be sung as a hymn, but that is all." This marks the first clear indication of the introduction of Israeli or Yiddish music, although others disagreed that Israeli music was intrinsic to the Reform repertoire of the time. Blue still retained

¹⁰⁷ Sidney Carter (1915-2004) was an English poet and songwriter best known for his "Lord of the Dance" (1967), set to an American Shaker tune, "Simple Gifts."

¹⁰⁸ *Yerushalayim shel zahav* was written by Israeli songwriter Naomi Shemer in 1967, shortly before the Six Day War in June of that year.

¹⁰⁹ Private conversation with Lionel Blue.

¹¹⁰ Philip V. Bohlman, "Beyond Jewish Modernism," in *Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New*, ed. Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 168.

¹¹¹ *Zog nit keynmol*, "Never Say, 'This is the End'," known as *The Partizaner lid* (Partisans Song), text by Hirsch Glick, set to a pre-war Russian tune by Daniel and Dimitri Pokrass in the Vilna Ghetto (1943), a year before he was killed in Estonia.

a desire for Protestant-type service, replete with hymns, Christian, or in the form of extra-liturgical sundry Jewish songs.

Blue described himself as intensely musical, and said that the music was deeply moving for him. He showed an awareness of its spiritual, religious potential; it is unfortunate that he did not expand on his thoughts, perhaps earlier on instigating a dialogue on music:

Some of my greatest moments in a service came from music... I was affected by ... recordings of *shuls* from 1930s Berlin. There was great fervor; the whole congregation sang out ... I don't know if that still exists. Can we replicate that? No. Anglo-Judaism is more moderate in its expression... I tried to get Kurt Weill¹¹² in, but the people didn't want it, if it came from Germany. They wanted things that were triumphant, Zionist songs... Often the songs had very little relevance to the words, for instance, the *Adon olam*,¹¹³ but this is one of the profoundest moments of mystical experience, and no one seemed to know the words. And some songs that needed to be sung in the synagogue... now became sentimentalized, so people did not realize the significance of what they were singing. I felt the need for a new type of religious song, direct, that dealt with religious experience, that was easy, didn't ask people to believe in impossible things, but the time had not come yet. I also got some ideas from an American synagogue on 5th Avenue.¹¹⁴ I don't go for antiquarianism... also, a lot of music doesn't require words, so you could introduce *niggunim*. Lots cannot read Hebrew... but songs without words are a characteristic of mystical music.¹¹⁵

Within this approach, however unsystematic, are a number of themes of great import. One is that Blue regards British Jewry as staid and lacking in passionate connection to its heritage, which extends, as he noted sadly, to a lack of emotional intensity in services. He believes that there is sometimes no congruity between melody and words, and that music, when set to a text, accompanies the prayer and should reflect the mood appropriately. He opposed "Zionist" songs,¹¹⁶ which stemmed from a place of Jewish dwelling and reflected Jewish experience, in favor of incorporating music from German Jewish and *hasidic* sources, as well as Christian hymns. His views invited serious debate, but they also drew the movement back to the Verrinder era of syncretism, reflected in his wish to include Christian hymns and exclude music being developed in the Jewish state.

Viv Bellos—Director of Music

In 1986, Viv Bellos was appointed Director of Congregational Music for the RSGB, a new position created especially for her and which marks the first time that the movement appointed a professional musician to provide leadership of its musical state of affairs. She

¹¹² Kurt Weill (1900-1950) was a German Jewish composer for the stage, best known for collaborating with German playwright Berthold Brecht (1898-1956) on *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), with its still-popular hit song, "Mack the Knife"

¹¹³ He is referring to a melody very popular with younger people in particular, noted as "traditional" in a popular songbook series for the Conservative movement, edited by Jeffrey Shiovitz. Titled *Zamru Lo*, the series began with *Zamru Lo: The Next Generation, Volume I—Congregational Melodies for Shabbat* (Fairlawn, OH: Cantors Assembly, 2004).

¹¹⁴ Very probably Reform Temple Emanu-El, founded in New York in 1845.

¹¹⁵ Private conversation with Lionel Blue.

¹¹⁶ Early Reform was, as Blue exemplifies, rather anti-Zionist, which fit the project of reconstructing Judaism as a religion, of a non-nationalistic, universalist, hue. Blue has been in the forefront of interfaith dialogue, but also of a syncretistic amalgam of Jewish and Christian practices, as well as Jews and Christians.

worked in this role until 1996, when the position was abolished.¹¹⁷

Bellos was and still is the Director of Music of Northwest London Reform Synagogue, “Alyth.” She begins her story of the movement’s music with WLS:

West London was the backbone but could not become the flagship synagogue. They always had a professional choir, except for when they began, when they had a semi-professional choir. The smaller *shuls* could not do that WLS music with their small choirs, so they looked to the German music, (which was also written for four-part choir with organ accompaniment) which they either sang in their choirs, or as unison melodies, written down as they remembered them.¹¹⁸

The process was a difficult one at first, as uncovering and disseminating music was time-consuming and presented transcription difficulties: “The strongest influence [on the music at that time] was American. There wasn’t any printed music from Israel, so I had to transcribe it, but in reality, there was very little liturgical music from Israel. It was not being printed, even if it was being written. There was music for Orthodox synagogues, but written for hazzan and male voice choir, of no use to me. As for Israeli music being sung in, say, *Kol Ha-n’shamah*,¹¹⁹ there were lots of *lai lai lais*, improvised harmonies, all sorts of stuff, not written down.”

Bellos was brought in by Raymond Goldman to change the musical culture of the movement. Although she did not introduce a serious discourse on the spiritual potential of liturgical music, she did rattle the Reform paradigm, with its pronounced emphasis on solemn, sombre music. What emerged was an inclination towards fun, upbeat tunes, instating Durkheim’s insight that “...religion would not be itself if it did not give some place to the free combinations of thought and activity, to play, to art, to all that recreates the spirit that has been fatigued...”¹²⁰ Yet playfulness in the Reform sphere is still a matter of contention, as we see through the disdain heaped on one popular melody for *Adon olam*. Bellos chose from among those composers whose music was lively and buoyant music. The first was Sol Zim, whose music is infused with neo-Hasidism within the framework of nusah.¹²¹

The second and third “playful” composers were Debbie Friedman and Jeff Klepper,¹²² who drew their inspiration from the folk and folk-rock movements. All three derive their “authenticity” from their connections to the American Jewish scene, an increasingly powerful influence on Anglo-Jewry, and all three offer melody line songs which are cheerful and easy to

¹¹⁷ At that point, the RSGB axed other such small positions.

¹¹⁸ Private conversation with Viv Bellos.

¹¹⁹ A Progressive synagogue in Jerusalem

¹²⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1915), 426.

¹²¹ Sol Zim (1939 -) is a famous American *hazzan*-composer, Cantor-for-Life at the Hollis Hills Jewish Center in Queens, New York, and Professor of Music at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Yonkers, New York. He has published a series of “*musical siddurim*” containing participatory songs for the entire yearly cycle of liturgy.

¹²² Debbie Friedman (1951-2011) combined American folk-ballad style with Hebrew liturgical texts (*Mi she-beirakh* being among her best-known settings) to create an extremely popular contemporary form of communal prayer, even in some Orthodox synagogues. Jeff Klepper (1952-) was “... one of the first cantors to champion congregational singing and to use a guitar in Jewish worship.” Klepper cites as his musical inspirations the Yiddish songs he sang at home, studies with the eminent composer Abraham Binder, and “the sing-along style of Pete Seeger, the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell and the late Shlomo Carlebach” as well as animated Israeli and *hasidic* song. www.jeffklepper.com/bio/html I found no examples of nusah (traditional prayer modality) in his music.

engage with, marking a transformation from the more turgid, imposing music of the WLS and German traditions.

Bellos attempted to make the music of the various synagogues more appealing through music seminars and choir festivals for the movement, and through holding workshops in synagogues, to help revitalize their choirs. She imparted respectability to the use of “new” music: “I don’t know if people learned this music from me or from another source, but it seemed to me that my doing it made it legitimate.” In order to make the music readily available, in March 1987 she compiled and distributed four volumes of a unison songbook for *Shabbat* and the High Holidays with cassettes; Bellos sang, accompanied by Chani Smith, a scholar/composer and teacher of cantillation at Leo Baeck College, on flute. Bellos notes that she did, indeed, find music for every song in the *siddur*. Sometime later, a cassette was produced by Michael Boyden, then rabbi of Menorah Synagogue, Cheshire, with songs for Shabbat, accompanying himself on guitar. He was the first British rabbi to use a guitar in services. Technological advances removed one impediment between congregations and music that was an issue with the earlier indices; now one could listen to the actual melody and either order the music or learn it aurally.

American liturgical compositions and Israeli music began to infiltrate the music and style of the RSGB, but as additional material; it did not depose the older strata, with which it often struggled to be heard. The RSGB musical scene was a *bricolage* of different genres and styles of music which in many respects clearly underscores the nature of the movement, diffuse, unadventurous, wedded to incremental change. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the nature of its two prayer books, whose pearl is arguably the rich and mature study anthologies at the back. That might best describe the music of the RSGB: a congerie of different genres of music jostling up against each other within each service.

Bellos’s tenure marks the beginning of a more active, rather than reactive, process of musical change. Whereas earlier, the Music Committee’s offerings *reflected* the music being sung, Bellos attempts to expand and *alter* the musical culture in two respects: One, by distributing different melodies, she was suggesting that congregations try to sing “new” music, and two, by singing these works in unison, she was helping shift the performative from that of four-part choir and organ to one of unified congregational participation. The introduction of melody-line music to the synagogues made the music very accessible (to those who could read music) and singable; at the same time, Bellos was and remains a major proponent of choral music. She feels that the synagogue choir is a characteristic of Anglo-Reform synagogues and should be preserved as part of its heritage. In visiting Alyth one sees that they attempt, through a visibly present congregational choir, to juggle both goals. She broadened her work to increase musical literacy, in the form of the publication once or twice a year of a magazine called *Kolot* [Voices], containing news about music in the movement.

The RSGB Music Handbook

One of Bellos’s resounding achievements was the publication of the RSGB *Music Handbook*, the first of its kind within the movement. This was progress, an attempt to assess the importance of music in the movement, to educate people about the history, nature, and function of liturgical music, and to offer advice on improving music in the

synagogues. Various rabbis, lay leaders, and two musical professionals offered insights through historical exposition, musicological treatises, practical strategies, and a hint of music theology evinced through quotes from the *Tanakh* [Bible].

The *Handbook*, although an evolutionary step, stopped short of entwining religious meaning with music. In the *Handbook* Introduction, Bernard Pearlstone stated that the handbook was “...aimed at stimulating a greater interest in music among Reform Jewish Congregations...and [to] offer guidance on approaches to Reform synagogue music.”¹²³ An article on choirs asserted that “...musical renderings of prayers, hymns, responses, etc., contribute to the worshippers’ feeling of *Kavvanah* (intense devotion) and are therefore a desirable part of the service.”¹²⁴ It offered a self-help guide to the setting up and maintaining of a choir. But still absent were ruminations about the spiritual quality those who sang should bring to their vocalizing in order to imbue the services with spiritual feeling.

The bulk of the offerings in the *Handbook* revolved around qualitative commentaries and interviews by those involved in the production of services and music, including rabbis who sing, a warden, choristers, a “Jew in the pew,” and a professional musician. There was a presumption that choirs and organs would be the mainstays of congregational music, possibly due to Bellos’s emphasis thereon, yet offered some compelling arguments as well for the fostering of *hazzanut*. As Alec Belkin¹²⁵ stated in his piece, “*The Chazan in Reform*,” it is “worth repeating” the words of Rabbi Geoffrey Goldberg, who left the UK to train to be a *hazzan* in the USA:

We are heirs to a magnificent tradition, but are we going to be its transmitters? The prejudices, misunderstandings and lack of knowledge surrounding the attitude towards traditional Jewish music in many Reform and Liberal communities is still damaging our responsibility for this unique inheritance...Eventually Leo Baeck College must surely take a lead in establishing a department of Jewish music. For Jewish music... requires a training as rigorous in many ways as that of the rabbi. Full courses should be available for musically inclined students and for those who wish to take up the cantorate as a profession...¹²⁶

Goldberg never returned to the UK to work,¹²⁷ as there were formerly no roles for cantors. Bellos points out that there were few synagogues large enough or wealthy enough to employ musical professionals, but one could argue that, had this been a higher priority, money could have been found. Rabbi Bobby Silverman¹²⁸ offered some theories as to why Reform in the UK, in contrast to Reform movements in virtually all other countries, has been loath to incorporate “singing from the *bimah*.” His conclusions add little to explain the pervasive absence of cantors but direct us rather towards that which heretofore was not in the foreground: the gradual fading out of choirs as rabbis began to embrace the function of performer of musical renditions, or a quasi-cantorial role. According to Silverman, this was not always the case. “It is just as likely that the absence of singing from the *bimah* in Reform synagogues began not on

¹²³ RSGB *Music Handbook*, 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20; Alec Belkin had served as hazzan/teacher at Maidenhead Synagogue in the 1960s and 1970s).

¹²⁶ Belkin, quoting Rabbi Geoffrey Goldberg, originally printed in *Living Judaism* (the organ of the RSGB) in Spring, 1979.

¹²⁷ He subsequently qualified as a hazzan and lectured at the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College.

¹²⁸ Reuven (Bobby) Silverman, rabbi of Manchester Reform Synagogue.

dogmatic grounds, but simply [because] the pioneer rabbis of West London Synagogue were not singers.”¹²⁹ Van der Zyl, who, we already noted, was a rabbi with a cantorial background, was the first to sing from the *bimah*, when he introduced the notion of chanting *Kiddush* on Friday nights at Alyth and then at WLS.

This is an astonishing contention that, prior to van der Zyl, no rabbi or lay leader ever stood at the reading desk and *sang* a prayer. And yet, we know that there had been occasional *hazzanim* at certain synagogues, and that it is traditional to chant *Kiddush* on Friday night during the service, for the sake of travellers. This was still evidently a matter of controversy in 1986. As a student and later ordained rabbi leading services from 1977 onwards, I can attest to the fact that I, and other rabbis who were musically capable, were singing from the *bimah* with no antagonism from the congregation. Indeed, rabbis did in fact lead other parts of the service from the *bimah*. One can deduce, from this and from the article by Goldberg, that there were tensions, concerning who “owned” the music and “which” music, some of which seems to coincide with the malaise felt in the rabbinate amid increasing strains between them and the lay leadership. Perhaps a hazzan or singing rabbi presented a threat to the voluntary synagogue choir, perhaps perceived as an encroachment of professionalism on amateurism, in a movement that was founded and led by lay people and with a strong tradition of lay involvement; possibly as well as a result of rabbis in the vanguard of musical novelty, at the cusp of attempts to improve the acoustic aspect and broaden the scope of Reform services.

Implicit in the discussions about choirs is the contention that choirs foster greater involvement. There is much to be lauded in that choir members attend services, are proficient in aspects of the liturgical music, and add layers of leadership to each service. On the other hand, as we have and shall see, a choir can impede congregational participation, where a dedicated cantor can, conversely, stimulate involvement. Choirs are often deeply reactionary in musical outlook, and, looking further ahead to the contemporary ethnographies, shared leadership in a spiritual endeavor may result in no clear sense of spiritual center and direction.

The tensions simmered, but the centrality of choirs having been asserted, the *Handbook* contains advice about the mechanics of founding and working with a choir. Its consensus is that choirs should primarily encourage congregational singing and not attempt to *discourage* it through a preponderance of solos and sopranos with the melody line. Most agree however, that there are occasions when “it is useful to give congregants a rest” at various points of the service and to allow the scintillating voice of a soloist to refresh their spirits.”¹³⁰

The most thoughtful piece, the one perhaps most pertinent to the work of this article, is by former University of London lecturer on Jewish music, Alexander Knapp. It is titled, “The Philosophy and Practice of Choice.” In this essay, Knapp discusses the appropriateness of various melodies as carriers of the texts to which they are set. He suggests that it is essential that “... music reflect text, otherwise there will be a rapid loss of credibility in its practical function as a true and viable vehicle for religious feeling...” And then he ponders the matter of what he terms “... the *philosophy* behind music in the service.” Here his answers are disappointing. Aside from reiterating the need for the music to fit the text, or, as he phrases it “... to enhance the inner

¹²⁹ RSGB *Music Handbook*, 24.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

meaning of the words...”¹³¹ he offers only two examples of inappropriate text-melody combination.¹³² For the rest, he moves on to a discussion of the need for some music to be sung by professionals and listened to by congregations, adding another voice to those who are wary of the shift towards exclusively participatory services, and insisting that there is a place for beautiful music sung well. The idea that musically trained professionals might aid in the goal of choosing appropriate music, and educating the congregations about the function of music, does not appear save for its mention in the Goldberg quote.

Finally, Knapp, as have others, observed the passion that attaches itself to discussions about which melody, and drily observed that “... if music ever threatened to degenerate into a weapon... I would have no hesitation in recommending that, in the interests of peace and harmony, music be excluded from all services!”¹³³ Illustrations of this supposition abound and remind us that music can be as disruptive as it is unifying for a group.

Seder Hatefilot—Forms of Prayer—18th Edition

The latest development in the musical history of the movement begins yet again with prayer book reform. As we have noted, each new prayer book states that one of the aims of its editors is a revivification of religiosity and this one is no exception. Among other comments is the remark that one needs to be conscious of, “...a younger generation that feels detached from congregational life...the prayer book needs to be more accessible and welcoming to a wider range of people.”¹³⁴ In common with all of the other revised liturgies of the various progressive organizations of the world, this *siddur* is a more traditional one, aligned more closely with the traditional Order of Prayer (*Matbei’a*),¹³⁵ including the re-introduction of formerly excised sections such as *Musaf*. The reason given for opting for a holistic stream of prayers in place of the former division into six separate services was to offer choice. Because most Reform synagogue services last no longer than one and a half hours, *sh’lihei tsibbur* would have to compile and choose from a variety of materials in each of the traditional sections of a service, rather than follow the short program of material organized into discrete sections of the previous *siddur*. Although the main preoccupations for the committee were questions of inclusion in terms of gender-neutral language and transliteration, music played an enhanced role in this new chapter of the Reform Jewish liturgical experience—but not for the Prayer Book Committee and its Editors.

The editor was, once again, Jonathan Magonet. He believed that the promotion of choice was good for music, as it could be used “for a WLS type high choral service, or a *minyan*, or a minimalist service combined with a study session. It could be used by those who wanted an

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹³² One of these was also disparaged by Lionel Blue above, namely, a buoyant melody for *Adon olam*, requested by many, perhaps most, *b’nei/b’not mitzvah*.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³⁴ *Seder Hatefilot/Forms of Prayer* (London: The Movement for Reform Judaism, 2008).

¹³⁵ *Matbeia she-tav’u hakhamim bivrahkot* (the coin of blessings minted by our sages), tractate *B’rahkot* in both Talmuds: *Yerushalmi*, 9:2; *Bavli*, 40b.

organ and choir, or those who wanted a guitar-led service.”¹³⁶ Diversity is acknowledged and catered for, but as previously, Magonet took the view that one had to be descriptive, not prescriptive, with the music.

As in *Forms of Prayer* 1977, *z'mirot* were included as options within the body of the services, but this time Magonet believed “It was about expanding musical options, that inclusivity will happen if people can sing together. Taking it home (a goal with the 1977 edition) was less an issue; it was now more about the coming together and participating as a group.” What was once an overt goal, to encourage home practice, was jettisoned in favor of the objective of community building, and a new concern, that of marketing. “One is aware people do not have to come to services, so we have to provide something that works for them and the prayer book too. In the seventies, it was assumed that people would come. Now it had to be attractive to make people come. We are in a supermarket, so we have to offer good services that are interesting and accessible.”

This is significant. The movement’s prayer book underlines a key theological shift, from prayer as a spiritual enterprise between a person and God within a congregation, to synagogue as a place of pleasurable social interaction between people, within a congregation, a shift from temporality to spatiality. Whereas the previous *siddur* emphasized home and religious development, this one celebrates space and works to shape the experience people have within that space.

Magonet noted that there already were marked changes in the character of the movement’s music. He commented that: “People know Carlebach and other types of contemporary Jewish music. It’s in the air. In the seventies, there were very few Jewish books and resources in the UK. Now there are discs, CDs, etc. People go to Israel, hear a melody, and want to sing it. They are much more conscious of that aspect and thus, the experience of the service itself became much more important.”¹³⁷

Yet, and despite all movement endeavors to the contrary, Magonet admitted that they had not really had any new ideas about music and, in fact, had dropped the song anthology in favor of including more songs in the service. He also mentioned that there were size and financial constraints and that music was not regarded as the foremost priority. He admits that there was no real discussion about how the music was to work because they did not start from the music. “We are aware that most of our services are a kind of strange combination of classical WLS, popular things people come across, Carlebach or Friedman, a hodgepodge. Maybe WLS still has a coherent musical strategy, but other people don’t think that way.”¹³⁸ The process of adding music seemed to be the same as with the earlier *siddur*, namely, that individuals would request a favored melody and it would be included.

It seems clear that Magonet and some members of the Prayerbook Committee were either unaware or unimpressed with the suddenly burgeoning interest in new perceptions about musical

¹³⁶ I have witnessed its use in different settings, but a number of MRJ alternative services have compiled their own books, implying that the new *siddur* is not as adaptable as intended.

¹³⁷ Private conversation with Jonathan Magonet.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

diversity, and the functions of music as textual interpreter. As music moved to occupy a more central role in the prayer life of Reform professionals and lay people, the battles around music grew stronger. Note that in this comment by Magonet, the clash between choir and rabbi looms large. “We tried, for instance, to change *Avinu Malkeinu*,¹³⁹ but choirs shrieked, ‘our music won’t fit.’ We found the one group of people our colleagues are frightened of and that is the choir director, as they can make or break the service. No rabbi can go against them. And with so many songs and synagogues, it was impossible. We were interested in content. Does it help us in our religious life? The music is a secondary support for that. Our job was to get the text. Content came first.”¹⁴⁰

Although the idea of a song book was not his, Magonet acknowledged the need for a more professional approach to the music. He himself is deeply ambivalent about this change in emphasis in a service:

The more you sing, the longer the service takes. That’s a real issue. You have to balance the desire to sing together with the length of time, so you have to exercise discipline and choose. So, rabbi and choirmaster may battle, in terms of time. I grew up in the United Synagogue. There were one or two passages I found deeply moving...and I want to hear them. The rest can be nice, but it doesn’t work for me at that level. For me, it is much more the moment than the type of music. I don’t enjoy a totally sung service. I feel the music totally takes over; you don’t think about the content anymore, you’ve taken that away. The Alyth Friday service is all sung. I miss the bite. It is a pleasant pop occasion, like the so-called “BJ Experience.”¹⁴¹ For example, in BJ at a certain moment, they distribute tambourines and people spontaneously dance every week. I consider that musical manipulation. Muzak. I recognize the power of music. A selected piece that speaks to me is better than a “sing-along with Mitch.”¹⁴² I am too involved with music to want it to be abused. That moment that you really value, you don’t want cheapened. WLS is also a choral exercise, but a disinterested choral exercise. There they are trying to be beautiful, not to manipulate you religiously, but aesthetically. Thinking again about BJ, I felt that they were egocentrically thinking, “Here we sing along—look at us all singing together.” Yuck.¹⁴³

Magonet’s recalcitrance notwithstanding, the movement’s musical experiences had expanded, its rabbis and many of its lay leaders had visited other venues, and many consequently desired a different, more profound *shul* experience with a new *siddur* that allowed for just those possibilities. And yet, this was placed under the direction of a man whose synagogue tastes were from a different era and stemmed from a different *Sitz-im-Leben* (setting in life).¹⁴⁴ And although Magonet did not oppose the publication of a song book, “The fact of a plurality of melodies for the same text is part of the inclusivity-flexibility thing; different voices, different need,” neither did he support the project.

¹³⁹ “Our Father, Our King.” Many wished for this prayer to be recreated in a more gender-neutral version.

¹⁴⁰ Private conversation with Jonatan Magonet.

¹⁴¹ “BJ”: B’nai Jeshurun on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. Founded in 1825 by German breakaways from Sephardic Shearith Israel, it’s now the hub of a revived Sabbath-observant neighborhood.

¹⁴² Mitch Miller (1911-2010), an American oboist, conductor, record producer, recording industry executive, and host of the television show, “Sing Along with Mitch.”

¹⁴³ Private conversation with Jonathan Magonet.

¹⁴⁴ German biblical criticism term indicating the alleged context in which a term or object has been created, and its function and purpose at that time.

Shirei Ha-T'fillot: Songs of Prayer--Music to Accompany the Reform Siddur

The impetus for a songbook to accompany the new *siddur* came from the Prayer Book Committee, some of whose members helped to raise funds. Rabbi Sybil Sheridan assumed editorial responsibility for the songbook. In common with everyone else involved in this project, she highlighted the shift in the *Zeitgeist* towards choice and variety, maintaining that the older music no longer “works” and that choice in music is also desired. She professed a contrasting point of view to that of Magonet, as she is an advocate of the inclusion of nusah, and of diverse melodic ways to approach liturgy.

Rabbis Elaina Rothman, Chair of the *Siddur* Steering Committee, and Shoshana Boyd-Gelfand, then Executive Director of the Movement for Reform Judaism, were very keen for this project to proceed. Both rabbis received their *s'mikhah* [ordination] from the Jewish Theological Seminary [JTS], the rabbinical college of the American Conservative movement, and although Sheridan disagreed that this had had an impact, it is difficult to imagine that the involvement of rabbis immersed in American Conservative Judaism was unimportant to the concept of widening the scope of British Reform music while introducing more traditional musical patterns. This team therefore conceived of this project to introduce congregations to an expanded repertoire of compositions and to educate them in the art of chanting. Sheridan was aware of the songbook that Bellos created in the 1980s, but felt that that was an outmoded volume, with a very different model. “The new one is more diverse. There are two or three styles of music to choose from. The hope is that congregations will do different tunes for different types of service. And there is music for the new prayers.”¹⁴⁵

The work was not easy. The first ones to labor over the book were musicians, and there was a split between the American “happy-clappy” informal type of inclusive service and the British Reform choral style. Sybil Sheridan says that this conflict accelerated and they could not resolve the chasm between those advocating for such vastly different styles of music, so Sheridan assumed editorial control and brought the project to the Assembly of Rabbis. She felt it was better not to involve musicians, but that the music should come as the *Siddur* came, from the Assembly. She says that the core musical repertoire in the book has remained the choral tradition by virtue of those who constituted the original committee of rabbis and musical directors of *shuls* looking for music for their choirs and assertive about what music they wanted and needed. Included in the committee were rabbis without choirs who wanted simple music, easily learned.

When asked why there was such a fervent desire to relegate Lewandowski, she responded that even though she came from a musical family, Lewandowski is not kind to her, and other, untrained voices, as the registers are too high. She felt that colleagues as well were straining to sing these pieces. She maintained, as do many others interested in musical change, that “older people derived spirituality from listening to beautiful melodies and inspiring sermons, but now people want to join in, demand participation.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ The North American Reform movement ceased publishing communal song collections in 1987. See Schiller, “Musical Change in Reform Synagogues,” in *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet Walton, editors. (Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 208.

¹⁴⁶ Private conversation with Sybil Sheridan.

Sheridan is not a cantor, and, although knowledgeable and interested, found editing the songbook a challenge. Earlier on, I contrasted the cantor-influenced hymnal from the USA with the rather more amateurly-produced WLS version, and much the same contrasts appertain here. Sheridan herself rued the absence of such specialist clergy:

I was also pretty ignorant and had to learn along the way. A lot of our music is wrong according to the traditional *nusah*. They didn't teach it to us. There is a cantorial tradition in the USA, but not here, so we didn't know. And once you are aware, it's hard to go back, like the fact that many congregations use the High Holy Days melody for the *Mi khamokha* on a regular Shabbat. We are incredibly dependent on our American colleagues for this music, but we do not want to be overwhelmed with the USA model. Our historical ties are to the Western *Ashkenazi* tradition, so we need to keep our own historical musical heritage as well as the beauty of the *nusah* and its different modes for different times.¹⁴⁷

This latest project, unlike those of former times, is more prescriptive. Whereas Librowicz et al collected and disseminated the music that was in use, a process continued by Bellos, this book aims to alter the music that is *sung by worshippers*. There is a judgmental aspect to the new book that was missing in the past, which seems to derive from the current conviction, as Sheridan put it above, that “now people demand participation.” This may well be true, although there were earlier attempts to create participatory musical services, and in practice, many lay people do sing lustily along with the “unsingable” Lewandowski corpus. But there is a further aspect to this, a shift from *description to prescription*, mirroring a change in the Reform world itself. In June 2005, the RSGB changed their name to the Movement for Reform Judaism. An association has far less power than a movement, but also far more independence. With the shift has come a narrower, more confidently and assertively pronounced claim about what Reform theology and ideology are, a heightened presence of the leadership in the news, and a concurrent lessening of interest in the lives of the synagogues. In terms of the music, this has resulted in a proselytizing element which aims to “reform” the music sung in the various synagogues.

A judgmental tone has entered the Anglo-Reform world: “Rabbis of the MRJ... [are] aware...how often we tend to use music inappropriately.”¹⁴⁸ So whereas there may be more diversity on the ground, and Sheridan states that “The hope is that every synagogue service leader, music director and rabbi will find in these pages, music that will fit their particular resources...”¹⁴⁹ there is a firm resolve here to amend the [incorrect and undesirable] music of these widely differing synagogues.

Where We Are Now

Until relatively recently (2008), the Reform movement could be described as a liturgically and musically impoverished community, with a limited repertoire of synagogue music consisting primarily of choral works as, until recently, nearly every synagogue had a choir. The music derived from the repositories of WLS, and subsequently, of the German refugee

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Shirei Ha-T'fillot* (London: Movement for Reform Judaism, 2011).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

rabbis and their collections of Lewandowski, Sulzer and others, although people do not, in general, remember the music of Verrinder. As mentioned at the outset, the music has taken on a venerable hue and many congregations feel that this corpus of music is the Reform movement's hallowed musical heritage. This music is often employed incorrectly--Lewandowski's Friday night *Bar'khu* is a good example. Despite the fact that Lewandowski used *nusah* in crafting his compositions, it is not his amalgam of tradition and modernity that is attractive to people. This *Bar'khu* is based on the Friday night German *nusah*, yet sung in Reform synagogues not only on Friday night, but also on Shabbat morning, festival mornings and evenings, and at *Shivah* services in a house of mourning. Omission thereof, as I have discovered to my dismay, brings down criticism and complaint, even if you attempt to teach people that it is inappropriate to use that melody other than at Friday night services. It is clear that people are attached to this piece because of familiarity, often described as "traditional," and its comfortable Western choral sound, without understanding or appreciating the Jewish knowledge behind it. This music defines the Reform movement and its "appropriate" use is of lesser importance than that it be used.

What is there about this music that allows me to fit comfortably into a British liturgical framework? First, it is easily accessible, continuing the universally familiar liturgical music of the late 1800s. The second reason is one with which people are least conscious: the struggle between one mode of being Reform and another. The original music of the movement, espoused by Verrinder et al, came to be increasingly dominant: that of Lewandowski and of Sulzer. It arose out of a context in which Westerners assumed that Western music was the apex not only of culture, but also as a vehicle for the proper expression of appropriate models of spirituality, and in a country which, although free of the type of persecution experienced on the Continent, was nonetheless a hegemonic Christian culture which exerted both subtle and overt exhortations to assimilate/acclurate. Jewish identity was less important than British identity, and this was clearly demonstrated by the musical repertoire which carried the spiritual expression thereof. Yet paradoxically, the music of Verrinder to a much lesser extent, and of Lewandowski and Sulzer to a greater extent, was re-imagined Jewish music, which is to say, it was music fashioned from durable Jewish melodies and the *nusah* of prayer, and as such, was recognizable to those who knew the tradition as Jewish music. While it would be fair to say that Verrinder, the non-Jewish organist, learned about Jewish music so that some of his music contains hints of Jewishness, it is clear that Lewandowski and Sulzer, both scions of a traditional Jewish upbringing, were deeply embedded in *nusah* and then strove to re-work it to fit the prevailing aesthetic preference.

The musical history of the UK Reform world might usefully be divided into several phases. They do not represent distinct years, but elide into each other, providing a schema for shaping the developments in musical practice that we have examined over the past 175 years.

- 1) **The Phase of Musical Assimilation**, in which the music was primarily in the hands of non-Jews, and Jews whose training and musical predilections led them to create music in church and classical concert hall style in four-part harmonies, the whole accompanied by an organ. The music was decorous and sombre, composed and arranged to accompany a serious rendition of prayers, and it was under the control of professionals, to render to the congregation.
- 2) **The Phase of Musical Hybridization**, in which the Continental composers, such as Lewandowski, became more prominent. Unbeknown to the general congregant, this was classical

Western *nusah*, but tamed and beautified through arrangement in the normal four-part harmonies and generally still accompanied by an organ or harmonium. This music was, as above, solemn and serious and often in the hands of professionals, but congregational choirs emerged and the music migrated to amateurs, in the process becoming less formally and expertly performed.

- 3) **The Phase of Transition**—People began traveling to Israel, where they encountered American and Israeli music, and became interested in the liveliness of Sabbath *z'mirot* in the summer camp movement with its song books and popular music, and generally, in the possibility of incorporating music of a more popular style into the synagogue. Music used in children's services was in the vanguard; there one encountered guitar accompaniment, songs in English, melodies from the hasidic world, and Israeli popular liturgical music. Music began to be more animated, playful, with melody-line compositions sung by all in a strophic manner. Although the synagogue choir is still pre-eminent, there is a marked shift to greater participation.¹⁵⁰
- 4) **The Phase of Renewal**—There is increased exposure to the USA and its rich Jewish music scene, as rabbis and learned lay people visit the USA, consciously looking for musical creativity. Jewish singer-songwriters are invited to the UK to lead sessions and services. These melodies thus find greater exposure, as synagogues begin to incorporate them into their services, and the style of, and sometimes even the whole of, the children's service migrates to, permeates, and even usurps the main services. Many synagogue choirs are either disbanded or reduced to a pattern of irregular performances. Guitars are more frequently used, and there is a call for participatory music making.
- 5) **The Phase of the Beginnings of Musical Mastery**—In this period, our current one, musical experimentation and interest in musical diversity accelerates, and more rabbis in particular have become exposed to traditional services, believing that they can offer an appealing alternative to sterile Reform services. Non-Orthodox cantors, educated in the USA, offer their qualifications and expertise to teach and encourage the use of appropriate *nusah*, and in the others, to encourage both thoughtful and diverse use of liturgical music. They share their understanding about congruence and appropriateness of word and music and thus increase the knowledge of professionals and lay people within the movement. More singing is led by guitars or done *a cappella*, but some synagogues employ cellos, violins, and other instruments.

It remains to be seen whether the latest suppositions and visceral feelings of the Reform leadership—about the place of music in the synagogues—are borne out by the “Jews in the pews.”

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¹⁵⁰ We must not forget that participation was encouraged even during phase one. It was, however, more circumscribed.



West London Synagogue

TENSION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES AND LITURGICAL MUSIC IN THE SYNAGOGUE HAS EXISTED FOR CENTURIES. AMONG MAIMONIDES' HALAKHIC *RESPONSA* (II: 468, #254) WE FIND THE GRUDGING OBSERVATION: “*PIYYUT* IS PERFORMED MORE MUSICALLY THAN THE STATUTORY PRAYERS, WHICH DETRACTS FROM THE SERVICE'S DECORUM.” SO, TOO, DID THE LEIPZIG CHURCH AUTHORITIES IN BACH'S TIME OBJECT TO HIS INSERTION OF MUSIC INTO THE LUTHERAN SERVICE. THEY FEARED THAT IF IT WERE TOO ENTERTAINING, IT WOULD...PROVIDE A PRETEXT FOR UNRULY BEHAVIOR.

(JOHN ELLIOT GARDINER: *BACH*).

The Use of Limited and Conditional Livestreaming of Services on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*—a Report and Recommendation by the Ritual Committee of Bet Torah, Mount Kisco, New York—to the Synagogue's Board of Directors

Researched and formulated by Committee member Michael Gordon

EDITOR'S NOTE: The global COVID-19 pandemic forced synagogues around the world to close their doors only a few short weeks after the submission of the article that follows. Many congregations responded by engaging in livestreaming and other electronic efforts to provide authentic ritual experiences for their members. The leadership of Congregation Bet Torah of Mt. Kisco, NY had previously engaged in a lengthy process to determine for themselves, how they might integrate tradition, law and modernity to expand *T'fillah* and Torah beyond the four walls of their synagogue. Their deliberations involved Rabbi Aaron Brusso, known for his outreach to members isolated because of age or illness; Cantor Randy Herman, famous for integrating Jewish ritual practice with musical performance; Director of Community Engagement Rabbi Loti Koffman, who helped teach the importance of *K'vod hab'riyot*; and the congregation's dedicated Ritual Committee, who thoughtfully considered the needs of their congregation and their fealty to the halakhic process. This confluence of lay and professional ideals and the ability of all parties to express them creatively and meaningfully resulted in the Report reprinted below. The *Journal* included this report with the hope that it would offer a helpful window into the process engaged in by this community, and is indebted to Cantor Herman, who posted the report on Hazzanet, and to Michael Gordon, who kindly shared the Ritual Committee's Report (as well as a summary of the early impact of their decision) with us. At the same time, the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, aware of these kinds of activities, had been engaged in its own discussions of the issue. In recognition of the *sha'at had'hak* (moment of urgency) created by the pandemic, the Law Committee issued a *T'shuvah* on the use of Streaming Services on Shabbat and Yom Tov, authored by Rabbi Joshua Heller and approved by a vote of the Law Committee on May 13, 2020, that it hopes Conservative congregations will adopt. The full text of that *T'shuvah* can be found at www.rabbinicalassembly.org.

Introduction and overview

The question has arisen whether, to what extent, and under what circumstances Bet Torah should permit live audio and video streaming of Shabbat and Jewish holiday services.¹ The purpose of this report and recommendation is to address that question and explain

¹ We wish to emphasize that this report and recommendation does not seek to impose restrictions on technologies used at or in the synagogue on days other than Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. So, for example, we do not suggest by this report and recommendation that the Purim *Shpiel*, if it takes place on an ordinary day of the week, cannot be recorded or that it can be livestreamed only under the terms, conditions, and circumstances set forth herein. This report and recommendation only addresses livestreaming on days when *m'lakhah* is prohibited.

why the Bet Torah Ritual Committee recommends an eight-month² pilot protocol that would permit such streaming on a limited and conditional basis.

At first blush, one might wonder what the big deal is. Why *wouldn't* Bet Torah take advantage of technology that allows those of its members who are unable to attend Shabbat and holiday services to observe and virtually share in those services. Live video and audio streaming would benefit the ill, the homebound, and those otherwise unable (for any number of reasons) to attend services. Through a livestream, these individuals, who ordinarily could not participate in services at Bet Torah, would be able to attend services remotely and experience some measure of the joy of communal prayer, song, and study that happens at Bet Torah on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. And given that the theological framework of the Conservative Movement has always been animated by what Rabbi Elliot Dorf has described as the desire “to make traditional Judaism thrive in a modern context,” wouldn't it make sense to allow the broadcasting of our services utilizing modern technology? After all, we use microphones on Shabbat to amplify the voices of those on the bimah, we use microphones during the *Yamim nora'im* to enable those far in the back of the social hall to participate in the service, and we have congregants who utilize electronic adaptive technology so they can share in prayer. So why not livestreaming?

The short answer is that the Ritual Committee, with the advice and consent of Bet Torah's clergy, believes that, with appropriate limitations and conditions, livestreaming of Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* services can and should be implemented on a trial basis. However, because process matters, the Ritual Committee believes that it is important for the Board of Directors and Bet Torah's members at large to understand that in reaching this conclusion, the Ritual Committee carefully considered a number of difficult issues of Jewish law and ethics.

First, on the legal front, we note that, as members of a Conservative Synagogue, we are bound by Jewish law, Halakhah, bearing in mind that Conservative Judaism recognizes that Halakhah “has never been monolithic or immovable” and has “grown and developed” over time and will continue to do so.³ We also note that the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (“CJLS”) of the Rabbinical Assembly, which sets “halakhic policy for Rabbinical Assembly rabbis and for the Conservative movement as a whole,” has not taken a formal position on the propriety of livestreaming services on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. Therefore, in determining whether livestreaming is halakhically permissible, we turned in the first instance to Rabbi Aaron Brusso, who serves as Bet Torah's *Mara d'atra* (local, legal authority). With the guidance and direction of Rabbi Brusso, with valuable input from our Director of Community Engagement and Learning, Rabbi Lori Koffman, and Cantor and Music Director, Randy Herman, and upon review of a number of relevant Talmudic and scholarly source materials, the Ritual Committee concluded that, if implemented with appropriate limits and conditions,

² The Ritual Committee believes that eight months is an appropriate length of time for a trial period because it will cover many *Shabbatot*, *haggim*, and *Yamim nora'im*, and thus will allow the Board a full and fair opportunity to evaluate the program and either continue it as is, make any necessary adjustments, or cancel it.

³ *Emet Ve'Emunah, Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism* (the “Principles”), p. 15.

livestreaming of Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* services would be permissible as a matter of Jewish law.

Second, the Ritual Committee recognizes that Judaism places the highest value on human dignity. Thus, even if there were a concern about livestreaming somehow interfering with the peacefulness of Shabbat or the holiness of the *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*, that concern would be overridden by the extent to which livestreaming dignifies those who would not otherwise be able to share in communal prayer on religiously important days.

For these reasons, more fully discussed below, the Ritual Committee recommends that livestreaming of Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* services at Bet Torah be permitted on a trial basis, for a period of eight months beginning with the first live streamed service, subject to certain limits and conditions.

Summary of Ritual Committee recommendation

This document shall serve as the formal recommendation of the Ritual Committee for the implementation of livestreaming for Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* services, subject to the following limitations and conditions:

- Streaming may only take place via approved technology;
- Streaming will be one-directional; those viewing and/or listening to the service will not be able to communicate with the congregation;
- Any equipment required for livestreaming will be as unobtrusive as practical;
- Streaming will be activated in advance of Shabbat and deactivated after Shabbat ends;
- Bet Torah will not record or facilitate the recording of any streamed service and will advise all users that Bet Torah prohibits the recording of any streamed service;
- Access to the streamed service will be limited to those individuals who complete a short and simple questionnaire, to be posted on the Bet Torah website, intended to ensure that all users understand and agree that their use of the livestream is subject to certain terms and conditions, most notably that the livestream not be recorded or re-transmitted in any way. Upon completing and submitting the questionnaire, a password will automatically be sent to the email address included in the questionnaire.⁴

⁴ Appendix I to this Report and Recommendation contains a summary of the alternative approaches to access considered by the Ritual Committee. We include this Appendix so that the Board understands the options for access the Ritual Committee considered, and for various reasons, rejected.

Halakhic considerations – Does Jewish law permit livestreaming?

The primary concern of the Ritual Committee was that we as a congregation do what we can to enhance the spiritual depth and breadth of communal prayer at Bet Torah without crossing the line of that which is prohibited by Jewish law or that is inconsistent with the atmosphere of peace, tranquility, and spirituality we try to achieve on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. Our concern is rooted most fundamentally in our belief in the primacy of Shabbat. As we say on our website, quoting Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg-Ahad Ha'am-one of the early Zionists, "More than Israel has kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat has kept Israel." And so, in the first instance, we turn to Halakhah to determine the boundaries of what is and what is not halakhically permissible.

As noted above, the first step in this process was to consider what position the Rabbinical Assembly has taken on the issue. CJLS has not issued a ruling or responsum (in Hebrew, a *t'shuvah*) precisely addressing the permissibility and, to the extent relevant, limits and conditions, of livestreaming Shabbat and *Haggim* services within the meaning of Jewish law⁵. There are *t'shuvot* that are relevant and that are helpful in resolving this halakhic question, but we cannot say there is definitive guidance from the CJLS on the specific question at hand. Accordingly, we turned to Rabbi Brusso, who serves as Bet Torah's *Mara d'atra*, Rabbi Koffman and Cantor Herman, and to relevant written materials, including responsa from the CJLS, for guidance. We also researched the experiences of other, similar Conservative congregations who livestream their services. Our conclusion, explained below, is that if certain conditions are met, livestreaming would be permissible as a matter of Jewish law, since, assuming those conditions are met, livestreaming would not constitute *M'lakhah*, biblically forbidden activities for Shabbat, and would not violate *Sh'vut*, the affirmative commandment to rest on Shabbat.

M'lakhah

The starting point for our analysis of the Halakhah of livestreaming was the concept of *M'lakhah*, or creative, transformative, durable labor. From the perspective of the CJLS, as explained by the Electronics *T'shuvah*, *M'lakhah* is work that is (a) of a creative nature ("[t]he term *M'lakhah* is employed in reference to God's creation of the cosmos in Genesis (2:2-3)"), (b) transforms our material reality ("The type of creativity discussed here is one in which material reality is transformed, rather than the creativity of song, speech and other expression of emotion and ideas."), and (c) has a durable, permanent impact ("Labors which leave no durable impact on the material environment are not considered to be forbidden as *M'lakhah*"). If all three of those criteria are met by the subject activity, that activity is deemed to be *M'lakhah* and is biblically forbidden on Shabbat, because the nature of the activity would dishonor the rest that God took on the seventh day of creation. See *Parashat ki tissa* in the Book of *Sh'mot*, chapter 31, verses 14-15, which teaches that we are obligated to "keep the Sabbath, for it is a sacred thing for you," and that "[s]ix days, work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord."

⁵ As noted, this article was written before the recent CJLS *T'shuvah* was issued.

In other words, *M'lakhah* represents a negative Mitzvah: the Torah forbids us to perform *M'lakhah* on Shabbat. In so doing, we follow and honor God's commandment to do as he did by avoiding work on the seventh day of the week. And, as a consequence, we are treated to a day of peace and joy. As the Jewish philosopher and theologian Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel put it on pages 28-29 of his book, *The Sabbath*:

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature—is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man's progress than the Sabbath?

In the tempestuous ocean of time and toil there are islands of stillness where man may enter a harbor and reclaim his dignity. The island is the seventh day, the Sabbath, a day of detachment from things, instruments and practical affairs as well as of the attachment to the spirit.

So, what activities are considered *M'lakhah*? What exactly is prohibited? What must we refrain from doing on Shabbat so as to enter Rabbi Heschel's island of stillness? This is not such an easy question to answer. As a CJLS *T'shuvah* explained in 2012, "while the Torah "emphatically prohibits all *M'lakhah*, ... it is vague about the definition of such activity. It is that ambiguity, that lack of certainty, that has for ages generated serious debate about what activities are and are not prohibited on Shabbat. For a Conservative Jew trying to balance the traditional with the modern, the task is exquisitely complex." Indeed, while the Torah provides some guidance as to activities that are *M'lakhah*, our sages have spent millennia developing specific lists. The tractate of the Mishnah dealing with the rules of Shabbat, written in the period between 70-200 CE identified 39 activities constituting *M'lakhah*. Since that time, there have been countless derivative activities that the Rabbis have identified as related to or associated with the original 39 primary areas of *M'lakhah* and thus deemed to be prohibited.

Critically, as the Electronics *T'shuvah* points out, it does not matter whether an activity is *Avot*—one of the 39 primary *M'lakhot*—or *Tol'dah*, a derivative: "It is immaterial whether a *M'lakhah* said to be involved in the use of electricity is considered to be a primary or derivative category; all are equally forbidden."

The key to understanding *M'lakhah* is to understand the purpose and result of the activity, rather than its physical characteristics. If the purpose and result of a *Tol'dah* is the same as that of an *Av* (singular of *Avot*); if the purpose and intent of a derivative subject activity is the same as that which is expressly, directly, primarily deemed to be a forbidden activity, then that derivative activity is forbidden. And, for that matter, if an activity has comparable intentions and results to one of the derivations, that, too, would be deemed to be *M'lakhah*.

The Mishnah (Tractate *Shabbat* 7:2) teaches that the primary (*Avot*) categories of *M'lakhah* consist of 39 activities that can be divided into the following four major groups: 11 categories of activities required to bake bread; 13 categories of activities required to make a garment; 9 categories of activities required to make leather; and 6 categories of activities

required to build a structure or building. Interestingly, the last two items in the leather-making area cover writing and erasing and prohibit writing or erasing at least two letters. And it is that area, writing and erasing, that is most relevant to the question at hand, since the CJLS has determined that the creation of a video, electronic or digital record is a form of writing. Indeed, in the Electronics *T'shuvah*, the CJLS concluded that even “the use of contemporary digital storage media such as hard drives and flash memory ... and ‘cloud computing’” are all forms of writing and thus are biblically forbidden *M'lakhah* (See the Electronics *T'shuvah*, p. 33, below):

The purpose of writing is to store information for later recall. What matters is not the process but the purpose and the result. However, we would clarify that the process does matter somewhat; writing to digital memory can be considered *Tol'dat koteiv*, a derivative form of writing rather than the original form or *Av*. As such it remains biblically prohibited on Shabbat.

In a related point, the Electronics *T'shuvah* accepted the conclusion of Rabbi Joel Roth that photography (and, we would say, videography or the use of technology to capture and record moving images) is equally forbidden: “If the function of writing is appropriately defined as the production of a lasting imprint upon some substance, it seems virtually incontrovertible that the function of photography would have to be considered forbidden under the category of writing.”

The Electronics *T'shuvah* (p. 35) summed up the issue as follows:

The intentional recording of data—whether of text, images or sound—is forbidden on Shabbat as a derivative form of writing. While this form of recording may not employ the same mechanism as the writing used in the tabernacle (whatever that was), it has the same purpose and result—to preserve information for later display. ... [T]his form of writing should be considered a derivative form of the prohibition (*Tol'dat koteiv*) which is biblically prohibited on Shabbat and *Yom tov*. Thus, we would prohibit the Sabbath operation of a digital camera, voice record, or computer used for writing text or recording audio or video files. These activities are all derivative forms of “writing” and are therefore biblically forbidden on Shabbat and *Yom tov*.

Turning to livestreaming via a camera and microphone set-up, the Ritual Committee believes that livestreaming would constitute a form of impermissible derivative *M'lakhah*, *tol'dat koteiv*, if the technology were such that the transmitted images would inevitably or even likely be recorded. However, if steps are taken to disable or otherwise prevent the recording of such images, then livestreaming would not constitute *M'lakhah* and thus would not be forbidden on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. Assuming that Bet Torah permits livestreaming only on condition that there be no recording, and assuming that reasonable steps can and will be taken to prevent any recording of streamed images (to the point that we can safely say that it is not likely or inevitable that the transmitted images will be recorded), livestreaming should not be deemed to violate the biblical prohibition against *M'lakhah* on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*. The Ritual Committee believes that the on-line affirmation by users that the service will not be recorded meets this standard.

Sh'vut

There is a second consideration, the positive Mitzvah of *Sh'vut*. *Parashat mishpatim*, v. 23:12 teaches: “Six days you shall do your labor, and on the seventh day you shall rest.” This Mitzvah to rest is different than *M'lakhah*, in that *M'lakhah* consists of a negative Mitzvah, a prohibition against the performance of certain activities. Here, in *Parashat mishpatim*, G-d instructs us to not only refrain from doing work on Shabbat but also to actively and uncontroversibly rest (see also *Parashat b'shalah*, v. 16:23, *Parashat ki tissa*, v. 31:15, and *Parashat va-yak'heil*, v. 35:2. As to Yom Kippur, see *Parashat aharei mot*, v. 16:31 and *Parashat emor*, v. 23:32.

We observe *Sh'vut* by doing things that allow us to rest and to create an atmosphere that is conducive to rest. And so, on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*, we should avoid business, we should not drive (unless it is to and from synagogue, a conclusion reached in the early 1950s by the CJLS), we should avoid heavy exertion, and we should seek out and engage in rest, companionship, conversation and discussion, and study of Torah. As with *M'lakhah*, there are activities that are clearly prohibited because they interfere with the positive obligation to rest, and there are those activities that, while not directly problematic, have the potential to interfere with the state of tranquility we seek on Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*.

Electronic communications—telephoning, texting, emailing, engaging in social media communication—all fall squarely in the category of activities that undermine Shabbat and prevent us from appreciating the peace that Shabbat offers us. As the Electronics *T'shuvah* puts it: “Refraining from calling, texting, video-chatting and the ever-expanding menu of social media for 25 hours preserves the simple art of face-to-face communication and differentiates Shabbat from other days. *Sh'vut*, the positive command to rest on Shabbat, is undermined by the use of electronic communication.” (Electronics *T'shuvah*, p. 46).

The Ritual Committee believes that if livestreaming is handled in such a way as to be unobtrusive and in such a way as to not lead to an alteration or modification of the holy nature of the communal prayer in which we, as a congregation, take part on Shabbat and the *Haggim*, livestreaming does not contravene *Sh'vut*. However, if it turns out that livestreaming makes congregants uncomfortable or awkward or causes prayer leaders to modify their—or the congregation's—davening, or in any other way creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to the peace of Shabbat, we would conclude that livestreaming would be contravening *Sh'vut*. For that reason, and because we are in uncharted waters, the Ritual Committee is suggesting a pilot period of eight months so that we can observe how livestreaming functions and determine its propensity to interfere with Shabbat.

***K'vod hab'riot* – human dignity**

One of the most empowering and uplifting qualities of Judaism is its focus on human dignity. We are commanded to respect the dignity of human life and to prevent anything that would cause humiliation of others. As the Electronics *T'shuvah* teaches, this value cannot trump a biblical prohibition, but it can supersede a *Sh'vut*-based restriction. For that

reason, electronic hearing aids and other adaptive technologies, as well as microphones and other voice-amplifying technologies, are permitted.

The role of the remote participant

There is one remaining religious question: What is the role of the remote participant? Is one who is receiving a livestream able to count towards a minyan? May that person meet his or her obligation to say Kaddish? These questions were answered directly in a 2001 *T'shuvah* authored by Rabbi Avram Israel Reisner and overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 18-2-1. The short answers are that (a) the remote participant may not count towards the Minyan but may participate and be deemed to be part of the congregation once a Minyan has been established at Bet Torah; (b) once we have a Minyan, the remote participant may respond and fulfill his or her davening obligations; (c) a remote participant who hears the Shofar blasts on the *Yamim nora'im* has met his or her obligation to do so; (d) as long as a member of the Minyan present at Bet Torah recites the Kaddish, the remote participant may recite Kaddish along with him or her and thus satisfy an obligation to do so.

Practical and secular considerations

In addition to the religious considerations, there are a number of practical, non-religious ones that must all be addressed. We herewith refer some of those considerations—set forth below—to the appropriate Bet Torah committees for their review and comment:

1. **Financial.** How much will livestreaming cost initially and on an on-going basis? Can Bet Torah afford the livestreaming system? What sort of financial commitment must Bet Torah make?
2. **Legal (secular).** What are the secular legal issues that are implicated by livestreaming? Must we provide notice to those who attend that they will be “on air”? Are there intellectual property issues? Are there special considerations that apply when minor children are present and leading services? How will Bet Torah enforce its prohibition against recording and re-transmitting, assuming those prohibitions are put in place as part of the approval process?
3. **Physical, operational, and technological.** How can the necessary equipment be installed so as to be unobtrusive? Will there need to be changes made to our building? To our electrical and/or telecommunications systems? Where will the control equipment be maintained? Who will operate the equipment and how will that person have access at the appropriate periods of time before and after Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im*, and how will passwords be sent to users who complete the Bet Torah livestream questionnaire?⁶

⁶ The Ritual Committee addressed the issue of whether or not to capture identifying information, such as user-names and email addresses, of those who access the livestream. There were two views on this issue. One view was that, for security reasons and to identify those in our community who, for any number of reasons, might benefit from being contacted by Bet Torah, we should know who is accessing the livestream. The other view was that many

Conclusion

As a Conservative Synagogue, Bet Torah is committed to honoring Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* and doing what we can to enhance the spiritual experience of our members through meaningful communal prayer. We recognize our traditions and laws but view them through the lens of careful thought and analysis, striving to focus at all times on the meaning and intent of what we do and to balance competing Halachic considerations and values. Given that our tradition and laws permit, if not command, us to take steps to enable those who cannot be physically present on Shabbat to share in the joy of Shabbat, *Haggim* and *Yamim nora'im* remotely, the Ritual Committee recommends that Bet Torah permit livestreaming of Shabbat and *Haggim* services. However, because this technology has potential to violate certain biblical laws and Rabbinic teachings, we also recommend certain conditions and limitations, set forth above in Section B. Finally, so as to ensure that we are thoughtful and considered in this process, we recommend that livestreaming be done on a trial basis and that, at the conclusion of the trial, the Board of Directors reevaluates the program and makes a decision as to whether or not to implement livestreaming on a permanent basis.

Respectfully,

Bet Torah Ritual Committee



APPENDIX

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE ISSUE OF ACCESSING THE LIVESTREAM

The Ritual Committee recognizes that access to the livestream is one of the most, if not the most, sensitive issues raised by the livestreaming program. Therefore, the Ritual Committee considered, in addition to the access protocol it is recommending to the Board, the following four alternatives, ultimately deciding that the best approach would be one in which we put to the user the obligation to abide by our standards of use. The Ritual Committee believes that the recommended approach will protect Bet Torah's interest in ensuring that the livestream service is used in a manner consistent with Bet Torah's values and standards of use, respect and trust the user and, at the same time, minimize the burden on our clergy and administrative staff.

congregants and others would feel uncomfortable sharing their identity as livestream users. Because these issues are not directly related to the mission of the Ritual Committee and are more appropriately issues for the Board, the Ritual Committee did not press for a consensus position and, instead, presents both views for the Board's consideration and resolution.

Here are the alternative approaches that the Ritual Committee considered:

Alternative One. Designate Rabbi Brusso as an access gatekeeper. Under this approach, the Rabbi would review all applications for livestream use and make a decision, based on his review of the application, as to the appropriateness of the request. *The Ritual Committee felt that this approach was too restrictive and too burdensome on the Rabbi and so it was rejected.*

Alternative Two. Instead of leaving the issue of access to Rabbi Brusso's discretion, with no pre-set criteria, Bet Torah would establish and publish those criteria. *The Ritual Committee felt that this approach was too restrictive and too burdensome and so it was rejected.*

Alternative Three. This alternative would be similar to Alternative Two except that the decision-makers would be a panel of three lay members of the congregation who, in consultation with Rabbi Brusso, would evaluate each request for access to the livestream. *The Ritual Committee felt that this approach was too restrictive and too burdensome and so it was rejected.*

Alternative Four. Under this alternative, any congregant may request access to the stream, with no application required and no questions to be answered. The Office would simply forward the necessary access credentials to whomever requests access to the live stream. *The Ritual Committee felt that this approach was too lax in that it would not provide for assurances from the user that Bet Torah's values and standards would be applied and so it was rejected.*



Bet Torah Livestream update – January 27, 2020

As noted in the Report and Recommendation of the Ritual Committee, livestreaming began as a pilot program at Bet Torah. Shortly after the eight-month pilot period ended, the Ritual Committee requested that the Board of Directors adopt the program on a full-time basis. The Board resoundingly approved that request. Here's why:

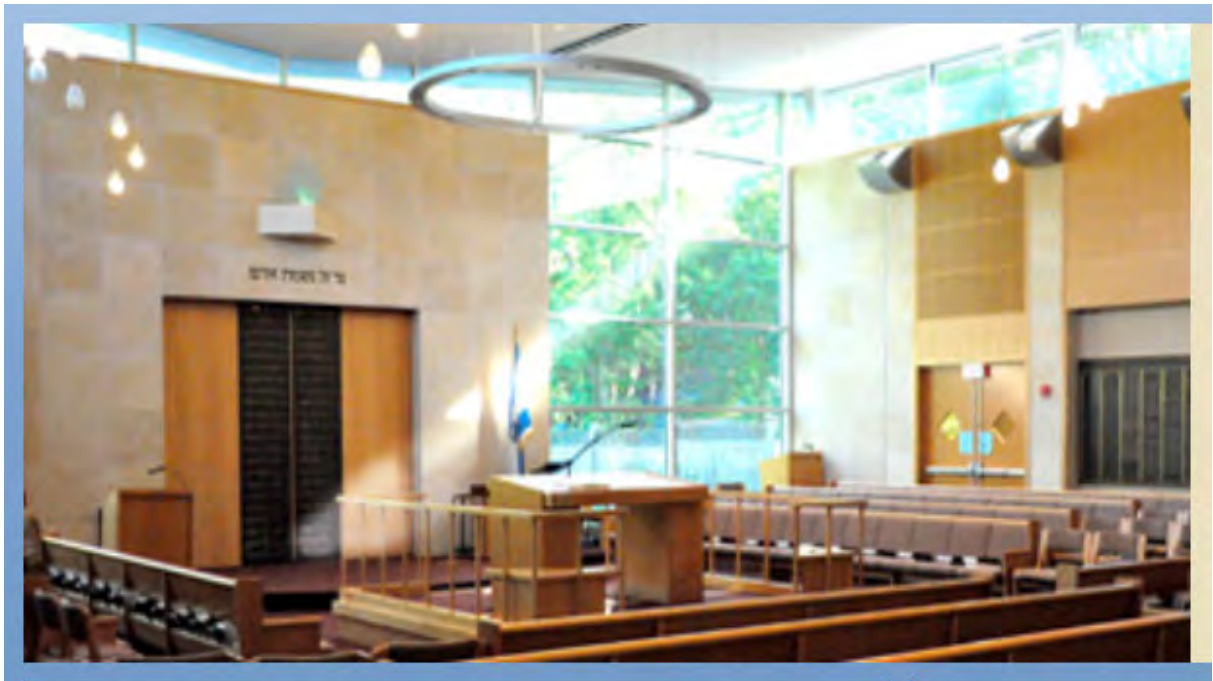
The livestream program has proven to be a blessing for so many of our congregants and their friends and relatives who would like to join in person our Shabbat, *Yamim tovim*, and *Haggim* services but are not able to do so. Here are some examples:

- A grandfather who wasn't well enough to make the trip in from Florida for his grandson's Bar Mitzvah was able to see and hear the whole service from home.
- A congregant who was a regular Shabbat attendee moved in with her son out of the country because of health issues and was able to connect to her community every Shabbat.
- A congregant who had just been diagnosed with cancer and was depleted from treatment was able to participate in High Holiday services from home. We can't think of any greater endorsement for our program than his own words:

Please pass along my thanks and words of job well done (*Yasher koah*) to all involved in setting up the streaming video of the service. When I was completely fatigued and spent much of Rosh Hashanah in bed, it was incredibly comforting to turn to the service and listen to the beautiful melodies, the prayers and your sermons. It was also humorous to watch my cats awaken and sit up at attention when the shofar was sounded. A month ago, I never thought that I would be one of the people listening to and watching the service from home. As soon as I heard the melodies and felt the warmth of the congregation, I had an overwhelming sense of gratitude, and immediately thought that I hope the people involved in this effort know how special this is. It is a real gift. From a technical perspective, it was very easy to log in with excellent video and audio quality. I am so grateful that I am able to connect and participate in this way and assure you that the warmth of the shul is transmitted very well over the Internet.

In terms of usage, the numbers have been fairly steady. They are generally heavier on Shabbat, although we do have other events, such as a special celebration or a commemoration, which are livestreamed. By way of example, over the past 30 days, we had 18 separate viewers log in and watch services. In the past two and a half years or so, 1131 separate views and 5833 total views have been recorded.

Needless to say, we could not be more pleased with our decision to livestream our services, as it has done exactly what we hoped it would do: provide a means for those who are unable to travel to Bet Torah to experience our most special days with us.



Interior of Bet Torah Synagogue, Mount Kisco, New York

The Torah as Song and the Rabbinic Sage as Troubadour

By James A. Diamond

In gratitude to Eliezer ha-kohein, the High Priest of Song

Rav Hiyya bar Abba said in the name of Rav Yohanan, “In the future, all the prophets are destined to sing in unison.”

(*b. Sanhedrin* 91b)

The prophet is human, yet he employs notes one octave too high for our ears.

Abraham Joshua Heschel¹

The title track of Bob Dylan’s (né Robert Zimmerman) 1965 album *Highway 61 Revisited* begins provocatively with a partial retelling of the opening lines in the binding of Isaac narrative (*Akeidah*) that originally appears in Genesis 22. The first stanza reads as follows:

Oh God said to Abraham, “Kill me a son.”
Abe says, “Man, you must be puttin’ me on.”
God say, “No.”
Abe say, “What?”
God say, “You can do what you want Abe, but
The next time you see me comin’ you better run.”
Well Abe says, “Where do you want this killin’ done?”
God says, “Out on Highway 61.”

A few years later, Leonard Cohen, another twentieth-century Jewish musical icon and poet laureate of rock music in the Sixties and onward, released his own version of that same biblical narrative in *The Story of Isaac*. Part of its message, similar to much of the folk and rock music of those decades, was a protest against the older generation’s decisions to send their children to war.² Consider Cohen’s rebuke:

You who build these altars now, to sacrifice these children, you must not do it
anymore.
A scheme is not a vision, and you never have been tempted by a demon or a god.
You who stand above them now, your hatchets blunt and bloody, you were not
there before.
When I lay upon a mountain and my father’s hand was trembling with the beauty
of the word.

The *Akeidah*-related themes of trial, sacrifice, martyrdom, and death (potential or actual) of the beloved son, which so critically informs and shapes subsequent Jewish, as well as

[Editor’s Note: Unless otherwise noted, translations of Hebrew sources are the writer’s own.]

¹Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955, vol. I, p.10).

²As he declares explicitly in his introduction to the song on side two of the album, *Leonard Cohen: Live Songs*, “It’s about those who would sacrifice one generation on behalf of another.” This sentiment assumes a particular poignancy by the place where it was recorded: Berlin.

Christian, theology,³ have found their way into modern popular music. These songs cannot possibly be understood without their referent—one of the most powerful, shocking, problematic, and inspiring passages in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ I return to these musical revisions of the *Akeidah* further on, but the question which this paper addresses from a philosophical-theological perspective is how the secular and popular protest music and poetry of the Sixties is the logical culmination of a long biblical and rabbinic tradition regarding the centrality of music, and how that legacy consequently accounts for the Jewishness of some of contemporary popular music's greatest bards. As such, my goal is to offer a personal Jewish theologoumenon of music; I do not venture into the thorny halakhic issues regarding normative restrictions on music since the destruction of the second Temple.⁵

Although according to biblical chronology, musical instruments were only introduced in the eighth generation of the annals of humanity (Gen. 4:21), there is, of course, a prior auditory dimension to existence that is a condition precedent to that innovation. There are those sounds that no one hears, the “sounds of silence,” such as the primordial wind, which precedes creation per se, followed by the daily creative voice of God generating the various components of existence. Then there is the first sound heard by a human being, a divine “blessing” that ensures the independent perpetuation of human regeneration (פרו ורבו) and that transfers control of the environment (וכבשה) to humanity (1:28). These premiere instances of sound thus inaugurate the auditory future of human beings with the qualities of preservation, protection, and triumph.

That pristine sound of silence, the “divine wind” (רוח אלהים),⁶ reverberates throughout all time with the protective sense of “hovering” (מרחפת) over the waters, which the Talmud analogizes to a “dove hovering over its nest.”⁷ Once the idyllic social harmony of Eden is disturbed by the relational imbalance of domination and subservience, and ultimately shattered by a fratricide, music enters the scene to repair and reharmonize human relations. And so, as if to compensate for the natural antagonism of brotherly professions between Cain and Abel—the rootless shepherd versus the rooted farmer—the next contrast between brothers occurs in the eighth generation, posing Yaval, the forerunner of all nomadic shepherds “dweller of tents among the herds” (אבי יושב אהל ומקנה), alongside his brother Yuval, the pioneer of musical instruments (אבי כל תפש כנור ועוגב) (Gen. 4:20-21)⁸ and, according to later commentators, the inventor of

³ The literature on the *akeidah* is vast, but for one excellent study, see Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁴ For a comprehensive list of the copious biblical allusions in Dylan's music, see Michael J. Gilmour's appendix to *Tangled Up in the Bible* (New York: Continuum, 2004).

⁵ For a thorough overview and analysis of this topic, see Aharon Kahn, “Music in Halakhic Perspective,” *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* (JJML) 9 (1986-1987): 55-72; 10 (87-88): 32-49; 11 (88-89A): 65-75.

⁶ The Zohar (1:16a) identifies the wind (*ruah*) with sound/voice (*kol*), citing Ps. 29:3 (“The voice of the Lord is over the waters”) as corroboration. That primordial divine sound conducts and empowers the void of *bohu*: רוח הוא קול: דשאר על בהו ואתקף ליה ואנהיג ליה בכל מה דאצטרך [Sound is the medium for shaping the world]. Daniel Matt, *The Pritzker Zohar* (Vol. 1; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 120.

⁷ b. *Hagigah* 15a.

⁸ The two instruments, *kinnor* and *ugav*, have been identified variously as reed or string instruments, but the consensus seems to be that *kinnor* is a lyre and *ugav* is a reed pipe. See Bathya Bayer, “The Biblical Nebel,” *Yuval: Studies of the Jewish Music Center* (1968): 89-131.

music altogether.⁹ With names that both assonate with the sound of their forebear *Hevel* and follow his shepherding lead, there is a literary resurrection of their murdered ancestor. Unlike that second generation, the two here do not present naturally competing occupations that encroach on each other's domain, but rather mutually beneficial ones. Yuval's product that enables musical sound can be utilized by Yaval to accompany and enhance his own interests and livelihood. Their near-identical names reflect the social harmony that music cultivates, thus retrieving the protective sense of that primordial soundless sound of the divine breath. Perhaps it is because of this dimension of music, the power of strengthening the bonds between diverse peoples, that Immanuel of Rome (c. 1260—c. 1330) characterizes the science of music as a “wondrous art”.¹⁰

It is no wonder then that when civilization deteriorates once again, societal fragmentation, alienation of disparate groups, and global disharmony find their dénouement in the aftermath of the Tower of Babel debacle of a myriad of languages where peoples are separated by babble, or insuperable barriers of incomprehensible sounds (אשר לא ישמעו איש שפת) (רעהו). The very word for God's *confounding* languages (11:7), *navlah* (נבלה) resonating with the sound of both the names *Yuval* and *Yaval*, as well as the term for Yuval's harp, *neivel*, suggest a link between the two. Humanity became obsessed with material productivity (11:3), mining resources for stone and mortar (ותהי להם הלבנה לאבן והחמר היה להם לחמר). The “same language and the same words” (שפה אחת ודברים אחדים) unique to that corrupt civilization held together a monotonous conformist world typical of the mass production line that had lost the sense of music that Yuval introduced. That single-minded obsession with the production of goods overcame the importance of aesthetic creativity signified by music that traverses both national boundaries in its appeal and preserves a space for individual expression.

Isaac Arama's musical depiction of the angels' relationship to the heavenly bodies precisely captures why this suppression of artistic individuation in favor of materialistic conformity is so insidious. The planets and stars are the angels' musical instruments whose “sounds” in the form of their perpetual endless movements attest to “the infinite majesty and exaltedness of the Creator and the futility of absolutely emulating Him.” As proof that music bears witness to sublimity, Arama cites Moses's motivation for composing the song at the Sea, *I will sing to the Lord for He is exalted*— אָשִׁירָה לַה' כִּי גָאָה גָאָה (Exod. 15:1); meaning that the purpose of the song is to declare God's exaltedness above all others.¹¹ Absent the sensitivity of the song which points upward toward the sublime, the civilization that built the Tower revelled in

⁹ See Judith Cohen, “Jubal in the Middle Ages,” 3 *Yuval: Studies of the Jewish Music Center* (1974): 83-99, who demonstrates that Yuval's constructed image is as a figure who paves the way for all future musical developments by laying down the very foundations of the art of music.

¹⁰ חכמת הניגון היא חכמת נפלאה. See the text and introduction by Amnon Shiloah, “A Passage by Immanuel ha-Romi on the Science of Music,” 10 *Italia* (1993): 9-18, at 14. This text, according to Shiloah, evidences “the advent of a flourishing culture in Italy that gave prominent place to music and its related science” (9).

¹¹ *Akeidat yits'hak* (vol. 1; Israel, 61a).

אלא הכדורים הגדולים ככלי שיר וזמר ביד המלאכים המניעים אותם. להודות ולהכריז בתנועותיהם המפורסמות והתמידיות שאין סוף וקץ לגדולת רוממות הבורא אותם ית' שמו ושהרודף אחר השגת ההדמות אליו רודף אחר דבר שלא ינוה בו לעולם. ועל דרך שאמר אדון הנביאים אשירה לה' כי גאה גאה אמר כי ענין השיר הוא לומר כי גאה גאה מכל מיני הגאווה והרוממות.

Arama composed a short mini-treatise titled *Niggun Olam* (*Music of the Cosmos*) which depicts the relationship between God and the world in terms of two identically tuned musical instruments which cause each other to vibrate. *Akedat*, 113a-115b.

their own exaltedness, which deluded them into thinking their material progress could place them in the same realm as God. The certainty and arrogance of their own unlimited creative ability, confined to building with stone and mortar, should have been tempered by what Abraham Joshua Heschel considered the sense of finitude conveyed by music, for “music is the language of mystery. But there is something greater than mystery. God is the meaning beyond all mystery.”¹²

A life without mystery pointing to something beyond, a life without music, fuelled their delusions to “make for ourselves a name” rather than defer to the Other and proclaim the Name of God. Even one of the fathers of the modern study of Jewish history, Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), drew an intrinsic connection between the Judaic notion of God and music, but in his version, music emerges from an auditory *Weltanschauung* “which perceives its God in the alternately loud and soft sounds of the movement of the waves, in the rhythm of word sounds, the artistic drive, in harmony with this particular view of God, gave birth to music combined with religious poetry.”¹³ If we graft Graetz’s historical insight onto Heschel’s theological one, what results is a reciprocal relationship between music and the Jewish God, between mystery and history, where music directs the mind to God, and God, in turn, inspires musical artistry.

As we plot the course of biblical history along a musical staff, we encounter a patriarch whose life can be particularly charted along an ebb and flow of music and whose life personifies the role of music in the religious life of the Jew. History repeats itself with a contrast between brotherly occupations—Esau “the skilled hunter, outdoorsman,” and Jacob, “a mild man, dweller of tents.” Jacob thus is occupationally a descendant of *Yaval*, the ancestor of all “dwellers of tents,” but, unlike their brotherly antecedents, there was no music to mediate their relationship, and so Jacob’s and Esau’s names and births portend the enmity and struggle that was to define their relationship. Consequently, that which paves the way for a brotherly kiss and embrace, after many years of a poisoned relationship, is a name change from *Ya’akov* the “deceiver,” the one who stealthily exploits another’s vulnerability or ignorance (Gen. 25:29-34; 27:18-24), the one who holds others back (25:26), who usurps another’s rightful place (27:36), to *Yisrael*, the one who advances openly by direct confrontation and struggle, and who triumphs by standing his own ground (32:29). *Ya’akov*’s encounter and transaction conducted with the angel is then a reversal of his first recorded exchange with Esau—a blessing previously obtained by dubious exploitation of another’s physical impairment and hidden identity (Esau’s fatigue and hunger; Isaac’s blindness) is now acquired by sustained effort and open disclosure while he himself experiences physical disability: he wrestles alone all night (32:25); he admits his name when asked (32:28); and he strains his hip (32:26).

Yet here, too, *Ya’akov*’s ultimate victory over his angelic combatant is achieved, according to the midrash, by a suppression of music. *Ya’akov* ignores the angel’s plea for release to perform his designated function among the angelic retinue of singing for God. *Ya’akov*

¹² “The Vocation of the Cantor,” in *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966), 250. Heschel’s writings abound with musical metaphors. For a short analysis of his use of music as an essential medium of religious experience, see Michael Heymel, “A Witness to the Existence of God: Music in the Work of Abraham Joshua Heschel,” *Judaism* 49:4 (2000): 399-410.

¹³ Ismar Schorsch, ed., *The Structure of Jewish History and Other Essays* (Schorsch, trans.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1975), 68-69. See Kalman Bland’s discussion of Graetz’s binary distinction between Jewish hearing and pagan seeing, in *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 23-29.

persists in his insensitivity to the power of music, to that art which God is portrayed as dependent on daily from the angelic consorts, and refuses to release the angel from his grip.¹⁴ It is no coincidence then, that the name “Israel” bears a midrashically etymological derivation from song (*shir*) and God (*eil*)¹⁵ which captures both the metaphysical bond between God and music, as well as the physical uniqueness of Israel as the national reflection of this integral bond, and signifies that a spiritual path to God can be found through music. In fact, Nahmanides goes as far as to consider the song at the end of Deuteronomy a précis of the entire Jewish historical experience in terms of its relationship with God: “Now this song, which is our true and faithful testimony, tells us clearly all that will happen to us.”¹⁶ Jewish experience and biography is a divine musical score. Thus, by renaming Jacob, the angel introduces music into his existence, an element sorely lacking until this point in his life.¹⁷ Immediately afterward, the brothers reunite and, if only for a fleeting moment, join in a genuine mutual expression of love.¹⁸

Music, however, is not always appropriate, especially at a time of death and tragedy. Here too, the midrashically constructed end to Jacob’s life is instructive. Joseph’s pain and self-denial during the seven days of grieving for his father’s demise (Gen. 50:10) so affects God that He guarantees a future transformation of that sorrow into the ultimate joy of messianic redemption and the “comfort” of Zion’s ultimate reconstitution. Isaiah’s prophetic vision corroborates this by assuring that God *comforted Zion, comforted all her ruins...gladness and joy shall abide there, thanksgiving and the sound of music* (51:3).¹⁹ The most prominent of midrashic collections on Genesis climaxes in its very last word of “music” (זמרה).²⁰ Jacob’s death, a time when music stopped, signals a utopian future which is suffused with song. Even abstinence from music during periods of mourning itself portends further prospects of joy and music’s reintroduction into the mourners’ lives. Thus, the two extreme poles of human emotions, grief and happiness, are defined by the presence of song and music.

What Jacob had partially accomplished by the assimilation of music into his life, marked by his name change, is consummated by the national crystallization of that name in his

¹⁴ *B’reishit rabbah*, ed. Chaim Albeck (Jerusalem: Shalem Books, 1996, vol. II, 78:2, 918-919). See also Geoffrey Hartman’s analysis of the midrash which claims that the amoraic argument regarding angelic singing is itself a musical performance: their midrashic ingenuity is their own version of singing in “competition” with the angels; Hartman, *The Third Pillar: Essays in Judaic Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 127.

¹⁵ *Zohar hadash*, vol. II, *Megillat shir ha-shirim* 5b—“כונתם לכך כי האותיות ‘ישראל’ שיר דא איהו ישראל, חכמי האמת קבעו ‘שיר דא איהו ישראל’.” מכילות את שני הביטויים “שיר” ו“א-ל”.

¹⁶ Commentary on Deut. 32:40 (Charles B. Chavel, trans.; vol. 5, 367) — והנה השירה הזאת אשר היא בנו לעד אמת ונאמן, תגיד בביאור כל המוצאות אותנו. See also *M’khilta d’Rabbi Yishmael* 116, which plots all the major turning points in Israel’s history through a final utopian end that is yet to come along a continuum of song [*shirah*].

¹⁷ See the sources cited by Louis Ginzberg. *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968, vol. 5, p. 307, n. 253), especially those explaining the name Israel as “trying to sing instead of the angels.”

¹⁸ The Masoretic text has critical dots above the letters of the word “and he kissed him” in Gen. 33:4. It is as though the emotion expressed is punctuated as an exceptional occurrence. Though there is an argument about the sincerity of the kiss, one opinion sees this kiss as a momentary gesture of love in a normally hateful relationship; see *Sifrei*, *B’ha’alot’kha* 69. Ibn Ezra asserts that, despite traditions to the contrary, the *p’shat* upholds the sincerity of the kiss.

¹⁹ *B’reishit rabbah*, 100:14, 1296.

²⁰ For a detailed etymology of the root *zmr*, see John A. Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 40-43. Especially pertinent is his observation that forms of this root in the Hebrew Bible “appear only in contexts concerning cultic worship.” (41) The future song generated by Jacob’s death then elevates the mourning over it from personal grief to sorrow over the loss of some divine dimension as a result of the death of a righteous individual.

descendants: Israel's Song at the Sea. The expression of joy over the ultimate defeat of the Egyptian slave-masters and a future of freedom and independence takes the form of spontaneous song. Ultimate reward is signalled by what the midrash considers a future tense of "sing" in the preface to the song "then Moses and the Israelites *will sing* (ישיר) this song" (Exod. 15:1). The rabbis consider this locution to be a biblical locus that substantiates the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—that is, a song will be sung in the future.²¹ In fact, if Ezekiel's resurrection of the dry bones (chapter 37) is the dress rehearsal for and concretizes the truth of resurrection, then one tradition ascribes the whole purpose of resurrection to the performance of one last song, after which the revived bodies lapse back into lifelessness.²² Once again, just as at the end of Genesis, music is the quintessential characteristic of ultimate reward, adding resurrection to messianic redemption is another instance of its occasioning.

Yet here, too, there is a vindication of the transfer of the role of spiritual music initiated by Jacob's defeat of his angelic combatant. Though the angels request divine leave to sing at the splitting of the sea, the future tense midrashically indicates Israel's pre-emption of the angels in song: "God said to them, *then Moses and the Israelites will sing* first and then you afterwards."²³ But music, in the flurry of midrashic exegesis inspired by the Song at the Sea, not only anticipates the ultimate in human perfection, it also perfects God himself, for the midrash attributes divine kingship established on earth to the power of the Song. Previously, God was merely the Creator, but the Song coronates Him as King.²⁴ Thus it is music that transforms the detached God of the philosophers into the providential God of the patriarchs who governs and forms relationships with God's subjects. Music therefore looks back retrospectively to the origin of all things and prospectively to the end of all things. Music is the nexus between creation and redemption, and it is music that animates the Creator as the God of history as well. Without music there is no vital continuum between creation and redemption, but simply an indifferent, and therefore directionless, sequence of events. Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) was wary of the danger of music, which is prone to creating "ideal time" at the expense of real time. These rabbinic traditions which view music as connecting all time and drawing down God's presence into time are the midrashic articulations of what Rosenzweig considers the neutralization of this danger by leading music "out of its next-worldliness into this world of time and incorporate its ideal time into the real."²⁵

Just as God's presence as king is drawn into the orbit of human existence and history through music, the divine voice is heard only through the exhilarating effects of music. Sadness is a bar to prophecy, or that which constitutes the perceptual bridge between the divine and the human realms, the essential medium enabling religious life by disclosing divine will. The instrumental catalyst of prophetic inspiration is music, as exemplified by the travelling group of prophets Saul encounters prior to his installation as the first king of Israel. That group is

²¹ See *b. Sanhedrin* 91b

²² *Ibid.*, 92b.

²³ *Sh'mot rabbah*, 23:8—קדמו שרים אלו ישראל שעמדו על הים דכתיב אז ישיר משה, אחר נוגנים אלו המלאכים.

²⁴ *Sh'mot rabbah*, 23:1—באמת עד שלא בראת עולמך, היית אתה, משבראת אותו אתה הוא, אלא כביכול עומד... אבל משעמדת בים ואמרנו שירה לפניך באז נתיישרה מלכותך וכסאך נכון

²⁵ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Barbara Galli, trans.; Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 382. See also Galli's commentary in *Cultural Writings of Franz Rosenzweig*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), who draws a connection between Rosenzweig's understanding of music and "redemption or the end of all suffering." (71).

described as being thrust into a prophetic mode to the accompaniment of “harps, timbrels, flutes, and lyres” (1 Sam. 10:5). Maimonides codifies this fundamental rule of joy through music in the cultivation of prophecy, the very highest form of engagement with the divine.²⁶ However he also makes it clear that music and the joy it inculcates on its own are not sufficient to trigger prophecy, but they are conditions precedent “on the way toward prophecy” after a process of “seeking” it.²⁷ Like Rosenzweig, and his tempering of musical ideal time to real time, Maimonides thus adds a sobering note to the unrestrained power of the aesthetic, of art, of music, and of poetry, as means that must be integrated with the whole person, intellectually and morally, in the quest for spiritual perfection. The musician poet needs the grounding of emotions, ethics, and mind in establishing a line of communication with what transcends all these single dimensions of human existence.

Considering the centrality of the imaginative faculty for prophecy in Maimonides²⁸ (who maintains that all prophecies occur in dreams and visions,²⁹ and that prophecy is often transmitted in cryptic parabolic language and images³⁰), it is no wonder that an aesthetic sensibility attuned to the inventive, dreamlike, and imaginative cadences of music would be more prone to achieving prophecy.³¹ Clearly, those who are “on the way toward prophecy” would count among those exceptional individuals whose music leads, according to Maimonides, “to prudence of the spirit and to nimbleness of [mental] activity to acquire intellect or submission to the divine commandments.”³² If those other facets of his being must complicate the musician

²⁶ For a comprehensive overview of joy (*simhah*) in Maimonides’ works, see Gerald Blidstein, “Joy in Maimonides’ Ethical Thought” (Heb.), *Eshel B’eir Sheva* 2 (1980): 45-163. The other *locus classicus* corroborating the idea that divine inspiration and prophecy are not acquired while in a state of sadness also involves music and its soothing effects in opening the channels of prophecy is 3 Kings 15, as cited in *b. Shabbat* 30b.

²⁷ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Y’sodei ha-Torah* 7:4. See also *Guide of the Perplexed*, trans., S. Pines; (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) (GP) II:36, 372-373, for sadness as an obstacle to prophecy and II:32 for the essential idea that prophecy arrives only after extensive “training and perfection” as well as natural disposition, and that those qualified “were always engaged in preparation” (362). The issue of prophecy in Maimonides has attracted voluminous scholarship and debate and cannot be given its full due in this paper. See, e.g., the bibliography compiled by Jacob Dienstag, “Prophecy in the Thought of the Rambam: A Bibliography,” *Da’at* 37 (1996): 193-238. Suffice it for the purposes of this study to state my agreement with the position that sees no essential difference between the opinion of the philosophers on the nature of prophecy and the Jewish Maimonidean one or, in other words, a thoroughgoing naturalist conception. For one cogently argued analysis in support of this, see Lawrence Kaplan, “Maimonides on the Miraculous Element in Prophecy,” *HTR* 70 (1977): 233-256, who essentially collapses the distinction between what Maimonides lists as “that of the philosophers” and that of “our Law and the foundation of our doctrine.”

²⁸ GP, II:36, 369; see also II:45, 403, where he asserts that all prophets excluding Moses “hear speech only through the intermediary of an angel...the intermediary is the imaginative faculty.”

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II:41, 386.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, II:43.

³¹ In this paper, I present music and its role as conceived in the post-biblical rabbinic tradition. The question of the precise relationship between prophecy and poetry/music in the biblical tradition is another issue altogether. See, e.g., James Kugel’s typically lucid analysis in “Poets and Prophets: An Overview,” in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition* (ed. James Kugel; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 1-25.

³² See his responsum on music in *T’shuvot ha-Rambam*, (ed. Joshua Blau; Jerusalem: *M’kitsei Nirdamim*, 1960), vol. 2, nos. 224, 269, 398-400; 515-516). See also Yitzhak Shilat, *Igg’rot ha-Rambam* (Jerusalem: Ma’aliyot, 1987) vol.1, 425-431. Much has been written on Maimonides’ attitude toward music and, again, I don’t enter here into the halakhic complexities of the issue, but only intend to convey Maimonides’ conceptual attitude, which is not as negative as it might seem. See Boaz Cohen, “The Responsum of Maimonides Concerning Music,” in *Law and Tradition in Judaism* (New York: Ktav, 1969), 167-181, and Fred Rosner’s analysis and English translation in “Moses Maimonides on Music Therapy and his Responsum on Music,” *JJML* 16 (1993-1994): 1-16, and the

in him to become an authentic prophet, then his audience must also appreciate the prophecy beyond the music. The danger of the recipients of the prophetic message simply being seduced by the music is captured by God's assessment of Ezekiel's message to the community: "To them you are like a singer of erotic songs whose voice is melodious and who makes sweet music; they hear your words but do them they don't (33:32)."³³ His audience divorced the lyrics from the melody, transforming a sacred teaching into profane entertainment. The result is a spiritually catastrophic fracturing of what was forged at Sinai.³⁴ Ezekiel's adherents *hear* and *do not do*, rupturing the resounding *hearing and doing* (*na'aseh v'nishma*) which underpins God's revelation to the entire community of Israel at Sinai.

Once individual revelation is understood as originating in song, the groundwork has been laid for viewing revelation on a national scale. The formal commandment that obligates Jews individually to write a Torah scroll is derived from a particular divine mandate addressed to Moses and Joshua to, in the consensus of both modern biblical scholars and classic traditional medieval exegetes, write one small segment of the Torah, the Song of Moses: "And now write you this song and teach it to the Israelites" (Deut. 31:19). The poem that is its direct referent follows in the next chapter and commences with the word *Ha'azinu*, "listen," and therefore is informed with an auditory sense. But the rabbinic rereading of the command transforms the entire Torah into an epic poem, a song. The minor poem of *Ha'azinu* mirrors the major "poem" of the Torah from Genesis to Deuteronomy in that, just as only nature heard the divine voice at Creation, the poem commences in kind with nature, the heaven and the earth, as God's audience. And just as the Torah moves from the universal story of creation to the particular story of a single people concluding with it and its leader on the cusp of establishing its own homeland, so too does the poem crescendo from its opening in creation to its climax in the people of Israel and its land: "And [God] will cleanse the land, His people" (32:43). But the Torah as song, as poetry, also captures the relationship between its devotees and its text in the classic Jewish enterprise of study and interpretation. R. Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, the N'tsiv (1816-1893), claimed that the poem captures the nature of the Torah much better than prose in its covert allusiveness, metaphor, symbolism, and acrostic clues that disclose meaning far beyond what he considers the simplicity and overt message of prose.³⁵ The profound discoveries and *hiddushim* of the sage, the *talmid hakham*, are then artistic explications of poetry; they are expressions of keen listening to the tone and rhythm of the text that turns authentic learning into musicology. The sage becomes the Torah's troubadour.

Indeed, in the kabbalistic tradition, music, concretized by the cantillation notes that melodize and punctuate the words of the Torah, ontologically precedes the vowels and alphabet

literature cited therein. Jacob Levinger draws a suggestive inference that Maimonides might condone antinomian behavior for extraordinary individuals in their pursuit of personal perfection since halakhah generally prohibits music as injurious to the common man. See "Halakhah and Individual Perfection According to Rambam" (Heb.), *Da'at* 13 (1984): 61-65 at p.65.

³³ Moshe Greenberg's translation, in *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

³⁴ Perhaps it is this same reason that underlies the curse one rabbinic source expresses against King David's classification of Scripture as songs when he declared in Ps. 119:54, "Your statutes have been as songs to me..." (*b. Sotah* 35a). The aesthetic dimension must be in the service of the substance of the Law. In the same vein is R. Akiva's harsh denunciation of those who treat the Song of Songs as an ordinary song (*k'min zemer*) in *Tosefta, Sanhedrin* 12:10.

³⁵ *Ha'ameik Davar* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Volozhin, 2005, vol. I, p. 2). See Isaac Hershkowitz, "The Melody of the Sages: Does God Really Have a Voice?", *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism* (2011): 14:1, 120-128.

of language, opening a pathway into the inner recesses of the Godhead.³⁶ According to the Zohar the letters are actually informed with meaning by the musical intonations “whose melody is followed by the letters and vowels, undulating after them like troops behind their king...All of them range in motion after the intonations and halt with them.”³⁷ This sentiment is moderately echoed even in the rationalist school by Profiat Duran (Efodi) (c. 1350—c. 1415), who considered the “special melody with which we sing the phrases of this sacred Book” superior to all other nations’ music “for by itself it almost provides the meaning intended by the phrases.”³⁸ It is music that preserves the text.

Without their musical cadence, the Torah’s words are lifeless and meaningless and therefore cannot invigorate those who are dedicated to living their lives by it. Rabbi Yohanan rules that the book of Ezekiel’s odd divine pronouncement of “giving laws that are not good and rules by which they could not live” (20:25) applies to “anyone who reads Torah without a melody or repeats Mishnah without a tune.”³⁹ Without music the study of both the texts of the written and oral laws is drained of any value, amounting to simply a collection of dead letter statutes which fail to perform their normal function of guiding life and behavior. In this sense, the study in the *beit midrash* of Judaism’s foundational texts are animated by the *ba’al korei*’s weekly musical rendition of the *parashah*. Every Shabbat, the *leyening* performance jolts the listener into that preverbal transcendence that must animate the mundane engagements with the literary form of the canonical texts that consume her life and mind. The melodic phrasing accompanying the study of a talmudic *sugya* is not simply a practical aid for “increasing yearning and desire,” or “strengthening the faculty of memory,”⁴⁰ for any moral or legal guidance the *sugya* might offer. Rather, it retrieves the “sweetness and joy” of the *tana* Ben Azzai’s compositional midrashic weaving together of all the sections of the Hebrew Bible.⁴¹ The flames his learning generated were decidedly not merely the result of the subject matter, of delving into the most esoteric realms of the Torah and the mysticism or metaphysics of the *ma’aseih merkavah*, but rather of the passionate intensity that imbued his ordinary rabbinic engagement with the Torah.⁴²

³⁶ This kabbalistic view of the musical notations is in complete opposition to the common scholarly understanding of them as expressed, for example, by Israel Yeivin: “This chant enhanced the beauty and solemnity of the reading, but because the purpose of the reading was to present the text clearly and intelligibly to the hearers, [emphasis added] the chant is dependent on the text and emphasizes the logical relationship of the words.” In *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, trans., E.J. Revell (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980) p.158. The Zohar reverses the dependency relationship—the words are dependent on the music. For a comprehensive treatment of the *ta’amei hamikra* see Mordecai Breuer, *Ta’amei ha-Mikra b’Khaf-alef S’farim u-v’Sifrei Emet*, (Jerusalem: Horeb, 1989)

³⁷ 1:15b; Matt, 114-115: כגונא דתנועי דמנגני, ובגונא דלהון אזלין אבתרייהו אתון ונקודי ומתנענען אבתרייהו, כחילין בתר מלכיהון, גופא אתון, ורוחא נקודי, כלהו נטלי במטלניהון בתר תנועי וקיימי בקיומיהו.

See Elliot Wolfson, “Biblical Accentuation in a Mystical Key: Kabbalistic Interpretations of the *T’amim*,” *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* XI (1988-89) Part 1: 1-16; Part 2, XII (1989-1990):1-13. The thrust of the Zohar and other thirteenth-and-fourteenth century kabbalistic texts he marshals demonstrates that “for the kabbalist, through the melodic chanting of the Torah, one can reach one of the highest stages within the divine process.” (Part 1, 2).

³⁸ J. Friedlander, J. Kohn, eds., *Ma’aseih Eifod*, (1865; repr. 1970), 11; see also Kalman Bland’s discussion in *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual*, supra 86-91.

³⁹ *b. Megillah* 32a—כל הקורא בלא נעימה ושונה בלא זמרה עליו הכתוב אומר וגם אני נתתי להם חוקים לא טובים

⁴⁰ See J. Friedlander, J. Kohn, eds., *Ma’aseih eifod*, supra n. 38, at 11.

⁴¹ *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10—שמחים ועריבים כנתינתם מסיני—

⁴² Indeed, Jacob Neusner constructs a theology of the Jewish encounter with God out of the metaphor of music. Since “the Torah is always sung, never merely said or read,” his account is of “how those faithful to the Torah listen

If we return to the refrain with which we began this study and the “secular” music on which I myself was nurtured outside the halls of the *shul* and the *yeshivah*, the outside and inside of those “four ells” are more blurred than clearly delineated. Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, among others, emerge consciously and subconsciously, out of a tradition in which song and Torah study, poetry and spiritual devotion, are intertwined in a sacred embrace. Their turns to Judaism’s sacred texts are not sacrilegious but rather extensions of the profound role that music has been shown to play within the tradition. In order to afford them their due, we need apply the N’tsiv’s methodology of searching for meaning in the songs’ allusions, which he would characterize as the *p’shat* of poetry.⁴³

Highway 61, the road that winds its way some 1400 miles across the USA, from the south in New Orleans to the north in Minnesota, symbolizes the spectrum of various genres of quintessential American music. Dylan anchors that route in the image of the *Akeidah*, which animates it with both the terror of encounters with God and the adventurous discovery of the lengthy road that traverses a wide swath of his own country, disclosing the endless musical possibilities it encompasses. If the killing is to be done on that highway, then perhaps Dylan appropriates Abraham’s encounter and trial as a paradigmatic symbol of breaking new ground in poetry and musical creativity. The music that deserves travelling this road needs to adopt the boldness, the moral shock, the risk taking, the offensiveness, and the suffering that must have informed Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice that which he most loved. If the poet songwriter wants to play it safe and compose comfortable music, then he “better run,” because for music to approach the realm of the transcendent, it requires the censure and moral outrage that novelty and pioneering in a field usually attract. The toll for the musical highway of meaningful inventiveness is sacrifice of the highest order.⁴⁴

Leonard Cohen’s treatment of Abraham, like Dylan’s, is nuanced and tinged with both reverence and revulsion. Abraham’s motivation in the trial and relationship with his son lies in stark contrast to those “over thirty” in Cohen’s own time who fail to measure up to the tragic nobility of their biblical predecessor. Those who currently sacrifice children are “schemers” and not driven by a “vision.” Misguided or not, Abraham sets out sincerely to accomplish something much larger than himself, to pursue a vision that connotes ideals, that teaches, that leaves a sacred legacy. A scheme, on the other hand, colloquially conveys a sense of deviousness and of immoral plotting to exploit others for one’s own benefit. Playing on the midrash that Abraham’s trial is prompted by Satan,⁴⁵ one can judge Abraham’s test to have been invoked either negatively by a “demon” or positively by a “God,” but his temptation to murder at least reflects a relationship with the Transcendent, with something beyond his own existence. The parents of Cohen’s Vietnam era have no such excuse, no temptation other than their own self-interest.

to the melody of the Torah.” See *Judaism’s Theological Voice: Melody of the Talmud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), xv.

⁴³ “For the song is not as explicit as prose and requires glossing indicating what each poetic verse signifies, and this is not considered *d’rush*.” R. Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, *Ha’ameik Davar* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Volozhin, 1999) vol.1, p. 2.

⁴⁴ I follow Michael Gilmour’s advice: “Bob Dylan’s Bible is most often a unique rendition of Scripture because he shapes language for his own purposes, whether this means accommodating a rhyming pattern, introducing irony, or weaving images together.” Gilmour, “Bob Dylan’s Bible,” in *The Oxford History of the Reception of the Bible*, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199204540.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199204540-e-25>

⁴⁵ *b. Sanhedrin* 89b.

Abraham's weapon in Cohen's hands is elegant and is also reminiscent of the midrashic uniqueness of Abraham's knife signified by the rare and unusual term *ma'akhelet*. Earlier in the song, Abraham's axe is said to be "made of gold." It was neither "blunt,"⁴⁶ nor crafted to cause the most excruciating pain, nor "bloody," since at the end of the trial, Abraham in fact does not sacrifice his son. Axes used as weapons or tools are normally made of copper, bronze, iron, or steel, and so the preciousness of Abraham's axe of gold almost certainly indicates ornamental use rather than weaponry. Their willingness to sacrifice their children is no real test, for the love they feign for their children is superficial, and therefore effortlessly overcome. Their love bears no resemblance to Abraham's passionate and all-consuming love for Isaac, as the midrash understands the implications of the heightened biblical multi-phrasing "your son, your only one, the one you love, Isaac." They "were not there before" and thus cannot hope to stand in Abraham's shoes. Though there is much more to be said, Cohen exquisitely blends the biblical narrative, rabbinic midrash, and his own midrashic accretions to evoke first the nightmarish terror in the murderous movement of Abraham's hand over Isaac's throat. But it also resonates paradoxically with a type of "beauty" in Abraham's gesture⁴⁷ that starkly contrasts to the cruel, crude, and barbaric drafting of Cohen's contemporary children to the foreign battlefield. Cohen's music itself annotates the "trembling" of the *Akeidah* with "beauty."

Now I understand what initiated one of the great Jewish master-disciple relationships of the twentieth century. After years of study, after extensive training in Greek and philosophy, after developing deep rabbinic expertise, and after searching for a teacher to whom he could indenture himself, R. David Cohen, known as the Nazir, was staying in the same place in Switzerland as Rav Avraham Yitzhak Hakohein Kook (1865-1935) when he heard Rav Kook praying in the morning. He was so enraptured by Rav Kook's musical rendition of the *Akeidah*, "with an exalted song and melody," that he immediately knew his quest had come to an end. He became Rav Kook's devoted acolyte for the remainder of his life.⁴⁸ He captures Rav Kook's melodiously overwhelming effect on his being by adopting the biblical description of Saul's own transformation as a result of joining the prophetic musical troupe mentioned earlier: "and I was turned into another man."⁴⁹ What is significant here is not simply the spirituality of the melody, but the text it accompanied. If the retelling of a horrifying narrative such as the *Akeidah*, imbued with what Kierkegaard called "fear and trembling," could by its chanting be spiritually transformative and inspire the kind of cathartic enlightenment Saul himself experienced, then one can be certain that the singer, in this case Rav Kook, is the one who knows how to extract

⁴⁶ See, e.g., the tradition that Abraham carefully inspected the knife beforehand, in *Tanhuma* 96:13.

⁴⁷ As such, Cohen's appropriation of the *Akeidah* is another example of what Elliot Wolfson considers his "deep connection to his Jewish roots," as well as the transformation of a "traditional theological image by introducing a note of doubt that is distinctive to the modern predicament." See his extensive treatment of Cohen's engagement with kabbalistic themes in "New Jerusalem Glowing: Songs and Poems of Leonard Cohen in a Kabbalistic Key," *Kabbalah: A Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 15 (2006):103-152, at 104.

⁴⁸ *Orot ha-Kodesh* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1984), introduction, 18-19:

על משכבי לא שכב ליבי. גורל חיי על כפות המאזניים. והנה בוקר השכם ואשמע קול צעדים הנה והנה, בברכות השחר, תפילת העקידה, בשיר וניגון עליון, משמי שמי קדם, וזכור לנו אהבת הקדמונים, ואקשיב, והנה נהפכתי לאיש אחר. אחרי התפילה, מיהרתי לבשר במכתב, כי יותר מאשר פיללתי מצאתי, מצאתי לי רב.

For an analysis of the critical role music plays in R. Kook's theology, see Dov Schwartz, "Aesthetics and the Limits of Understanding: Approaches in Twentieth Century Orthodox Thought" (Heb.), *Daat* 74:75 (2013): 403-432, at 403-414. Music is so important that "it is not just confined to one area but is the key to understanding all of existence." (404).

⁴⁹ See 1Sam. 10:6.

beauty from every other part of the Torah. Leonard the *kohein* and his rendition of the *akeidah*, follows the lead of these earlier *kohanim* in communicating its inner beauty through song.

The prophetic music of creativity and social justice, and the rabbinic euphonic interpretation of Judaism's foundational texts that preserves and perpetuates their relevance throughout history, reverberates in the Jewish exponents of contemporary music and poetry. Though we have only presented a preliminary sketch of the pervasiveness and importance of music in the Jewish tradition and omitted much, including its role in the ancient Temple, in liturgy and in the Psalms—and especially its elevation as a metaphysical crux in hasidic theology⁵⁰—we have certainly refuted Richard Wagner's vulgar canard that Jews and Judaism have no interest in aesthetics beyond a crass commercialism.⁵¹ The music composed as resistance to what would later become the very demonic mass murder of Jews rendered possible by rants such as Wagner's attests to Wagner's insidious perverseness. What commercial profit ever motivated or accrued to the composers of such songs as Mordechai Gebirtig's *Es brent, briderlekh, es brent* ("It's Burning Brothers, It's Burning!"), which laments the apathy of the passive bystanders in the years leading up to the Shoah while "our poor *shtetl* pitifully burns"?⁵²

The cruelty portended in Gebirtig's song may never have occurred had the final tempestuous message of Job, the biblical paradigm of innocent suffering, been truly assimilated. It is the canonical text where one would least expect music to be heard. However, one of the first responses to Job's torturous search for a rationale behind his unbearable suffering from the divine voice from the tempest at the book's grand finale relates to music. Framed as a rhetorical question, Job is asked to contemplate the limits of that search: "[Where were you] when the morning stars sang together, and all the divine beings shouted for joy?" (38:7).⁵³ Whatever else this may mean, there is the implication that the inability to appreciate the music and the song that accompanied the foundation of the universe lies at the very heart of Job's, and all human beings', confusion regarding the "why" of suffering. Job must restore the music that he agonizingly renounced from his life (Job 3:7). Perhaps what Job must consider is that suffering is partially the consequence of the absence of music, of the refusal to transcend nature and the purely material by remaining deaf to its chords of song and joy, since that music would sensitize one to the needs of others. It is no coincidence then, that Job is restored and made whole once he "prays on behalf of his friends" (42:10), and only ideal prayer, suffused with joy and song,⁵⁴ can successfully open the gates of heaven.

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⁵⁰ See Moshe Idel, "The Magical and Theurgic Interpretation of Music in Jewish Sources from the Renaissance to Hassidism" (Heb.), *Yuval* 4 (1982): 33–63.

⁵¹ See Jacob Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986).

⁵² See Moshe Avital, "The Role of Song and Music During the Holocaust," *JJML* 31 (2011-2012): 51-60, and Josef Bor, *Terezin Requiem* (New York: Avon Books, 1978).

⁵³ See also Ps. 148.

⁵⁴ See. e.g., *b. B'rakhot* 31a; *Sefer ḥasidim* 18; and *Zohar* 73a.

My Brief Encounter with Yehezkel Braun (1922-2014)—the Man and His Music

By Jonathan Schultz

Born in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland), Yehezkel Braun moved with his family to Mandate Palestine when he was two. In the formative years of his teens during the 1930s he was surrounded by music of the so-called “Mediterranean School” of composers such as Marc Lavry, Joachim Stuchewsky, Yitzhak Edel and Paul Ben-Haim. “These composers, educated in Western European music traditions, were affected by their encounter with Middle Eastern Jewish communities and Arabic music in the region,” writes Jan Radzynsky in his liner noted to a CD featuring music of the Mediterranean School.¹ Radzynsky cites salient characteristics of this style:

The frequent use of variation techniques and of unison, ostinato repetitions, irregular meters, linear textures, the use of modes, and a preference for melismatic ornamentation derived from vocal tradition. The style was aesthetically akin to Claude Debussy’s Impressionism, and excluded such Western devices as polyphony, major-minor tonality, and the interval of the augmented second, which had been associated with the music of the Diaspora.

Yehezkel Braun, who would go on to serve as Professor of Music at Tel Aviv University for many years, at one time also studied Gregorian chant with Dom Jean Claire of the famed Benedictine Abbey at Solesmes in France. His lifelong partiality to liturgical chant dovetailed neatly with the characteristic sound of traditional synagogue prayer that he had heard as a child. Braun would merge this fluid vocal line with accompaniments that incorporated impressionist harmonies preferred by the Mediterranean School composers.

I was privileged to interview the composer, by then 88 years of age, at his home in Tel Aviv on January 12, 2010. I began by asking him when he first knew that he had a gift for music, and how he got started. He told me that it happened over many years, and that in his childhood and in his teens, he didn’t take music too seriously. But he loved classical music, Arabic music, and just about any other kind of music. When he was a child, his father gave him a small wind instrument and a booklet of German melodies, and he learned how to play and sing many of those melodies. Some years later, he started playing the violin. He learned melodies by heart before he learned how to play them, and he was sure that everyone was capable of doing what he did.

He had quite a surprise many years later when a boy of about 17 or 18 asked him to teach him how to sing, and Braun was surprised that this boy was not able to sing. So he began with the basics, “this is Do, this is Re, C, D, E, F.” Braun was about 24 at this time, and living on a kibbutz after having served four years in the British Army. This was when he started to think seriously about music. He conducted the kibbutz choir, but his principal business and what he loved very much was agriculture—working in the fields and operating the machinery. Music was a hobby.

¹ Jan Radzynsky, music director, *Jewish Music: Between East and West—CD 3—The Israeli Mediterranean School* (Columbus, OH: The Melton Center for Jewish Studies at Ohio State University), 2003.

The change from music as a hobby to it becoming his life's work happened gradually. He said to me, "I couldn't believe that I was capable of doing what the great masters, the great composers did... supernatural beings belonging to the remote past, belonging to a far off, far away country. And then the kibbutz decided to send me to Tel Aviv to study at a teacher's college, to become a teacher." He didn't become a teacher. In the summer there was a class for choral conductors, and one of the instructors was a prominent Israeli composer named Mostovich. Braun was supposed to go to the beginners' class, but finding nothing of interest there, he sneaked into Mostovich's harmony class. Ignorant of technical terms like "dominant 7th chord," he understood by ear what was being discussed, and his instincts told him how the harmonies worked and fit together. When Braun asked Mostovich to give him lessons, the latter agreed. Braun told me, "after two or three lessons with Mostovich, we started to compose. It was like magic. Somehow, he opened a lock; before that I didn't even dream that I could compose, so this was actually the beginning."

I then asked Braun who some of his influences had been, and he told me that his first influence as a composer was Bela Bartok. He went so far as to say that Bartok was his greatest teacher of composition, because he never really formally studied the subject. Instead, he made a thorough study of Bartok's six-part series of "Progressive Piano Pieces—*Mikrokosmos*" (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1940), arranged by grades, from the simplest to the most demanding. He said to me,

I'm not a pianist, but somehow, I managed to play Bartok. Then I analyzed his "Concerto for Orchestra" (1943), his greatest piece. I analyzed the "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta" (1936), which is something out of this world... But I think my greatest influence was from very early childhood, the music I heard in my environment, in the synagogue, from the coffee house near where I lived where I heard only Arabic music... My father used to sing to me hasidic melodies and my mother used to sing me lullabies, which I realized later on were from Schubert *Lieder*... And my parents loved opera, especially Puccini. Those melodies—I remember since I was perhaps three or four years old.

In sum, Yehezkel Braun was influenced by both Western art music and by the folk music of *Erets yisrael*.

Braun's "King Solomon Cycle": *Kohelet*

A representative example of Braun's work is his setting of *Divrei kohelet ben david* (The Words of the Preacher, the Son of David: translation found in *The Holy Bible*—Revised Standard Edition, 1952). A setting of selected texts from the biblical book, the piece was commissioned by the Zamir Choral Foundation through its Jeanne R. Mandell Fund for New Music, and premiered in 2006 at the Foundation's North American Jewish Choral Festival at which Braun, himself, was honored with the Foundation's *Hallel V'Zimrah* award.² A 24-minute

² Editor's note: Braun's choice of *Kohelet* as the subject for his composition marked a completion for him of his "King Solomon Cycle," begun with his composition of *Cantici Canticorum Caput III* (2001), a setting of the third chapter of *Shir ha-shirim* (1972) and continuing with *Eishet hayil* (2001), also commissioned through the Mandell Fund, setting the well known passage from Proverbs (31:10-31).

work in six movements, its **Movement I** opens on a reciting tone that is reminiscent of traditional synagogue prayer (**Example 1**):



Example 1. Opening of Yehezkel Braun's *Divrei kohelet ben david*—on a reciting tone.

The ensuing accompaniment as well as vocal line utilize an alternately ascending and descending melodic pattern (**Examples 2 and 3**):



Example 2. Ensuing accompaniment—showing alternately ascending-and-descending melodic pattern.



Example 3. Ensuing vocal line—showing alternately ascending-and-descending melodic pattern.

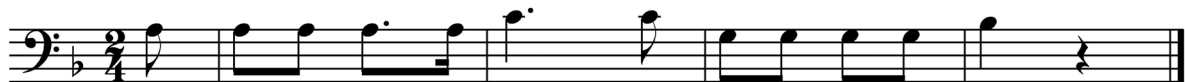
The vocal line and piano accompaniment in Examples 2 and 3 are based upon an octatonic scale. Unlike major or minor scales which contain seven distinct tones, an octatonic scale comprises eight distinct notes, spaced in alternating whole steps and half steps (**Example 4**):



Example 4. An octatonic scale comprising eight distinct notes.

One feature of this particular octatonic scale is that it includes both Eb and E-natural, enabling Braun to alternate between C major and C minor tonalities. In Example 2 the ascending pattern is harmonized with a C7 chord, and the descending pattern is harmonized with Eb7.

The tonal ambiguity just discussed continues through **Movement II**, along with the regular appearance of folk-like melodic passages like this one, whose initial phrase suggests the tonality of A minor and whose consequent phrase implies G minor (**Example 5**):



Example 5. A folk-like passage in **Movement II**, whose two phrases suggest different tonalities.

In **Movement III**, tonal centers shift similarly, as in the verse: “For I have seen that the difference between wisdom and intellect is as vast as that which divides night from day” (Eccl. 2:13). Its key signature is five flats (B – E – A – D – G), which would normally indicate Db major or Bb minor. However, the tonal center established in the opening theme appears to be Eb, based on the scale Eb – F – Gb – Ab – Bb – C – Db – Eb, which makes the key Eb Dorian (**Example 6**):

V'-ra - i - ti a - ni shey-yeish yit - ron la-hokh - mah min has-sikh -

lut, k' - yit - ron ha - or min ha - ho - shekh.

Example 6. A verse whose opening theme, in **Eb Dorian**, belies its key signature of **Db major**.

The text of **Movement IV** is arguably the most famous passage in the Book of *Kohelet* (Eccl. 3: 1-5a, 6-8):

A season is set out for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:
 A time for being born and a time for dying,
 A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;
 A time for slaying and a time for healing,
 A time for tearing down and a time for building up;
 A time for weeping and a time for laughing,
 A time for wailing and a time for dancing;
 A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,
 A time for seeking and a time for losing,
 A time for keeping and a time for discarding;

A time for ripping and a time for sewing,
 A time for silence and a time for speaking;
 A time for loving and a time for hating;
 A time for war and a time for peace.

Braun musically underscores this stunning counterposed sequence through an introductory melody that opens with a phrase announcing the overall theme of the movement. (**Example 7**):



Example 7. Introduction for the “Polar Opposites” series, announcing Movement IV’s overall theme.

The choir adds further emphasis by singing the theme in unison, in three different octaves, with the piano doubling and accentuating the melody (line 1 of the text; **Example 8**):

Example 8. The “Polar Opposites” introductory theme emphasized by doubling and accentuation.

Then comes the actual series of “polar opposite” verses, set to two alternating melodies. The first cited melody is for the **first of a pair** of “polar-opposite” verses in the series (A time for being born and a time for dying, a time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted; **Example 9**):



Example 9. Melody for the **first of a pair** of “polar-opposite” verses in the series.

The second cited melody is for the **second of a pair** of “polar-opposite” verses in the series (A time for seeking and a time for losing—A time for keeping and a time for discarding; **Example 10**):

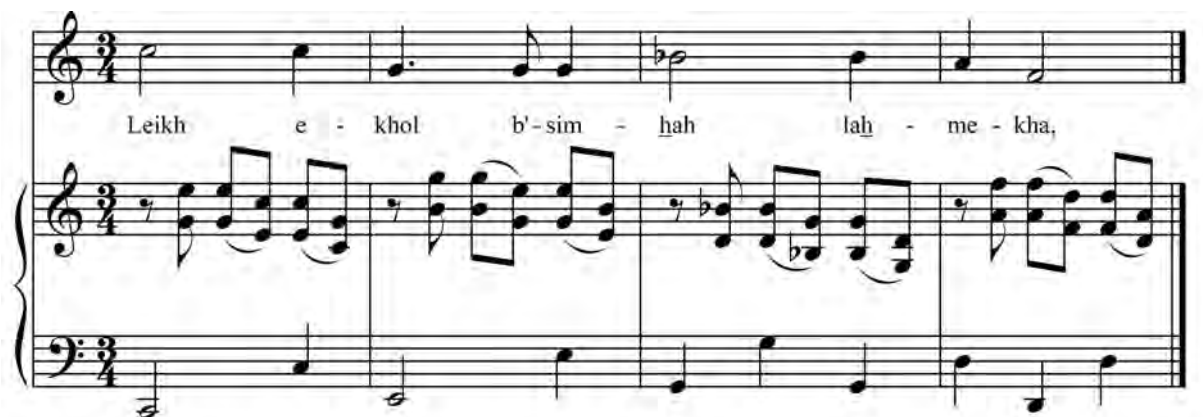


Example 10. Melody for the **second of a pair** of “polar-opposite” verses in the series.

The text of **Movement V** is about enjoying life (Eccl. 9: 7a, 8-9a):

Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy...
 Let your clothes always be freshly washed, and your head never lack ointment.
 Enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of your life...

The music assumes a lively character: Allegretto tempo, primarily major tonality, dance-like with half-note/quarter-note voice rhythms and cascading eighth-notes in the piano (**Example 11**):

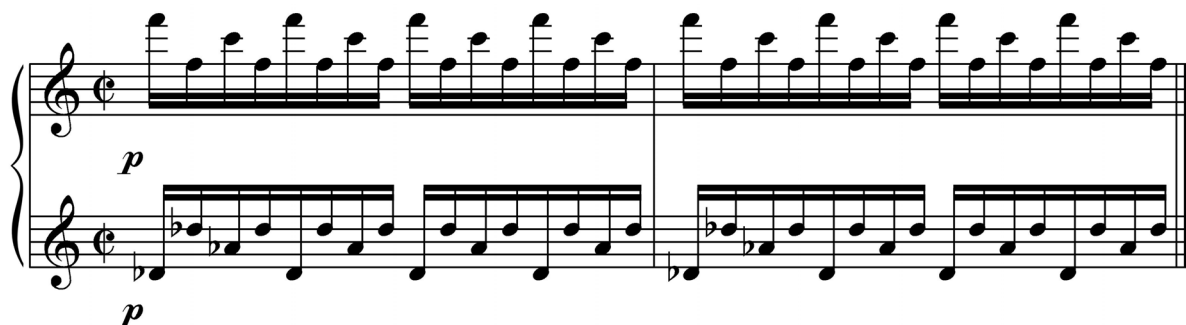


Example 11. Music for **enjoying life**: lively, in major, with **dance-like** rhythms.

Movement VI opens with a tone-painting of only one line of text, in 21 measures (Eccl. 11:7):

How sweet is the light, what a delight for the eyes to behold the sun!

The composer conveys the impression of “delightful sweetness” through a legato vocal line, and evokes a feeling of shimmering sunlight by rapid contrary-motion toggling in the accompaniment (**Example 12**):



Example 12. Braun’s rapid toggling in the accompaniment tone-painting “shimmering sunlight.”

Having created an idyllic tone painting of a bright and idyllic life, Braun now forewarns us of a darker time ahead when we will no longer be able to enjoy life (Eccl. 12:1b-2, 3b-5, 7a):

Before those days of sorrow come and those years arrive of which you will say,
“I have no pleasure in them;” before sun and light and moon and stars grow dark,
And the clouds come back again after the rain:
And the maids that grind, grown few, are idle,
And the ladies that peer through the windows grow dim,
And the doors to the street are shut
With the noise of the hand mill growing fainter,
And the song of the bird growing feebler.
For the almond tree may blossom,
The grasshopper be burdened,
And the caper bush may bud again;
But man sets out for his eternal abode,
With mourners all around in the street,
And the dust returns to the ground as it was.

The musical tempo supporting this peroration is grave, the accompaniment predominantly chordal, and the sparse “melody” features multiple repetitions on single pitches at a time. Each verse is sung once by the tenors, and repeated at *ff* volume by the full choir, with longer rhythms (**Example 13**):

The musical score is for a piece in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest for 8 measures, then enters with the lyrics "Sof da-var, hak-kol nish - mah." The melody is sparse, featuring multiple repetitions of single pitches. The piano accompaniment consists of a single bass line with a few notes, also featuring repetitions of single pitches. Dynamic markings include *mf* for the vocal line and *p* and *mf* for the piano line.

Example 13. Sparse melody featuring multiple repetitions on single pitches.

The foregoing account of my brief encounter with Yehezkel Braun and his musical portrayal of *Kohelet* demonstrates his commitment to express tonally the ethos of the biblical text. In doing so, Braun marshaled a variety of composing techniques characteristic of the Israel Mediterranean School, including ambiguity of key, use of exotic modes such as Dorian, unusual scales like the octatonic, unison passages, ostinato repetition, plus a mixture of Debussy-influenced Impressionism and folk-type melodic characteristics. Even without knowing the original language of The Preacher *Kohelet*, one can be deeply moved by the emotions that Braun's underlying musical portrayal of him evokes.

*Jonathan Schultz received his Masters degree in Sacred Music from the Jewish Theological Seminary. This article is drawn from his 2011 thesis on Yehezkel Braun's **Divrei Kohelet ben David**. Jonathan is Hazzan at Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg, Florida. He had earlier worked as an engineer while training for an operatic career, singing lead tenor roles in **Eugene Onegin** and the operetta **H.M.S. Pinafore**. He is passionate about conducting choirs and composing new music for the synagogue.*

CANTOR AND COMMUNITY

Engaging Young Children and Their Families Through “Tot Shabbat”

By Emily Teck

Picture the following series of five golden moments (printed in italics), which took place during typical Tot Shabbat Services:

- 1) *A baby delightfully throws his arms in the air to add “HEY” after singing “Shabbat Shalom” during the communal singing of Bim Bam.*

This type of service, which may be called by any number of different titles around the country, is often the first chance that young children have, to experience Jewish ritual and worship in an accessible, developmentally appropriate way. Geared towards the pre-school population, young worshippers are warmly initiated into congregational participation in a space that is shared with their peers alongside their parents, who are being initiated into Jewish parenthood. Tot Shabbat programs foster Jewish learning and identity as well as social, emotional, and spiritual development in its participants—and not “just” for the children. Tot Shabbat is more than a Shabbat program and service; it is a potent opportunity for the host synagogue community and the participating families to connect to, learn from, and foster meaningful relationships with one another.

I spent over a decade learning about, designing, leading, evaluating and participating in worship services geared towards children and families before deciding to refine my focus and explore the topic of prayer services designed for children up to age 6 attending the services with their families for my doctoral dissertation. My identities and experiences as an early childhood educator, song leader, program planner and parent intertwined to motivate how and why I went about my research for the 2018 study *Exploring Tot Shabbat: A Study on Tot Shabbat Programs and Their Effect on the Engagement in Jewish Life of Families with Young Children* that sought to discover what these services typically entail and what (if any) influence participation in these programs has for the families that attend. These types of services have increased in popularity since the 1980s for many reasons, including: the ordination of women as clergy; the evolution of Jewish music to include genres for education and for children; the growing expectation that congregants will participate in services (rather than passively listen to a cantor); and the addition of early childhood learning centers in many synagogues that “feed” membership. All of these are distinct evolutions that align to support Tot Shabbat programs.

Information about the experiences and perspectives of both “Tot Shabbat” leaders and their adult participants was collected through surveys and interviews, then analyzed to discover trends and to illuminate effects that Tot Shabbat programs produce. The study yielded a fairly simple definition: Tot Shabbat is an experience during which music, prayer, and Jewish ritual play a significant role as young children and their families gather to learn about and celebrate Jewish life and community.

- 2) *An interfaith couple make eye contact and smile as their Kindergartener joyfully leads her friends in singing Sh'ma.*

Tot Shabbat is a gateway into Jewish life and an opportunity to build community and foster relationships with members of that community. The vast majority of participants (more than 90%) agreed or strongly agreed that Tot Shabbat “provides a positive Jewish experience for my family; helps connect my family to Jewish community; encourages my family to participate in Jewish life; provides opportunities to create and nurture relationships with members of the synagogue community; and helps connect my family to Jewish ritual.” Most participants (more than 75%) also agreed or strongly agreed that Tot Shabbat “teaches my family about Shabbat; makes me think about my family’s Jewish practice; helps connect my family to Jewish prayer; influences the way my family engages with Judaism; and teaches my family about Jewish concepts and beliefs.” In order to better understand the experience of both populations, an open-ended question asked for three adjectives that describe their Tot Shabbat experience: the top three offered by both populations were “fun,” “musical,” and “engaging”.

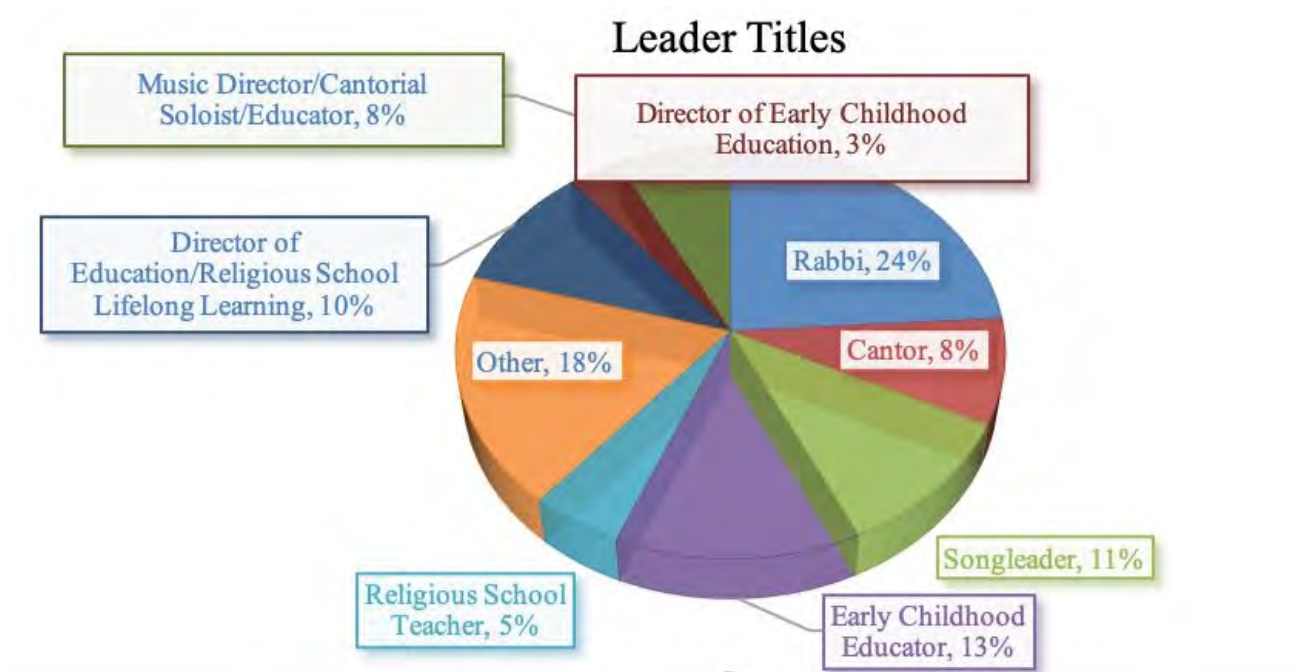
- 3) *A group of children spontaneously grab hands to make a circle and dance around a tambourine-playing cantor during Mi khamokha.*

A significant take away that I was thrilled to discover was the depth of the immediate impact of Tot Shabbat experiences. Eighty-nine percent of participants directly credited their attendance at Tot Shabbat in their family’s decision to engage in Jewish life *outside* of the Tot Shabbat experience in additional ways. The two most commonly cited engagement examples that Tot Shabbat participation encourages are that it “influences social interactions with other families who have young Jewish children” and that it encourages the families to “listen to and/or sing Jewish music outside of Tot Shabbat”. 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Tot Shabbat encourages my family to engage in Jewish life.”

- 4) *A dancing toddler gleefully follows the Torah processional, “high-fiving” fellow congregants who reach out to kiss the Torah.*

These Tot Shabbat services help build Jewish community in general by modeling and motivating ways that families can meaningfully engage in Jewish communal life. It can also specifically build *your* community as it fulfills many diverse roles for the synagogue's overall impact. For example, a service of this nature might be: one part religious school for kids; one part prayer service for participants (of all ages); one part community building and social function; one part adult education; and one part marketing and recruitment tool. Therefore, the responsibility of planning and facilitating the service can fall under the scope of various leaders in different communities.

There is no specific type of training or talent or even person that is typical of a Tot Shabbat leader; a key finding of the research was the incredible diversity of the congregational role/title of Tot Shabbat leaders. Rather, an ongoing conversation among synagogue leadership needs to identify and support a person (or persons) who have some combination of knowledge and skills related to early childhood education, worship leadership, engaging families, and experiential Jewish learning. This conversation is the critical component to fostering a successful program in your congregation. In some communities, this is a dynamic rabbi, an enthusiastic cantor or a devoted volunteer- but the critical component for success for not only the participants but also the leader/s and larger congregation is the communication with and support of the Tot Shabbat leadership. Ultimately, the clergy and congregational leaders need to become familiar to the participating congregation population and with the content of their congregation's Tot Shabbat program.



Tot Shabbat is an experience rich with opportunities. All Tot Shabbat programs can provide connections with other Jewish families, relationships with Jewish professionals, and knowledge about Judaism and how it might be relevant to the stage of life that families with young children are experiencing. The specific nature of the opportunities varies by community and depends upon the community's goals, physical space and culture. They might offer early childhood learning options, recruit for adult learning options, or facilitate Havurah groups that create support networks—the list of possible offerings could be endless. Like worship experiences for any population, the services likely share a skeleton, but the actual experience is conducted by leaders in a unique physical environment for a community of individuals, so each community offers its own special variation while providing a common overall experience to participants. The participants each bring their own background, expectations, and personal preferences to the experience, which also frames their perceptions.

- 5) *A senior congregant lays one hand on her adult child and another hand on a grandchild as she blesses both generations, their smiling faces reflecting the glow of Shabbat candles.*

In a perfect world, a Tot Shabbat leader might have background and training in *t'fillah* leadership, program planning, early childhood development, family education, marketing, production and more. Similarly, in an idealized world, every cantor might hold degrees in music, counseling, education, Jewish studies, non-profit management and event production. Knowing that the resources and expertise of every synagogue's leadership is limited, it might be daunting to approach any task; thankfully, at least in the task that is planning and leading a meaningful, impactful Shabbat service for young children and families, the only truly necessary elements are intentional leaders that can invite community members to participate and engage in ways that are meaningful and important to them. This does take time and effort—but the investment of resources a community allots to their young children and families speaks volumes about their priorities. The significance of the impact suggests that developing and implementing an engaging Tot Shabbat program is well worth the effort.

Dr. Emily Teck is a Jewish educator, musician and consultant dedicated to increasing and improving the ways communities educate and engage young children and their families in joyful Judaism. Dr. Teck blends diverse online and in person environments to maximize the impact of her work. She travels to communities and conferences to present music and workshops while also consulting remotely, directing the [NEXT program](#) and [JewishLearningMatters.com](#). She holds an Ed.D. in Jewish Education and serves on the faculty of Gratz College. Dr. Teck lives in Florida with her spouse and their three young children. Learn more: [www.MissEmilyCelebrates.com](#)

The Cantorial Power of Exclusion¹

By David Berger

Cantors² in synagogues today are tasked (among other things) with managing the musical life of a synagogue and are expected to be both expert in the necessary musical and liturgical traditions and possessing of sufficient musical talent to execute them artistically, spiritually, and creatively. From the perspective of Halakhah (Jewish law), however, these aesthetic criteria, though important, are all secondary to the most traditional halakhic task of a cantor, which is to recite the liturgy publicly in a way that will fulfill the legal requirements of everyone in the congregation. In traditional Jewish law, every adult male is obligated to pray three services a day, and that requirement can only be fulfilled through the correct recitation of the texts established in the liturgy. Though there are spiritual and emotional goals for prayer, achievement in those realms lies outside of the Jewish legal system. From the strict perspective of law, the goal of worship is only to fulfill a requirement (Hebrew: לצאת ידי חובה³). Though in modern times most traditionally observant Jews can fulfill this requirement without the services of a cantor, in medieval times this was not the case. Before printing presses were able to cheaply produce prayer books, even a literate community member may have had difficulty gaining access to the authorized texts of the liturgy. Without the services of a cantor a community would be unable to fulfill its legal prayer requirements – making the appointment (and financing) of a cantor one of the essential tasks of the organized Jewish community.

Choosing a cantor, however, in medieval Ashkenaz was complicated. As Ephraim Kanarfogel describes in great detail,⁴ the process involved not only evaluation of a candidate's skills, knowledge and talent but also of his interpersonal relationships with members of the community. Quoting extensively from Rabbi Isaac of Vienna (d. ca 1250, known as the Or Zarua), which in turn quotes earlier responsa, Kanarfogel discusses the question of whether even one objecting member of the congregation can prevent the hiring of a cantor⁵. Essentially, in a phrase that will come up frequently in this paper, the congregation must be considered a unified block (אגודה אחת)⁶ in prayer – and a unified block cannot have even one dissenter. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the cantor to ensure that he cultivates positive relationships with all members of the community so that in the crucial prayer moments he can effectively lead the community. But what if a relationship goes sour? What is the proper response – in the moment of prayer – for a cantor who faces a member of the congregation for whom he simply cannot

¹ I am deeply indebted to Drs. Alyssa Gray, Rachel Mikva and Eliyahu Schleifer for their detailed and incredibly helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Though female cantors are an essential part of the modern cantorate, as this paper deals primarily with medieval Ashkenaz where women would not have been allowed to lead, or legally required to attend halakhically mandated worship, I have elected to use masculine pronouns for both the cantor and the congregant in the body of this paper. For an exploration of female cantors and women's worship in medieval Ashkenaz, see Avraham Grossman's chapter on "Women in the Synagogue" in *Pious and Rebellious* (Brandeis University Press, 2004:180-187).

³ Literally, "to depart regarding an obligation." The sense is that when one faces an unfulfilled obligation, he/she is dwelling in a state of incompleteness. Once the obligation has been fulfilled, one departs from that state and can be called *Yotsei* (יוצא) as if to say, out of the situation of obligation.

⁴ Kanarfogel, *The Appointment of Hazzanim in Medieval Ashkenaz: Communal Policy and Individual Religious Prerogatives*, 2010.

⁵ The precise halakhic phrase is: שיחיד יכול לעכב חזנות.

⁶ This phrase is borrowed from the High Holy Day Liturgy, "Let them all unite in fellowship to do Your will with fullness of heart."

pray? This paper will address that question through discussion of a unique halakhic position, named here “the cantorial power of exclusion,” that turns the perspective around. What if, rather than considering how a community may choose a cantor, the cantor might have the ability, in real time, to decide who counts (or more to the point, who does not count) as part of his community? This unpopular and frequently rejected position surfaces repeatedly throughout hundreds of years of halakhic discussions, even continuing, in a modified form, into modernity.

An Initial Responsum: Maharam

The cantorial power of exclusion finds its first, and only, full length defense in a responsum of Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg (1215-1293)⁷ who is frequently called “Maharam of Rothenberg” or simply “Maharam.” This responsum does not appear to have a question, but begins as if an inquiry initiated by Maharam himself:

שמעתי אומרים שש"ץ שאמר לאחד מן הקהל אינו⁸ מוציא אותך בתפילתי [יצא] אפילו שלא מדעתו.

I heard people saying⁹ that if a *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur*¹⁰ said to one member of the congregation ‘I will not fulfill your requirement in my prayer’¹¹ – the congregant’s requirement would be fulfilled, even without his [the *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur*’s] consent.

For an undefined reason, the *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* chooses to identify one member of the congregation and orally declare that he will not enable that singular person to fulfill his halakhic requirement for prayer – even if that congregant is physically present in the synagogue. Maharam, considered the greatest halakhic authority of his time, is not, in this opening statement, giving a decision – but merely stating that he has heard that people believe that even if a *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* was to make such a statement to a member of the congregation, that congregant would nonetheless be able to fulfill his requirement. Having presented the issue, Maharam will go on to argue against this position.

Maharam first takes on what he “hears” to be the evidence for the opening position, based on a Talmudic discussion about the sounding of the shofar. In medieval times, members of the congregation were generally unable to recite the service themselves, leaving them dependent on the recitation of the *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* to fulfill their requirement for prayer. A parallel legal situation can be found in the sounding of a shofar. All Jews are obligated to hear the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, but most people are unable to sound the shofar themselves, leaving them dependent on a shofar sounder to fulfill their requirement. The Talmud¹² describes a situation in which a shofar sounder is practicing, and intends only to practice, but those practice sounds are overheard by a second person who is obligated to hear the shofar. Is it essential, the Talmud

⁷ שו"ת מהר"ם מרוטנבורג דפוס לבוב סימן תקי.

⁸ Most likely the Hebrew here is corrupt and should read “איני” rather than “אינו.”

⁹ This phrase “שמעתי אומרים” appears only three times in all of Maharam’s responsa, and this is the only instance in which it is found at the very beginning of a responsum.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that R’ Meir uses the term *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* (messenger of the community) here rather than the term *hazzan*, which he uses frequently in other responsa. Perhaps through use of this more general term R’ Meir intends to include both professional *hazzanim* employed by the community and lay people who are leading the service.

¹¹ This translation is assuming the corrected Hebrew text (see footnote 7).

¹² Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 28b.

asks, that the shofar sounder specifically intend to fulfill the legal requirement for shofar – or is hearing the sound itself, stripped of such intention, sufficient? The Talmudic debate, though seemingly relevant, is dismissed by Maharam (after a summary of all related points), by a simple distinction:

ונראה דאין מכאן ראייה שאינו דומה לא נתכוין להוציא לנתכוין שלא להוציא, ודוק.

And it seems that there is no proof from this because there is a distinction between not intending to fulfill another's requirement and intending to not fulfill another's requirement, and you should follow up on this [in halakhic sources].

Maharam continues to give two further reasons why the Talmudic discussion about the shofar, which he cites at the beginning of the responsum as the “proof” for the fallacious opening position, is not applicable to this current question, thus forcefully refuting any validity to the explanation that he “heard.”

Maharam's View of the Or Zarua

Maharam next considers the same text from the Or Zarua, discussed by Ephraim Kanarfogel regarding the appointment of cantors.¹³ The driving question in the Or Zarua is whether a single person can prevent the appointment of a cantor:

אמת ואמונה כי הורה מורי רבינו שמחה זצ"ל הלכה למעשה שיחיד יכול לעכב חזנות שלא יעשה שליה צבור כי אם מאגודה אחת גם פשוט בכל ריגוס שהמיעוט מעכב על הרוב מלקבוע שליה צבור.¹⁴

It is true and certain that I was taught by my teacher, Rabbi Simchah¹⁵ (of blessed memory) who ruled as a matter of practical law that a single person may prevent a cantorial appointment, that one may only become a *Sh'liah tsibbur* through a unified community. Furthermore, it is found all throughout the Rhineland that a minority may prevent the majority from appointing a *Sh'liah tsibbur*.

Maharam's citation of this responsum¹⁶ is curious in that it would seem to make the entire legal question irrelevant by precluding the cantor's prerogative. The Or Zarua forcefully argues for his teacher's position, that even a single person may prevent the appointment of a cantor. Were such a cantor to declare to a member of the community that he is specifically excluding him from his intention, could it be that the congregant would allow that cantor to lead? In any case, searching for another relevant example, Maharam cites the continuation of the Or Zarua's responsum, with its depiction of an Israelite bringing an offering to a priest in the Temple, summarized here by Kanarfogel:

If a *kohen*¹⁷ who is unacceptable to the owner (and beneficiary) of a sacrifice nonetheless offers the sacrifice on the owner's behalf, this sacrifice is considered to be completely invalid (even if it was offered properly from the technical standpoint). With regard to prayer as well, R. Isaac

¹³ See footnote 4.

¹⁴ ספר אור זרוע חלק א - הלכות שליה ציבור סימן קיד.

¹⁵ Rabbi Simchah of Speyer (d. ca 1230), a German Tosafist.

¹⁶ Originally sent from Rabbi Isaac to Rabbi Hezekiah son of Jacob (a student of Rabbi Shimshon Mikotzi).

¹⁷ This is the Hebrew word for a priest in the ancient Jerusalem temple.

therefore concludes that a cantor may not pray without the unanimous agreement of the congregation.¹⁸

Maharam, using this paradigm of the priest and the Israelite from the Or Zarua, insists that prayer requires proper intention from both the congregant and the cantor, asserting that:

ואחרי שמדמה תפלה לעבודה א"כ פשיטא שאם אמר ש"צ בפירוש איני רוצה להוציא את אחד מן החבורה שלא יצא דאטו היכא שהכהן המקריב את קרבן אחד מישראל ופירש בפירוש איני שוחט או זורק לשם בעליו וכי"ד שעולה לבעלים לשם חובה.

Since prayer has been compared to temple sacrifice it is clear that if a *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* says explicitly "I do not want to fulfill the requirement of one member of the congregation" – that that person's requirement is not fulfilled. For could it be that a priest who offers up the sacrifice of an Israelite and explicitly says "I am not slaughtering or dashing [the blood] for the sake of its owners" – could you possibly think that this sacrifice would be accounted for its owners for the sake of requirement?

Maharam's argument is strongly worded and definitive and seems solidly logical. How indeed could a spiritual requirement be fulfilled when one of the two parties involved specifically intends to prevent it? For Maharam, no further explanation was necessary and his responsum simply ends without any guidance as to how this power of exclusion could be enacted or the ramifications of a cantor making this choice. Also missing is any indication of the reasons why a cantor may exclude someone. Curiously, there is a small three-word post-script in some editions¹⁹ of this responsum that puts the entire issue in question. Maharam simply writes: "שמא לא הבנתי" – "or perhaps I misunderstood." What is it that Maharam misunderstood? Moses Bloch, editor of the 1891 Berlin edition²⁰ of the responsa says simply that it is not clear to what Maharam is referring.²¹

A Second Responsum: The Maharil

Following the responsum of Rav Meir of Rothenberg, the next mention of this cantorial power of exclusion is found in a responsum of Rabbi Jacob Moelin (ca. 1355-1427), known as the Maharil. In this responsum,²² the power is neither explained nor justified but is simply deployed as a means of communal rule enforcement. The Maharil was asked by his brother, Gumprecht, about the economics, logistics, and politics surrounding the prayer services for the High Holy Days in a town surrounded by smaller villages. The Jews in the small villages, it seems, lacked the resources to have their own services for the High Holy Days. They could not afford to pay a cantor's salary, nor could they guarantee that they would have a minyan of 10 men. The village Jews' simple solution was to come into the larger nearby town – but this

¹⁸ Kanarfogel, 2010, p. 12.

¹⁹ The 1891 Berlin Edition of the Parma manuscript, edited by Moses Bloch, indicates that this postscript is found in the manuscript but does not include it in the body of the text. Some modern editions include the phrase while others delete it entirely.

²⁰ This edition has been reprinted several times, but the original citation is: Bloch, Moses Löb. *Sefer Sha'arei T'shuvot Maharam*, B. R. Barukh. Berlin, 1891.

²¹ "בסוף התשובה כתוב בכ"י שמא לא הבנתי. ולא הבנתי הכוונה."

²² שו"ת מהרי"ל החדשות סימן נט.

seemingly “simple solution” created its own host of problems. Gumprecht’s first question deals with the specifics of cantorial compensation: Is the town community responsible for providing a cantor for the village Jews or might they be able to demand that the visitors share in the expenses? Beyond the financial concerns, however, lies a much deeper concern about the safety of the community itself:

...כי אלא אתם גורמים לנו רשע מן הגוים שיאמרו העיר מלא יהודים, כי הם אינם רגילים בכך. וגם שאתם חוטפים וקונים מה שאינם רגילים בשאר ימות השנה, ובוזה אינו ניהא לנו.

... because you are causing [us to suffer] malevolence [that would come] from the non-Jews who will say that the town is filled with Jews, because they are not used to this. And furthermore, you are grabbing up and buying things that they are not used to during the rest of the year, and this does not sit well with us.

The village Jews coming in for the High Holy Days might actually be an existential threat to the viability of the community itself. The delicate equilibrium achieved by medieval Rhineland Jewish communities could break at almost any time. It was only 10 years after the death of the Maharil that a set of expulsions hit many of the historic Jewish communities of the Rhineland (e.g. Speyer in 1435 and Mainz in 1438). Sydney Steiman, whose 1963 study of the Maharil remains the only English language monograph on the topic, describes the atmosphere of 15th century Rhineland Jewry:

The century in which the Maharil lived was indeed a period of disorganization. Communities were destroyed, Jews were constantly fleeing, poverty was rampant; actually, Jewish life was disintegrating. It was virtually impossible to maintain the inner life of German Jewry under such conditions. The great challenge of the era was to keep the tradition alive. The Maharil was a major force in preserving as well as uniting the spiritual life of the Jews in Ashkenaz during this crucial period.²³

Rabbi Gumprecht’s question to his brother presents a fascinating example of the challenges of this particular moment in Ashkenazic history. Conflicts between urban and rural Jews, delicate relationships with non-Jewish neighbors, and financial arrangements for High Holy Day services all converge in this difficult question.

In response to Gumprecht’s conundrum, the Maharil offers a series of practical solutions about managing the presence of Jews in the marketplace and in all public spaces, and then closes with this advice about a means of enforcement:

וכה"ג שיהא להם שלום, ובקנס שאם לא ישמעו לקולם שאל יוציאום בתפילה ובתקיעת שופר ובוזה יהיה להם מנוחה.

And through this, they will have peace, and with the penalty that if they do not obey, that he²⁴ will not discharge them of their obligations to communal prayer and hearing the shofar, and in this way, they will have rest.

If a member of the community, or one of these visitors from the outlying villages, violates the policies laid out by the Maharil, the cantor (and the shofar sounder) will be directed to

²³ Steiman, 1963, p. 13.

²⁴ Presumably the cantor.

exercise the power of exclusion described by Maharam.²⁵ The Maharil is unique in making this recommendation. No other similar recommendation has yet been identified from any other medieval rabbinic authority. Perhaps the Maharil felt that extreme times called for extreme measures and saw the unique dynamics of this situation as requiring special intervention. Were that the case however, one might expect some special explanation or justification of this means of enforcement, but none is to be found; following this radical statement, the Maharil just continues on with Gumprecht's next question, which centered on taxation. Another possibility is that the Maharil did not consider this means of enforcement special or radical, seeing it as a logical solution to this specific problem: People are coming in to the town for the purpose of attending the High Holy Day services, so excluding them from fulfilling their obligation to those services is a logical punishment for their failure to follow the rules. The Maharil's legal decision presents a unique approach to the similar, yet different positions of Maharam and Or Zarua on the relationships of cantors and communities. Perhaps, just as an individual has power to obstruct the appointment of a particular cantor by a majority of the community, a community has the power to direct the cantor to exclude an individual person.

An Opposing View: Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau

The first source opposing the opinion of Maharam and the Maharil is Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau (d. 1425), an exact contemporary of the Maharil. Rabbi Isaac gives a short definitive statement in the comments to his *Sefer Haminhagim* (Book of Practices):

ש"ץ שאינו מוציא אחד מן הקהל אפילו האחרים לא יצאו (מהרי"ש²⁶).

A *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur* who does not fulfill the requirement of one member of the congregation – the others' requirement will not be fulfilled either (Maharish).

This single line appears within the context of general recommendations for selection of a cantor, especially for the High Holy Days. As a challenge to the earlier decision of Maharam, it presents its own challenges. To be sure, it can be known if a cantor explicitly tells a member of the congregation “איני מוציא אותך בתפילתי” – “I will not fulfill your requirement with my prayer” – but can it be known if a cantor excludes a person from his intention without explicit declaration? Could the entire community's prayers be made invalid without their knowledge? It is noteworthy that while Rabbi Isaac felt the need to include this line, he saw no need to explain it. Was the idea still a topic of discussion since the time of Maharam? Was it already considered a settled issue no longer worthy of debate? One further quandary: Shlomo Spitzer, the editor of the *Makhon Yerushalayim* edition of *Sefer ha-minhagim*, suggests that perhaps “Maharish” ought to read “Maharash” – meaning Rabbi Shalom of Neustadt (c. 1350-1413) who was an influential teacher for both the Maharil and Rabbi Isaac. Why would the Maharil, who frequently cited Rabbi Shalom of Neustadt and was known to be his greatest and most devoted student, contradict a statement of his teacher?

²⁵ Though no details are given for this direction to the worship leaders, later responsa refer back to this line as proof that such direction may be given.

²⁶ It is not clear who “Maharish” might be. There are later rabbis who used that acronym but none of them lived prior to Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau. See below for one possible suggestion.

²⁷ ספר המנהגים (טירנא) הגהות המנהגים ראש השנה, קג.

A number of sources confirm and expand upon Rabbi Isaac's one-line statement. Especially notable, and frequently cited, is the *Leket yosher*, compiled by Rabbi Joseph ben Moshe (1423-c.1490). He writes:

העתקתי ממהר"ר יהודה יצ"ו אוברניק שהעתיק מליווא חרש. אמר הגאון זצ"ל ש"ץ שהיה בדעתו שלא להוציא אחד מן הקהל בתפלתו אז כל הקהל אינו יוצא. הואיל ובטל שליחותו במקצת בטלה כולה.²⁸

I copied from Rabbi Judah Obernik (d. 1520) who copied from Liva Heresh.²⁹ The Gaon,³⁰ of blessed memory, said: A *Sh'liah tsibbur* who had it in his mind that he would not fulfill the requirement of one member of the congregation in his prayer does not fulfill the requirements of any of the congregation. If he nullifies his commission a little, he nullifies it entirely.³¹

This statement leaves intact all of the same problems as Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau's one line, but does include some additional language for examination, most notably that the *Sh'liah tsibbur* "had it in his mind" – (היה בדעתו). The explicit and vocalized declaration previously described by Maharam has now entirely been replaced by an internal and unexpressed intention. One could read this as a warning to cantors, that they need to police their own thoughts and be sure to include everyone present in their intentions. Their commission is to represent the unified community (אגודה אחת) and no diminution of that commission is acceptable. Impossible to regulate or enforce as law barring explicit declarations, this powerful and memorably phrased statement of the cantorial power of exclusion (or lack thereof) stands as a reminder that the work of the cantor, though fraught with all of the interpersonal challenges of any communal occupation, is to overcome all those conflicts and stand as the representative of all in his prayers.

Continuing the Discussion: Moses Isserles

The idea of cantorial powers of exclusion continues to find expression in halakhic literature into modernity. Moses Isserles (1520-1572) mentions it first in his *Darkhei Moshe* (סימן תפכא הלכה ב), where he essentially copies Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau, and then adds some additional language in the *Mapah*, his Ashkenazic glosses to the *Shulhan arukh*.³²

וכן צריך שיוציא כל אדם בתפלתו; ואם יהיה לו שונא ומכון שלא להוציאו, גם אוהביו אינם יוצאים בתפלתו (הגהות מנהגים ישנים).³³

²⁸ לקט יושר חלק א (אורח חיים) עמוד כ ענין ד

²⁹ I have been unable to determine the identity of this "Liva Heresh." This is the only reference to his name anywhere in medieval responsa. It is, of course possible that this could refer to any one of the number of rabbis who carried the name "Liva" or "Loew" throughout Ashkenaz. Another possibility is that there was an error in transcription and the *het* was originally a *heh* – leading to the more common name "Hirsch."

³⁰ Most likely, this refers to Rabbi Israel Isserlein (1390-1460).

³¹ This same halakhic concept, that something that is nullified in part is nullified entirely, appears in other areas of legal inquiry, and generally with similar language.

³² The *Shulhan arukh* (Set Table) by Joseph Caro (1488-1575) is an authoritative Jewish law code which centers on Sephardic practice. Isserles created his *Mapah* (Tablecloth) as an Ashkenazic overlay to preserve and explain areas in which Ashkenazic practice differed from the Sephardic practices explained by Caro.

³³ המפה לשולחן ערוך, סימן תפכא, הלכה א.

Further, he must fulfill the requirements of every person in his prayers, and if he should have a detractor and intend to not fulfill his requirement, then even those who love him will not fulfill their requirements in his prayer (Comments to old *Minhagim*).³⁴

It is here that the interpersonal conflicts implied in the previous descriptions find explicit language, with Isserles defining the single congregant as a detractor, or perhaps a hater (שונא) and the rest of the congregation as supporters or friends (אוהביו). Whereas in all previous descriptions of this situation, the dynamics between cantor and congregant have been left more or less ambiguous, Isserles's language is direct. Even when faced with a person who hates him, the cantor must intend to fulfill that person's halakhic obligation for prayer (or at least must not intend to not fulfill that obligation).

The View of the Levush

Isserles' student, Mordekhai Jaffe (c. 1530-1612), commonly referred to by the name of his major work, the *Levush*, expanded one step beyond his predecessors and gave a practical consequence for a cantor who attempts to exercise his power of exclusion:

דשאני תפלת ראש השנה שצריך החזן להוציא כל הקהל יותר משאר ימות השנה מפני שהוא יום הדין, ואם יחשוב החזן בדעתו שאינו מוציא אחד מן הקהל גם האחרים לא יצאו, כיון שמחשב שלא תקובל תפלתו ע"ז דוחין אותו כולו ואין מקבלים אותו.³⁵

The prayers of Rosh Hashanah are different in that the cantor must fulfill the requirements of the entire congregation more than on other days of the year, for this is the day of judgment. If the cantor thinks in his mind that he will not fulfill the requirement of one member of the congregation, then the others' requirement will also not be fulfilled. Because he planned that his prayer will not be received, we remove him and do not accept him [as our cantor].

Where the other authorities said only that the cantor's exclusion would nullify his prayers for all, the *Levush* is the first to actually say that such a cantor should be removed. Still missing from the discussion is any way, barring the cantor's open admission of his intention to exclude a member of the congregation, to determine what precisely is in the cantor's thoughts, an issue which is magnified by the specific usage of "אם יחשוב" – "if he thinks." Also interesting in this passage is the specific mention that the High Holy Days may present an additional concern. The *Levush* says merely that the cantor's intentions are more important because it is the day of judgment, but the High Holy Day liturgy itself is a major consideration in this discussion.

The liturgy for the High Holy Days is substantially more complex than that of regular weekday or Sabbath liturgy. Whereas a lay Jewish person (not a scholar, cantor, or religious virtuoso) could, and probably did, learn those frequently repeated liturgies, learning the prayers for the more complex High Holy Day services could be a daunting task. In an eye-opening article addressing the larger question of literacy among the general medieval Jewish public, Ephraim Kanarfogel writes:

³⁴ Old *Minhagim* refers to *Sefer ha-Minhagim* by Rabbi Isaac of Tyrnau.

³⁵ לבוש אורח חיים סימן תקפב.

באשכנז יש כמה עדויות שמלמדים לימדו ילדים קטנים לקרוא עברית על ידי קריאת פסוקי המקרא דווקא, ונראה שעשו כן כדי שהילדים יוכלו לאמרם אחר כך בעל פה בשעת התפילה. (כמובן, לחלקי התפילה הרגילים שאינם פסוקים מן המקרא, אלו שלא נזכרו אצל המון העם או אלו של ימים מיוחדים הנדירים יותר וידועים פחות, אפשר לצאת ידי חובת אמירתם גם מן השליח צבור בלי כל בעיה).³⁶

In Ashkenaz there are a number of testimonies that teachers would teach small children to read Hebrew specifically by way of biblical verses, and it seems that they did so in order that the children be able to say them, by heart, during prayer times. (Of course, for the parts of the regular liturgy that are not biblical verses, those parts which were not well known by the regular people, or those of special days that are rarer and less well known, it is possible to fulfill one's requirement to say them through the recitation of the *Sh'lich tsibbur* with no problem).

The picture of literacy in medieval Ashkenaz may, as Kanarfogel describes, be more complex than previously thought – and though many, or even most, people were able to read Hebrew to some extent, that may not have included the complex liturgies of the High Holy Days. When the Levush says that Rosh Hashanah is different because it is the day of judgement, perhaps he also meant that on Rosh Hashanah, the people are more likely to depend on the cantor's recitation because they may actually be unable to read the liturgies of the holiday with sufficient proficiency.

A Third Responsum: Rabbi Yair Bacharach

A more complete account of the kind of situation where this may be relevant is discussed by Rabbi Yair Bacharach (1639-1702) in a lengthy responsum dealing with some of the complexities of the appointment of cantors and shofar sounders. Constructing a theoretical situation, Bacharach describes a community of 13 members that seeks to hire a shofar sounder. Six of those members (meaning a minority) want to hire a specific shofar sounder from far away, but due to some increased dangers of travel the shofar sounder substantially raised his fee, and the seven others are not willing to share in the additional expense. The group of six first demand that the other seven at least offer whatever they would pay in a normal year (without the extra expense) and then threaten that if the seven do not contribute they intend to go forward with their hire – but will prevent those other seven from benefitting from the presence of this shofar sounder. After a lengthy discussion of the complexities of minority vs majority rule in communal decision making, as well as the role of wealthy individuals, Bacharach comes to his conclusion:

ובדבר מה שאמרו אלו ששה שאלו לא נתרצו חבריהם היו מתנים עם התוקע שלא יצאו בתקיעתו רק הם ולא חבריהם ואם נשפוט בזה אם בידם לעשות כך. נראה פשוט דאם מתנים עם התוקע שיכווין שלא יצאו הם בתקיעותיו ודאי תנאם קיים כי המה אינם מחויבים להעמיד תוקע לחבריהם וגם על התוקע אין חיוב.³⁷

Regarding that which these six said – that if they were not satisfied by their fellows, that they would stipulate to the shofar sounder not to fulfill their requirement in his sounding – and to only fulfill their (the six) requirement and not their fellows – let us consider this and see if they have the ability to do so. It seems simple that if they stipulate that the shofar sounder intend to

³⁶ Kanarfogel, 2000, p. 210.

³⁷ שו"ת חוות יאיר סימן קפו.

not fulfill their requirement with his sounding that this stipulation would certainly hold up, because they are not required to hire a shofar sounder for their fellows, and the shofar sounder himself has no requirement.

This position is reminiscent of the Maharil – but with a different purpose. Whereas the Maharil offered the power of exclusion as a means of enforcement to protect against an existential threat to the community, Bacharach offers it here as a way to give strength and power to a minority of the congregation.³⁸ The potential ethical questions raised by this decision are immense. Presumably, the minority seeking to hire the expensive shofar sounder despite the increased costs can afford to do so without the support of the other seven community members who are not financially able to hire their own shofar sounder. Bacharach continues with a surprising extension of the idea previously expressed in the Levush that a cantor may not change his commission:

ואם מכווין להוציא דווקא אלו ולא כל השומע' ודאי לא יצאו כבמשנה. ואם יעבור על התנאי ויכווין להוציא כל השומע' נ"ל דכל השומעים לא יצאו דנקרא התוקע שליח בני ישראל כמו הש"ץ ושליח ששינה מדעת משלחו בטל שליחתו.³⁹

Further, if he intends to fulfill the requirements of just these, and not all of those who can hear, of course their requirement would not be fulfilled, as in the Mishnah. If he should break with these stipulations, and intend to fulfill the requirement of all who hear, then it seems to me that none of those who can hear will fulfill their requirement, because a shofar sounder is considered a messenger of the Jewish community, just like a *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur*, and a messenger who changes his commission nullifies that commission.

The shofar sounder, according to Bacharach, is directly parallel to a cantor, and as such is subject to the same conditions. Unlike a cantor, however, the mitzvah of shofar does not include the mandate that the congregation must be a united block “אגודה אחת”. As a result, we find that the congregation, even when gathered together in the synagogue, may indeed be broken into factions, and a shofar sounder who is employed by only one of those factions may not give of himself and extend his services to all.

Bacharach's assertion that this minority does not have an obligation to provide for the rest of the community seems contrary to the principles of Jewish communal life. Uncomfortable ethically with this result, Bacharach nevertheless agrees that this distasteful practice is halakhically valid. Voicing his concern, he writes:

המתנים כדין וכדת עשו ואין לפקפק בהם לומר שאם היה זמן ויכולת היה הדין לכופ אותן על מדת סדום דזה נהנה וזה לא חסר.⁴⁰

Those who stipulate in this way have acted according to the law, but we should not hesitate with them, saying that if there was time and ability it would be appropriate to compel them for acting in the aspect of Sodom, that this one benefits, and the other loses nothing...⁴¹

³⁸ There is an important halakhic distinction between prayer and shofar sounding. Hearing shofar is an individual mitzvah and does not require a minyan. Because of this legal distinction, the earlier principle allowing an individual to prevent the appointment of a cantor does not apply to shofar sounders.

³⁹ Bacharach, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ – “This one benefits, and the other loses nothing” is the Talmudic (*Bava Kama* 20a) phrase used by Bacharach. In this case, if the seven others were allowed to benefit from the sounding of the shofar, the six

Comparing this situation to other similar ethical quandaries,⁴² Bacharach rules that due to “תיקון עולם”, the proper functioning of society, it is not worth pushing on this lest those (wealthier) six simply leave and separate themselves entirely from the community for both the hiring of a cantor and the shofar sounder. Irritated by the entire issue, Bacharach signs the responsa “נאם הטרוד יאיר חיים בכרך” – “signed, the annoyed Yair Chaim Bacharach.”⁴³

Bacharach’s responsum is the final time that the idea of the cantorial (or shofar sounder’s) power of exclusion is given a full discussion, but the concept does reappear from time to time even in contemporary responsa and commentaries. *Hareidi*⁴⁴ rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932) was asked, referencing Isserles’ gloss to the *Shulhan arukh*, if a shofar sounder could consciously exclude inappropriately dressed women from fulfilling their requirement to hear shofar through his sounding.⁴⁵

Hareidi Perspectives: I

Rabbi Simchah ben Tziyon Isaac Rabinowitz (a *hareidi* rabbi currently living in Jerusalem), in his *Piskei t’shuvot* (printed between 1991 and 1997)⁴⁶, gives a thoughtful analysis of the power of exclusion, explaining that the halakhic role of cantors in medieval times was much greater than it is today. Most medieval Jews did not have their own prayer books, were not necessarily literate, and could not rely on themselves to fulfill their own prayer requirements. Today, in Rabinowitz’s description, a cantor “is only for *piyyutim*, *kaddish*, the *k’dushah*, and *bar’khu*.” The power of exclusion, therefore, is irrelevant for the cantor as people can now fulfill their own prayer requirements. With regard to shofar, however, there is still an active issue. Shofar sounders should, writes Rabinowitz, be diligent in their thoughts and be sure to consciously intend to fulfill the requirements of all who can hear them. Agreeing with Bacharach, Rabinowitz explains that those who appoint a shofar sounder may direct him to exclude specific people (or specific categories of people). In one of his footnotes, Rabinowitz editorializes about this law:

והלכה עמומה היא שלא האריכו בה האחרונים כלל, ואכמ"ל יותר.

This is a murky law which the *aharonim*⁴⁷ did not dwell on at all, but this is not the place for a more extended discussion.

As this paper demonstrates, any practical attempt to legislate around this law does in fact become murky and, perhaps due to that problem, very few of the *aharonim* have commented on it at all much less created extended discussions around it.

would not incur any additional cost. This particular form of miserliness is considered to be one of the aspects of the residents of Sodom that caused their destruction.

⁴² Specifically, *Tur*, *Hoshen Mishpat* #264 and #363.

⁴³ Bacharach signed a number of his responsa this way.

⁴⁴ *Hareidi* is the Hebrew word for what is often called in English “Ultra-Orthodox Judaism.”

⁴⁵ שו"ת שלמת חיים אורח חיים סימן שכה.

⁴⁶ פסקי תשובות אורח חיים סימן תקפא: ט. ש"ץ ובעל תוקע המכוונים לא להוציא חלק מהקהל.

⁴⁷ “Later scholars” – roughly any rabbinical authorities from the 16th century into the present.

Hareidi Perspectives: II

Bacharach's position is quoted by *hareidi* rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein (born 1934) in a contemporary responsum centering on controlling unruly behavior during the reading of the Scroll of Esther (the *Megillah*) on Purim.⁴⁸ The *Rosh Yeshivah* (headmaster) of the Gateshead Talmudical College in England became upset on the evening of Purim during the reading of the *Megillah* because some of the students were prolonging their noisemaking⁴⁹ so that the words of the *Megillah* could not be heard. In the morning, he directed the *Megillah* reader to exclude anyone making excessive noises from his intention so that they would not fulfill their requirement, and he publicly informed the yeshiva of this instruction. Zilberstein defends the *Rosh Yeshivah*, quoting extensively from Bacharach, and declares that as the person in charge, it is up to the *Rosh Yeshivah* to determine the specific commission of the *Megillah* reader. If the *Megillah* reader violates the *Rosh Yeshivah*'s order and intends to fulfill the requirement of all, then no one's requirement will be fulfilled. Following many others before him, however, Zilberstein questions the actual application of the law and offers a way out of the precarious position of the *Rosh Yeshivah*:

אך יתכן לומר שבשופר הוי קפידא אמיתית שמי שלא שילם לא יצא ידי חובתו, וכמו שמוכר מקפיד שמי שלא שילם על הסחורה לא יקנה את מה שלקח, אבל כאן שעיקר המטרה של ראש הישיבה היתה שהציבור יוכלו לצאת ידי חובת הקריאה, אולי אין זה נקרא שינוי מדעת המשלח, וכולם יצאו ידי חובתם, וצ"ע.

It may be that with regard to shofar, one could say that there is a genuine need for strictness – that one who did not pay will not fulfill his requirement, and this is similar to a salesman who is careful that a customer who has not paid for the merchandise will not acquire that which he takes, but here, when the essential goal of the *Rosh Yeshivah* was for the public to be able to fulfill their requirement through the reading, perhaps this cannot be called a change in the mind of the commissioner, and everyone fulfilled their requirement, and this requires further inquiry.

Were this *Rosh Yeshivah* to consider his real goals, he would know that he wants everyone to fulfill their obligations – and perhaps that is enough to ensure that, as the commissioner of the *Megillah* reader, regardless of his stated intentions in the heat of the moment, everyone can fulfill their requirements. Though delivered with hesitant uncertainty, this loophole invented by Zilberstein has the potential to undermine many of the previous responsa around the cantorial power of exclusion.

Hareidi Perspectives: III

One final contemporary responsum adds yet another consideration to the power of exclusion. Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Wosner (1913-2015), a highly influential leader of the *hareidi* community in Israel and abroad, pondered whether there might be a difference between an official cantor of a synagogue, and a person celebrating a home observance (in this case, *Havdalah*, the ritual of separation at the end of Shabbat) with guests.

⁴⁸ חשוקי חמד מגילה דף יט עמוד ב.

⁴⁹ It is customary to blot out the name of Haman by making loud noises whenever his name comes up in the reading of the *Megillah*.

נלענ"ד פשוט דאס נזדמנו חבורה בבית להוציאם בהבדלה וכיו"ב וחשבו שהמבדיל יוציאם ומחמת שיש
לו הקפדה על אחד מהם חושב שלא להוציאם מכ"מ שאר השומעים יוצאים.⁵⁰

It seems to me quite simple that if a group were invited to a home in order to perform the *Havdalah* ceremony, or something similar, and they thought that the person making *Havdalah* would fulfill their requirement – but because [the host] has a conflict with one of them he intends to not fulfill his [guest's] requirement, in any case, the other people who hear him will fulfill their requirement.

Unlike in a synagogue, where the previous dicta that nullifying one's prayer for one would nullify it for all would be operative, in a private setting where no one has officially been declared the cantor by some authoritative body, the cantorial power of exclusion can, according to *Wosner*, be used. Again, like all of the other authorities, after giving his clear understanding of the *halakhah*, *Wosner* adds a note of doubt about the practical application of the power of exclusion:

אמנם מסופק אני בנ"ד אם אמר לו בתחלה שיוציאנו ג"כ ושוב הוציאו מן הכלל במחשבתו, כיון דכבר
התחייב עצמו להיות המוציא כולם.

However, I am doubtful in as far as our issue is concerned – if the host said to [the guest] at the beginning that he would fulfill his requirement as well, and then went back and excluded him from the group in his thoughts – since he had already obligated himself to be the one fulfilling everyone's obligation.

Like the case of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, the presumption that one would have an intent to fulfill another's requirements may be sufficient to obligate the ritual officiant to all – even without an official appointment.

Contemporary Implications

Returning to the opening question of this paper – how does an understanding of the cantorial power of exclusion deepen our knowledge of the lives of the medieval, and even contemporary, cantors? This power, or perhaps this hope for power, appears and reappears through hundreds of years of discussion because it points to one of the central ways in which the appointment of a cantor is different from almost any other role in communal leadership. A rabbinical legal decision is not dependent on personal relationship for its effectiveness, nor does interpersonal conflict affect the *kashrut* of meat from a butcher. The work of a cantor, however, fulfilling the ritual and spiritual requirements of the members of the community, is fundamentally different. Commenting on that difference, *Kanarfogel* writes:

As was the case for *Sefer Hasidim*, it would appear that *Rabbenu Tam* saw the selection of a cantor as reflecting an uncontested choice to be determined not according to the principles of communal government as he understood them, but rather as a matter of spirituality. The efficacy of his prayer required the cantor to be the most obviously qualified person available,

⁵⁰ שו"ת שבט הלוי חלק ד סימן ל.

who was appointed to his post without recourse to a voting or selection process by individual members of the community.⁵¹

The regular means of appointing communal officials were insufficient for the selection of a cantor because there is in this selection a question of efficacy. The job is not merely technical – though the technical demands on medieval cantors (in terms of use of proper melodies and impeccable pronunciation of all liturgical texts) were great. For the prayer to be efficacious, the cantor also needed to maintain sufficiently positive social relationships with the members of his congregation that they would be confident that he would willingly and graciously fulfill their prayer requirements when they were unable to do so for themselves. Leo Landman, in his book on the office of the cantor in history, described the difficult nature of cantorial interpersonal relationships:

The cantor's difficulties did not end with rabbis or his colleagues. He met with many difficulties while dealing with the laity, as well. Sometimes bitter disputes arose concerning different ritualistic minutiae such as pronunciation, intonations, order of the prayers, or novel formulae introduced by the cantor which did not meet with the approval of some members of the community.... Cantors often got involved in private disputes and always came out losers in such altercations.⁵²

The temptations to exercise the power of exclusion must have been great (and sometimes still are today). With one thought, a cantor would be able to do spiritual damage to a person who had harmed him professionally or personally. He didn't even need to tell that person in order for it to be effective. The rabbinic urge to diminish this power, from R. Isaac of Tyrnau forward, is easy to understand in this light. The integrity and efficaciousness of Jewish communal worship depends on a *Sh'liaḥ tsibbur*, a messenger of the community, who will faithfully fulfill the halakhic needs of everyone present. At the same time, rabbinic authority is constantly looking for new tools of enforcement, and the power of exclusion is too tantalizing to be discarded.

Rabbinic authorities, from the Maharil's time up to today, have found ways to locate the power of exclusion not within the thoughts of the cantor (or shofar sounder) himself, but rather within their own purview as the "commissioners" of the worship leaders. As rabbinic power and authority have progressively become more and more limited, control over the ritual environment and the ability for halakhically-minded Jews to fulfill their requirements has grown more important. Uses of and references to the power of exclusion, separated from the internal mental world of the cantor, are an as-yet unexplored piece in the ongoing study of rabbinic authority in history – about which much has been written in recent times. Whereas, in the time of the Maharil, the power of exclusion was used as a means of defending against an existential threat, the modern examples given in this paper give evidence to the ways in which the power of exclusion is deployed in order to fight what we might call "culture wars" in contemporary political discourse. In this way, it shows some similarities with the denial of communion in the contemporary Catholic Church.⁵³ In both instances, people could be physically present in a worship service and nevertheless find themselves denied the ritual fulfillment they sought. Differently, however, whereas denial of communion has become an international issue with

⁵¹ Kanarfogel, 2010, p. 27

⁵² Landman, 1972, p. 48

⁵³ <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/politics/politicians-and-holy-communion/denying-holy-communion-a-case-history>.

reporting in major news outlets both inside and outside the church, Jewish use of this power of exclusion remains extremely obscure.

This murky law has wound its way through Jewish liturgical and legal history without ever attracting too much attention to itself because it is inherently radical and destabilizing. We want to imagine that a prayer service can be “Kosher” in the same way that a piece of meat can be – that is to say that if all observable technical aspects of the execution of the service are performed appropriately the service will “work.” The cantorial power of exclusion reminds us, uncomfortably, that the actors in a service, including both the cantor and the congregation, are human beings who bring all of their conversations and machinations into the sanctuary with them. For that service to fully succeed, the unified congregation needs to put their faith and trust in their cantor, and that cantor needs to put his intentions and thoughts to each of the members of the congregation – and only then can everyone’s requirements be fulfilled.

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LOGS THAT BURN SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER WILL NOT MAKE A GOOD FIRE. BUT PUT A MINYAN OF PEOPLE WITH SOME PRAYER IN THEIR HEARTS CLOSE TOGETHER, AND YOU'LL LIKELY GET A GOOD BLAZE GOING, WITH SOME REAL SINGING, SOME AMENS, SOME SWAYING AND SOME HANDCLAPPING.

(ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI, DAVENING: A GUIDE TO MEANINGFUL JEWISH PRAYER)

Jewish Choral Singing Today

By Sheldon Levin

As a college student, I sang in synagogue choirs, sometimes as a paid professional to support the tenor section. In those years, many congregations had a choir which sang during services most Friday evenings of the year. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the choir sang selections of great repertoire by composers such as Sulzer, Lewandowski, Helfman, Janowski and others. Times have changed and most Conservative synagogues have removed sections of services that used to be sung by a choir (and in some congregations accompanied by an organ). These days, congregational singing of unison settings by Shlomo Carlebach, Debbie Friedman, Craig Taubman, Dan Nichols, Josh Nelson and other contemporary composers have replaced the nineteenth and mid-twentieth century masterpieces. In congregations that use instruments, guitar or piano, and drums have replaced the organ.

What should a congregational choir sing today? What should a cantor do who wishes to bring the joy of singing and especially choral singing to his or her community?

If you have a congregation that appreciates choral singing, you are in a precious minority. Reform and some Conservative services still include wonderful choral opportunities. If, in addition to the stirring repertoire of the past, you wish to bring new compositions into your community, there are great composers writing new settings of prayer texts. A few that come to mind are: Bob Applebaum, Noah Aronson, Gerald Cohen, Steve Cohen, Meir Finkelstein, Elliot Z. Levine, Benjie Ellen Schiller, Beth Schaefer, Josh Nelson, Craig Taubman and numerous others. Transcontinental Music www.transcontinentalmusic.com continues to publish beautiful choral octavos and they recommend buying one of several plans that will send new publications each year. Shalsholet www.shalsholet.org run by Cantors Ramon Tasat and Natasha Hirschhorn present new works in concert and in print. Each summer the Zamir Choral Foundation's North American Jewish Choral Festival, founded and directed by Mathew Lazar, will give you the chance to sing more than a dozen compositions and listen to great community and congregational choirs perform both sacred and secular Jewish music. The Foundation's Mandell Rosen Fund for New Music and others are inspiring the creation, performance and recording of new choral selections. We live in an exciting time with ready access to outstanding new music.

If your shul does not appreciate a choir during most services, there are still opportunities to form a synagogue-based choral group and enable them to perform. Concerts at local nursing homes, 55+ communities, interfaith Thanksgiving, Yom Hashoah and Yom HaAtzma'ut community events and other holiday programs offer opportunities to feature your choir.

Even in my own congregation, getting people to commit to a regular weekly rehearsal has not always been easy. I have experimented with shorter commitments with some success. You can have a group work for a month or so to prepare a Hanukkah concert at the shul, a retirement community or the local mall. People are often happy to perform in a show or revue of Broadway music, especially when they are featured as soloists. Creative Purim shpiels are available for purchase, or if you have the talent, you can write your own. These might feature your regular choir or people who sign up to perform that program alone. You can plan a Kumsitz with all unison singing or include some choral pieces if you have the singers available.

We are currently planning a new "Minyan Style" Kabbalat Shabbat service. To help people learn the melodies, most of which are new to our congregation, we have a Dropbox file with recordings, printed

music and we held several “prep” sessions. We did not call them “rehearsals,” trying instead to attract people who do not want to commit to a choir. You may wish to broaden your pool of possible singers by creating an “Intergenerational Choir” to include teens and adults of all ages.

If you have teens in your synagogue, you might encourage them to join a nearby chapter of HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir, if one is available. Another program of the Zamir Choral Foundation, this can be life changing for the young person and create opportunities to learn and perform high quality Jewish choral music. In addition to making life-long friends across the US and in Israel (HaZamir has chapters throughout both countries), participation in HaZamir will also set the stage for these young people to be life-long participants in Jewish choral singing. Contact the Zamir Choral Foundation at www.zamirchoralfoundation.org or www.Hazamir.org for more information.

If you can organize an *a cappella* group, or bring one in from a nearby university, the Cantors Assembly has published settings of numerous prayers in the *a cappella* style. Www.ilufinu.org is a site to find more information and order the music book. These days many communities have fine Jewish communal choirs, singing all styles of Jewish music. My experience is that they are not competition to synagogue choirs. They afford additional opportunities for those who love choral singing to learn even more repertoire and to improve their skills, which can enhance your synagogue choir when singers choose to join both groups.

If you have singers in your choir who are not good music readers, there are several options you might want to consider. I often provide mp3 recordings of each voice part, which I keep in a Dropbox folder so the singers can easily download them or listen to them online. Some choirs have a budget for professional singers who can help each voice part stay on pitch and learn the music. Some choirs set aside time for sight singing exercises. Cantor Mitchell Martin of B’nai Torah in Boca Raton has everyone in his synagogue choir purchase Finale (a music software program). He creates a Finale version of every song they need to learn, and each singer can easily hear his or her voice part loudly while the other parts play softly in the background.

There are conductors who teach music by rote and never hand out the music. Instead, singers sing their vocal parts from either lyric sheets or a siddur, or from memory. Other conductors patiently repeat the same part hundreds of times. Some choirs organize sectional rehearsals for each voice part to learn their notes and rhythms. Some singers like hearing a recording of a good choir perform a new work as they struggle to learn their own notes. The Zamir Choral Foundation www.zamirchoralfoundation.org and the Zamir Chorale of Boston www.zamir.org have recordings for sale. These days, YouTube might even have a video of the piece you want, and Transcontinental Music offers some demo recordings of their repertoire.

The times are changing for Jewish synagogue music. True, choirs are singing less often in some Conservative synagogue services. However, there is more Jewish choral music being sung by teens, adult communal choirs, festivals and non-synagogue opportunities than ever before. Wonderful composers and arrangers are creating new choral works every year. It is a great time for Jewish choral music in both North America and Israel, and we encourage every singer, conductor and listener to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible.

Sheldon Levin serves Neve Shalom, Metuchen, New Jersey as Cantor and Adult Educational Director. He is a past president of the Cantors Assembly, conductor of the New Jersey Cantors Assembly Ensemble, and co-conductor of Makhelat Hamerkaz, The Jewish Choir of Central Jersey. He is a member of the Journal's Editorial Board, and his article, "Psalm Enchanted Evening," appeared in the March 2015 issue.



Joseph A. Levine, "London's Zemel Choir Celebrates A Half-century" (2005).

BACK IN THE DAY

The *Vimalei* Boy

By Jacob Mendelson

In March of '56, I was playing the outfield in a game of punch-ball on the cement grounds of *Etz Hayim* Yeshiva, a school for boys, when Perry Horowitz punched a moonshot in my general direction. I screamed, "I GOT IT! I GOT IT!!" at the same time that a car horn blared. I catch the *spaldeen*, turn, and see my Brother the Cantor pulling up in his black and white Buick convertible with the red leather interior, and leaning on his horn. "Shmuck!" he yells: "Don't ya know you got a *Vimalei* tonight?"

The so-called Golden Age of Cantorial Music fell approximately between 1890 and 1950. That group of cantors, along with their choirs of boys and men, dominated the synagogue scene with their fabulous voices and over-the-top personalities. At weddings, when the bride and groom arrived under the *huppah*, a boy alto soloist dressed in cantorial garb would slowly walk down the aisle, singing *Vimalei*, a liturgical chant asking fulfillment of everyone's wishes for the couple. The kid would then take off the gown, and later in the ceremony would sing either "I Love You Truly" or "O Promise Me." For this, he would get five bucks. Not a bad night's work, when hot dogs cost a dime.

Scared witless, I hop into my brother's car, knowing I was going to get it big time from Tibby (Mom). I had screamed myself hoarse during the punchball game and had zero voice left for the wedding. We reach home, and sure enough, Tibby goes berserk. She flexes her right index finger, and shoves it between her upper and lower teeth, biting hard, a uniquely Jewish/Italian gesture. Normally, a belt would follow, but hoping I would be singing in public soon with an unmarked face, she picked up the phone and called Bogie. Bogie was William Bogzester, (pronounced Buck Chester) a Viennese former cantor with whom I studied cantorial music and voice. Bogie was five-foot three, 300-plus pounds and a dandified eccentric of the highest order, who also was a brilliant and loving teacher. In short order, Bogie arrives at the house in full voice-teacher regalia. That is, patent leather shoes, over the calf socks with male garters, silk shirt with ascot, and lustrously coiffed hair. He waddles over to the piano with young Mendelson in tow, proceeds to vocalize me through a few scales, and then pronounces: "JECKIE VEEL SING TONIGHT! YOU MUST GEEVE HEEM BLECK COFFEE VIS HONEY UND LEMON!"

Back in the '50s there was no decaf, so after about a half-dozen of those suckers I wasn't sure about my voice but was definitely ready to rock and roll. So off we go, mother, father, and heavily caffeinated ten-year-old, to Eastern Parkway and the Brooklyn Jewish Center, one of the great "cathedral" synagogues of New York. We find the organist, a wizened old pro named Morris Barash, and rehearsed—which consisted of him asking me what key, me saying d minor, and him saying "We're good to go." On goes the gown, *tallis* and miniature "cantor's hat" (mitre), and I watch the wedding party march in, and wait for my cue. Facing me was one of the longest aisles of any shul in the country. The deal was, I walk slowly down the aisle as I'm singing, and time it so I end up right in front of the bride and groom, lifting my arms in a priestly gesture as I finish the text. Right before my cue, the last thing I see is Tibby giving me the look. That is: "I'm gonna *shep nakhas* (derive pleasure) or else!"

Barash plays the d minor intro, and I start walking and singing:

Vimalei "God should fulfill" (not bad, the voice feels pretty good)

Mish'alseinu "our requests" (that low note was a little rough).

B'midoh tovoh "in good measure" (oy, I'm losing it),

B'midoh tovoh (my goose is cooked),

Y'shu'oh v'rah^uamim "with salvation and mercy" (have mercy on ME);

B' midoh tovoh, b'midoh tovoh (SHOOOOOOOOT!),

Finally, with tears streaming down my cheeks, I croak:

Y'--shu—oh—v'—ra—^ua—mim.....!

The bride and groom look at me kindly, the father of the bride, not so kindly, and the photographer snaps a shot of me and whispers in my ear: "Kid, if I were you, I'd get the heck outa here fast!"

I ran back down the aisle with my gown and *tallis*, straight out of the shul, and on to Eastern Parkway. I kept running blindly while tearing off the gown and leaving it on the pavement. I ran until I felt a stitch in my side and couldn't run anymore. I found myself sitting on a stoop, my breath hitching, when seemingly hours later, the family Chrysler pulls along, my father gets out, puts his arms around me, and gently leads me inside, where a contrite Tibby said: "I shouldn't have made you do the *Vimalei*, it's my fault." We drive back home to Borough Park, where we go to the Famous Dairy Restaurant on 13th Avenue. My Dad and I order our favorite meal, a vegetarian "Protose" Steak©, smothered in sauteed onions with double fries. This concoction was a substance looking like dog food and tasting like meat.

Heaven!

All was forgiven. About a week later I got a package in the mail. In it was a five-dollar bill plus a Voight basketball, from the bride and groom.

Fast-forward 15 years, I'm at my brother's house in Long Beach shooting the breeze, when he gets a call from Irving Rogoff. Rogoff was a cantor-and-manager of cantors who happened to be a family friend. "Hey Rogoff!" my brother yells. "Ya wanna hear my kid brother sing a high B- flat?" He gives me the phone, and I scream a high note.

Rogoff says: "Hey kid! Ya remember a *Vimalei* you did in the Brooklyn Jewish Center when you were hoarse?"

I say: "Sure, how could I forget? It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life!"

He says: " I was the agent in charge of finding a *Vimalei* kid that night. I call your brother and ask him if he knows anyone. He recommends you. After the ceremony, the father of the bride asks me if I'm responsible for the *Vimalei* boy.

I say: "Yes."

He hauls off and belts me in the face and knocks out one of my front teeth!

Thanks, kid..."

*A past President of the Cantors Assembly, Jacob Mendelson is Hazzan Emeritus at Temple Israel Center, White Plains, New York. In his retirement, he is taking his one-man show **The Cantor's Couch**—book by Jack Bieler, original music by Jonathan Comisar—all across the country and beyond. He is also in the midst of shooting a sequel to the highly successful documentary film **A Cantor's Tale**, and recently celebrated the release of his second CD set, **Yontef!**, a musical retrospective on the Days of Awe.*



Jacob Mendelson in his "Vimalei" years

N'GINAH L'MA'ASEH

Adonai ro'i / The Lord is my Shepherd

Text: Ps. 23; Music: Max Wohlberg; audio: Faith Steinsnyder

(CLICK ANYWHERE IN THE MUSIC TO ACCESS THE AUDIO FILE)

As in the past, renewal of Jewish worship in America has arisen among a few imaginative prayer leaders working individually on the local level, and then radiated outward. One of them, Cantor Faith Steinsnyder, has employed a short-term solution for Hebraically insecure congregants that may prove crucial to the long-term survival of davening in our linguistically impoverished society: chanting an English translation of the liturgy—or at least key parts of it. Some years ago, while she served at Reform Congregation Knesseth Israel in suburban Philadelphia, I witnessed her doing exactly this during a Yom Kippur Memorial Service.

It followed *Minhah*—with its lengthy Bible readings—and was well past mid-afternoon. The shadows of surrounding trees had by then reached the sanctuary's stained-glass windows. A palpable restlessness rippled through worshipers who had remained in their seats since morning; they were hungry, thirsty and tired. Until then, their participation had been decidedly passive, listening in silence as page after page was read at them in English from the rabbis' (there were three, all co-officiating in rotation) side of the pulpit.

Then, it was time for the Twenty-third Psalm to close that portion of the Day of Atonement liturgy, and Cantor Steinsnyder had a choice: chant it in Hebrew or in English—and with great prescience (it turned out) she chose the latter option. The *Gates of Repentance* Mahzor offers an update of the King James language ("You" for "Thou"), and that is what Cantor Steinsnyder sang—but to the rhythms and stresses of the Psalmist's original inspiration. From the opening phrase, people were with her. At first haltingly, unsure of the free chant's exact contour, they hummed, ever louder and with increasing confidence until at last, a thousand Reform Jews were davening *fortissimo* along with her—in English!

Since this Psalm is so frequently recited, we have provided readers with both its Hebrew (transliterated) and English versions, in the form of lyrics set to music by Max Wohlberg. The chant is devoid of high notes or virtuoso pyrotechnics, epitomizing what used to be called *Gebrauchsmusik* (practical music or *n'ginah l'ma'aseh*), mainly because it can be performed equally well by almost all voices. Cantor Faith Steinsnyder, a lyric soprano, was kind enough to record the prayer in its original Hebrew for the *Journal of Synagogue Music*. [JAL]

Adonai ro'i (The Lord Is My Shepherd)

Text: Psalm 23

Music: Max Wohlberg

Miz-mor l'-da - vid, a-do-nai ro - i lo eh - sar. Bin - ot
The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He

dde - sheh yar - bi - tsei - ni, al mei m'-nu-hot y'-na-ha-lei - ni. Naf-shi y'-sho-veiv yan-
makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me be- side still wa ters. He re - stores my soul, He

hei - ni v'-mag-lei-tse-dek l' - ma-an sh' - mo. Gam ki ei - leikh b' -
leads me in right paths for the sake of His name. Even when I walk in the valley of the

gei - tsal - ma - vet lo i - ra ra ki a - tah im - ma - di,
sha-dow of death I shall fear no evil for You are with me,

shiv-t'-kha u-mi-shan-te - kha hei-ma y' na - ha mu-ni. Ta - a-rokh l'-fa-nai shul - han
with rod and staff You comfort me. You have set a ta-ble be-fore me

ne - - - ged tso - r' - rai, ddi - shan - ta va - she - men ro -
In the pre - sence of my e-ne mies, You have an-noin - ted my

shi, ko - si r' - va - yah. Akh tov va - he - sed yir - dd' fu - ni kol y' -
head with oil, my cup o-ver - flows Surely goodness and mer-cy shall follow me all the

mei hay - yai v'-sha - v' - ti b'-veit a - do nai L' - o - rekh ya - mim.
days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord, for - e - ver.

N'GINAH L'MA'ASEH

Havineinu: A Rabbinically Abbreviated Weekday Amidah

Text: BT *B'rakhot/Mishneh Torah*; **Music arranged:** Joseph Levine;

Audio: Jacob Mendelson

(CLICK ANYWHERE IN THE MUSIC TO ACCESS THE AUDIO FILE)

Rabbi Abraham Millgram (*Jewish Worship*, 1949:98) stated the following concerning the growing length of daily prayer in his day:

One often gets the impression that the Jewish liturgy has kept on expanding without any consideration for the convenience of the average Jew, who is usually subject to the pressures of earning a livelihood and has no time for lengthy services. This impression, however, is contradicted by the [ancient] rabbinic provision for an abridgement of the *t'fillah* when time does not allow one to recite the prescribed prayers (*bish'at ha-d'hak*). It is in such cases that the rabbis [Mishnah, *B'rakhot* 4.2] suggested "an abbreviated eighteen benedictions" [Babylonian Talmud *B'rakhot* 29a]. What is meant by "an abbreviated eighteen"? Rav said: An abbreviated form of each blessing; Samuel elaborated: "Give us discernment, O Lord, to know Your ways, and circumcise our hearts to fear You, forgive us so that we may be redeemed, and keep us far from our sufferings, before we call—You have already answered. Praised are You, O Lord, Who listens to our prayer."

הַבִּינֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְדַעַת דְּרָכֶיךָ, וּמֹל אֶת לִבֵּנוּ לִירְאָתְךָ, וְתִסְלַח לָנוּ לַהֲיוֹת
גְּאוּלִּים וְרַחֲמֵנוּ מִמַּכְאוֹב, וְנִשְׁגְּנוּ בְּנֹאוֹת אֲרָצְךָ, וְנִפְּצוֹתֵינוּ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת
הָאָרֶץ תִּקְבֹּץ, וְהַתּוֹעִים עַל דַּעְתְּךָ יִשְׁפֹּטוּ, וְעַל הַרְשָׁעִים תִּגְיֶיהָ יָדְךָ, וְיִשְׁמָחוּ
צַדִּיקִים בְּבִגְדֵי עֵירָךָ וּבִתְקוֹן הֵיכָלְךָ, וּבְצִמְיֻת קָרְן לְדוֹד עֲבָדְךָ וּבְעֲרִיכַת גֵּר
לְבֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשִּׁיחָךָ. טָרָם נִקְרָא אֶתָּה תַעֲנֶה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot t'fillah* 2.3) later modified Samuel's formula for the *Amidah*'s central section. The abridged Hebrew text *Havineinu* (Grant us Wisdom) is from Philip Birnbaum's *Daily Prayer Book*, (New York: Hebrew publishing company, 1949: 97). The music, arranged by Joseph Levine, combines Weekday Nusah motifs with elements of medieval Psalm Tones.¹ The rationale for resorting to it was offered by Joseph Caro (*Shulhan arukh, orah hayyim* 1564, 1.1): "Rather a little [prayer] with intention, than a lot without it." [JAL]

¹ Joseph A. Levine, *Emumat Abba*, 2006: 146-158; Richard Hoppin, *Medieval Chant*, 1971: 81-83, Ex. 4a-b.

Havineinu

An Abridged Amidah

Text: BT B'rakhot 29a;
Mishneh torah,
Hilkhoh t'fillah 2.3

Music: arr. Joseph A. Levine;
Weekday nusah motives combined
with Psalm-tone elements

Ha-vi - nei - nu, a-do-nai e - lo - hei-nu la - da - at d'-ra- khe - kha, u -

4 mol et l'-va-vei - nu l'-yir - a - te-kha, v'-tis-lah la - nu, li-hi - yot g'-u-lim, v'-ra-ha-

7 kei - nu mi-makh - ov, v'-dash - nei - nu bin - ot ar - tse - kha, un' -

9 fu-tso-tei-nu mei-ar-ba kan-fot ha - a - rets t'-ka-beits, v' ha-ta - im al da-at-kha yi - sha -

12 - fei - tu, v'al hor-sha - im ta-nif ya-de-kha, v'-yis-m'- hu tsad-di - kim b'-vin-

15 yan i - re - kha, u-v'- tik - kun hei-kha - le - kha, u-vits-mi-hat

19 ke-ren l'-da-vid av-de-kha u-va-a-ri-khat neir l'-ven yi-shai m'-shi - he - kha.

22 Te - rem nik-ra v'-a - tah ta - a-neh. Ba- rukh a -

25 tah, a - do nai, sho - mei - a t'-fil - lah.

N'GINAH L'MA'ASEH

Bakkashah l'musaf shabbat

Text: Robert Gordis; Music: Abba Weisgal; Audio: Raphael Frieder

(CLICK ANYWHERE IN THE MUSIC TO ACCESS THE AUDIO FILE)

The Rabbinical Assembly's *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book* of 1946 (edited by Morris Silverman) included an Introit to the Amidah of *Musaf shabbat*, newly written by Robert Gordis. It asked that God remember *our ancestors as they stood in the Temple courtyard in days of old*. Titled a *Bakkashah* (plea, p. 140), it was ignored for half a century until 1996, when our late colleague Pinchas Spiro (in a letter to the present writer) wrote the following:

This is the kind of contemporary *piyyut* that deserves to be included in future editions of the RA Siddur. For many years I hadn't even noticed this optional *bakkashah*. However, upon reading it closely, I felt a true epiphany, After long struggling with the concept of *korbanot* as it might apply to contemporary worship (an historic "connection" alone wasn't enough), I finally connected with the inspiring words that portrayed our ancestors' love for God as they brought their offerings before His Holy Presence each Sabbath day.

Abba Weisgal had set these words in *Ahavah rabbah*, the prayer mode of Shabbat Musaf. In the RA's current *Siddur Lev Shalem* (a supplementary *Meditation*, page 188a), the word *v'imoteinu* has been added to *avoteinu*, and *kadmoneinu* has been substituted for the latter. The word *hovoteihem* (obligatory), referring to *korb'noteihem*, has been deleted, indicating the voluntary nature of our forebears' Sabbath offerings. [JAL]

So too, may we, in our ancestors' spirit of sacrificial devotion, fulfill our duty in rebuilding Thy Holy Land, the wellspring of our life, that we may ever be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth.
[JAL]

A Meditation

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
[וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ]. יַעֲלֶה לְפָנֶיךָ
זְכוֹרֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ]
בִּימֵי קֹדֶם, בְּעַמְדֵם לְפָנֶיךָ
בְּחִצּוֹת קֹדֶשׁ.
מִה רַבָּה אֲהַבְתָּם לָךְ, בְּהֵבִיאֵם
לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת-קִרְבָּנֹתֵיהֶם מִדִּי
שִׁבְתָּ בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ.
אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הָאֵצֶל
עֲלֵינוּ מִרוּחָם רוּחַ דְּעַת
וְיִרְאֵת יְהוָה.
בֶּן נִזְכָּה לְמֵלֶךְ הַחֹבֹתֵינוּ
לְבָנִין אֲרָצְךָ וְלַחֲדוּשׁ בֵּית
חַיֵּינוּ, וְיִתְפָּרְכוּ בָנוּ כָּל-
מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה.

Bakkashah l'musaf shabbat

Text: After Robert Gordis
(1946)

Siddur Lev Shalem
2016: p. 188a

Music: Abba Yosef Weisgal
(1963)

Transcribed: J. Levine

Longingly

E-lo - hei-nu ve-lo-hei a-vo - tei-nu v'-i-mo - tei - nu, ya - a - leh

5 l' - fa - ne - kha zikh-ron kad-mo - nei - nu bi - mei

8 ke - dem, b'-om-dam l' - fa - ne - kha b'-hats- rot kod - she - kha. Mah rab - bah a - ha - va - tam

12 lakh, ba - ha - vi - am l' - fa - ne - kha et kor-b' - no - tei - hem mid - dei shab - bat

15 b' - shab - ba - to. A - na a - do - nai e - lo - hei - nu, ha - a - tseil a -

19 iei - nu mei - ru - nam, ru - an a - ar v' - yr - at a - do - nai. K'ei - n n'iz - k'ei - n i - ma - lei - no - vo -

23 tei - nu l' - vin - yan ar - ts' - kha ul - hid - dush beit - ha - yyei - nu

26 v' - yit - ba - r' - khu ba - nu kol mish - p' - hot ha - a - da - mah.

With emotion

Brightly

N'GINAH L'MA'ASEH

Ana avdda... beih ana raheits

Text: The Zohar; Music: Joseph Levine, after Zalman Rivlin/Lazar Saminsky; Audio: Shayna Postman

(CLICK ANYWHERE IN THE MUSIC TO ACCESS THE AUDIO FILE)

The Book of Light (*Zohar*), central text of Jewish mysticism attributed to Moses Nahmanides (1194-1270, Spain), introduces the Aramaic introit to public Torah reading, *B'rikh sh'meih d'marei alma*, Ruler of the universe, praised be Your name and Your sovereignty:

The whole congregation should assume an attitude of awe and fear, of trembling and quaking, as though they were at the moment of standing at Sinai to receive the Torah... for it is not permitted then to open one's mouth, even for discussing the Torah, still less other subjects... When the Torah scroll is taken out to be read before the congregation, the heavenly gates of mercy are opened... and each one should [silently] recite the prayer, *B'rikh sh'meih d'marei alma*...

The hazzan chants aloud from *Ana avdda d'kud'sha b'rikh hu* to *u-masgei l'mebad tav'van u-k'shot*. Some congregations then sing from *Beih ana raheits* until the end as a communal hymn.

אָנא עבדא דקדשא בריך הוא, דסגידנא קמיה, ומקמא דיקר אורייתא בכל עדן
ועדן. לא על אנש רחיצנא, ולא על בר אלהין סמיכנא, אלא באלהא דשמיה,
דהא אלהא קשוט, ואורייתא קשוט, ונביאיה קשוט, ומסגא למעבד טבון
וקשוט. בה אָנא רחמן, ולשמה קדישא יקרא אָנא אמר תשבחו. יהא רענא
קדמך דתפתח לפאי באורייתא, ותשלים משאלין דלפאי, ולבא דכל עמך
ישראל, לטב ולחיים ולשלום. (אמן.)

A *na avdda d'kudsha b'rikh hu*—I am a servant of the Holy One, Whom I revere, and Whose precious Torah I revere in every time and place. Not on mortals nor on angels do I rely, but rather on the God of heaven, the God of truth, whose Torah is truth and whose Prophets are true and who abounds in deeds of goodness and truth.

B *eih ana raheits*—I put my trust in God, and I utter praise to God's holy, precious name. May it be Your will that You open my heart to Your Torah, and that You fulfill the desires of my heart and the hearts of all Your people Israel, for goodness, for life, and for peace. [JAL]

Ana avdda ... beih ana raheits

Text: Zohar (Part 2, 206A)

Music: Zalman Rivlin/Lazar Saminsky

A - na av-dda d'-kud-sha b'-rikh hu, dd'-sa - gid-na ka-meih u -

mik-kam ma di - kar o - rai-teih b' - khol id - dan v' - id - dan.

(Wait - then repeat above phrase; octaves)

La al c-nash ra - hits - na, v' - la al bar c-la-hin sa - mikh - na,

13

accel *3* *3* *rit*

cl - la bc-c-la-ha dish-may - ya, d' hu c - la-ha k'-shot, v' o - rai-teih k'-shot, u-n'-vi-

17

3 *3* *3*

o-hi k'-shot, u-mas - ggci l' me - bad ta-v'-van, ta - v' van u-k'-shot.

21

3 *mp*

Beih a-na ra- heits, v' - li - sh' mci kad - di - sha yak-ki-ra a - na ci-mar

26

mf *3* *p* *cresc*

tush - b'-han. Y' - hei-ra'a-va ka-da-makh; ra - a-va ka -da- makh, d'-tif - tah li -

31

- ba - i b' - o - rai - ta, v'-tash - lim_ mish-a-lin d'-li - ba - i, v' - li - ba d'-khol

f

mf

p

f

3

36

am - makh yis-ra- cl; v' - li - ba d'- khol am - makh, v' - li - ba d'-

mf a tempo

f

3

3

mf a tempo

40

khol am-makh, d' - khol am - makh yis - ra - cl, l' - tav u-l'

rit

p

mp

rit

44

hay - yin v' - lish - lam. A - mein.

mf

f

3

3

3

pp

REVIEWS

Shmuel Barzilai's CD—*Sh'ma Israel*, 2018, www.gramola.at

Reviewed by John H. Baron

Barzilai has issued another cantorial CD, his fifth since 2008. As Chief Cantor of the city of Vienna and latter-day successor to Salomon Sulzer at the Seitenstettengasse Synagogue, Barzilai is continuing a tradition of Central European *hazzanut* that is sorely needed in an era of post-Shlomo Carlebach and post-Debbie Friedman synagogue song. Born in Jerusalem in 1957 and a pupil of such masters as Naftali Herstik, he has coupled vast learning with a fine tenor voice to become one of the outstanding cantors of our time (See my review of his fourth CD in this Journal in September 2016.) He is in fine vocal shape on this recording, and those listeners who have enjoyed his many previous recordings will be happy to hear that he remains an exciting cantor.

Barzilai is accompanied by a large orchestra and all-male choir of high quality conducted by the late Mordechai Sobol (1951-2018), who also arranged some of the tracks. Three of the numbers also present the 12-year-old Canadian Yedidya-Tzviel Weksler, a boy soprano, who is very effective. Albeit the orchestra is out-of-place in a strictly liturgical setting, it gives to concert audiences the same show biz pizzazz that one finds in historical cantorial recordings by Moshe Koussevitzky and others. Barzilai used this orchestra in his previous recordings, though it is perhaps not so blatantly secular as in the present CD. In the 2015 recording, the orchestra is more an outgrowth of the synagogue song of Barzilai, a real accompaniment, whereas in the 2018 recording the cantor and choir seem to be doing their own thing much of the time. The influence of Hollywood and Disney in the 2018 CD, such as in the opening of the first track (*B'tseit yisrael*), is unfortunate for those seeking a purer liturgical experience. The orchestral introduction to track 4 (*L'khu n'ran'nah*) is misleading, for what follows is an exquisite cantorial recitative. The vocal aspects of this recording are so compelling that the listener can gain inspiration from them and, if so inclined, ignore the orchestra.

As in the previous album, this CD contains ten works: in this case nine liturgical pieces and one in Yiddish. But even the Yiddish piece quotes several well-known liturgical works such as *Kol nidrei*. Cantor Barzilai takes well-established liturgical works by Zilberts, Malavsky, Alter, Ganchoff and others and interprets them in his own (and Sobol's) arrangements. The opening track (*B'tseit yisrael*) is more Viennese than Jewish, especially with the dance-like rhythm provided by the orchestra. But the second track (*Mimkom'kha*) with its *Ahavah rabbah* mode and rhythmically free cantorial recitative, brings us back into the synagogue. *Un'taneh tokef* (by the Israeli Armed Forces composer Yair Rosenblum who died at age 52 in 1996), which comprises track 3, is a tribute to a group of Israelis killed during the Yom Kippur War. It is a real composite of traditional chant and theater. It opens like an opera; later continues like a cabaret from Israel; momentarily returns us to the synagogue, then succumbs to the cabaret, only to end with a traditional Ashkenazi final cadence. Track 7 (*Sh'ma yisrael*) reaches an emotional high point liturgically, again a rhythmically free recitative in the *Ahavah rabbah* mode.

Most of the remaining tracks are more like tracks 2 and 7 than track 1, except for the Yiddish song (*Dos yiddishe lied*) by Secunda, track 6, which is a narrative that runs the gamut of

an observant Jew's liturgical calendar. The final track ("Hasidic Kaddish") is a short, cute, joyous (non-mourner's) Kaddish that could make its way into any synagogue. Sobol has provided brief notes and translations of texts in German, English, and Hebrew that are very useful.

John H. Baron is Emeritus Professor of Music at Tulane University. His review of Shmuel Barzilai's fourth CD, Areshet S'fateinu (2015), appeared in the September 2016 issue.

Samuel Adler's *Building Bridges with Music: Stories from a Composer's Life*

Reviewed by Michael Isaacson

Joyfully, there are certain consummate lives that shine as beacons of possibility. Their example, like Moses after Mt. Sinai, shows us what is attainable within our own finite timespan. Composer, conductor, educator, Samuel Adler's life in music is a precious case in point. It's fair to say that at a hardy and vigorous 92 years of age, Hans Samuel Adler has lived more lives, written more music, achieved more goals, met more people, and made more friends than most of us in groups of five. Throughout this oversized (naturally!) biographical memoir, each of these paths is documented in meticulous and fascinating detail. In this 2017 release by Pendragon Press, one may observe seven factors explaining the richness of his life.

1. A sterling parental role model. Sam's father, Cantor Hugo Chaim Adler (1896-1955), was both musically knowledgeable and a devoted Jewish leader in Mannheim, Germany before the Shoah and afterward in Worcester, Massachusetts. In a highly dramatic story of the two of them, in peril for their very lives, sneaking up to their shul's choir loft after Kristallnacht to save the choral part books, and almost being killed by the SS. One can therefore understand how much Sam's father influenced and shaped his son's Jewish musical imperatives and later fostered a vision for an American Reform devotional music menu as well. Adler senior also made sure that the family did not wait too long to escape to the U.S. and relocate in America. Undoubtedly, all of Sam Adler's creative and editorial Jewish musical activities are directly inspired by his father's example.

2. An immigrant's will to succeed in the new land. As a child, Sam was both an outsider who knew he had to try harder and, as a grateful emigré from Germany, fundamentally understood that achievement and success were the only proper motivations. Having been traumatized by the Hitler Youth while being mandated to learn to swim by the seashore and then suffering a beating, Sam was never an athlete who played on teams; he was always an individualist. He and his sister used to play "synagogue" together. His natural athleticism, however, would reveal itself later on in both his gymnastic music and his conducting of it.

3. A wonderfully thorough education. Growing up in the Boston area, Sam was privileged to attend Boston University, Harvard, and a summer at Tanglewood under Aaron Copland and Serge Koussevitzky. He studied with fabulous composition teachers including Walter Piston, Paul Hindemith, and Randall Thompson. There's a wonderful story of how Sam was disciplined and groomed by the faculty at Harvard to relinquish unfocused intellectual habits and really step up to the plate. Hard work made it all happen for him.

4. A mission-oriented *raison d'être*. Adler's creative life was mandated. He was to create both Jewish and secular music that reflected a new 20th-century musical direction and sensibility. It wasn't good enough to rehash anything; new alternatives were to be discovered and embraced. Using his weekly huge Shabbat SATB choir at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, he intermingled elevated choral masterworks with habitual service settings, a first in reform Jewish music circles. New ways of making older music were also part of his agenda. Read about Sam's creation of the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Germany as a means of rehabilitating the country after the war's devastation, and you'll marvel at how this soldier in his early twenties could have mustered sufficient authority to move the Army brass.

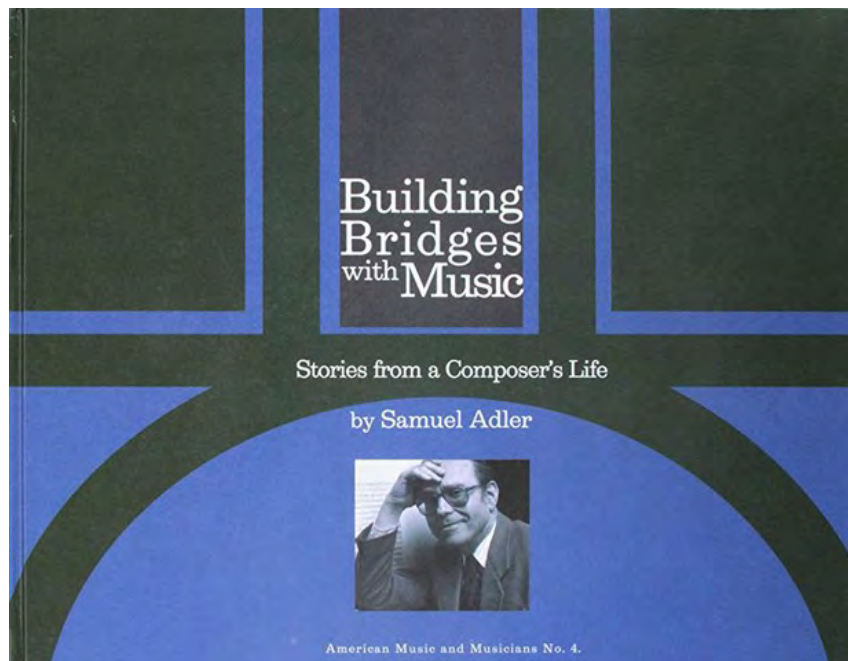
5. Hard work. Throughout the book, one is reminded of two kinds of composers. The "celestial" *Wunderkind* like Mozart, who seemingly conceives and pre-composes entire works effortlessly, and Beethoven, who struggles, scratches out, re-composes, and perseveres through constant hard work. Without discounting Adler's gifts at all, one could put him in the latter category. His work ethic is second to none. His rigorous labors amount to conquests that might not have been achieved by even more innately gifted composers. His highly successful orchestration text, as well as his choral and sight-singing studies, in addition to his two-volume High Holiday liturgical anthology *Yamim Noraim* must have been written in the middle of the night; daylight hours could hardly have offered enough time in the day for him to complete all of his numerous publications. At Harvard, indolence was hardly tolerated, and he, in turn, was a loving taskmaster-educator in his earlier years as well. His students at North Texas University, the Eastman School of Music, and later Juilliard would regularly be urged: "Come on man, pour on the steam, give it more!" He became somewhat more understanding of his students' challenges later in his teaching career, but still inculcated hard work as the only real solution to solving problems, surmounting obstacles, and achieving a successful life in music.

6. A belief that people are good and all things are possible. When you read of all his college residencies, his international teaching and travel, his advocacy of new programs and methods, you are struck with how much Adler enjoys relating with people. Almost as much as breathing oxygen, he needs to make new friends, interact, teach, and change lives for the better. There isn't a time when he has not just returned or is preparing to go on a trip to a new, sometimes exotic location (now with his wife, Emily Freeman Brown, the gifted conductor of Bowling Green University's Philharmonia and Opera Theater). For several years during his seventies and eighties he traveled each week from Ohio to New York City to teach for two days at Juilliard, each time seeing dozens of students. Only an optimist and believer in humanity could endure such a schedule.

7. An understanding of the long line both in music and life. A final note: Adler doesn't compose for your immediate or easy gratification. His music is often technically challenging to play, requiring schooled musicians, and is designed to wake an audience from its lethargy. He aspires to give us all a sonic experience that might temporarily disturb but ultimately transform.

The only “tune” that I believe he will be remembered for is his composition of the *Ha-motsi* blessing, sung before meals as if it had been handed down to Moses at Mount Sinai. Adler’s motto, borrowed from Baruch Spinoza, is *sub specie aeternitatis* (“from the perspective of the eternal”). He is about creating bright pathways long into the future. His music works to elevate, transform, improve and, of course, build bridges.

We are indebted to Samuel Adler for this sumptuous recap of his thrilling and most memorable life’s journey. It would be impractical for this review to list all the musical giants of the 20th and 21st centuries that he has known, or all of his achievements and the honors he has received. Instead, I enthusiastically recommend his *Building Bridges with Music* as a remarkable tonic for anyone feeling temporarily low or defeated, or anyone looking for a blueprint for designing a life well lived. Every Bar and Bat Mitzvah should be gifted with a copy and every Temple and Synagogue library should have multiple copies made accessible. We all need heroes and role models and Sam Adler fills both bills. May he be spared for many more productive years, in good health.



*Michael Isaacson is a composer of Jewish synagogue music, whose songs for young people helped define the Jewish camp song movement of the 1960s, and have been cited as influences by modern Jewish pop stars such as Debbie Friedman and Craig Taubman. His **Michael Isaacson Songbook Volumes I, II and III**, contain 160 of his compositions with CD musical examples.*

Saul Wachs's Updated & Digitalized Teaching Resource:

Rinnah Ut'fillah

Reviewed by Marsha Bryan Edelman

In 1982, the United Synagogue Department of Education released *Rinnah Ut'fillah*, a set of cassette tape recordings to teach would-be *ba'alei t'fillah* the basics of nusah and a selection of appropriate melodies for congregational and home use. Prepared by Dr. Saul P. Wachs, an ordained hazzan (JTS 1959) as well as an expert in liturgy and education, these recordings were slow-paced, clear articulations of the Hebrew text as it appeared in the 1946 Silverman *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book*, the “movement standard” at the time. Saul’s pleasant tenor voice was easy to listen to, and the chanting, devoid of cantorial excess, made it possible for individuals without any prior musical training to learn the traditional chants of our people. (Notably absent from the complete set of recordings was material covering Musaf for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as well as Kol Nidre and Neilah, the assumption being that no one but a trained cantor should be charged with leading those services.)

The “Wachs nusah tapes” (as they were popularly known) were used for many years and served their purpose well, but as technology moved away from cassette tapes, and as congregations moved on to other prayer books, the usefulness and relevance of these recordings waned – despite the fact that they remained the same excellent teaching tool they had always been. Fortunately, as has happened with so many other treasures from the past, *Rinnah Ut'fillah* has made its way into the 21st century. Volume 1 (Weekdays, including liturgy for Hanukkah and Rosh Hodesh as well as weddings) and Volume 2 (Shabbat) have been repackaged as a digital resource and sold on a flash drive (with internal versions available for Mac or PC users).

In addition to modernizing the technology, there are quite a number of changes that have made this material ideal for a variety of contemporary users. An accompanying file of “Prayer Book Page Locators” leads the listener to texts as they appear in several *siddurim*, including *Kol Haneshamah* (Reconstructionist), *Mishkan Tefilah* (Reform), and Koren/Sacks (Orthodox), as well as *Lev Shalem* and the various editions of *Sim Shalom* (weekday only, Shabbat only and complete) in use in most Conservative congregations. True to its purpose of enabling the user to “Learn the Basics” (or “Sharpen Your Skills”), a folder of “Supplementary Documents” includes a file providing a “Reference Booklet” that introduces the reader to the world of *Nusah ashkenaz*, with brief overviews of the musical elements and historical evolution that comprise our traditions. This material, as well as a guide to the other accompanying files, is helpfully included in a printed booklet that comes inside the case holding the flash drive.

An even more important aspect of these “modernized” recordings will be immediately apparent to the listener who is aware of changes to the liturgy since the original tapes were prepared. The practice of adding the *Imahot* to the *Avot* blessing of the *Amidah* is perhaps the most familiar, though there are differences in the precise language used. All of the “standard variations” are presented as options here, with “insertions” to the original recordings that, though noticeable, serve more as an interesting tracing of contemporary developments in liturgical

practice than as a distraction; a similar insertion, for example, recognizes the more recent custom of adding the recitation of Hallel to services on Yom Ha'atzma'ut and Yom Yerushalayim.

The flash drive is a clever means of packaging this wealth of material; the dozens of audio recordings would otherwise be enormous files, complicated to access through other technologies, and even then, appearing as individual tracks, rather than being “packaged” as services (for *Shaharit*, *minhah*, *ma'ariv*, etc.) and collected in their proper liturgical sequence (e.g. *Birkhot ha-shahar*, *p'sukei d'zimra*, *sh'ma u-virkhoteha*, etc.). Unfortunately, the “copyright protection” built into the flash drive (to prevent direct downloading and unauthorized sharing) makes it difficult to negotiate from one track to another, let alone between file folders; at the conclusion of each track, the listener needs to return to the original “Table of Contents” to proceed to the next, let alone to skip to something else. While a useful collection of “Sources” for each volume is provided, its location in the “Supplementary Material” is similarly difficult to access and may cause frustration to a listener who hears an interesting melody on a given track and wants to know its provenance. (Of course, one relatively easy solution to this last problem would be to simply print out the files of “source material” to provide ready retrieval.)

Notwithstanding the aforementioned logistical challenges in making one's way through these files, *Rinnah Ut'fillah*, in its updated format, continues to offer a valuable resource to beginning *ba'alei t'fillah* as well as those eager to advance their skills. The lovely graphic design of the printed material is the handiwork of Rabbi Miles B. Cohen, known to many members of our community for some of his other attractive and authoritative Resources for Synagogue and Home publications (including *Luah HaShannah*, student “Guides for Cantillation” and “Hebrew Grammar Guides”). As Dr. Wachs nears his ninetieth birthday (*yibadeil l'hayyim*) we must thank him (and Rabbi Cohen) for the hard work that went into re-issuing these two volumes. With a third volume for *Shalosh r'galim* nearing completion, and a fourth volume planned for the High Holy Days (with the previously “missing” services now recorded), we look forward to the speedy release of the remainder of the liturgical calendar. *Rinnah U'tfillah* is available at www.milesbcohen.com

Kol Isha: Songs and Settings of Prayers Composed by Members of the Women Cantors' Network, 2019

Reviewed by Marsha Bryan Edelman

The Women Cantors Network (WCN) was formed in 1982 to provide support and advice as well as educational and professional resources for women serving congregations in a variety of roles. At a time when the Conservative movement had not yet ordained female cantors, the organization, founded by Deborah Katchko (granddaughter of Cantor Adolph), drew women from Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and unaffiliated congregations who were serving, formally or informally, in roles including cantor, cantorial soloist, educational director,

choral conductor and even rabbi. The WCN has always prided itself on its “non-hierarchical” structure, eschewing titles in favor of the talents on display from its members, now numbering more than 200.

Given those founding principles, it should come as no surprise that when the WCN decided to showcase its members’ creativity, it adopted a similar attitude of inclusivity. So it is that *Kol Isha*, the aptly named collection of “Songs and Settings of Prayers Composed by members of the Women Cantors Network,” applied no particular limits or controls on the submissions accepted for publication. The resulting volume contains a wide-ranging list of more than 80 compositions by nearly as many contributors. A majority are treatments of familiar liturgical passages, alphabetically arranged from “*Adon olam*” (4 different settings) through *Hashkiveinu* (5 settings) to *Yis’m’hu* (2 settings), but there are surprises even among these. Many of the compositions include at least some lyrics in English, and a few include some Ladino, while others have creatively opted for the feminine forms of traditional texts (“*Modah ani*”).

Beyond liturgical passages, the book includes settings (or English language adaptations) of familiar biblical texts: two different works based on Ruth’s soliloquy (“Where you go, I will go...”); “Therefore Choose Life” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20); *V’asu li mikdash* (Exodus 25:8); an adaptation of Ezekiel 1:14, *Ratso va-shov*; *Mayim hayyim* (Jeremiah 2:13); and *Ani l’dodi* from *Shir ha-shirim*. Other settings are based (some more loosely than others) on Psalm texts: *Ahat sha’alti* (Ps. 27:4); “Beneath the Wings of *Shechinah*” (Ps. 29:11); and *Esa einai* (Ps. 121:1-2). Also included are settings based on Shabbat *z’mirot* and Hillel’s famous question from *Pirkei avot* (1:14), *Im ein ani li, mi li*.

Several of the selections in *Kol Isha* go well beyond any definition of “traditional” material. The collection offers a “Hebrew Counting Song,” an “Alef-Bet Acronym Song”, and Rosh Hashanah-themed songs including “*Sha-na-na Tovah*” and “*T’kiah*.” Appropriately for a volume written by and for women, there is a song celebrating “sisterhood,” a reflection on pregnancy loss, and a lullaby.

Just as the themes of the selections are varied, so, too, are the musical styles represented here. A few of the new works borrow traditional Jewish materials, from *Magein avot* and *Ahavah rabbah* modes to biblical *trop* and Hasidic *niggunim*. Others are more reflective of the world of contemporary music, from rock to rap. Nearly all are intended for solo voice, but a section at the end of the volume includes choral arrangements for female voices that the Women Cantors Network has specifically commissioned over the years.

Given the diversity of the music contained in *Kol Isha*—and of the communities that might embrace it—it is hard to predict how much of this music might find an audience and become an ongoing part of the repertoire. Among the liturgical settings, Deborah Jackson’s *Tsaddik ka-tamar* could be easily sung by a congregation, as could the chorus of Geela Rayzel Raphael’s *Y’varekh’kha*. Laura Berkson’s 3-part round setting *Yih’yu l’ratson* offers an entire congregation the opportunity to become a lovely meditative “choir.”

Editors Susan Colin, Emily Howard Meyer and Anita Schubert have produced an attractive, spiral-bound volume with easy-to-read scores (in eminently singable keys) presented

in a “lead-sheet” format with guitar chords (some of the choral settings do have piano accompaniments). The collection runs to more than 230 pages of music, with indices at the back that offer separate alphabetical listings of contributing composers, genres and *Tanakh* verses. The only place where the editors apparently chose to “economize” was in providing just one iteration of the text and translation of lyrics that receive multiple settings. Fortunately, since the selections appear alphabetically by title, the reader needs only to turn a few pages to find the lyrics, and a helpful note at the end of each song where the translation is “missing” directs the reader to that location.

Kol Isha was released in the summer of 2019 at the end of an 18-month “gestation.” While some of the entries are recent compositions, others go back to the 1980s. Thus, the collection reflects music from across the entire lifetime of the Women Cantors Network. Much has changed over nearly four decades—most especially, general acceptance of the role of women in synagogue musical leadership. This volume is a reflection of how far women’s voices have come—and portends a rich future.

*JSM’s Co-editor Marsha Bryan Edelman is the author of **Discovering Jewish Music (JPS 2003)**. She holds an MSM in Sacred Music from JTS and an EdD in Music and Music Education from Columbia University. She served as Professor of Music and Dean for Academic Affairs at Gratz College for almost a quarter century. She is the Founding Conductor of HaZamir Philadelphia, a chapter of HaZamir’s International Jewish Teen Choir, and two adult community choirs in New Jersey. She serves as Administrator of the Zamir Choral Foundation, on the Steering Committee of its North American Jewish Choral Festival, and as Adjunct Professor of Music at the Seminary’s H.L. Miller Cantorial School.*



N’rom’mah sh’mo, JAL, 2019

The Cantors Assembly's *Ilu Finu*: A Capella for Jewish Prayer— plus a Soundcloud Link to Selected Recorded Items

Reviewed by Charles Heller

This 2019 volume, edited by Matthew Austerklein, is part of a large-scale project involving numerous cantors, composers and vocal groups. The scope of the project, once completed, will eventually call for a review in some depth.

Synagogue music has gone through many significant changes in the past few generations. About a hundred years ago it was the norm to have a cantor leading the prayers with the help of a choir, using nusah with which the congregation was familiar, and nusah-based choral music which involved the congregation through simple responses and “congregational melodies” (before such practice had become canonized). Later generations, who spent less time in shul than their predecessors, were unfamiliar with nusah and so to engage them the cantor would create new congregational melodies, often based in popular culture rather than nusah. Later still, shul goers were apparently so unfamiliar with the services that they could not even sing the congregational melodies. The time was thus ripe for professional singers to provide slick entertainment. Enter the A Capella Choir, whose singers are hired for their vocal ability: no knowledge of synagogue practice or nusah required.

That was back then; the extensive introduction to this volume summarizes the origins of today’s “a capella” choir: originally intended as a fun activity for students, it is now proposed as a key element in synagogue services, while the role of the cantor is minimized, if not actually suspect. The volume under review is intended for this type of choir.

This volume comprises 22 selections, each by a different composer or arranger, in popular styles ranging from jazzy to pop, gospel and even rap. Some pieces will be familiar, such as Oran Eldor’s *L’kha dodi*, popularized by Cantor Azi Schwartz. Three of the selections ingeniously combine a slick, jazzy background to familiar nusah-based melodies: Goldfarb’s *Magein avot*, Lewandowski’s *Kiddush*, and Binder’s *R’tseih vimnuhateinu*. The volume also includes a useful biography of the composers/arrangers, and an extensive directory of choral groups and support material.

What kind of group will you need to perform this repertoire? Certainly, good basses—there are a lot of low Es and even E flats in this volume. I hope your singers can come in right on time after a sixteenth rest, even harder to do when the piece is sung in swing time. Some of the selections, such as Mike Boxer’s *Yigdal*, will be challenging for an average choir, let alone the congregation; leave them to the experts. (Paradoxically, *Yigdal*, like other metrical texts, was originally designed to be sung by the congregation...)

Gospel music has had a great influence on choral singing since the 1980s—we might mention here the inspired work of such arrangers as Rollo Dilworth—and shul choirs have not escaped its influence, as seen in this volume. Whereas it was a given in previous generations that Jews cannot clap in time, today they not only can clap, but can clap on the offbeats!

One of the selections (*Oseh shalom* by Rebecca Mann) uses rap. Allow me to say something about rap. With its intentionally inexpressive delivery, rap can potentially be used as a vehicle for intimidating, dissing and embarrassing your opponent; a recent rap session in Toronto ended in a gunfight in which an innocent child was killed. Is this really an ethos we want to copy in synagogue music? This question arose years ago when the blues first appeared in a Friday night synagogue service. Wynton Marsalis characterized the blues as “the greatest joy is earned in the hardest times.” *Shabbat hi mi-liz’ok* (on the Sabbath, it is forbidden to cry out)—should we be welcoming the Sabbath by singing the blues?

Regarding the music typesetting in this volume: In general, there could be more attention paid to printing the words, making sure there is a hyphen between syllables and a dash after a word when needed—this will be very helpful to singers who do not know Hebrew. Some of the music contains “spelling” errors: the melody used for *Adonai malakh* arranged by Noah-Bar Shain in G# minor has the leading tone as G natural instead of F-double-sharp, which is very confusing to read.

Even more confusing is Scott Stein’s *Mimkom’kha* in D freygish which has been written with a key signature of G major, with the page covered in a snowstorm of flats. (There have been more absurd key signatures for *freygish*—read my book!)

Some of the pieces call for vocal percussion, but I am afraid the notation is unclear. Sam Shankman’s *Modeh ani* calls for “epic” as well as “auxiliary” vocal percussion, a distinction that eludes even the a cappella colleagues that I mentioned this to. Some notated percussion uses a mixture of different note-head shapes without any suggestion as to what they refer to, and some of the nonsense syllables are unpronounceable (such as “xoh”), with no explanation given in the otherwise detailed transliteration guide. I suppose one could guess a solution to these problems but guessing is not what the purchaser of a music volume should be asked to do. And on the subject of proofreading: in *Magein avot*, the phrase *she-ein kamoMa* should be *she-ein kamohu*; and in the Kiddush, *m’kadeish Shabbat* should be *m’kadeish ha-shabbat*.

Writing about his *Mimkomo*, Daniel Henkin tells us: “I once heard that the Musaf melodies are supposed to be in the Major mode (I don’t know if that is true) ...” I would have thought that before a remark like that gets printed in a publication of the Cantors Assembly, someone could take the time to find out the answer.

Anyone who has heard Cantor Glazman’s choir at Temple Emanu-El, New York, sing Lewandowski’s *Enosh ke-hatsir* during Yizkor will know the power of unaccompanied choral music to move you to your core. This new style of “a capella” singing—in the Latin spelling, to differentiate it from the *A Cappella* sacred works of Salomone Rossi in early 17th-century Mantua, for example—is far removed from that genre, but clearly, here to stay. Let us hope that future volumes in this series will be imbued with the spirit and conceived with the skill to move their listening congregations as well.

Charles Heller is the award-winning author of What To Listen For in Jewish Music (www.ecanthuspress.com). His most recent book is Shul Going (Resource Publications, 2019); see Joshua Jacobson’s review immediately below).

Charles Heller's *Shul Going*

Reviewed by Joshua R. Jacobson

In the preface, the author writes that his new monograph (Resource Publications, 2019) provides an opportunity to view “how Jews (and non-Jews) throughout history have felt about being in the synagogue...” Indeed, the book’s subtitle says it all: *2500 Years of Impressions and Reflections on Visits to the Synagogue*. Mr. Heller’s collection of 176 brief source readings takes us from the Babylonian exile, through “great synagogues” and *shtibels*, to contemporary American multiplex synagogues. And he also affords us a wide geographical span, including Egypt, Italy, Spain, Israel, England, Holland, Australia, America, Poland, Germany, Austria, and more. We hear the words of Jews of all stripes—Orthodox, Hassidic, *haredi*, Conservative, Liberal, Reform, women’s prayer meetings, new-age, independent, and *havurot*. We hear from rabbis, cantors, congregants, politicians, and non-Jewish observers, both critics and admirers.

Mr. Heller points out that the first *batei k’neset* were built to afford Jews a venue where they could assemble for study and prayer. According to the Talmud (BT *K’tubbot* 105a) there were nearly 400 synagogues in Jerusalem before the Second Temple was destroyed, including one reserved for the priests, held within the Temple’s Chamber of Hewn Stone (*Lishkat ha-ggazit*). How sadly ironic, then, are the stories of 2nd-century Rabbi Yosei ben Yehudah praying at a ruined synagogue in Jerusalem, and Nachmanides’s observation on his visit to Jerusalem in 1267 that he could barely find a *minyan* to meet in someone’s home. Also touching are the descriptions of “The Last Minyan in Germany, 1938,” “The Ruined Synagogues of Post-War Vilna,” and “The Destruction of the Great Synagogue, London.”

We hear from witnesses to the musical riches of Salamone Rossi’s choral efforts in Mantua, Salomon Sulzer’s “High” liturgy in Vienna, Zavel Zilberts’s stirring music at Moscow’s *Khorshul*, Yossele Rosenblatt’s intricate *hazzanut*...everywhere, and Simon and Aliza Spiro’s “Song Shul” in Toronto. On the other hand, there are also the colorful critiques of the synagogue’s soundscape by non-Jewish writers such as François Tissard in Ferrara, Samuel Pepys in London, and Charles Burney in Amsterdam. Mr. Heller also included Sholom Kalib’s encyclopedic eulogy over the demise of nusah, choirs and aesthetic values in most contemporary synagogues, a sentiment echoed by Cantors Samuel Rosenbaum and Robert Kieval, both of whom have served as presidents of the Cantors Assembly.

Of particular interest are the chapters concerning prayers at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In 1928 and 1930, the British Mandate government had to intervene to settle conflicting claims of Jewish and Muslim worshippers. More recently, in 2017, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government attempted (rather unsuccessfully) to settle conflicts between the *haredi* superintendents of the Wall and various mixed-gender or all-women’s prayer groups.

Of course, any author who creates an anthology faces the daunting task of which sources to include and which to omit. Mr. Heller is to be praised for his wide-ranging selection. Yet this reviewer would have welcomed a few more pages, including vivid descriptions

by cantors who have been the subjects of comprehensive biographies, such as Zavel Kwartin and Yossele Rosenblatt, composers of avowedly “Jewish” music, like Ernest Bloch and Samuel Adler, authoritative rabbis on the scholarly level of Judah al-Harizi, Samuel Archivolti, Yehudah Leib Zelichower or on the musical level of Shlomo Carlebach, not to mention today’s “Community Singing” paragon, music director Joey Weisenberg. Sadly, there is no mention of today’s magnificent musical services at the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem or the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York or Temple Emanu-el in San Francisco. Also missing is much of the controversy since the beginning of the early 19th-century German Synagogue Reform movement regarding the language, music, instrumentation, seating and decorum of the services. Nor is there much attention paid to the material culture of the synagogue—the evolution of its architecture and furnishings.

Nonetheless, Charles Heller is to be commended for his assiduous research and the vast knowledge he has brought to bear on this subject. He has amassed a treasure of rare and fascinating documents, which can provide needed perspective on contemporary synagogues and their issues, both in the US and elsewhere.

*A frequent contributor to JSM, Joshua R. Jacobson is Emeritus Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Northeastern University, Visiting Professor and Senior Consultant in the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College, and founder of the Zamir Chorale of Boston. He has guest conducted the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Bulgarian National Symphony and Chorus, the New England Conservatory Orchestra and the Boston Lyric Opera Company. His book, **Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation** (JPS), was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in 2002, and a **revised expanded edition** appeared in 2017. His review of Sholom Kalib’s **The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue, Volume II-A, “The Sabbath Evening Service,”** appeared in the September 2018 issue, and his latest project is www.JewishChoralMusic.com, a searchable website with tons of information as well as helpful recommendations for choral conductors.*

Judah M. Cohen’s *Jewish Religious Music in Nineteenth-century America*:

Reviewed by John H. Planer

This book’s title describes the content well: a historical study of Jewish sacred music in America, largely between 1840 and 1900, a seminal period not previously studied in depth. English, German, and Austrian influences transformed American practices, especially the influence of Sulzer and Samuel Naumbourg. The issues and themes this period witnessed still resonate today and laid the foundation for the efflorescence of Jewish liturgical music in the first half of the twentieth century. Professor Judah Cohen “weave[s] together individual, communal, musical, historiographic, and intellectual histories around a central core of published musical compendia...” (p. 8).

Cohen focuses on developments in Liberal Judaism, when distinctions between Reform and Conservative movements were less precisely defined. He devotes little coverage to developments in Orthodox, Eastern European and Sephardic music, for the most far-reaching changes occurred in Liberal Judaism. Although Cohen mentions smaller congregations in passing, he studies predominantly large congregations in the Northeast and Midwest: New York, Cincinnati, Baltimore; few references are on the West Coast and in the South. He sketches biographies of important composers, compilers, arrangers, and editors who published musical collections and hymnals; he cites their formal and informal training and summarizes their careers. The book concludes with an extended discussion of the genesis of the *Union Hymnal*.

The latter publications contained music for the synagogue—that is, hymns and liturgical settings; the school—that is, religious education; and the home. Cohen describes their contents, the modes, languages, and texts. He makes incidental references to liturgical music in individual congregations, financial information such as salaries and budgets, interpersonal conflicts, contractual duties, and the adoption of publications in schools, congregations, and homes.

The book is illustrated with drawings and photographs of individuals. Sample pages from the musical compilations include title pages and musical selections. Although Professor Cohen's monograph mentions supplemental materials accessible at <http://jewishreligiousmusic.com>, at this writing (December 2019), the website includes only four maps of North American and European centers of Jewish music. The folders describing the site, articles, and collections have no content. The website, however, could easily become an important resource if it provided music or links to sites containing these publications.

Organization

Cohen organizes his study in seven chapters, five of which examine important publications of Jewish music and their composers and compilers.

Chapter One, entitled “Early Strata: Of Choirs and Reform through the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” begins around 1840, and traces the change from British to German influence and the rise of choirs. Cohen focuses on Ansel Leo (c1767-1837), Henry A. Henry (1800-1879), Isaac Ritterman (c1820-1890), Louis Naumbourg (1813-1902), Leon Sternberger (1819-97), and Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900), summarizing their careers, duties, and influence.

Entitled “The Sound of German Jewry,” Chapter Two is subtitled Hymnals and Singing Societies in Wilhelm Fischer's *Zemirot Yisrael* of 1863. After a brief survey of early European hymnals and Jewish singing societies, Cohen discusses Fischer's biography and the contents of *Zemirot Yisrael*, which Fischer linked to David Einhorn's 1859 prayer book *Olat Tamid*. Cohen summarizes the contents—German hymns, and liturgical texts for the Sabbath and minor festivals—and traces the reception of the collection.

Chapter Three, entitled “Bildungsmusik”, summarizes the career of Gustave M. Cohen and examines his publication *The Sacred Harp of Judah* (1864, 1872, 1878). The chapter traces Cohen's career as hazzan, educator, and author in New York, Cleveland, Chicago, and

Cincinnati. By using the term *Bildungsmusik*, the author emphasizes Gustave Cohen's German roots and his intent to influence Jewish culture, education, and liturgy. The chapter concludes with a summary of the *Sacred Harp's* contents and influence.

Chapter Four examines Simon Hecht's hymnal *Zemirot Yisrael* (1878) and Gustav S. Ensel's scholarly study of Jewish music *Ancient Liturgical Music* (1880).

Chapter Five discusses the influence of Salomon Sulzer and the celebratory *Sulzerfeier* of 1866. Sulzer's music had enormous influence, and his protégés influenced liturgical repertoire, the use of organs, and the introduction of male and mixed choirs, particularly in eastern urban centers.

Cohen devotes Chapter Six to *Zimrath Yah* (1871-1866), a four-volume collection of liturgical music edited by Cantors Samuel Welsch and Alois Kaiser, assisted by Isaac Rice and Cantor Morris Goldstein. Cohen examines in depth not only the genesis of this publication but also its contents. Included is a discussion of the evolving role of the cantor.

Chapter Seven is devoted to *A Collection of the Principal Melodies of the Synagogue* by William Sparger and Alois Kaiser, and the development of the *Union Hymnal* (1897). Cohen's sources as well as his documentation are outstanding. Primary sources include printed Jewish publications, newspapers, congregational minutes, and contemporary articles and reviews, and private letters. His mastery of secondary sources as well—congregational histories and biographies—is impressive.

Themes

Cohen organizes his monograph around significant publications and their authors, composers, and compilers, but his primary themes are broadly historical and diverse: (1) Congregational singing, choral music, choirs, and cantors; (2) music in the school and home; (3) the training, duties, and professionalism of the cantor; and (4) the adaptation of music and liturgy to shape Jewish identity in America. Underlying these developments was (5) the conflict between popular appeal and communal participation on one hand and musical artistry and the "elevation of the liturgy" on the other. The popular appeal promoted social bonding and identity through English texts and homophonic style. The artistic appeal emphasized musical sophistication: penetration of the text using harmony, rhythm and texture to express emotion and significance.

Secondary themes include the dynamics between the rabbi and cantor, European versus American melodies, arrangements of traditional melodies and newly composed settings; the influence of Sulzer and his students; and universalism in music and liturgy versus the distinctive and particular. Topics briefly covered include the languages of the music: German, English, Hebrew; male and mixed choirs; women's roles in worship and choirs; major tonalities versus the modes; the promotion of hymnals; the organ; and the development of musicological scholarship in Jewish music.

Conclusion

The content of Professor Cohen's book is impressive, but the prose at times impedes comprehension. When describing music, biography and events, Cohen's writing is clear and direct. But in introductions and summaries of paragraphs and sections—where clarity is most requisite to explicate significance—the writing can become obscure. For example, in summarizing developments in the late nineteenth century, Cohen writes,

The desire for a musically facile congregation that could easily port its Jewish identity into and out of the sanctuary doors, in other words, remained strong even as more elaborate national projects sometimes gave the appearance of a shift away to more highbrow priorities (p. 108).

Divining the meaning of such prose might be challenging to some readers.

That said, this 2019 publication by Indiana University Press in Bloomington is an important book! It traces the development of progressive Judaism as it adapts to American realities throughout the latter two-thirds of the nineteenth century. The author's organization, coverage, scholarship, and documentation are exemplary. In sum, Professor Cohen's monograph stands in the finest tradition of Jewish musicology.

*John H. Planer is Emeritus Professor of Music at Manchester University, and a past president of the Guild of Temple Musicians. His monograph, **Jewish Liturgical Music in Strasbourg from the French Revolution to c. 1957**, appeared in French translation in 2020 (Jérôme Do. Bentzinger Editeur in Strasbourg). His work, **An Inventory to the Eduard Birnbaum Manuscripts**, is available in pdf format online at <http://huc.edu/research/libraries/collections/Birnbaum>. His article, "The Provenance, Dating, Allusions and Variants of U-n'taneh tokef and Its Relationship to Romano's Kontakion," appeared in JSM's Fall 2013 issue, Vol. 38.*

Charles Davidson's *Shirei Shlomo: A Friday Evening Service for Cantor and Congregation with Guitar Accompaniment*

Reviewed by Sam Weiss

A spirit of love pervades this book of Friday night compositions dedicated by Hazzan/composer Charles Davidson to his JTS classmate, colleague, and lifelong friend, Hazzan Solomon Mendelson (1933–2016). A name embedded in a Hebrew book title traditionally references the author, but *Shlomo* in this case is not Davidson, but Sol Mendelson, to whose memory each piece of music is individually inscribed. In this light, the beautiful if surprising setting of the *Kiddush* to the cantillation of *Shir ha-shirim* makes sense as an indirect evocation of the name of *Shlomo ha-melekh*, author of that biblical book. Interpolated between *Aleinu* and *Adon olam* we find a graceful melody for the para-liturgical *Eishet hayil*—yet another biblical text ascribed to King Solomon. The latter piece bears an additional dedication to Sol's dear and devoted wife, Emma Mendelson.

Shirei Shlomo does not comprise the complete Friday night service, but fourteen of its key prayers. In addition, there are settings of *Shalom aleikhem* and *Y'did nefesh*, as well as a transcription of a Mendelson family tune for *Yah ribbon*. Taken as a whole, the collection has stylistic coherence and motivic cross-referencing that characterize a major work, yet each piece is self-contained. The working cantor can easily pick and choose among the selections as the need arises, since each title starts on a fresh page. Many singers, however, may be disappointed by the small font size of the lyrics.

The compositional styles of the prolific Charles Davidson are many and varied, and one would be justly curious to know what approach he took to this project. Most of the melodies in *Shirei Shlomo* could be described as simple to perform yet not simplistic. As stated in the preface, the music was written to be “easy to present by a cantor, a talented rabbi, or lay person.” Among the exceptions to this description I would place *L'kha dodi*, *Hatsi kaddish*, *Magein avot*, and the aforementioned rather bravura *Kiddush*. *R'tseih vimnuhateinu* is a concise recitative in the classic style complete with a “choral” interlude and a traditional *hatimah*. While not technically challenging, it is a composition that virtually demands a knowledgeable cantor to give it the proper interpretation. Besides this setting, there are other pieces or passages written for an optional second voice; these too are not easily performed by an untrained singer.

The accompaniments, in the form of chord symbols, add an interesting layer to all of the settings. The primary function of the accompaniment is harmonic enrichment rather than rhythmic support. In only two pieces (*L'kha dodi* and *Mi khamokha*) is the guitar relied upon to propel the music rhythmically.

The brisk pace of the chord changes in several cases will necessitate careful rehearsal and coordination, whether the singer and the accompanist are the same person or not. Similarly, many of the tutti parts are not simple refrains that can be pulled off without rehearsal, and they assume a congregation of above-average musicality. Passages that alternate between cantor and congregation provide a satisfying texture to many of the selections. A particularly exhilarating moment in the *Hatsi kaddish*, for example, is the sudden brief shift by the congregation to major at *y'heih sh'mei rabba* followed by the cantor's return to minor at *yitbarakh*. Not all harmonic shifts in *Shirei Shlomo* are as felicitous, however. Some can be challenging and even startling, but they are always purposeful and often instructive.

An interesting aspect of *Shirei Shlomo* is its relationship to the Friday night nusah. As one would expect from a master teacher of the subject, Davidson intelligently incorporates elements of nusah phraseology, but this does not necessarily translate into easily recognizable Ashkenazic Friday night nusah—which is as it should be in a melodically and harmonically creative work of this nature that includes only a selection of the liturgy. While the “talented rabbi or lay person” will enjoy the expressive qualities of the music and only briefly be aware of the nusah, the seasoned hazzan will delight on a deeper level in the composer's craftsmanship in this area as in others.

Some of my favorite moments in *Shirei Shlomo* include the *Aleinu*, a gorgeous setting in Eb major that is perfectly suited to the text and is easy to sing. Its *Adonai malakh* modal character is not immediately apparent since the D-flat is the highest note—which is cloaked in a gentle Bbm7 chord. I only wish that the music did not stop at *Ha-kadosh barukh hu*

but continued for the entire paragraph. Hearing this *Aleinu* performed *en masse* would be a thrilling experience.

Another delight comes at the end of *Tzaddik ka-tamar*, an introspective melody of shifting meters in the key of D minor whose elegiac quality comes across as a personal communication by the composer to his departed friend. At the words *l'haggid ki yashar adonai*, we experience a momentary uplift in the form of a raised 6th supported by a G major chord, as if to remind us of the psalm's greater message relating to the divine rather than to a human being.

Throughout his career, Sol Mendelson was responsible for commissioning many of the celebrated works through which Charles Davidson has enriched our Jewish musical heritage both sacred and secular. *Shirei Shlomo*, available at <http://www.ashbournemusic.com/>, is a worthy salute to this beloved and accomplished hazzan's memory.



Sam Weiss is hazzan of the Jewish Center in Paramus, New Jersey. A long-term member of the Journal's Editorial Board and faculty member of the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York, he is an acknowledged expert in Jewish music who has lectured widely on the subject. His article, "The Changed Face of 'Nusah'" appeared in the September 2015 issue of JSM.

Michael Haruni's *Siddurim: Nehalel beShabbat* (2013), and *Nehalel beChol* (2015); Nevarech Press, Jerusalem www.nehalel.com

Reviewed by Joseph A. Levine

Here at last we have the first two volumes of a projected trilogy (the third being *beShalosh Regalim*). Once complete, it will comprise a comprehensive traditional Siddur in which photographs illustrating main themes within a given text are introduced to focus readers' attention on what the prayers are about. The series is modeled after the Nevarech Bencher, which has sold well over a half million copies since it first appeared in 1999.

The pictorial images are contemporary and historical, human and natural, Israeli and universal. Some depict the dark times in Europe, others depict the triumphs of modern Zionism. In a rarity among Orthodox religious publications, these *siddurim* show men and women, sometimes not even Jewish, both separately and commingling—a notable loosening of rigidity in the area of gender equality. Textually, we find *Modah ani* (females) alongside *Modeh ani* (males). We also discover a *Mi she-beirakh* for Bat Mitzvah, as well as permission asked of *Ba'alat ha-bayit* before reciting *Birkat ha-mazon*, plus a ceremony “Celebrating a Newborn Girl”: *Zeved ha-bat*.

If a single picture is truly worth 1,000 words (per Confucius), the one of pre-adolescent girls studying *Hummash*, placed opposite even younger boys studying *Gemara*, says it all (beShabbat: 276-77). If the photo does nothing more than persuade open-minded daveners to use both volumes, deviser/editor/translator Michael Haruni’s courageous project will have been well worth the prodigious effort and expense it must have taken to realize.

The series’ basic conceptual challenge reveals itself at the outset, in Zvi Grumet’s Introduction (beShabbat: xvii-xx), which argues that even “the awe-inspiring... visual experience [at Sinai] could not preserve the content of Revelation—only words could.” Haruni immediately modifies that contention in a “Cautionary Guide to the User: The Limits of a Siddur with Photographs” (ibid., xxiii, no.4): “We should not rely only on the photographs but press our imagination beyond them.” This editorial overconcern reflects the producers’ uncertainty about how their innovative approach might be received by their intended audience: Modern Orthodox readers.

The following are several praiseworthy features found in both *siddurim*:

A complete Life Cycle (*Toldot adam*) liturgy that includes a photograph of the Purim Megillah scroll, richly illustrated in full color (beChol: 810-11).

The most comprehensive *Ma'ariv-shaharit-minhah l'yom ha-atma'ut* ever published (beChol: 528-67).

An abbreviated Weekday Amidah (*Havineinu*; beChol: 244-47). (Its text also appears in the current JSM issue’s *N'GINAH L'MA'ASEH* section, with an audio sung by Jacob Mendelson.)

Prayers for the UK and US governments, along with *T'fillah lishlom medinat yisrael* (beShabbat: 348-51).

The Hebrew text on every page features a photograph that highlights the illustrated verse in a different color.

The luxurious feel and look of these splendidly illustrated *siddurim* exceed any other currently available prayer books.

The volumes also contain a few near misses:

Smaller-sized instructions interspersed with prayer texts are difficult to read because their imprint is too faint.

The weight of both volumes is about twice that of most other currently available *siddurim*.

While every photo is listed at the back of both books, identification of their specific locations is spotty: sometimes (but not always) given on the photo itself and often hard to read against a dark background.

The few *Piyyutim* that survive in our liturgy (*L'kha dodi*, *Adon olam*, *Yigdal*, *Eil Adon*, *Anim z'mirot*, and 18 Table Songs scattered throughout Shabbat) are not attributed.

The over-all impression of Michael Haruni's *Nehalel* project, given that it is only two-thirds finished and therefore, subject to further refinement in a future edition, is overwhelmingly positive. Its photos—of *Erets yisrael*, the cosmos, history, Jews and gentiles of both genders enduring the worst and enjoying the best of circumstances—tipped the scales for this reviewer in favor of Haruni's "Visual aids for *kavvanah*." Surprisingly, the books' weightiness only added to a feeling of travelling "First Class" in God's world, so luxurious to the touch and friendly to the eye was each smoothly coated and richly adorned page. Its gentle prodding of one's attention to a particular verse within each text seemed to heighten the experience of *t'fillah*, rather than to limit its scope.

Unless we are too close to the unfolding event to make out the headlines, *Nehalel beShabbat* and *Nehalel beChol* may indeed prove to be heralding *Hevlei mashi'ah*: Messianic birth pangs preceding a time when other barriers to a common Jewish liturgy will also begin to fall, one by one...

Sidney Dworkin's "Cantors' Corner"—A Recorded Archive for the Ages

Reviewed by Joseph A. Levine

Among radio broadcast series of cantorial music, "Cantors' Corner" stands out, having run originally on Montreal Radio Shalom (1650 AM) from 2007 to 2016. It has recently been made available online at <https://cantorscorner.wordpress.com/>. Montreal born Cantor Dworkin conceived, produced and hosted the series following his tenure as *Hazzan rishon* of Shaar Hashomayim Congregation in Westmount, Quebec from 1987 to 2004. His generosity of spirit in sharing hundreds of his colleagues' recordings that exemplify a broad variety of hazzanic styles, plus his unfussy pinpointing of how the effects were achieved—in terms any lay listener can easily understand—exceeds anything this reviewer has ever encountered.

Zvi Scooler, Bernard Kwartin and Charlie Bernhaut hosted similar weekly broadcasts in New York City (WEVD 1940s-50s, WQXR 1960s-70s, WSOU 1977-2009, cbjmusic@aol.com 2009-present, respectively). Dworkin has built upon their pioneering efforts through a wide range of selections, an easily understandable narrative, and the digital preservation of a highly accomplished prayer style that is fast disappearing. In some 90 different hour-long programs featuring perhaps five times that many artists, he has succeeded in underlining the elements of lasting value in every recording and verbalizing exactly how a particular cantorial turn of phrase might fit into the greater scheme of Jewish sacred as well as secular music. His guiding principle seems to have been the seeking-out of traditional material that has been reworked to meet contemporary stylistic preferences.

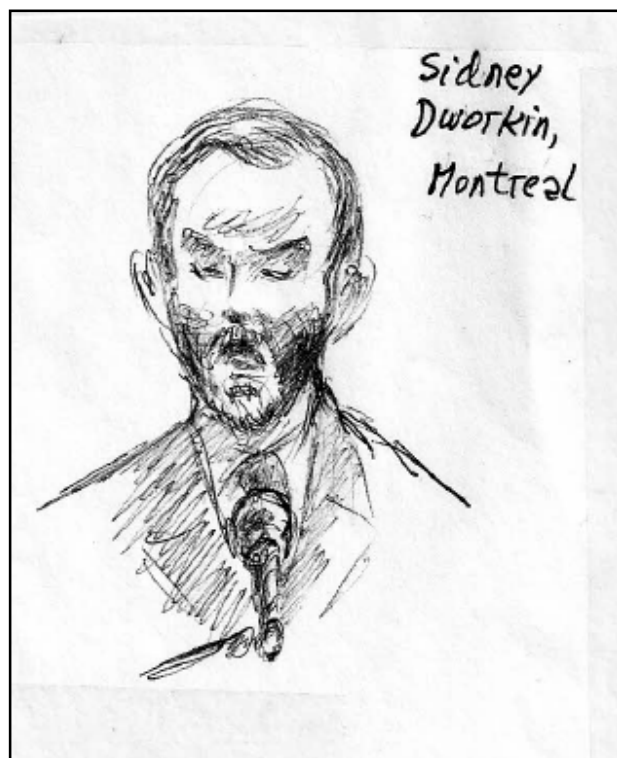
JSM readers will find sufficient material in the programs listed below (spelled the way they appear randomly on the website) to fill years of Adult Education courses for congregants and perhaps formal lectures for colleagues or conservatory students as well. The subjects range from Yossele Rosenblatt, whom journalists dubbed “The King of Cantors” for his unsparing efforts to help the War effort by giving cross-country Liberty Bonds concert tours in 1918, through a *Vocal Analysis of [Yitzchak Meir] Helfgot*, today’s leading exemplar of Hasidic high-tenor/instrumental “mixes” of cantorial recording favorites from the early 20th century. Additionally, a quarter of the broadcasts feature performances of secular Jewish music: Israeli dances and patriotic hymns; Partisan songs during the Shoah; and a wide sampling of Yiddish folk repertoire.

Complete List of “Cantors’ Corner” Broadcasts—In Alphabetical Order

4 Cantors, 4 Styles
40 Years of Hazzanut in Montreal
Aaron Rosand—Romantic Violin Virtuoso
A Crossover Recording
Anniversary Program
Beth Ora Congregation’s 40 Year Anniversary Celebration Concert
Boaz Davidoff Sings Unknown Original Carlebach Songs
Cantor Aaron Shiffman of Cleveland
Cantor Benny Rogosnitzky Sings Nusach ha-t’fillot
Cantor David Bagley Yahrzeit Tribute
Cantorial Masterpieces
Cantor Isaac Wall & Others
Cantor Jacob Koussevitzky (2)
Cantor Joseph Malovany
Cantor Joseph Gross “Zichrono Livracha”
Cantor Sid Dworkin Retrospective
Cantor Tibor Holczer in a 1970 Concert at Beth Zion
Cantor Ya’akov Rubin of Petach Tikvah, Israel
Cantor Yehuda Rottner
Cantor Zvi Aroni & Others

Cantors Formerly From Montreal—Toren & David Guber
Cantors Sing Opera
Cantors Yehezkel Braun & Issachar Helman
Chanukah
Children's Chanukah Concert
Dr. Mordechai Sobol "Zichrono Liracha"
Famous Cantorial Recitatives
Golden Voices
Great Cantorials
Helpgot Vocal Analysis
High Holiday Preparation (2)
Hommage to Barry Serota
Important Pieces From the Golden Era
Interpretations in Hazzanut
Into the Month of Adar
Kabbalat Shabbat
Kristallnacht
Legacy Albums
Leibele Glantz—Commemorating 120 Years Since His Birth (1898-2018)
Lesser Known Cantors Who Survived the Shoah
Mar Heshvan & David Kusevitsky
Mothers' Day
Motzen Highlights & Others
Nostalgic Cantorials
Odds & Ends (3)
Outstanding Cantorials
Passover (3)
Passover Children's Special
Purim Children's Special
Rabbi Gedalih Fleer: "Where Was God During the Holocaust?"
Remembrance Day November 11th
Rosh Chodesh Kislev "Plus"
Rosh Hashana
Shai Abramson & Other Cantors Out of Israel
Shavuot
Shulem Lemmer Shares Music for Chanukah
S'lichot
Some Montreal Cantors & Some Golden Era Cantors
Sukkot
The 10 Greatest Cantorial Recitatives of All Time
The Art of Moshe Koussevitzky
The Complete "Cantors' Corner" Theme
The Duet That Never Happened
The Four Koussevitzky Brothers
The Kiddush
The "Sh'ma"

The Week After Yom Haatzmaut
Tishah B'Av
Web Browsing
Yiddish Songs (5)
Yom Haatzmaut (2)
Yom Hashoah—Holocaust Remembrance Day
Yom Kippur
Yom Yerushalayim
Zemirot Shabbat (Songs)



**“Cantors’ Corner” creator, producer, host and archiver,
Sidney Dworkin, performing during the CA Convention, 1999
at the Marriott, World Trade Center, New York City.**

Joseph A. Levine has edited the Journal of Synagogue Music since 2004, and has authored eight books, 45 articles, and 32 mini-series of lectures. He served Conservative congregations as a full-time cantor for 35 years, later teaching Hazzanut at the Jewish Theological Seminary where he earned a Doctorate in Sacred Music, at the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York, and at the University of London.

IN MEMORIAM



Victor Tunkel (1933-2019)

Victor Tunkel's father was a London tobacconist to whose home their cantor, David Kusevitsky, would come occasionally to buy cigarettes, which were scarce at the end of World War II. An alto soloist from the age of nine to fifteen in the Hendon Synagogue's all-male choir, Victor regularly sang duets with their brilliant hazzan, whom the congregation affectionately dubbed *unzer Dovidl*. The latter's departure for America in 1949 was viewed by his distraught parishioners as tantamount to Joseph's catastrophe in the Bible: *Gunnov gunnav mei-erets ha-ivrim* (he was stolen outright from the land of [Anglo-] Hebrews).

A barrister and university lecturer, for 49 years he was Secretary and Librarian for the Selden Society—the only British publisher devoted entirely to English legal history. He sang tenor even longer in the Zemel Choir, England's leading Jewish mixed-voice group, founded by his friend Dudley Cohen in 1955. Victor Tunkel had a lifetime involvement in Jewish music as an amateur chorister, cantor, cantillator, collector, and educator. His book, *The Music of the Hebrew Bible: The Western Ashkenazic Tradition*, was reviewed in *JSM* 2006 by Joshua Jacobson, who acknowledged its great value for practitioners of that particular Minhag, and lauded the author for having “set out to protect this endangered species from disappearing under the hegemony of the ubiquitous Eastern Ashkenazic tradition.”

Victor's review of “The New British Siddur (2006)” in *JSM* 2010 forthrightly criticized the prayer book's translator, then Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, for not having “been as bold as one might have hoped” by not retaining *Ishei yisrael* (Israel's fire-offerings) alongside *t'fillatam* (their prayers) in the Amidah's Restoration of Zion benediction, *R'tseih*. This despite “our non-existent fire-offerings” still appearing in both the Orthodox *ArtScroll* Siddur and Conservative *Mahzor Lev Shalem*—in the sense of our fervent prayers bearing the same import as burnt offerings once did for our forebears.

In addition to publishing numerous articles on Jewish music, Victor's passion was amassing printed and handwritten manuscripts on the subject. The Victor Tunkel Archive is one of the largest of its kind ever held in private hands. Mainly focusing on liturgical music, the archive includes extensive sections on Biblical cantillation, Jewish folk music, musicological research and educational materials. The archive also contains rare manuscripts from late 18th-century Sienna, among the oldest specimens of notated synagogue music. Several years ago, Victor had indicated his intention to have the archive donated to Leo Baeck College in London, where it would be made available to interested scholars and researchers. As an introduction to the breadth of his knowledge and the extent of his collection, here is his excellent article, "Introduction to Shul Music," written for the European Cantors Association:

<http://www.cantors.eu/Introduction%20To%20Shul%20Music.html>

For *JSM* 2007, Victor had paired a poem by Yehuda Halevy (1075-1141)—*Hah, Bitti* (A Mother's Lament)—with the music of a *Sinfonia for 5 Viols* by Leonora Duarte (1610-1678), whom he called "the first Jewish woman composer." We dedicate an excerpted verse from that elegant pairing to Victor's dear wife Gilly, his son Daniel, and his daughter Sarah.

Ki lish'ol nas'u aroneikh
v'ein helki mim-meikh rak zikhronaikh

the coffin bearers have taken you to the grave
 and I have nothing left of you but your memory.

Mournfully

Ki lish - ol nas - u nos' - ei a - ro

Ki lish - ol, ki lish - ol nas - u a - ro -

neikh, a - ro - neikh.

neikh, a - ro - neikh, a - ro - neikh, a - ro - neikh.

IN MEMORIAM



Elliott H. Dicker (1945-2019)

Based Upon a Eulogy by His Friend for Almost 50 Years--Richard Nadel

As a teenager, I was conducting a professional choir for Passover at a resort in the Borscht Belt, and Elliot Dicker happened to be my tenor. He was 25 at the time, and a cantorial student at the HUC School of Sacred Music. He had grown up in Brooklyn, NY, and graduated from that community's Yeshiva Eitz Chayim of Borough Park. As a child, he sang alto in Ben Friedman's all-male male choir at Temple Beth El, whose hazzan at the time was Moshe Koussevitzky, Chief Cantor of Warsaw's Tlomackie Temple before the War. If Elliott knew anything, he knew what a hazzan should sound like. He may have reacted a bit too demonstratively whenever another cantor did not sing the correct nusah, since he was somewhat high strung as a young man. It must be said that he did mellow as the years progressed, but his Cantors Assembly colleagues would come to respect his insistence on doing things the right way.

From the time of his maturity, his voice displayed an operatic quality. He got a job singing in the so-called Extra Chorus that the Metropolitan Opera used when doing large productions that required it. He thus performed onstage with the world's best singers, its most famous conductors and what is regarded as one of its finest orchestras.

Years later, he would assume the pulpit at B'nai Torah in Boca Raton, Florida, where he created a very successful concert program. After moving to nearby Beth Ami, Elliott would call me to touch base (as he put it), and would say, "I can't talk long, I'm on my way into the hospital to see a congregant." I would say, "You have a part time job, hospital visitation is not part of your job." He would answer, "I can't help it, that's who I am."

When Marc Levy, the cantor whom he succeeded at B'nai Ami retired, he offered to teach Elliott the skill of embroidering, so that he could take over his business. Sensing Levy's sincerity in offering him a dependable source of income, Elliott quickly accepted his proposal.

Exacting in everything he undertook, he installed computer-driven sewing machines that enabled him to mass-produce his own designs of what previously had been freehand work.

Elliot always looked for opportunities to reach out to people in need. Working in his embroidery shop on late winter afternoons, he would frequently be visited by a homeless woman with evident psychological issues. Elliott was unfailingly kind to her. Even when her incessant talking would agitate him, he would let her sit in the shop and take a rest. He always allowed her to use the ladies' room, and he would even send out for dinner for the two of them. As Elliot once described himself to an interviewer for a book on American cantors: "I am a good people person." He never missed reciting Yizkor for his father, who had passed away when Elliott was four, nor when the time came, for his mother and his sister.

One November during Elliott's undergraduate years at the HUC School of Sacred Music, his fellow students were discussing Kristallnacht. He was embarrassed to admit he had never heard of the tragic event. This was because neither his mother nor any of the European-born neighbors where he'd grown up, spoke about the Holocaust; the memory was too painful to put into words. From that moment on, the horrible history became very important for him. He read whatever he could find about the subject, was the first to see Holocaust movies, and was always intensely involved with the annual Yom HaShoah memorial service in his synagogue.

Elliott was an animal lover as well. One day while living in New York, he came across a dog that someone tied to a park bench with an electrical cord. Realizing that this dog had been abandoned, he untied him and took him into the building he lived in on Riverside Drive. When unsuccessful in finding someone to care for the dog, he brought him into his own apartment as his pet. That dog, whom Elliott aptly named *Kelev*, eventually moved to Florida with him.

Throughout his career, Elliott Dicker would be found on the side of what *he* considered right: for his chosen profession to be respected; for cantorial students' God-given voices not to be judged during weekly practicums; for women to serve as *sh'lihei tsibbur*; for families to observe shabbat on Friday nights at home rather than at what he termed a "ludicrous" Late Service; for cantors to concentrate on improving their davening rather than ruin their instruments while attempting to function as educators; and even for relinquishing the luxury of a professional choir when he saw that the financial burden proved too heavy for his semi-insolvent synagogue to bear.

He loved his family and his friends, and that love was easily returned to him. He set an example for his community as to how a good person should live. All too soon, Elliott has been taken from us. But not before he had ample opportunity to leave behind a legacy of sweet memories that will continue to reverberate far beyond the years that were allotted to him on earth. For so long as his goodness and generosity of spirit remain a force in our lives and the lives of all who knew and loved him, Hazzan Elliot H. Dicker's memory will continue to serve as an inspiration and a blessing.

IN MEMORIAM



Hans Cohn (1926-2020)

Gleaned from His 2005 Memoir, *Risen from the Ashes: Tales of a Musical Messenger*

Born in Berlin, Germany, Hans Cohn was forced to leave his public school after passage of the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws in 1935. His Bar Mitzvah present was the family's desperate escape, first to Genoa and from there by boat to Shanghai, where it joined thousands of other European Jewish refugees. Hans' mother died after only five months, hunger and disease being widespread. Hans worked long hours in his father's small restaurant, where he often had to step in and substitute as a cook. When the Japanese took control in 1942, the Jews were all moved into the Hong Khou ghetto. There, conditions worsened until Allied bombings commenced in the spring of 1945 and the tide of war began to turn.

In 1946, Hans was working for the Americans, selling radio parts for airplanes. There, his enthusiasm earned him the supervising officer's remark: "Cohn, you could sell rotten tomatoes." He never did, but instead, he turned this strange compliment into his self-described "personal logo." He stowed away on a ship leaving for Australia, where he survived by working as a chef; by then he had perfected his cooking skills. Living Down Under as an illegal immigrant, he eventually had no choice but to turn himself in, whereupon the authorities sent him to America. In the U.S., he was immediately drafted into the Army. During his service he volunteered to lead prayer at a San Francisco synagogue, a task he immediately took to, having been blessed with a remarkable baritone voice and an abiding love for music. At that time, he also met Eva, who would become his bride and the love of his life for the next 50 years.

After his military discharge, Hans and Eva succeeded in the restaurant business, but his longing to become a cantor never left him. While studying for the cantorate at the Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music in Manhattan, he worked as a "Singing Waiter" during the summer months and Jewish holidays in the Catskill region's resort hotels—the so-called Borscht Belt. He trained with retired Metropolitan Opera Basso Alexander Kipnis at the Manhattan School of Music and would later go on to earn a Masters' degree in Education from Stanford University. In 1952, he and his father were reunited in New York.

At age 31, Hans had achieved his dream of becoming an officially invested cantor, and served congregations first in South Bend, Indiana and then in Palo Alto, California. Hans endeared himself to his congregants in both positions, but the need to survive would again test him severely in his later years. He was stricken with cancer, and then lost his beloved Eva to the same disease. As was his way, Hans rose to the occasion. He continued to lead an active life, in the midst of his congregation and larger community, and to enjoy every minute of the years that were left to him.

He had been cantor at Beth Jacob in Palo Alto for 31 years when he retired in 1994. In 2002, he received an Honorary Doctorate in Music from Hebrew Union College. In 2005, his memoir *Risen from the Ashes* was published, to great acclaim from his colleagues. Its pages are filled with the same humility, wit, and sheer pleasure of survival that marked his long career.

A similar generosity of spirit characterized his many years of membership in the Cantors Assembly; his informative postings appeared regularly on its Internet page, Hazzanet. At home, he had established warm and caring relationships with Bar/Bat Mitzvah students along with their proud parents and grandparents, even with the Junior Congregants who revered him for organizing and leading weekly services especially for them. That children's service was reminiscent of what the legendary Cantor Emmanuel Kirshner had achieved with *Minhah l'shabbat* in Munich's Great Synagogue just before the Holocaust.

Our departed friend and colleague, Cantor Hans Cohn, inherited that mantle. He was truly (when we consider his culinary expertise), a Man for All Seasons—and Seasonings.

IN MEMORIAM



Gregory Yaroslow (1952-2020)

Gleaned from his own words and what his colleagues wrote about him

Born in Rochester, New York, where he was raised in Conservative Temple Beth El, Greg regarded its cantor, Samuel Rosenbaum, as his role model for life. At age 14 he was appointed as Rosenbaum's prime Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor and charged with leading the Junior Congregation service. Given that early sense of responsibility plus his father's abiding love of *hazzanut* and unfaltering encouragement of his son, Greg chose the cantorate as his life's profession. He studied voice and several string instruments in high school, and kept up his musical involvement at Fredonia College in suburban Rochester.

At the JTS Cantors Institute (now the H. L. Miller Cantorial School), he was elected president of the student body as well as its placement chair. His undergraduate position was that of *Hazzan sheini* to David Putterman at Manhattan's Park Avenue Synagogue, a "full-time job unto itself," as he later recalled. The Seminary instructors he remembered most vividly were Max Wohlberg (Nusah), Ben Belfer (Voice) and David Kusevitsky (Coaching).

Following graduation, he served briefly in New London, Connecticut and Albuquerque, New Mexico, before settling permanently in Congregation Emanu El of San Bernardino (now Redlands), California in 1978. Although it belonged to the Reform movement, Emanu El's approach to liturgy matched Greg's: Services to be led exclusively by a professional rabbi and cantor whose role was "to raise people to a higher level, so they might feel a connection with the cosmic... we Jews having been 'chosen' only in the sense that God *needs* our prayers." As for the outdated language of some liturgical passages, Greg felt it was a cantor's *job* to sing those words in order "to demonstrate to the congregation what our ancestors believed."

Greg concurred with Reconstructionist theologian Mordechai M. Kaplan's view that Judaism was "a civilization in progress," which implied corresponding changes in *hazzanut*. Regarding the rightful place that women were about to assume as *sh'lihei tsibbur*, he advised his

colleagues (in a 1985 interview), to “Go with the flow; if we serve our people, we will serve God.”

At that same time, he told an interviewer: “I was already a radical in the Seminary... my older colleagues were very protective of their recitatives. I, on the other hand, liked to share.” And share he did, with colleagues and cantorial interns alike. He mentored novices by adjusting his teaching style according to the student’s needs, bringing out the best in each. Greg’s empathy for others knew no limits; when he received the news that a former classmate had passed away, he cried like a baby. He served on the CA’s Convention Management Committee for years, getting to know most attendees on an intimate basis. Only two years ago, he eulogized a departed friend in terms that could easily have described himself:

A sweet colleague, he was quick to welcome new blood to our unique *hevruta*. Young and old, new and long in the tooth, he accepted, befriended and loved all of us. We will greatly miss his warm smile and his outstretched hand. It was so easy to earn his unconditional love.

Greg made it a point to take part in interfaith observances, estimating that he had led perhaps 1,000 *sedarim* for the greater community over the years. From its beginnings, he was involved in the Peace movement, proclaiming himself a conscientious objector and advising other like-minded individuals as a draft counsellor.

During the final two decades of his life he suffered from a debilitating combination of diseases, any one of which could have ended his life without warning. Unable even to teach, he simply increased his postings on Hazzanet, always having something valuable to say about music, politics, religion or computers. When he quietly left us last January, many of his colleagues described him on Hazzanet as: “Generous... magnanimous of spirit... possessing a sweet soul and beautiful heart... a living encyclopedia who shared his vast knowledge without judging.”

To that list of noble attributes, we can now add: Unbelievably courageous in walking ever onward through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He never complained about the hand he had been dealt while continuing to help others, as best he could, under the circumstances.

Greg was above all a *Mentsch*, passionate about his fellow human beings of all religious or ideological persuasions. He was also devoted to traditional *hazzanut*, whether chanted by others or by himself. At the *amud* or onstage, he was meticulous in his observance of correct Hebrew accentuation and in keeping his vocal production true to the engaging lightness of his lyric tenor. He was always prepared, a faithful servant of the text and music, and partner to his accompanying instrument or chorus, whether they be grade-school children or consummate professionals.

Hazzan Greg Yaroslow’s singing was truly (in philosopher Abraham Heschel’s metaphor), “a window into his soul.”



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